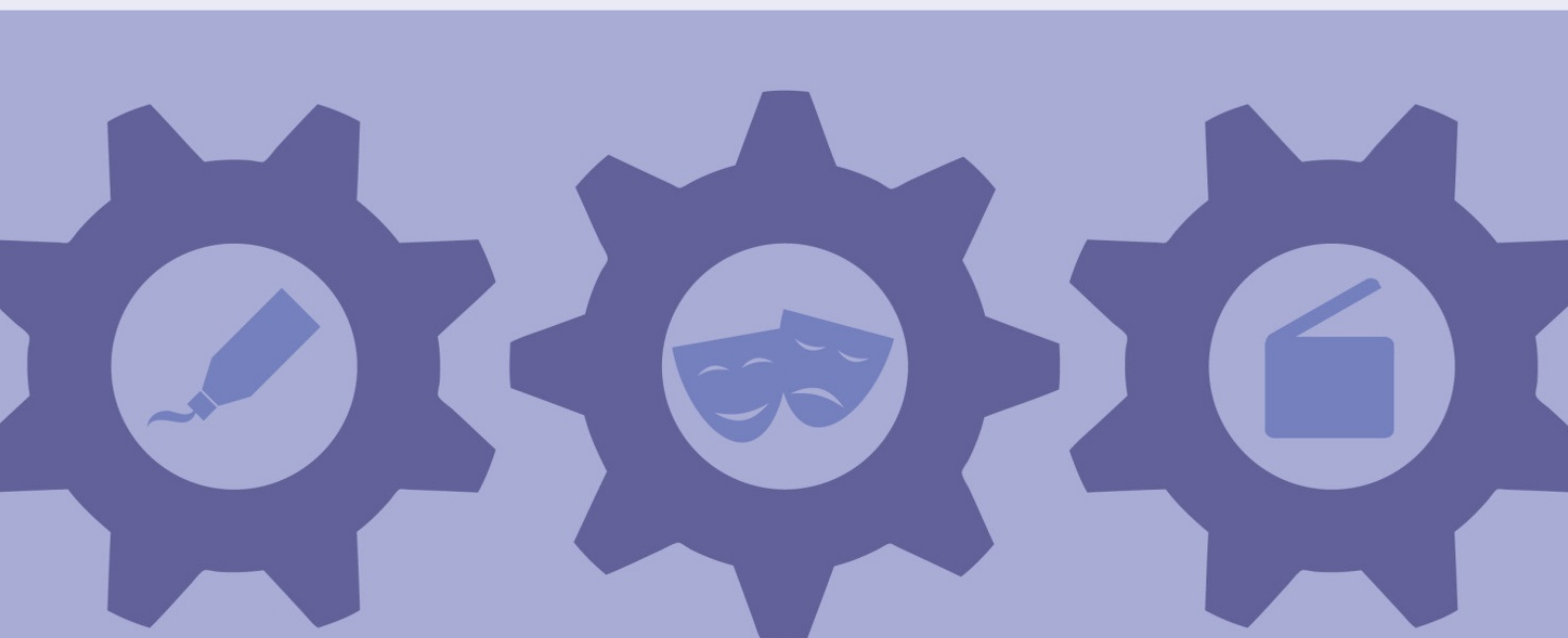


**An Evaluation of the  
*Personal Effectiveness  
and Employability  
through the Arts project.***



# An Evaluation of the Personal Effectiveness and Employability through the Arts Project

**Report Submitted to:**

Superact

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# Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1. The External Evaluation.....	1
1.2. Project Overview .....	2
1.3. Report Structure .....	2
<b>2. Project Context</b> .....	<b>3</b>
2.1. Introduction.....	3
2.2. The Prison Population .....	3
2.3. Penal Policy.....	4
2.4. Rehabilitation.....	5
2.5. Arts and the Justice System .....	5
2.6. Receptiveness to the idea .....	6
2.7. Summary.....	6
<b>3. Project Implementation</b> .....	<b>8</b>
3.1. Introduction.....	8
3.2. Implementation and Critical Success Factors .....	8
3.3. General Lessons .....	10
3.4. Lessons in the Use of Arts to Engage Prisoners.....	10
3.5. Promoting the Projects: The Role of the Prisons .....	11
3.6. Promoting the PEETA approach, other settings and art forms.....	12
3.7. Impact .....	12
3.8. Summary.....	14
<b>4. Policy Lessons and Transfer of Innovation</b> .....	<b>15</b>

4.1.	Introduction.....	15
4.2.	Alignment with the EC Policy Context.....	15
4.3.	Building a Community of Practice .....	16
4.4.	Dissemination and Exploitation.....	17
4.5.	Mainstreaming: Challenges and Opportunities .....	19
4.6.	How has innovation been transferred across the partnership? .....	20
4.7.	Policy messages .....	21
4.8.	Future Plans .....	21
4.9.	Summary.....	22
<b>5.</b>	<b>Concluding Observations .....</b>	<b>24</b>

# Executive Summary

CRESR at Sheffield Hallam University was appointed as the external evaluator for the Personal Effectiveness and Employability through the Arts (PEETA) project. PEETA is a pan-European intervention funded by a Transfer of Innovation award via the EU Lifelong Learning Leonardo Programme and a donation from the Medicor Foundation. The programme encourages European partners to transfer and adapt innovative vocational education and training materials and methods.

This is the final report of the external evaluation. It takes a programme-wide perspective identifying key lessons against the original project objectives. It is intended that this study complements the work of Marchmont Observatory at the University of Exeter who were appointed as internal evaluators from the outset.

## Introduction to the PEETA Project

The PEETA project involved the development, piloting and subsequent award of a new BTEC qualification known as Supporting Employability and Personal Effectiveness (SEPE). It was designed by Superact (a not for profit arts organisation) and the University of Exeter in association with awarding body Edexcel. The qualification aims to help those who may find accessing traditional routes to employability challenging. Superact was the lead partner and assumed the responsibility for project management and the training of the in-country artists working in five prison settings across Europe: the Netherlands, Italy, Portugal, Austria and Turkey.

## Custodial Context

CRESR have assessed four key dimensions of the delivery environment in each country: the degree of pressure on the prison system; the strength of the rehabilitation ideal; receptiveness to the idea of using the arts to improve the 'soft' skills of prisoners and host institution support. It indicates that the Netherlands and Portugal were the most propitious environments for implementation. In the former, a stable prison population, and a strong (albeit weakened) commitment to rehabilitation was complemented by a venerable tradition of using arts in prisons, strong receptiveness to the idea and host institution support. In contrast, the Turkish prison system has been put under enormous strain by a prison population that has doubled in less than a decade and PEETA was greeted with initial scepticism but, on the other hand, attracted strong local support.

## Project Implementation

The qualification has been piloted through the transfer of innovation method, which means that one country implemented PEETA then handed over to the next. The idea is that subsequent countries will benefit from prior experiences and so through trial and error a concept emerges that is continually fine-tuned. This approach has worked well with providers keen to learn from the experiences of others. However, it is also clear that the custodial context differed so greatly that this sometimes dictated how the qualification could be delivered. In addition, each provider had their own ideas about how best the innovation could be realised.

The evaluation has identified general features of successful delivery:

- the active support of both the Ministry of Justice and the host prison

- partners that were experienced at working in prisons
- the deployment of staff to deliver the art form and record learning outcomes
- the importance of securing voluntary participation since effective change is self-initiated
- the selection of prisoners that are receptive to the particular art form
- the ability to create a safe and secure space for prisoners to express themselves.

Key policy messages include:

- the arts can be used as an effective tool to re-engage reluctant learners
- most prisoners have gained the qualification
- many have acquired greater confidence and a more positive self-image
- some have begun to develop pro-social identities which is a vital first step in desistance from crime
- many prison staff became convinced of the value of an approach that has made most participants more positive and co-operative
- many have become more pro-active which may improve the chances of effective resettlement
- there remain some unresolved questions about the sustainability of observed changes given that many prisons selected those that were to take part.

### **Dissemination and Transfer of Innovation**

The PEETA project has a strong fit with current and emerging policy priorities. Chapter Four notes the emerging ET (Employment and Training) 2020 emphasis is on demonstrating a clear pathway to employment through both formal and informal learning and promoting a more integrated approach. The current thrust of EC policy articulated through Europe 2020 dictates that the next programming period will require projects to be conscious of the wider context of reintegration into the labour market and mainstream society.

*Valorisation*, which encapsulates the joint activities of dissemination and exploitation, is a central tenet of Leonardo da Vinci transfer of innovation projects. This has been one of the genuine successes of the programme. PEETA has attracted much interest from the media (TV, radio and print), and policy makers and practitioners. The team have developed international relationships beyond the immediate partnership and engaged senior policy makers in debate in a diverse range of international conferences and events. They have also made effective use of web and social media, project promotion, and training materials.

The external evaluation has also identified a series of effective *Communities of Practice* at the project level, within the artistic community and prison environments. In this sense PEETA was able to achieve one of its key objectives ensuring that lessons and consistency / quality can be assured through observation, moderation and mutual learning. Perhaps most importantly it has been able to re-engage reluctant learners.

The universal transfer of the qualification was always a challenging task and has been characterised by varying degrees of success in each of the partner countries. That said the project team have developed a very transferable concept which is being applied in different ways at the domestic level. In the future there will be greater opportunities in non-custodial settings. This is demonstrated by the inclusion of the SEPE qualification in Edexcel's Work Skills portfolio. The parallel internal evaluation by Exeter identified high retention and success levels.

The PEETA project team have managed to devise and implement a new award in very challenging settings and have an appetite to continue to develop their work at the EU and domestic level.

# Introduction

In April 2012 CRESR at Sheffield Hallam University was appointed as the external evaluator for the Personal Effectiveness and Employability through the Arts (PEETA) project. PEETA is a pan-European project funded by a Transfer of Innovation Award via the EU Lifelong Learning Leonardo Programme and a donation from the Medicor Foundation in Lichtenstein. The Transfer of Innovation Programme allows projects to work with European partners to exchange and adapt innovative vocational education and training materials and methods.

This study complements the work of Marchmont Observatory at the University of Exeter who were appointed as internal evaluators. As project partners they played an instrumental part in the development of the Supporting Employability and Personal Effectiveness qualification (SEPE) with Superact and have brought their knowledge of the Award to the project, contributing with a formative evaluation as the work developed. Alongside the internal evaluation, the project funders require an external evaluation of the programme-wide delivery and lessons. This is the final report of the external evaluation.

## 1.1. The External Evaluation

The over-arching aim of the external evaluation is to assess the extent to which the project has delivered against its objectives, to:

- pilot the delivery of a new UK award in prisons in a range of EU countries and contexts
- trial and refine a training package that will enable partnerships introducing the award to set learning objectives, teach, feed-back and assess employability skills on a consistent basis
- build communities of practice within each partner country and across the partnership as a whole, so that lessons and consistency / quality can be assured through observation, moderation and mutual learning
- research and evaluate effectiveness, incorporating lessons learned into the guidance and training materials developed for a wider audience
- mainstream the qualification, by networking and building relationships at regional and national level, and with a wider EU audience.

## 1.2. Project Overview

SEPE is a new BTEC qualification which is designed to help those who may find accessing traditional routes to employability challenging. It seeks to build confidence and allow participants to gain a meaningful qualification. Whilst not the primary objective it was hoped that participants would develop a passion for learning becoming 'learning receptive' through the unique, holistic delivery of the course. It is innovative partly because it makes a direct link between participation in the arts and the development of the 'soft' skills needed for work.

SEPE has been designed to help learners to gain and retain a job, and then to advance in the workplace through development of the soft skills that employers seek. These include adaptability, a 'can do' attitude and objectivity about strengths and weaknesses. The qualification is being trialled in five prison settings across Europe: Netherlands, Italy, Portugal, Austria and Turkey. In each country there is a project partner responsible for the delivery of the Award in a prison. Superact was the lead partner and responsible for project management and the training of the in-country artists working in each prison. Superact is a UK based not-for-profit arts organisation using creativity to improve the health and wellbeing of people from a wide variety of backgrounds.

## 1.3. Report Structure

The remainder of this report has three main parts:

- a review of the project's context
- a summary of its implementation
- consideration of dissemination lessons and the transfer of innovation.

It ends with a brief assessment of future prospects and succinct conclusions.



# Project Context

## 2.1. Introduction

At the outset it is important to recognise that prison-based interventions such as PEETA are structured by their custodial context. This realisation is very important because prison is a challenging environment in which to deliver employability interventions and conditions can vary enormously. Consequently, understanding the prison context in each of the five settings was an important focus of the external evaluation because this can have a direct bearing on the implementation of the award. This chapter focuses on five key dimensions of the implementation environment:

- the size and growth of the prison population and overcrowding
- the current direction of penal policy
- the importance of rehabilitation and the role of employment
- the role of the arts in the prison system
- the receptiveness of local stakeholders to the idea.

## 2.2. The Prison Population

The size of the prison system in terms of the number of establishments, the prison population and the degree of overcrowding are all important contextual factors (see Table 1). It should be borne in mind that most of the data presented is for 2010 and that project managers in the Netherlands confirmed that the Dutch occupancy level is now nearly 100%.

**Table 1: Prison Systems**

Country	Prison capacity	Prison population	Occupancy level	Number of establishments
Austria	8,868	8,658	98%	27
Portugal	11,619	11,921	105%	49
Netherlands	16,987	15,235	85%	81
Italy	45,647	48,693	147%	225
Turkey	104,650	120,814	110%	458

Source: International Centre for Prison Studies

Table 2 indicates the growth of prison populations over the past decade. It is possible to discern three broad national groups. First, the Netherlands and Portugal have witnessed little change or declining populations over the period. Second, Austria and Italy are characterised by significant and sustained growth. Finally, Turkey has experienced an exceptional growth of its prisoner numbers which has put severe strains on the prison system and prompted widespread concerns amongst human rights groups.

**Table 2: Prison Population Trends, 2001-2010**

Country	Population in 2001	Population in 2010	Change	Imprisonment rate
Austria	6,979	8,658	+ 24%	104
Portugal	13,260	11,613	- 12%	123
Netherlands	15,246	15,235	Little change	87
Italy	55,275	67,961	+ 23%	109
Turkey	55,609	120,814	+ 117%	176

Source: International Centre for Prison Studies

It is in this context that **overcrowding** has become a growing feature of many prison systems, especially those in Italy and Turkey. The evaluation has highlighted a number of consequences of overcrowding for PEETA:

- prisons have become more focussed on **crisis management**
- 'coping' overrides other prison objectives. The prison becomes focussed on the **containment** of prisoners rather than their rehabilitation
- in **Italy** prison overcrowding and the intensification of prison officer workloads has meant that resettlement activities have been curtailed. *'In fact, the overcrowding and lack of personnel for the education activities leads to oversizing of the custodial aspects instead of rehabilitation ones'* (Project Manager). However, the potential adverse effects on the project were minimised by the strong support offered by the Prison Director
- in the **Netherlands** prison education activities have become progressively restricted to inmates that are highly motivated and behave well. *'Safety is what counts most in our prisons'* (Project Manager).

### 2.3. Penal Policy

Those seeking to implement PEETA have also had to contend with a difficult policy environment:

- the recession has led to significant pressure on **prison budgets**. Practitioners are increasingly being asked to 'do more for less'
- in many jurisdictions policy makers are prioritising **'what works'** in terms of reducing re-offending. A 'payment by results' model is, for example, being trialled in several British prisons where service providers are only paid for activities that work to rehabilitate offenders
- more broadly, **public spending cuts** and the **increasing emphasis on punishment** have made arts-based interventions for prisoners politically sensitive.

At the national level:

- increased penalties for minor offences in **Italy** and the introduction of new drug-related offenses have put further pressure on the prison system
- prison regimes in the **Netherlands** have become more severe. Prison education is increasingly reserved for those displaying good behaviour. On the other hand, the Dutch MGW prison modernisation programme has improved efforts designed to help prisoners return to society.

## 2.4. Rehabilitation

The context of prison overcrowding and pressure on prison budgets is indicative of a weakening of rehabilitation ideals:

- in **Italy** rehabilitation remains a central element of prison system but overcrowding and a lack of personnel for prison education dilutes this focus
- the **Dutch** prison system prioritises prisoner re-integration but budget cuts mean that the focus is increasingly on ensuring safety
- in **Austria** there is a growing emphasis on punishment rather than rehabilitation and prison budgets have been cut
- in **Turkey** the exceptional growth of the prison population has given rise to concerns with human rights
- in **Portugal** a lack of funding limits rehabilitative activities.

Nevertheless, all jurisdictions recognise the necessity of preparing inmates for **employment**. However, each has different traditions with regard to the role played by employment in rehabilitative interventions.

- article 15 of L.354 of 1975 stipulates that in **Italy** the main rehabilitative measures should include: work, education, religion, cultural activities, sport, and contacts with outside world and family
- preparing inmates for the labour market is seen as a key component of rehabilitation in the **Netherlands**. There has been a wide array of activities e.g. financial problem solving, finding housing, health care and helping those addicted to drugs. There has been a growing recognition of the role education might play.

## 2.5. Arts and the Justice System

Although they have not been a prominent area of criminal justice policy and practice, the arts have occurred for some time in prisons worldwide. There was, for example, widespread use of the arts in US prisons in the 1970s and the UK in the 1980s. They have tended to flourish during periods when rehabilitation ideals were dominant. The arts have traditionally been viewed as a providing the means to temper the 'pains of imprisonment' rather than as a vehicle for improving employability skills. Furthermore, each of the five countries has different traditions regarding the way in which they have been deployed in custodial settings:

- the implementation of PEETA in **Turkey** drew upon the country's rich folk music tradition. However, the focus on using the arts to develop employability skills was a new departure

- the arts are among the main tools for promoting the rehabilitation of prisoners in **Italy** since the enactment of Article 15 of L.354 of 1975. This focus has grown over time
- the arts have been present in **Dutch** prisons since the 1960s. At present up to 70% of Dutch prisons has a resident art teacher. Nevertheless, the focus on linking the arts with the development of employability skills was new.

The **delivery infrastructure** also varies across the partner jurisdictions. **Turkish** partners were, for example, unable to identify any arts organisations that worked in prisons. Whereas in **Italy** there are several musical groups, theatre companies (even an itinerant one - *La compagnia del carcere di Volterra*) that have emerged in recent years. In contrast many prisons in the **Netherlands** have resident art teachers that are employed by the Ministry of Security and Justice.

## 2.6. Receptiveness to the idea

The use of the arts to help develop the 'soft skills' prisoners need for employment is an innovative feature of PEETA. A key task for the external evaluation has been to investigate the receptiveness of key local stakeholders to this idea and the degree of support offered by host institutions. This has revealed a mixed picture (see Table 3). The indications are that PEETA has found particularly fertile ground in Italy, the Netherlands and Portugal.

**Table 3: Receptiveness to the Innovation**

Country	The idea	Host institution support
Austria	Low: both prison authorities and provider struggled with the idea.	Low: little support from Prison Director and prison officers wanted extra pay for accompanying prisoners to rehearsals.
Portugal	High: receptive to new ideas but a lack of funding and the development of soft skills through the arts was not previously recognised.	High: allocated an exemplar prison for women and Prison Director and officers highly supportive.
Netherlands	High: receptive to new ideas but difficult to deviate from set programmes	Medium: prison staff initially saw project as fun rather than preparation for the labour market.
Italy	High: prison education is important and the arts are recognised as a tool for re-integration.	High: good support from Prison Director and Director of Education but prison officers initially saw it as 'a joke' but subsequently became convinced of its value.
Turkey	Low: scepticism about the value of music as a tool for rehabilitation.	High: strong political support and active involvement of prison education department.

## 2.7. Summary

Table 4 provides a summary of our analysis. This indicates that Portugal and the Netherlands constituted the most propitious environments for the implementation of PEETA. In the former, a falling prison population and renewed rehabilitation ideals were complemented by a high receptiveness to the idea and strong host institution support. Similarly, the Netherlands was characterised by a stable prison population and strong, albeit compromised, commitment to rehabilitation together with a

venerable tradition of using arts in prisons and receptiveness to the idea. In contrast, the Turkish prison system has been put under enormous strain and PEETA was greeted by widespread scepticism but, on the other hand, attracted strong political support.

**Table 4: The Custodial Context of PEETA**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Pressure on the Prison system</b>	<b>Strength of rehabilitation</b>	<b>Receptiveness to the idea</b>	<b>Host institution support</b>
Austria	Medium	Medium	Low	Low
Portugal	Low	High but little funding	High	High
Netherlands	Low	High but compromised	High	Medium
Italy	Medium	High	High	High
Turkey	High	Low	Low	High

# Project Implementation

## 3.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the implementation of the project, critical success factors and general lessons. It examines what has been learnt in relation to the use of the arts highlighting how the project was promoted within the prison and how it could be applied to other contexts. It concludes by considering the impact of the project though this was not the primary focus of this review.

## 3.2. Implementation and Critical Success Factors

A key objective was to trial and refine a training package that would enable partnerships to introduce the award and to set learning objectives, teach, feed-back and assess employability skills on a consistent basis. This objective has been met. Implementation has demonstrated the importance of getting the initial provider training right for the delivery of innovative provision. Most of those consulted felt that the SEPE training that was delivered in the Netherlands and Portugal was very good.

The qualification has been piloted through the transfer of innovation method, which means one country started the project then handed over to the next. The idea is that subsequent countries will learn from the mistakes previously made and so through trial and error a concept emerges that is continually fine-tuned in different settings. This approach has worked well with providers keen to learn from prior experiences. However, it is also clear that the custodial settings differed so greatly that this often dictated how the qualification could be delivered. In addition, providers often had their own ideas about how the innovation would be best realised.

The custodial context of delivery has presented a number of practical challenges. These have included:

- prison authorities have had contradictory expectations of the project. PEETA was often valued for its ability to provide inmates with something to do and thus help maintain order rather than as a route to employment
- it is important to facilitate voluntary participation because effective learning is self-initiated. However, prison authorities often selected those to take part
- those that were selected may not be the best candidates. In Austria individuals were selected as a reward for good behaviour. The project was given the 'most difficult' prisoners in Portugal
- prison staff were frequently sceptical about the value of the arts in the prison system but often became convinced of its value. In Italy prison officers undertook voluntary overtime to allow the activities to be undertaken

- difficulties getting prisoners to and from rehearsals. In Austria prison officers wanted paying for the time spent escorting prisoners to rehearsals
- transfers and movements due to prison overcrowding can disrupt SEPE training. The short duration of SEPE training has been helpful in this respect.

The SEPE certificate appears to have a high degree of credibility with prisoners which may reflect the fact that it provides proof that the individual has developed some of the 'soft' skills needed for work. It is something tangible to take away from the creative process. However, offender motivations for taking part may be more complex. Previous research has shown that some offenders may be attracted to pre-release training provision merely for its ability to occupy their time (Fletcher, 2008). Similarly, participants may be motivated by acquiring the certificate rather than any desire to initiate lasting change. Consequently, this raises questions about the sustainability of observed changes in behaviour. It is important to stress that the internal evaluation has found little evidence that participants were not genuine in their desire to change.

The way in which participants were recruited to PEETA will have important repercussions for key outcomes. Some were selected by the prison authorities whilst others joined voluntarily. As previously noted it is important that any process of change is self-initiated. It is likely that the motivation to change of those that were selected was lower. The internal evaluation has little to say on this particular subject. It is recommended that in future recruitment processes should seek to facilitate voluntary participation.

Nevertheless, implementation has generally gone very well. It has benefitted enormously from the hard work and perseverance of partners who were prepared to 'go the extra mile'. This was exemplified by Promidea (Italy) who delivered 72 hours of training to participants compared to the required 42 hours. Moreover, they continued to mentor some of the former trainees following their release from Sergio Cosmai prison in Calabria.

The evaluation has identified general features of success. These include:

- the active support of the Ministry of Justice, exemplified by the Portuguese pilot
- strong local support from the prison authorities. This was a key defining feature of the Turkish experience
- partners that were experienced at working in prisons
- artists which are receptive to the idea of using the arts as a vehicle to help participants develop work-related 'soft' skills
- the deployment of staff both to deliver the particular art form and record the learning outcomes
- the importance of securing voluntary participation
- working with prisoners that are receptive to the particular art form. The theatre will, for example, not appeal to all
- the ability to create a safe and secure space for prisoners to express themselves. This meant excluding prison officers from rehearsals in Portugal.

### 3.3. General Lessons

Implementation has gone well as evidenced by the following comments:

*“The rehearsals worked very well”.*

*“The whole process went very well...because of the certificate everybody took the whole process a lot more seriously”.*

*“The motivation and interest of the group elements with the theatre project and the certification”.*

One project commented on the positive influence of Superact in engaging them initially and helping to secure the support of the Ministry of Justice.

Working in a prison environment brings unique challenges. In Kocaeli (Turkey) a legislative change meant initial recruitment to the project was affected as some of the learners were given community supervision orders. There were some practical issues that arose around payments for work hours missed by prisoners (Portugal) and prison officer supervision (Austria). In Italy Promidea claimed prisoners were not allowed to practice in their cells and had to rehearse in common areas.

In practice most projects delivered more training hours than anticipated with one doubling rehearsal times. At least three projects (Portugal, Austria and Italy) felt that more time was necessary for effective delivery. Extra time was requested by prisoners in one country, in another more time for rehearsals would have been helpful and one respondent felt more dedicated time for reflection and feedback would have been advantageous. In another country extra sessions were organised to complete the minimum workshop hours necessary for the BTEC certification.

One project claimed they would not do anything differently and would use the same approach again. Another felt they might try a different art form such as group wall painting. In Austria recreating an authentic theatre setting in prison was particularly important. The Dutch project at PL de Ijssel found it easier to split the practitioner roles (musicians, actors, script writers or technicians) with each undertaking a specific task. One respondent suggested they might simplify the project next time. *“Sometimes it was difficult to combine the creative process of making a theatre piece with the work that had to be done for the certificate. We were very ambitious, combining theatre with music, writing the script making the props and costumes ourselves. This was a lot, if not too much, work. Sometimes it was very difficult to organise theatre production in a prison because there are so many strict rules”* (PL de Ijssel).

On balance it appears the pitch and focus of PEETA was about right. However, implementation would have been further improved by keeping things simple, having more time for rehearsals and through better clarification of practitioner roles in each country.

### 3.4. Lessons in the Use of Arts to Engage Prisoners

The arts can act as a springboard to employment for prisoners by improving the individuals' self-esteem, confidence and personal and social skills. Some countries are following this approach. In the UK, for instance, the specification for phase four of the Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS 4) seeks to engage reluctant learners through the arts: 'basic and functional skills in literacy, language and ICT can be taught in many ways, including embedding them in vocational programmes and in the arts, music, cookery and similar programmes'.



For Promidea (Italy) PEETA was their first experience of using the arts to engage prisoners. Previously they had focused on traditional education and on-the-job training with people serving their sentence under community supervision. Their view was *“the use of the arts promotes greater personal involvement of the participants who are pushed into an active role in their reintegration process”*. They claimed music is a ‘universal language’ that prisoners can relate to and participants didn’t need to be particularly accomplished. It was claimed that music is one of the best arts to use. *“We truly believe in the power of the arts to empower people and help them develop skills”* (Promidea).

The Turkish team were also new to this approach but claimed it was transformational. *“It was very interesting to witness the incredible development of the prisoners especially in communication and team working practices”*. They observed that some members of the group were initially quite introverted and quiet. The process helped individuals to work as a team giving them useful skills to assist them in their reintegration into society. *“I think this is the magic of art and especially the music”*.

The Netherlands and Portugal teams were much more experienced in working in a wide range of social contexts including prisons. Pele mentioned the capacity of the arts to develop team working skills. A member of the Dutch team claimed *“I think there is a big future for the arts as a method for learning employability (and other) skills. It is an approach that really fits in the demands for this time”*.

For experienced art practitioners and newcomers alike there was consensus that art is a very effective tool for engaging prisoners.

### **3.5. Promoting the Projects: The Role of the Prisons**

Securing the buy-in of prison staff and authorities from the outset was vital. In the event they played a key role in the success of the PEETA approach though there were quite different experiences within each of the prison regimes.

*“everything worked well because the prison administration was very helpful and facilitative”*

*“sometimes we had difficulties with the Ministry”*

*“the governor was critical first but he became more and more supportive, and now he wants to be an ambassador for the project”*.

*“the prison director supported the project and always tried to find ways to solve difficulties and to help Pele along the project. The guards knew they had to collaborate and to do what was needed for the project”*.

*“Pele was free to create the performance as we wanted....although the privacy had been really important to create and gain the confidence of the group, it should be important to integrate the guards and prison staff in the project and to do that more time would be needed”*.

In Sergio Cosmai in Calabria (Italy) the prison’s educational department played a key role in organising the delivery of the course. *“All the teaching staff were interested and intrigued by the initiative often attending the sessions. This enthusiasm was transferred to the prisoners”*. Similarly in Turkey the prison’s head of education was actively involved. On balance it would appear that initially getting the educational team on board was more straightforward than convincing the prison governors.

Prisons also played a role in the promotion of the final performance with several directors organising invitations for this final event. This is discussed further in the internal evaluation. The host prisons invited their colleagues and staff and appropriate attendees including public bodies such as job centres and the media.

The high level of interest shown in the projects was welcomed by some respondents. Pele cited “*the visibility of the performance among the media*” and “*the invitation to present the show at the Portuguese Parliament*” as positive features. During the final Turkish performance the Kocaeli governor opened proceedings giving an air of formality and an opportunity to celebrate achievements. “*I hope prisoners will be a success in their future lives*”. In an unusual gesture the chief prosecutor presented the SEPE award to someone he had previously sentenced. The engagement of various tiers of authority involved including the Ministry, the Governorship and public training centres was quite an achievement too. “*Some [institutions] can be resistant, some want to lead the project but yesterday [after the performance] their mind set completely changed*”. The prison administration disseminated the event, project and course via the internal Ministry of Justice website and several local Turkish papers and their websites allocated a page to PEETA<sup>1</sup>.

The key role played by the prison administrations in the final performances reflects how the projects succeeded in gaining their confidence and support.

### **3.6. Promoting the PEETA approach, other settings and art forms**

All reported that the PEETA approach could work in non-custodial settings with other marginalised groups including those in deprived neighbourhoods, the homeless, young people at risk of offending, migrants, or people on income support. Both Italian and Portuguese partners recognised the project’s potential with young people including those in community centres, institutions and shelters or young asylum seekers. Though it was claimed bureaucratic and practical challenges had hindered progress in Italy.

The Dutch team have applied for funding to work with other groups and are proactively discussing the approach with art colleges and educators, working to effect change through those who work with and engage others. “*We intend to make this an important development*”. The Turkish team could see the PEETA approach working well with migrants and other disadvantaged socio-economic groups including people with disabilities, Romany people, or people with no or low educational attainment. Like the Dutch team they perceive this requires tailored vocational educational provision and effective local authority co-operation.

### **3.7. Impact**

CRESR has taken a qualitative approach to conducting the external evaluation. Qualitative methods are best suited to providing an in-depth understanding of the views, experiences and behaviours of key stakeholders as required by this study. However, they are not appropriate for estimating the scale of project impacts. Nevertheless, the research has highlighted several direct and indirect impacts of the project. In summary the key messages include:

- the arts can re-engage reluctant learners
- most prisoners have gained the SEPE qualification

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.kocaeligazete.com/haber/gundem/19175/mahkumlara-ozel-egitim.html>  
<http://www.duyarlikapi.com/haber-592-ab-deneticilerden-ceza-infaz-kurumuna-tam-not.html>

- many have gained greater confidence and a more positive self-image
- some may have developed pro-social identities which are a necessary first step in desistance from crime
- many prison staff have become convinced of the value of an approach that has made most participants more positive and co-operative
- many prisoners have become more pro-active which may improve their chances of effective resettlement.

First and most foremost, implementation has validated the approach piloted by the PEETA project. All felt that the project had underlined the power of the arts to re-engage individuals and help them to become 'learning receptive'. Many prisoners have had negative experiences of education and are often alienated from classroom-based approaches to learning. In the UK, for example, 42% of prisoners have been excluded from school and 37% have a reading level below that expected of an 11 year old (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002). A key virtue of PEETA is that the accent on the arts and a participative approach means that it has been an enjoyable experience which has not carried the stigma of formal learning.

It is our understanding that the majority of those taking part had not previously been involved in the arts. The indications are that prisoners will have derived the strongest benefits where the provider has been able to foster a genuinely participative approach. This was a feature of implementation in Portugal, Italy and the Netherlands. In contrast, the more 'top-down' directive nature of course delivery in Austria and Turkey raises questions about the scale and sustainability of impacts in these countries.

Second, most participants have, with the exception of those in Austria, been able to gain the SEPE certificate. Fifty seven of the seventy prisoners taking part in the five prisons gained the award. This is vital because the certificate is the tangible result of the creative process employed by PEETA. To gain the award trainees must meet four learning outcomes:

1. Use effective communication skills
2. Make a positive contribution within a team
3. Demonstrate employability skills in a group project
4. Reflect on personal effectiveness skills and qualities for employability developed in a group project.

It is clear that many prisoners have valued the acquisition of the SEPE certificate, which will be the first qualification gained by many. A participant in the Netherlands pilot reported: *'I had never been able to work with others before but this has taught me to listen and work together, not just follow my own ideas'* (SEPE Evaluation). The research was unable to establish what, if any, currency the qualification will have in the labour markets of the host countries. It is also not possible in a study like this to measure the sustainability of improvements in employability skills. This is best captured in a longitudinal study. Nevertheless, there are indications that for some initial improvements in employability skills might have a long-term effect. The internal evaluation has, for example, shown that some have gained employment following their release from prison.

Third, many participants have developed greater confidence and a more positive self-image through acquiring the certificate. It is vital that ex-prisoners have confidence in their ability to secure work in the labour market as well as the 'soft'

skills required to obtain it. Furthermore, desistance research has often highlighted the importance of offenders developing a more positive self-image and pro-social identities as a key step in the process. Consequently, participation in the project may constitute an important first step in breaking the cycle of re-offending. However, further research would be required to shed more light on this particular issue.

Fourth, participation has secured a number of wider benefits. Many of those consulted reported that contact with the project had made many more positive and co-operative with prison staff. It is salient to note that much of the initial scepticism expressed by prison officers was overcome through contact with PEETA. It should also be borne in mind that rapidly rising prison populations and overcrowding have meant that prison authorities have increasingly prioritised containment and security. In contrast, there was some evidence that a few had become less docile and more challenging of prison authority. This may stem from the freedom that artistic expression allows coupled with the confidence gained through the process.

Finally, some prisoners have become more confident and pro-active through participating in the arts. This will bolster their ability to make use of other forms of resettlement support which may be necessary before their release into the community. This may take various forms including vocational training, help with drug / alcohol misuse and accommodation. Furthermore, rising prison populations and falling prison budgets have often meant that the caseloads of front-line prison-based staff have increased significantly in recent years. There is a growing tendency to focus support on those most pro-active. It is now more important than ever that prisoners have the confidence and skills to seek out other forms of support to build upon any improvement instigated by PEETA both in the custodial context and following their release.

### **3.8. Summary**

There are several points to note about the implementation of PEETA:

- project team members generally felt the project went well and some were pleasantly surprised by the level of interest shown
- getting the relationship right from the outset with the Ministry and prison administration is a key success factor. This should ideally involve on-going dialogue to iron out any practical difficulties that may emerge. The active involvement of some in the final performances has demonstrated their commitment to the project
- SEPE has shown that the arts can re-engage reluctant learners. As well as gaining the SEPE qualification participants have experienced improvements in confidence and are more pro-active. This may improve their chances of effective resettlement
- there are some unresolved questions about offender motivations and the sustainability of changes given that many prisons selected those that were to take part
- the process may be improved by increasing the number of training hours
- PEETA can be delivered in different settings with young people and other marginalised groups.

# Policy Lessons and Transfer of Innovation

## 4.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the transfer of innovation within the PEETA project. It starts with an assessment of the degree of fit with current and emerging EC policies before considering the extent to which the project has managed to build a *community of practice*. The focus then switches to examining the nature and depth of dissemination and exploitation activity (known as *valorisation*). It concludes by considering the challenges and opportunities of mainstreaming the approach and extent to which innovation was transferred across the partnership and beyond.

## 4.2. Alignment with the EC Policy Context

The general objectives of the EC Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) include a desire to create more and better jobs and promote greater social cohesion<sup>2</sup>. It aims to achieve this by fostering interchange, cooperation and mobility between education and training systems. There are several more detailed objectives that are particularly pertinent. They include an aspiration to: help improve the quality, attractiveness and accessibility of lifelong learning opportunities; reinforce its contribution to social cohesion; help promote creativity and employability; and to contribute to increased participation by people of all ages (including disadvantaged groups). The programme also encourages the best use of results, innovative products and processes and the exchange of good practice in the fields covered by the LLP, in order to improve the quality of education and training.

The overarching priority of the LLP is to reinforce the contribution of education and training to Europe's 2020 Strategy. The intention is that value will be created by empowering people in inclusive societies and ensuring that citizens can access lifelong learning and up-skilling throughout their lives. Education and training plays a key role in achieving the priorities set out in the Strategy. 'Flagship' initiatives include an agenda for new skills and jobs. The aim is to make it easier for people to get the right skills and competences and to be able to use them in work; to increase the chances of young people of finding a job; and improve the quality and attractiveness of education and training systems.

Following on from Europe 2020 a strategic framework for European cooperation in Education and Training (ET 2020) was adopted in May 2009. One of the aims of the framework is to make lifelong learning a reality by implementing strategies, developing qualifications frameworks and measures to enable more flexible learning

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<sup>2</sup> See Lifelong Learning Programme, General Call For Proposals 2011-2013, Strategic Priorities 2013

pathways. ET 2020 also seeks to improve the quality and efficiency of education and training enabling all learners to acquire basic skills and competences needed, ensuring high quality teaching and teacher training at all levels of education and training, improving its attractiveness and efficiency. ET 2020 also aims to address educational disadvantage through high quality early education, more targeted support and inclusive education. Finally, the intention is to enhance creativity and innovation at all levels of education and training promoting the acquisition of key competences and by establishing partnerships with the wider world, in particular business, to make education and training institutions more open and relevant to the needs of the labour market and society at large.

Analysis of Europe 2020<sup>3</sup> reveals a high degree of validation of non-formal and informal learning providing pathways for up-skilling and the reintegration of people to the labour market. The importance of monitoring groups 'at risk' is recognised as well as the integration of guidance services to promote labour market mobility and the provision of employment pathways and partnerships between providers, learners and local communities. In essence it is proposing a more integrated approach to lifelong learning and employability.

The PEETA approach fits the existing and emerging EC LLP objectives very well. Employability skills remain an important component, as well as ensuring clear and flexible learning pathways and making links with employers and other stakeholders.

### 4.3. Building a Community of Practice

A key aim of the evaluation has been to assess the degree to which the PEETA project has managed to build *communities of practice* within each partner country and across the pan-European partnership. The term community of practice is often used to describe collaborative networks for those involved in service delivery. Commentators<sup>4</sup> highlight how they typically involve people who share the same interests or enact the same experiences coming together to form communities.

Project partners have succeeded in creating and nurturing several communities of practice:

- at the **programme** level where Superact has worked with the University of Exeter and Edexcel to develop the qualification and engage suitable partners to test the concept. Partners have attended multilateral meetings<sup>5</sup> to share experiences and build on evidence collected and agree collective actions. Subsequently policy makers and practitioners have examined the power of the arts in harnessing employability as well as the practical implications, barriers and opportunities for mainstreaming the concept. The final conference<sup>6</sup> in Rotterdam engaged similar projects to share ideas from around the world including the Global Youth in Prison Movement, Shakespeare Behind Bars (USA) and the Educational Shakespeare Company (Northern Ireland)
- at the **project** level where partners have engaged practitioners including the judiciary, training organisations and job centres. The Turkish project required the active engagement of the regional government and their National Training Centre. The Dutch project is working closely with its Ministry of Security and

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<sup>3</sup> See "A new impetus for European cooperation in Vocational Education and Training to support the Europe 2020 strategy" Brussels, 9.6.2010, COM(2010) 296 final

<sup>4</sup> See Etienne Wenger (1998) *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

<sup>5</sup> December 2010, January and May 2011 and May 2012.

<sup>6</sup> Las Palmas, Rotterdam, September 27-29, 2012



Justice; and in Italy the job centres were involved in complementary pre-release activity

- within the **artistic** community who received training<sup>7</sup> in assessment. They felt it gave them another way of conveying the arts to new audiences and for the prisoners offered a form of escapism<sup>8</sup>. Cursley (op cit) noted the considerable effort that went into the creative process and the respective content and productions. Artists needed to cope with challenges as they arose such as differing abilities and balancing the assessment, artistic and feedback processes
- within **prisons** where the project required the constructive engagement of the prison governors and officers, other staff (educational social workers and psychologists), artists and the participants themselves. Cursley (op cit, section 1.3) explores the range of stakeholder rationales for engaging in the project. These range from containment and reducing aggression to prisoner self-development and the positive image of the prison.

#### 4.4. Dissemination and Exploitation

EC guidance<sup>9</sup> for Lifelong Learning Projects notes that “dissemination and exploitation of your project and its results are very important as they determine the extent to which your results reach their intended audience and are subsequently utilised”. The Commission places considerable emphasis on maximising a project’s impact ensuring activities are disseminated as widely and effectively as possible. Valorisation is defined as the joint activities of dissemination and exploitation. It refers to exploiting a project’s results by “transferring them to different contexts, integrating them in a sustainable way and using them actively in systems and practices at local, regional, national and European levels” (op cit, p20).

The project has planned and executed a number of dissemination and exploitation activities ensuring that the results have had an impact beyond the immediate consortium. These are illustrated in the diagram overleaf. Valorisation of the PEETA has occurred within five major components.

First, Superact has made extensive use of social media to keep interested parties informed of project milestones and achievements. It has also organised multi-lateral meetings and promoted the project to wider audiences through a website and other materials including a project information leaflet. It has developed a community of practice to assess the achievements and learning outcomes of beneficiaries across the partnership countries.

Second, there is evidence of fairly extensive project promotion through each of the partners. The various artistic genres deployed are very conducive to film and DVD format. The partners attended many national conferences promoting their experiences and involvement in the project. For instance PELE has held meetings with officials from social security, the Gulbenkian Foundation and the Director General of Prison Services. PELE staff have given masters and post graduate lectures and attended conferences around the theme of social intervention including one at the Católica University in Oporto. This report provides impartial evidence of the project’s impact complementing the longitudinal internal evaluation undertaken

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7 Training was held in Amsterdam (January, 2011), Portugal (September, 2011) and Rotterdam (September, 2012)

8 A detailed analysis of the use of the training is provided by Jo Cursley (2012) PEETA Project Internal Evaluation of Five European SEPE Pilots University of Exeter: Marchmont Observatory, Sections 1.2, 1.3, 1.3.1 and 1.4.4

9 Lifelong Learning Programme, Project Handbook, 2007, EC DG5

by the University of Exeter which involved an extensive qualitative interview programme.

Third, the PEETA partners have made a conscious effort to engage with policy makers and officials. This has occurred at both the project and programme level and there is generally a high level of awareness of PEETA activities in the respective Ministry of Justice's, and within MEPs and politicians. The most high profile political involvement has been the engagement by PELE of the Portuguese President<sup>10</sup> and the project final performance was held at the Portuguese Parliament.

A key outcome from the project is the development and accreditation of the BTEC SEPE qualification in 2010. The involvement of Edexcel as a partner means the qualification has some 'currency' ensuring there will be sustained impact beyond the project's lifetime. To date over 6,000 qualifications have been achieved in the UK. Outwith PEETA the qualification has been particularly effective with young people. Furthermore the training of artists and assessors means the project will have some legacy where the artists are deployed or resident. Some of the artists were from non-partner member states such as Belgium and Greece.

The final conference involved some very high profile experts including the key note speaker Curt Tofteland creator of Shakespeare Behind Bars<sup>11</sup>. The Leonardo da Vinci progress reports list the wide number of international conferences attended to disseminate the PEETA project. They include the Future of Education in Europe conference in Florence, the European Prison Education Association Annual Conference, the Reaching out Valorisation Grundtvig Event and various arts, music and justice conferences including the World Forum on Music in October 2011 in Tallinn. Superact has helped disseminate its work with the Lifelong Learning Programme Technical Assistance Unit (ecorys)<sup>12</sup>.

Fourth, the media coverage of this project has surpassed expectations. The subject matter has attracted interest from national TV radio and channels in Portugal and Austria, local and national press and magazines. The overall tenor of the coverage has been positive highlighting the transformational effects that the arts can have on prisoners' lives.

The final project performances have attracted large audiences and opened up the prison systems to prisoner families, the public and officials. The significance of the final performance is discussed in more depth by the University of Exeter evaluation cited earlier (In Section 3.1.1).

Finally the project has generated wider interest. Links have been made with other EU countries including Eire, Northern Ireland, Belgium and Greece and global arts organisations operating outside the EU such as Youth in Prisons, Shakespeare Behind Bars (USA) and the Educational Shakespeare Company (NI). Several prison officials from non PEETA prisons were also present at the event. HMP Highpoint in Norfolk (UK) has requested a meeting with Superact to discuss using SEPE to accredit its courses. These informal links raise the possibility of some interesting post project collaborations and co-operation both within and outside the EU and in developing countries.

The project has benefited enormously from the active engagement of the artistic community which has meant that project and policy messages have been conveyed

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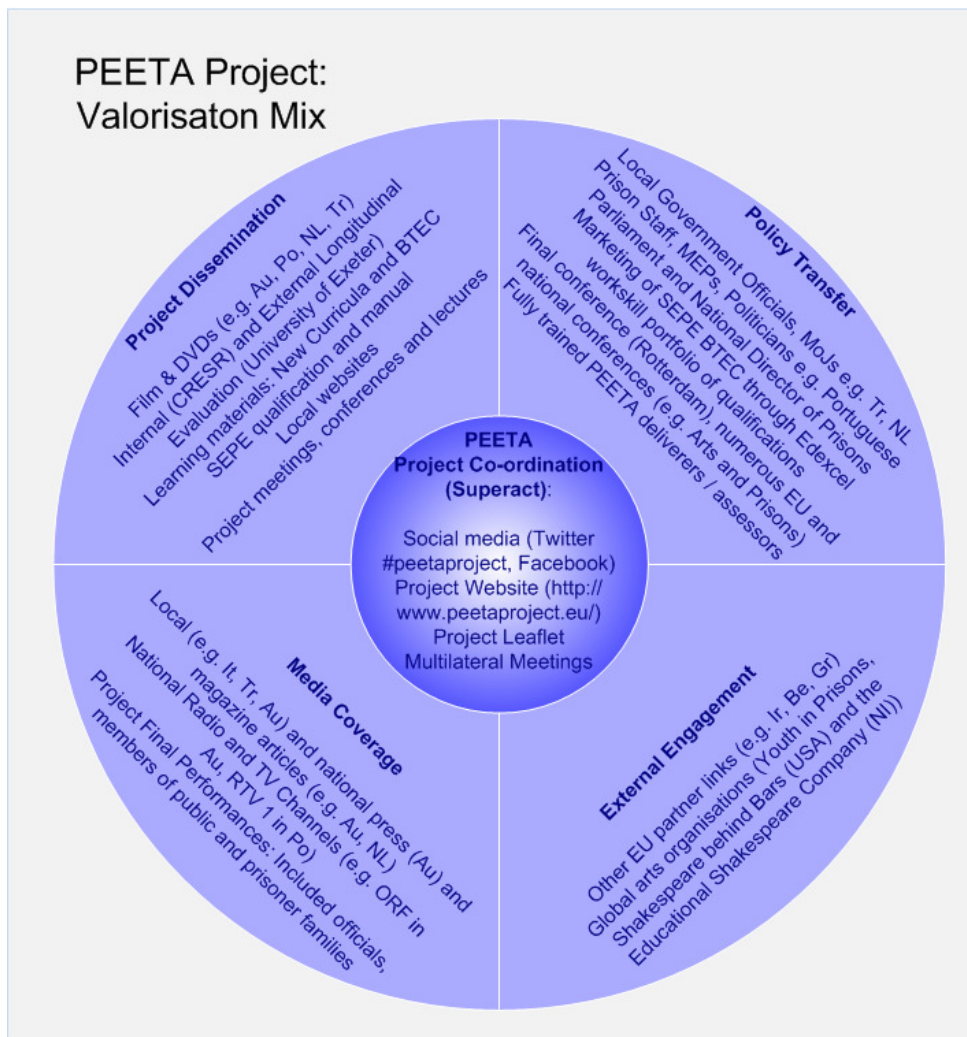
<sup>10</sup> Assunção Esteves President of the Assembly of the Republic

<sup>11</sup> See <http://www.shakespearebehindbars.org>

<sup>12</sup> See <http://lpukecorys.com/2012/07/18/a-celebration-of-achievements/>



in a captivating and stimulating way making good use of various dissemination techniques.



#### 4.5. Mainstreaming: Challenges and Opportunities

A key objective was to mainstream the SEPE qualification, through networking and building relationships at regional, national level and EU level. Mainstreaming can be described as a conscious and planned process of transferring the successful results of programmes and initiatives to appropriate decision-makers in regulated local, regional, national or European systems. In terms of networking and building relationships the previous section has highlighted that the project can demonstrate a range of credible links with senior policy officers and international practitioners.

The qualification has been transferred much more easily where Edexcel has a presence. The company is also growing its presence in Asian countries, Turkey and Brazil. It has also been used in non-prison settings, over 6,000 qualifications have been achieved in many schools, further education bodies and work based learning providers across the UK. Wholesale EU wide mainstreaming of the qualification however is not yet a reality. Some governments are simply not used to the accreditation of soft skills and others have much more state control and regulation over the provision and recognition of qualifications. In Italy the state awards qualifications, only a very few of which are offered outside this structure. “*Legally SEPE has no value*” the project lead claimed, though prisoners can put it on their CV and for an employer it’s arguably a material consideration. Promidea have continued

their work through funding from the province and they are undertaking further activities with prisoners and their families through job centres.

PELE are in discussion with the Portuguese authorities to embed SEPE within the National System of Qualifications. The Turkish and Italian partners have found it more difficult to mainstream SEPE though in Italy strong links have been forged with the Job Centre network in order to prepare prisoners for release. Cursley (op cit, section 4.3.3) notes that the Turkish partner would like a more detailed manual to allow SEPE to be more widely delivered. Edexcel has a stronger presence in the Netherlands and involvement of an individual who drafts the Dutch arts in prisons policy augurs well. We understand that discussions are on-going with the Ministry about use of SEPE in prisons. It is salient to note that senior officials and policy makers were present at the final conference in Rotterdam and part funded the event. Superact are also currently in discussions with Dutch partners about creating a charitable foundation to deliver SEPE in the Netherlands.

It would appear that whilst transferring the qualification universally is challenging the concept is very transferable. The opportunities in some quarters are perhaps greater than originally anticipated.

#### **4.6. How has innovation been transferred across the partnership?**

The aim of Leonardo da Vinci Multilateral "Transfer of Innovation" projects is to *"improve the quality and attractiveness of Vocational Education and Training (VET) in the participating countries"*<sup>13</sup>. It aims to do this by *"transferring existing innovations to new legal, systemic, sector, linguistic, socio-cultural and geographic environments through working with transnational partners"* (op cit).

The original rationale for the project was the high levels and costs of recidivism within justice systems within the EC at time when economic crisis was putting public expenditure under severe pressure. The original project application noted the insidious effect that low skills and worklessness have on offenders seeking to lead crime-free lives in the UK<sup>14</sup>.

Building on an earlier EQUAL project PEETA has sought to use arts in the new way by enabling offenders to develop valuable skills by transferring a new award into new contexts. PEETA develops and assesses offenders' soft skills through a process of goal setting, participation in Arts projects, observation, feedback and reflection. The project has successfully trialled the award in five EU countries. It has also developed and delivered training packages for staff introducing the award into new settings, developing communities of practice capable of making robust and consistent judgements on the achievements and learning outcomes of beneficiaries across the partnership countries.

PEETA has been mapped onto the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and integrated into the Edexcel Work Skills suite of flexible qualifications designed to enrich the curriculum and equip learners with valuable skills. Perhaps most importantly it has been able to re-engage reluctant learners making them more learning receptive.

Following the training, partners have been able to record and analyse adaptations and the effectiveness of the award in new contexts; build relationships with awarding

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13 LLP Guide 2013, Part II b, Explanations by Action

14 Reducing Re-offending by Skills and Employment - Next Steps, P 6

bodies, policy makers and ministries; and spread and try to mainstream the use of the Award within partners' countries.

The testing of the qualification has generally worked well but as noted earlier the wholesale integration into EC training systems is more challenging, though the wide currency the qualification has in different settings means it has significant potential. The drop-out rate was low. Of the 74 prisoners who started the course only four dropped out. Only Austria failed to collect sufficient evidence for its learners meaning 57 of the 58 participants who were entered for the award were awarded it. In other words the pilot demonstrated high retention and award levels.

#### 4.7. Policy messages

There are a number of policy messages that have emerged from the evaluation of the PEETA project. The main ones include:

- the transition to a service economy has made the attainment of 'soft skills' increasingly important in the contemporary labour market
- the idea that participation in the arts can help socially excluded groups to develop 'soft skills' is innovative and challenging for many working with prisoners
- since effective learning is self-initiated the approach will not work with those that have little real interest in changing their lives. Consequently, recruitment is best targeted at securing the voluntary participation of prisoners
- a context of rising prison populations and overcrowding makes it more difficult to work in prisons. However, the high financial and social cost of re-offending is making policy makers more receptive to innovative ways of facilitating the effective resettlement of prisoners
- the wider adoption of the approach in the criminal justice system will be dependent upon the extent to which it is seen as an effective means of facilitating the rehabilitation and resettlement of prisoners. *'It is not about art'* (Dutch partner). This means that providers need to engage with the lexicon of the prison system
- PEETA may also help to give the artistic community a new role and purpose following public spending cuts made in the wake of the economic crisis
- SEPE is best conceived as an important first step on the journey towards rehabilitation. It is vital that the momentum for individual change initiated by the programme is built upon. This means that provision should be integrated with other pre-release support e.g. vocational training, help with drug/alcohol addiction, help with finding somewhere to live etc
- it was originally envisaged that prisoners would undertake SEPE just prior to release. However, it could also be delivered to those just entering the prison system to make them more pro-active and receptive to other forms of pre-release assistance
- PEETA can be used in non-custodial contexts and readily tailored to help other socially excluded groups such as the long-term unemployed, immigrants, drug users, young people at risk of offending etc.

#### 4.8. Future Plans

There is a general desire amongst the partners to work together on future Lifelong Learning collaborations. The forthcoming 2014-2020 programmes provide a good

opportunity to respond to the ambitious objectives set by EU 2020 around education, employability and social inclusion.

The concept could be transferred to others: trainers, academics, politicians through peer group mentoring or encouraging judiciaries across Europe. Whilst the project consortium has gathered good evidence and inspired people, project based funding can make it difficult to embed SEPE as part of mainstream activity. The consortium has the capability and credibility to develop and transfer innovative vocational training approaches.

Partners have stressed that there are several elements they would like to incorporate into any new joint work. The first is to apply the SEPE qualification and concept to new groups. The Austrian team for instance are currently working with Turkish and Kurdish refugees. The second is to continue promoting SEPE to other prisons and within prison regimes despite the restrictions on funding. The consortium recognises that demonstrating value for money and long-term impacts are important considerations in conveying the benefits of SEPE. Finally, it is recognised that continuing support for offender transitions and resettlement is crucial for their effective reintegration into society.

Partners are taking forward SEPE learning in their own countries too. In the UK Superact is currently working on a proposal to a multi-agency programme for the National Offender Management Service in the UK (South West Region) to deliver training, work experience, and job creation or education placement. They are also looking to develop a charitable foundation with Dutch partners to deliver the SEPE qualification. The Dutch team are keen to take deliver SEPE more widely across their prison system but recognise that the next steps must involve employers. They are looking to integrate the programme into art academies too. They stressed that *“the key to convincing colleagues is showing that it can improve employability and aid prisoner re-integration”*.

Some feel that dissemination tools (a book in Portugal, DVDs in every country) is the best way to disseminate good practice and use the project as a foundation for future activity. Other countries are working through partner agencies such as job centres in Italy or public training centres in Turkey to promote the SEPE concept.

The focus on employment and inclusive growth within the Europe 2020 agenda outlined at the start of this chapter continues to provide a strong basis for further work. This will require partners to think about offender resettlement and the engagement of 'at risk' groups within the wider context of reintegration into the labour market and society. This will necessitate forging new alliances with health, labour market professionals and proactive employers.

#### **4.9. Summary**

In terms of dissemination and transfer of innovation, the PEETA project has:

- a strong fit with current and emerging policy priorities. ET (2020) aims to make lifelong learning a reality by enabling all learners to acquire basic skills and competences needed for work. Demonstrating a clear pathway to employment and a more integrated approach is important
- built a number of communities of practice at the project level and within the artistic community and prison environments
- resulted in a high level of interest from the media, policy makers, practitioners and government officials

- found the universal transfer of the qualification a challenging task but devised a very transferable concept with a myriad of further opportunities in new settings or with different groups
- demonstrated, where sufficient evidence is captured, high retention and success levels and has managed to devise and implement a new award in challenging settings
- identified some key policy messages for contemporary European labour markets and the effective rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners into society
- the potential to continue to develop at the EU and domestic level. Europe 2020 dictates that this will need to be in the context of wider context of reintegration into the labour market and society.

## Concluding Observations

The PEETA project has largely achieved what it set out to do and in some respects has exceeded expectations. This is impressive given the backdrop of public expenditure cuts and the weakening of rehabilitation ideals in many jurisdictions where the project was piloted. The first real achievement was the development of a new qualification and its subsequent piloting in several very different and often difficult contexts. The qualification has been trialled, refined and applied consistently. A series of communities of practice have also been developed promoting mutual learning at various levels within and far beyond the prisons walls.

The PEETA project team has reflected on key lessons and considered the implications for a wider audience. This is perhaps best illustrated through the final conference which was able to draw on a wide range of influential international policy makers and practitioners. The involvement of Marchmont Observatory at the University of Exeter throughout has given some credibility to the efficacy and applicability of the qualification and its implementation. The internal evaluation offers deep insights into the experience of participants and practitioners within the prison setting. It makes a valuable contribution to understanding the potential role of arts in prisons and some of the practical considerations.

The qualification has been applied to new settings and offers prison regimes a new 'employability' dimension to arts provision. This study has not sought to assess the economic impact or direct effects on recidivism but the signs are that learners have benefited in a number of ways considerably enhancing their life prospects. The future European landscape articulated through Europe 2020 provides scope to further develop employability initiatives of this kind particularly where they promote a highly integrated approach. This bodes well for project partners who are keen to justify the returns for society by investing in the futures of those on the margins of the labour market.

# Sheffield Hallam University

*An evaluation of the Personal Effectiveness and Employability Through the Arts project*

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