Eliminating Language Barriers in European Prisons Through Open and Distance Education Technology

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Abstract

Project ELBEP (Eliminating Language Barriers in European Prisons Through Open and Distance Education Technology) was a multilateral project funded by European Union (EU) Lifelong Learning, Grundtvig (Adult Education) Programme between December 2007-November 2009. The main rationale of the project has been to overcome the language/communication problems between prison staff and foreign inmates at European prisons utilizing online language teaching programs developed for the purposes of the project. The languages were Russian, Polish, Spanish, Greek and Turkish since statistics indicate that foreign prisoners speaking these native languages compose important percentages in European prisons. The choice of e-Learning as the main approach of the project, provided ICT-based content, pedagogy, and service as a lifelong learning opportunity. The short and long-term objectives of ELBEP have been in conformity with the LLP objectives of using lifelong learning for social cohesion and intercultural dialogue. In this paper the aim is to share good practices and discuss the sustainability of the project for other vocational groups across Europe, with an eye to the project outcomes. As a transnational project composed of partners from eight different countries, ELBEP has lessons to be derived for multilateral cooperation. Besides, the language education foreseen in ELBEP may promote personal fulfillment via developing language skills and vocational competences of different professions in the long term.