



2.4.5 TRAINING MODULES

for prison inmates

Partner: Club Magic & INDEPCIE SCA



Module's title: **Communication**



Including **Chess As a Re-education Up-Skilling** tool

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1- SUBJECT AND SCOPE

1.1 Main subject

The main subject of the module is the “OTHERS” area, meaning how you as an individual interact with the world around you, with things that are not directly related to you.

Specifically, in this area we work and develop communication as a skill to interact in the “others” area, understanding its importance in the way we use it in order to establish and maintain interpersonal relations.

1.2 Target

The target group of the project are prison inmates, chess players and also learners in general as they can be used by a wider public.

2- OUTLINE OF THE PRACTICE

2.1 Description

LU1. The OTHERS area - Communication (1h)

Communication / non-violent communication

Effective communication has become an essential skill because human interaction plays a fundamental role in all areas of life today. The ability to communicate ideas, express emotions and establish meaningful connections has become fundamental to overall success and well-being, whether in the work environment, in our personal relationships or in the social sphere.

What does it mean to communicate effectively?

The ability to convey information in a clear, understandable and meaningful way to achieve mutual understanding between participants is known as effective communication. It requires both the ability to communicate coherently and persuasively and the ability to actively listen and understand the message of the interlocutor. Effective communication goes beyond words and includes body language, facial expression and empathy.

Benefits

1. Building strong relationships: Effective communication is essential for establishing and maintaining strong relationships. It builds trust, fosters good communication between colleagues and superiors and promotes a collaborative and harmonious working environment.
2. Effective teamwork: Successful teamwork depends on effective communication. It facilitates cooperative decision-making, conflict resolution and allocation of responsibilities.
3. Problem solving: Problem solving requires effective communication. Because ideas and perspectives are shared clearly and solutions are discussed and evaluated constructively, challenges can be identified and addressed efficiently.
4. Effective leadership: An important characteristic of effective leaders is effective communication. Leaders must communicate their vision clearly and persuasively, inspire their teams and motivate members to achieve shared goals. Listening to and understanding the needs and concerns of team members and giving constructive feedback are other aspects of effective communication.

How to improve effective communication



1. Listen actively: Show interest, pay full attention and ask clear questions.
2. Clarity and conciseness: Express your ideas clearly and directly, avoiding the use of technical words or jargon.
3. Body language and facial expression: Use appropriate gestures and expressions to accompany your words.
4. Empathy and understanding: Try to understand the point of view of the interlocutor and show empathy towards their feelings and needs.
5. Constructive feedback: Keep an open attitude and give and receive feedback effectively.
6. Written communication: helps to develop accurate writing skills.
7. Persuasion skills: Use logic, examples and evidence to persuade.
8. Conflict management: Address conflict assertively and constructively by using non-violent communication and negotiation techniques.
9. Continuous improvement: Seek feedback, set goals and continuously improve your communication skills.

Coaching in Chess

First of all, we must start from a simple fact that is sometimes forgotten by trainers/facilitators who work in prisons: **prisoners do not constitute any homogeneous “collective”** with similar characteristics and demands: quite the contrary, the social and territorial origin, the causes that led to committing the crimes, the type of crimes, the motivation for future reintegration, the approach to life in prison... They are all extremely variable. It cannot be said in any case that there is a “typical prisoner” with certain characteristics and specific expectations. There can only be one exception to this, and that is the more or less numerous presence in each penitentiary centre of people who habitually reoffend in not very serious crimes and which frequently lead them to end up in prison.

The penitentiary centre has some characteristics that the trainer must always take into account, there is a certain “tempo” or pace, a precariousness of means determined by the circumstances and a variability with respect to the characteristics of the participants (motivation, personal circumstances, frequency of attendance) often unpredictable and difficult to control on your part. The material resources that you use, the complementary activities that you want to carry out and even the methodology, are also determined by the environment:

It is not possible to escape the characteristics of the prison, which in our opinion must be understood by the trainer.

The penitentiary system is the system established for the fulfilment of the sentences provided for in judicial rulings, and this whole system in its entirety - with its rules, internal regime and its operating characteristics - is a well-regulated machine that is subject to constant self-review. Therefore, the trainer must do everything possible to adapt to the environment, and also be aware that the people who most interact with the inmates – prison officers - have to carry out their daily work. Each professional within the penitentiary system - and within any system - plays a role: the trainer's role is only to teach the subject they are responsible for, in this case, chess.

In other words, we have to respect the time and space that has been granted to us in such a closed environment. If we maintain this professional and respectful behaviour, our workshop can be a safe space for everyone who attends it.

A fact that must be taken into account and one on which we will focus especially, is **the numerous absences from the workshop**, temporary or permanent, that occur -often unexpectedly - **among the participants in the program**. The vicissitudes of the prison regime and the particular prison situations of each inmate are the cause of this characteristic of a program in prisons.

Finally, the role of the trainer/facilitator is extremely important in this context. As we have pointed out, they need to be respectful and be aware of the prison environment at all times. As a trainer you have to know how to put yourself in the

other's situation with respect to the inmates, but not establish excessively personal relationships or enter on specific issues of each inmate. Confidentiality and discretion are essential for anyone who works in this environment. They should never forget their example as a teacher and role model. They have to understand that it is relatively common to find emotional variability in inmates due to multiple issues of which the trainer is most of the time unaware. As much as learning or improving, it is important for inmates to enjoy pleasant moments in prison. The trainer must promote good relationships within the workshop, camaraderie, cooperation, optimism and a healthy sense of humour.]

2.2 Aim/goal

To train trainers and chess players to practical modules, blending chess playing and training exercises, that will develop competences of the "OTHERS" area in prison inmates.

2.3 Learning Outcomes

Participants will learn to:

- Know rules of social interactions through a series of chess terms and how they can be applied inside and outside the board.
- Value the consequences of not planning actions.
- Respect social norms, about others and oneself.
- Improve listening skills, communication, a participative attitude and creativity.

2.4 Training Approach

This module implements a comprehensive training and teaching methodology that combines the metacognitive approach with the chess methodology to enhance cognitive development and achieve higher levels of learning,

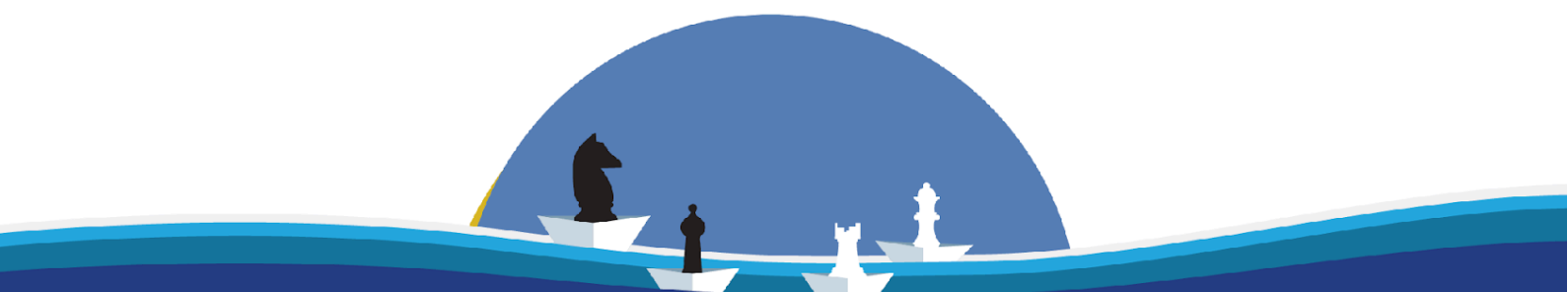
particularly for individuals such as prisoners. The metacognitive approach focuses on teaching learners to be aware of and control their own learning processes, encouraging self-regulation, reflective thinking, and strategic planning. This approach helps learners set goals, monitor their progress, and adjust their strategies, fostering an environment where they can reflect on their thinking processes and learning experiences to improve future performance.

Chess is used here as the primary training tool within this metacognitive framework due to its universal appeal and inclusivity. Chess enhances cognitive functions like strategic thinking, problem-solving, memory, and concentration. It requires players to plan ahead, anticipate opponents' moves, and devise strategies, which parallels the metacognitive skills of planning and monitoring one's own learning. By constantly solving problems and adjusting tactics, chess players develop reflective thinking and adaptive learning strategies. Additionally, chess promotes positive social interaction, crucial for developing social competences and learning from others, even among individuals who do not share a common language or have different cognitive abilities.

Targeting prisoners, the ICARUS project leverages this blended methodology to provide an engaging and accessible way for this isolated group to develop critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and self-regulation.

3- TOOLS

All the necessary materials are listed inside the communication practical exercises.



4- OBSERVATIONS

Club Magic has a wide experience with cognitive training through chess (ECAM method) in prisons, which made it easier to adapt their methodology and chess exercises to the metacognitive approach intended for ICARUS with the help of Indepcie and their expertise in this field.

5- DISCLAIMER

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

Authors

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