Creative methods to improve life skills and tackle violent extremism: case study from the Netherlands and Kenya

*Raoul Nolen, director Young in Prison*
*Sami Gathii, director YADEN*
*Jaap van der Spek, project leader Young in Prison*
Why Young in Prison?
Vision Young in Prison

VISION

- Young in Prison envisions a world in which children and youth in conflict with the law get a fair chance to realise their potential.
- We believe that creativity liberates the potential of every child in conflict with the law to contribute positively to society.
- Young in Prison has the necessary expertise to support youth and professionals working in the field of youth in conflict with the law.
Ideological / pedagogical foundation

1. **Restorative justice**: how to ‘cure’ what went wrong

2. **Desistance theory**: what makes offenders desist?

3. **Self-determination theory**: under what conditions does one feel confident to keep on desisting

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**COMPETENCIES**
- COPOSO-based workshop in which youths learn important life-skills.
- The workshop themes often important questions of life - stimulate personal development.

**AUTONOMY**
- Creative and sports workshops that stimulate agency.
- Working towards artistic end products and presentations.
- The youth participate in the design of COPOSO cycle.
- In the Youthlab youngsters learn how to work as consultants in the juvenile justice sector. Their experiences and insights are valuable.

**CONNECTEDNESS**
- Inspiring YIP workshop trainers who work from a horizontal and equal relationship.
- YIP mentors who are there for the youths and do not belong to the official framework or system.
- A YIP buddy who, depending on his/her background, can offer understanding and perspective.

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The goal

Young in Prison strives to rehabilitate young ex-offenders through secondary desistance: a long-term and intrinsic motivation to reject criminal behavior.

This is achieved by

Encouraging, inspiring or fueling the intrinsic motivation. For this purpose youngsters need to be provided with three basic needs – the self-determination theory.
Youthlab
Capacitating young (ex-) offenders to advocate for better policies
Volunteer mentors support youth in reaching their personal goals after detention

Pre-release
Youths are convicted and send to youth prison

Post-Release
Creative workshops through which youth work on the development of life-skills (COPOSO)
Creative methods: Why?

Purpose of Education (G. Biesta)

Qualifying
- Job training
- Skills training
- Life Skill training

Socialising
- Norms and values
- Culture and traditions
- Socio-emotional

Subjectification
- Becoming a person
- Independent thinking/acting

Description:
- **Qualifying** includes Job training, Skills training, and Life Skill training.
- **Socialising** encompasses Norms and values, Culture and traditions, and Socio-emotional.
- **Subjectification** involves Becoming a person and Independent thinking/acting.
Trend:

1. Socializing and subjectification skills of youth in prison lack behind
2. Treatment in prison focus on socio-emotional skills and qualifying skills

Creativity and Subjectification

*according to Peer van der Helm*

1. Creativity stimulates making own choices
2. Creativity makes one feel unique
3. Creativity stimulates intrinsic motivation

Conditions:

1. Element of choice is central (free participation and limited instructions from teachers)
2. Art workshop should have a meaningful content
3. Art discipline should be of interest to youth: urban arts vs ballet.
COPOSO stands for: contributing positively to society and is a practice based (co-created) methodology that allows (1) Civil Society Organisations, (2) Prison Staff and/or (3) workshop facilitators to systematically contribute to the positive reintegration of youth after detention by making use of three ‘instruments’

1. Using inspiring creative and/or sportive role-models: ability to establish contact
2. A positive approach: focus on qualities
3. Training participants in so called Life-skills

Ideally before and after release.
1. **Using inspiring creative and/or sportive role-models**

Professional songwriting & video artists did two series of workshops, making a professional song text and a professional videoclip.

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2. **a positive approach**

   a. Our facilitators have no knowledge of the offense, nor bears any knowledge of any given diagnoses, etc. etc.
   
   b. Everyone did something to contribute to the process, which added up to a full presentation & discussion with prison staff

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3. **Training participants in so called Life-skills**

   a. Their workshops were programmed not only to work towards the songtext, video and presentation
   
   b. But also to train the participants in ‘Communicating effectively’
   
   c. Their feedback, tips and compliments focussed on these life-skill

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*Role-models are experts in making contact with youth*

*They remain semi-outsiders*

*Coached and trained by YiP NL to program their workshop through standardized forms etc., organizing their workshop and feedback*
3. Training participants in so-called Life-skills

a. Their workshops were programmed not only to work towards the songtext, video and presentation.

b. But also to train the participants in ‘Communicating effectively’.

c. Their feedback, tips and compliments focused on these life-skills.
**COPOSO-**

*De-radicalising youth in Netherlands*

- in conjunction with the Dutch Juvenile Detention Teylingereind and the municipality of Amsterdam
- Teach ethical entrepreneurial skills and not criminal entrepreneurial skills.
- The topics empathy and negotiation formed input for a drama workshop that culminated in a show.
- Most of the learning took place during the rehearsals and during the process of creating the performance