



Der Westdeutsche Handwerkskammertag

The West German Chambers of Crafts and Skilled Trades' Council

Presented by Peter Dohmen, WHKT

ERASMUS+ STEPS

EUPRIS, 13.04.2021 (online)



WESTDEUTSCHER HANDWERKSKAMMERTAG





About STEPS

The Erasmus + project **STEPS** ("Sport and other leisure activities as a bridge for successfully addressing young adults in precarious situations") aimed to identify successful measures and tools from across Europe to use with adolescents and young adults who find themselves in difficult situations, to support them to find their way back into society.

The project partners have identified and documented numerous success stories (www.whkt.de/steps).

One of these success stories takes place in Heinsberg Prison, in partnership with a baseball club from Wassenberg in the west of the Federal Republic of Germany.



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



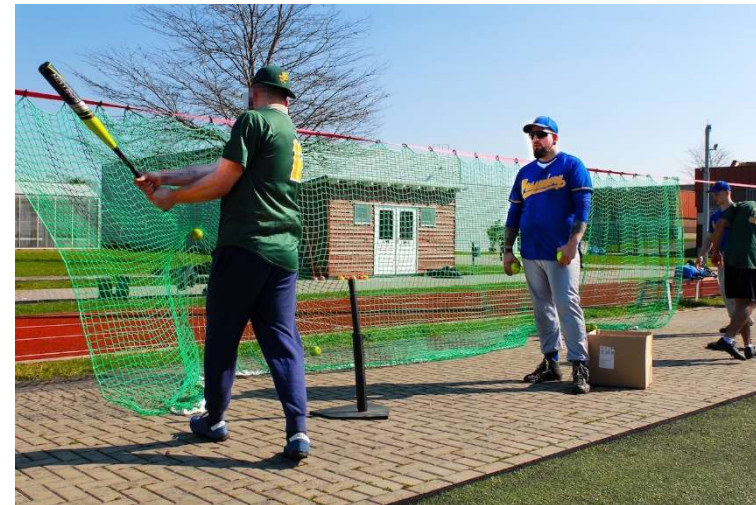
Basball Behind the Prison Walls

- Since 2016, a group of up to 14 inmates between the ages of 14 and 25 have been training the - technically very demanding - sport on the sports field in the prison with volunteer coaches from the Wassenberg Squirrels baseball club.
- The prison provides training equipment for the prisoners.
- In addition to training, the sports club regularly organizes friendly games and tournaments in which external baseball teams play against the prisoners in the prison.
- Individual prisoners also take part in the baseball club's training and competition schedule.
- Only selected inmates are admitted to baseball training, who get to work in sports units through impeccable behavior while in prison.
- The baseball training takes place for these prisoners in addition to the legally prescribed sport (3 hours per week in the Federal German State of North Rhine Westphalia).



Basball Behind the Prison Walls

- The sport of baseball not only demands physical fitness and promotes skills such as responsiveness, speed, strength and endurance, but also places very high demands on mental aptitude, through learning special game tactics and a complex set of rules.



- Via the network of the baseball club, the prisoners have the opportunity to continue their sport in a baseball club even after they have been released; This has given former prisoners the chance to spend their own free time in a stable social environment after imprisonment, a known factor in the reduction of recidivism.



Baseball Behind the Prison Walls



- For the young prisoners, the regular monthly meeting with the voluntary coaches of the sports club is not only a change from everyday prison life; Having this sport in common with volunteers gives them the feeling that they have not been completely forgotten and rejected by society.
- During the corona pandemic, there was almost no training with the volunteer coaches, but the sports officials in the prison were able to carry out baseball training with their own equipment and are still in contact with the sports club's coaches.



Next Steps

- The Sports Club and the Westdeutsche Handwerkskammertag are currently cooperating in the joint development of various follow-up projects in the field of justice systems and reintegration.
- The aim is to expand and consolidate the range of sports offered by voluntary associations in prisons and to improve the recognition of professional skills that are acquired in prison workshops during an individual's prison sentence.





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