

The Norwegian educational prison system

Kjetil Stavø Høvig

County Governor of Vestland, Norway



Statsforvaltaren i Vestland

County Governor of Vestland



25.01.2021



The Norwegian educational prison system

- The Norwegian education act and the right to education
- Prison structure/prison population
- The import model



Some facts about prison education in Norway

- The Norwegian Education Act guarantees prisoners the same access to education as other citizens and residents.
- This also applies to adults.



Some facts about the prison population in Norway

- 58 prisons
- 2 institutions for juveniles (up to 18 years)
- Prison capacity: 3600
- Students: 1400
- 420 teachers



Some facts about the prison population in Norway

- About half of the students in Norwegian prisons is doing upper secondary schooling.
 - General studies.
 - Vocational programmes.



Who are the students at the prison schools?

- Research done at the University of Bergen.
- Prisoners have less education than the general population.
- Reading and writing difficulties (30 %).
- Difficult upbringing, weak connection to working life, poor finances, substance problems etc.



Who is responsible for education in prison? – The import model

- Same access to social services as other citizens.
- All non-penal functions are placed with bodies outside the prison.
- Aim: Normalization and openness in an otherwise closed system.
- Should ensure that other authorities than the correctional services are being held accountable and take responsibility for the re-integration of prisoners into society.



Who is responsible for education in prison? – The import model

- Organization:
 - The school authorities are responsible for prison education.
 - The teaching is organized and carried out by an ordinary upper secondary school.
 - The prison school operates as a “branch” of the main school.



Who is responsible for education in prison? – The import model

- Prison education is an earmarked state measure.
- All Norwegian prisons currently have established educational programmes at the mandatory and upper secondary levels.
- In constant development since 1969.
- Still challenges – ict and fear of security breaches.