

# Prison Library Cook Book

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Compiled in cooperation with the Turku City Library  
and the Criminal Sanctions Agency

on the basis of the *Kirjastosta juuret elämään* project

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# Prison Library Cook Book

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## Foreword

This handbook was created as a response to the need to document the best prison library practices established as a result of the Turku City Library's *Kirjastosta juuret elämään* project and the subsequent prison-library collaboration. The "recipes" were prepared by a large group of prison and library employees alongside Irmeli Malka-Kannisto, who was the project coordinator of the *Kirjastosta juuret elämään* project. Malka-Kannisto has also developed library services for prisons operating in the criminal sanctions region of Western Finland. A wide range of leading Finnish artists, rock stars, experts-by-experience, library employees, guards, instructors, special instructors and other experts have been involved in the making of this handbook. They were all united by the passion and determination to make a change.

You are welcome to try out these recipes and evolve them further as well as create recipes of your own. This handbook emphasises that you need courage to try again even if things do not work out on the first attempt. I hope that this handbook is able to convey both the similarities and the differences of the prison and library sectors. Its objective is to help library and prison personnel develop meaningful and rewarding activities around prison library services.

Reading, participation, information retrieval and experiences of success have been important factors in library groups and meetings. Collaboration with libraries combines culture and art with rehabilitation. Culture and art should be as included in a convict's imprisonment as methods approaching the matter from a rehabilitative perspective.

The cultural side of library activities helps a convict contemplate and process their own life. As the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard puts it: "*Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards.*"

This cook book consists of ten recipes, i.e. modules. Many of them are interconnected. These modules could also be categorised differently. As you read this book, you might find new ways to combine the topics discussed and create completely new modules. Dare to experiment! That is what we strived to do in the process of developing library activities and writing this book.

Aura, 27 November 2018

Kristian Kipinoinen

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Criminal Sanctions Agency

# Prison Library Cook Book

## DEVELOPMENT OF LIBRARY SERVICES



**GENERAL  
APPEARANCE OF THE  
LIBRARY**

**COLLECTION  
CURATION**

**LIBRARY  
MANAGEMENT  
SOFTWARE**

**PRESENCE OF  
PROFESSIONALS**

### *Development of library services*

The development of library services refers to the maintenance of library material, creation of comfortable library facilities that serve their purpose and organisation of events and activities, such as book clubs. Libraries should listen to their customers and work together with prisons in order to provide satisfactory services.

In a good library, new material is added to the collection on a regular basis. This is an important part of the development of library services. In addition to the maintenance of the collection, the development of library services involves various events and activities and their further development. Libraries should strive to create and try out completely new events, activities, programmes and ideas.

### *General appearance of the library*

A good library contains a wide range of material that is up to date and in good condition. It is important that the shelves are neatly organised and material is easy to find. A library is not a storage or a second-hand bookshop. The collection should be updated on a regular basis as necessary.

A pleasant and well-functioning library is bright and clean. There must be comfortable tables and chairs in the library. The overall appearance of the library should be practical, appropriate and cosy.

### *Collection curation*

The maintenance of prison libraries is easily neglected amid other pressing tasks. Prison libraries often add new material to the library collection but fail to remove older items. As a result, the library might quickly become a storage. Do not hesitate to remove material from the collection. It will not go to waste!



Prisons and libraries should decide together what material is added to the collection. Libraries can also donate their material to prisons. Prison libraries should think carefully what kind of material they procure or accept from libraries. The collection should not be too large. Remember that not all the books have to come from the prison library's own collection. Interlibrary loans and borrowed collections are handy ways of acquiring material that is not particularly popular, e.g. multilingual material.

A prison workshop gave this book a new lease of life after being removed from the prison library collection. Photo: Irmeli Malka-Kannisto

### *Library management software*

A library must have a library management system to loan out books. Criminal Sanctions Agency units can buy a licence to the PrettyLib library management software via the Legal Register Centre. The Government ICT Centre Valtori is responsible for installing the software. Libraries help prisons get started with the library management system.

The Turku City Library provides written instructions for library management software. Library personnel help prison personnel and customers with anything related to library management systems and e.g. book cataloguing and labelling.

### *Professional librarians' involvement in prison libraries*

Although goal-oriented activities are an important part of prison library work, libraries should also be involved in the everyday life of prison libraries. A professional library worker should come by the prison library during its opening hours at least once a month to answer questions, provide guidance and advice,

take suggestions and help with library-related matters. Everyday activities should not be overshadowed by development, innovation and reform projects.

# Prison Library Cook Book

## BOOK CLUBS



<b>TRADITIONAL BOOK CLUB</b>
<b>VARIOUS APPROACHES</b>
<b>IMPROVEMENT OF READING SKILLS</b>
<b>SOCIALISING, READING, GAMES, CONTESTS</b>
<b>PROS OF A BOOK CLUB</b>

### *Traditional book club*

Book clubs are one of the most important prison library activities. Their goal is to reinforce prisoners' reading skills, inspire them to read and encourage them to express their thoughts and feelings in various ways. Book clubs are founded on socialising, conversation and comparison of notes on the topic under discussion. They are built on mutual trust and a safe environment.

The reading skills and motivation of book club members might vary significantly. The instructor must make sure that the group members have good chemistry: in order to enjoy the book club, the members must get along well enough. Prison wards might impose constraints on how book club groups are formed.

Cooperation with prison staff is essential to the operation of book clubs. Prison staff must be informed of

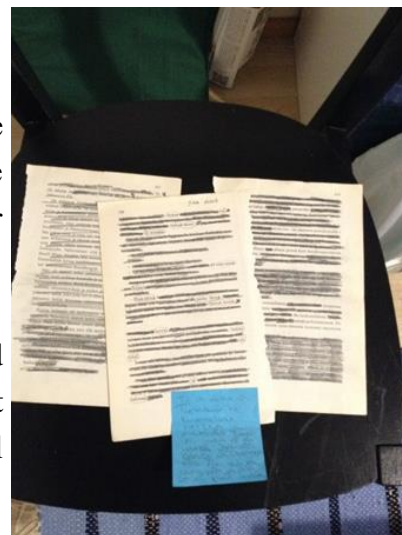
any unusual or challenging situations immediately. There is usually a prison employee present at book club meetings. This employee's training or title is irrelevant for the purpose of the book club. Practices vary between prisons. Some closed institutions might want to have supervisory staff attend the meetings.

In order to organise a successful book club, the employees must take on an active role and commit to the goals of the book club. The prisoners might feel uncomfortable if someone is there only to keep an eye on them. This is why it is important that the employees participate in the discussion and exchange ideas with the prisoners.

### *Various approaches*

A book club can be organised to discuss a book, film, poem or magazine article. Although the activity is called a book club, you can spend the time doing other things as well. For example, the club can play board games or listen to music.

The first step is to get to know the group members. The instructor should ask the members what kind of books they would like to read and request them to submit suggestions on books and topics. The instructor has the final say in the book and topic selection.



In a traditional book club, the members read books aloud. A book is assigned for reading one month before the book club meeting. When the members have read the book, it is discussed at the meeting.

The texts selected for the book club are usually short stories, pieces of writing or poems. Interesting magazine articles are also great for book club reading. Articles selected for book clubs often discuss literature or authors, but some news articles might work as well. Consult the prison staff to ensure the texts do not contain topics that are too sensitive or challenging for the group.

A book club is also a perfect place for watching movies. Many libraries have a licence that allows movies to be shown to prisoners. More information about broadcasting rights is available at [libraries.fi](http://libraries.fi) (article in Finnish).

### *Games, music panels and contests*

The book club does not always have to involve only books and reading. The members can play games, have a music panel or hold a quiz. The results of such activities have been positive. Music panels and quizzes turned out to be very popular during the *Kirjastosta juuret elämään* project. Prisoners have also enjoyed playing games. Prison libraries have acquired more games for book club groups. Alias and Skip-Bo have been particularly popular among book club members. These two games have served the purpose of the book club well.

It is important to establish the book club programme and learn the game rules before the book club meeting. Many prisoners are used to playing for money or other stakes and take this for granted. However, at the book club, games are only played for fun. This rule must be established before the members start to play a game. Teams should be decided by lot to speed up the game process. Small preparations like these help make sure everything goes well.

Playing is a fun form of entertainment that is also beneficial. Games help develop one's cognitive, social and emotional skills. They also improve one's well-being by relieving stress and giving experiences of success and pleasure. This helps prisoners manage their everyday life. It is also easier to discuss more difficult topics under the guise of fun activities.





# Prison Library Cook Book

## INFORMATION RETRIEVAL



<b>IMPROVEMENT OF MEDIA LITERACY</b>
<b>INFORMATION RETRIEVAL IN PRISON</b>
<b>PRACTICAL TRAINING IN WORKSHOPS</b>
<b>EXPERIENCES OF SUCCESS</b>

### *Objectives*

The Criminal Sanctions Agency and other authorities have made multiple decisions regarding information retrieval and the promotion of IT skills in prisons. All sectors of society have invested in digital services and their execution and availability. Both libraries and the Criminal Sanctions Agency strive to improve their customers' capacity to use digital services.

*"The Public Libraries Act states that it is libraries' role to promote knowledge, skills, culture, civic skills and lifelong learning. Media literacy is an essential part of civic skills and a prerequisite for lifelong learning."* (Turku City Library's Media Education Plan, 2015)

Libraries' cooperation with prisons plays a special role in the improvement of prisoners' digital media skills. Information retrieval skills have a great impact on offenders' time in prison and their later life as members of society. In information retrieval training, prisoners learn to use hardware, software, search engines and various sources of information. They also learn to be critical of sources. This training encourages prisoners to use electronic services independently and actively.

## *Information retrieval in prison*

The information retrieval training organised as part of the *Kirjastosta juuret elämään* project taught prisoners how to use library services and the web library as well as how to search for general information and use various digital services (e.g. e-books, Celia, Kela, vero.fi, TE services, map services). This training has been organised since autumn 2012.

Information retrieval training can be organised as ongoing or closed groups in prisons. If training is always available, short-term prisoners have a better chance to join in immediately. Otherwise, they would have to wait for the next group. However, in light of experience, closed groups have turned out to be more efficient than constantly available open groups. Group dynamics are a key factor in these results. When working with prisoners, mutual trust and perspective play an important role in successful training. A close-knit group works better together.

During the *Kirjastosta juuret elämään* project, most prisoners participating in the information retrieval training became very involved immediately. At least two hours of training were held per week. This was deemed good, because some open prison prisoners have had to wait for a long time to find employment. Prison personnel have been able to reach out to these prisoners better. Prisoners have been able to engage and get involved in things instead of passively waiting for a job or other activities to turn up. In other words, the library project has been able to also provide low-threshold services.

Information retrieval training is divided into six workshops: web libraries, Kirjasampo, other databases, e-books in open and closed prisons, and physical books in prison libraries. The practical implementation of the training has, however, faced some challenges. First of all, closed units have limited prisoners' access to the internet. The Criminal Sanctions Agency is currently searching for a solution to this issue. Secondly, training sessions should be more regular. Time tends to run out because the lessons move on slowly one topic at a time. Finally, the diverse background of the participants should be taken into account in the preparation of training material. A diverse group of learners requires a diverse group of assignments and tasks. The instructors should be prepared to give remedial lessons to those who need them. In other words, preparation is essential to successful information retrieval training. In this case, preparation refers to updating the training material and assessing the topics discussed. Although the information retrieval skills of offenders vary greatly and they might lack certain skills, they will definitely notice outdated and useless examples.

## Examples of information retrieval activities

### *Web libraries (one session)*

The first workshop begins by learning to use web libraries. The instructor can demonstrate different functions and services provided by the local web library. After having learnt how to use one web library, the prisoners know how to use other cities' web libraries as well.

### *Kirjasampo (one session)*

Kirjasampo (<http://www.kirjasampo.fi>) is an online literature service that contains information about books and their availability at different libraries. It is the libraries' search engine for literature: "*Kirjasampo helps you find the hottest authors, books and reading experiences.*" Tasks and exercises should be prepared in advance for this session.

### *Other databases (two sessions)*

In this case, other databases refer to e.g. digital services other than library services. The participants can also be taught how to search for information in general. Google is the most commonly used search engine. The prisoners can try out different search functions and search terms. Other databases the prisoners can be introduced to include Finna.fi, which is a search service used by Finnish archives and museums, and Leijuva liitutaulu, which contains copyright-free content.

### *E-books and "traditional" books (one session in open prisons)*

First, the prisoners learn how to borrow e-books. In open prisons, prisoners have access to tablets which can be used for this purpose. After the introduction, the participants practise downloading e-books. Some prisoners might need hands-on instruction, whereas others might find this exercise easy. The introduction to e-books has been deemed a very important part of the training because the experience has increased prisoners' motivation to read. Prisoners have also been inspired to borrow and read "traditional" physical books.

### *E-books and "traditional" books (one session in closed prisons)*

In closed units, e-books are downloaded on tablets in advance because the prisoners are not allowed access to the internet. Despite the lack of internet access, prisoners have really enjoyed this part of the training because it gives them the opportunity to learn how to use a tablet. The majority of the closed-unit prisoners participating in the project had no prior experience of reading e-books.

### *Getting to know the prison library (one session)*

Prisoners are introduced to the general rules of the library and shown how to find and borrow material. The shelf classification system is also explained to them. The system is the same as in city libraries. This ensures that the prisoners will know how to use city libraries after their imprisonment term.

# Prison Library Cook Book

## CULTURAL EVENTS AND TRIPS



<b>INTRODUCTION TO CULTURE</b>
<b>LIBRARY TOURS AND CULTURE DAYS</b>
<b>FAIRS, EXHIBITIONS AND CONCERTS</b>
<b>GUESTS</b>
<b>SOCIALISING</b>

### *Cultural events and trips*

The objective of cultural events and trips is to lower offenders' threshold to use various cultural services. These events and trips include visits to exhibitions, libraries and trade fairs as well as events like concerts. Prisons can also organise their own events. Participation in such events and trips is a good incentive. For example, prisoners can be rewarded with a trip for active participation in book club activities.

During the *Kirjastosta juuret elämään* project, the prisoners favoured trips to diverse exhibitions and sites that had a lot to offer. Exhibitions built around one style of art or a single artist might not be very popular due to the lack of variety. Many prisoners have a short attention span, which should be taken into account when making plans for trips and events.

It is very important to listen to the wishes of the group in question. People's interests change over time and many offenders might show a surprisingly profound interest in certain subjects. When selecting the place for a cultural trip, it is also important to remember that all prisoners are individuals with different interests and preferences.

The group and a suitable event or site are selected in advance based on the prisoners' and the prison personnel's wishes. The trip plans are given to the assistant prison governor for approval. In addition to one library employee, two prison employees must take part in the trip. The group is transported from the prison by the prison personnel. The library employee meets them at the site visited. Trips outside the prison are usually only plausible in open prisons.

### *Library and culture days*

Guided library tours introduce prisoners to libraries' work and goals. The tour is the same for all customer groups. The group leaves the prison with the prison personnel according to the practices of the unit in question. If possible, the group should also visit some other site in addition to the library, e.g. a museum.

During the *Kirjastosta juuret elämään* project, prisoners visited e.g. Aboa Vetus & Ars Nova, Turku Castle and Wäinö Aaltonen Museum of Art. Aboa Vetus & Ars Nova has by far been the most popular among prisoners. Some museums have given discounts to special groups.



#### **Example of a culture day schedule:**

The day begins with a library tour that lasts approximately two hours. The group learns how to use the return and lending machines and tour around the different library sections. The music department has been proven to be very popular.

After a lunch break, the group moves on to a second location, e.g. a local museum or exhibition.

### *Book fair*

Book fairs are held once a year in Helsinki and Turku. Trips to book fairs do not differ from other trips, apart from the high number of people present at the fair venue. Prisoners allowed to attend a book fair are always selected in advance, similar to other trips.

During the *Kirjastosta juuret elämään* project, prisoners from Käyrä Prison were able to attend the Turku Book Fair thanks to its convenient location: the prison is located close to Turku, which made transporting prisoners to the fair easy.

## Concerts

During the *Kirjastosta juuret elämään* project, Kotiteollisuus performed at Satakunta Prison's unit in Huittinen and in Käyrä Prison. Both concerts were held on the same day.



Kotiteollisuus performing in Käyrä in 2013.  
Photo: Irmeli Malka-Kannisto

## Tervetuloa Käyrän lastenkonserttiin!

26.5.2018 klo 13.00, paikkana koulurakennuksen tapaamistila



Miltä näyttävät Käyrän nimikkosoittimet eli käyrätorvet! Miten pasuuna kajahtaa tai miltä trumpetti tai tuuba kuulostavat? Voiko puutarhaletkulle olla kastelun lisäksi musikaaliskin käyttöä kesäaikaan?!

Asiaan perehdyttää ja teitä viihdyttää Turun filharmonikoiden vaskikokoonpano eli pari käyrätorvea ja pasuunaa, trumpetti ja tuuba.

Vaskikokoonpano esittää lastenkonsertin ohjelmistoa päivitettyinä muutamalla kappaleella ja yhteislaululla.

Lisäksi tilaisuudessa on soitinesittelyjä ja yllätysnumero.

Lastenkonsertin kesto on noin 30 minuuttia.

Järjestäjä: Turun vapaa-aikatoimiala ja Käyrän vankila

Experience has shown that not all prisoners are used to attending gigs and concerts despite being fans of music. Many of them have no experience enjoying live music sober. These two gigs were held under unusual circumstances, and even the band commented that the audience was “like on a gig in Lemi 20 years ago, in other words, very reserved.”

Concerts are a big deal to both the organiser and the audience. A small prison audience of around 35 people might come as a surprise to bands that are used to selling out large venues. Furthermore, the audience might not be very enthusiastic to clap and cheer. Instead: “when a song ends, it is over and that is it.”

Cooperation with libraries gives prisoners more opportunities to see their family. Prisoners' families are welcome to attend e.g. concerts for children

organised by prisons.

## Artist guests and other guests



In addition to trips outside the prison, prisons can welcome artists to visit the prisoners. Artist guests have been very popular and prisoners have been enthusiastic to attend their events. The guests and their topics have varied a lot. The guests have talked about e.g. rock lyrics, poetry, comics, prose and stand-up comedy. Inviting guests from different walks of life is one way to make sure the interests of all types of prisoners are covered. A prison library should strive to provide a wide range of content.

Artist guests have been popular but arranging the visits requires a lot of work: prisoners will not attend the event without proper marketing or if they do not find the guest or topic interesting. It also requires cooperation between multiple parties. During the project, it was discovered that hard work is always rewarded. As long as an event is carefully organised, prisoners will be happy to participate.

A number of artists visited prisons during the *Kirjastosta juuret elämään* project, including musicians Jouni Hynynen and Kaarle Viikate, expert-by-experience and stand-up comedian Miika Pettersson, authors Arno Kotro and Jasu Rinneoja, surgeon and expert-by-experience Christer Lybäck, poet Harri Herttel, comic book artist Jouko Nuora, teacher Laura Hokkanen and expert-by-experience and pastor Heikki Maakorpi. Many of the guests have held some kind of workshops or joined book club sessions in addition to or instead of lectures.

# Prison Library Cook Book

## PRISONERS CREATING CULTURE



<b>CREATIVE EXPRESSION AND PROCESSING OF EMOTIONS</b>
<b>LANGUAGE GUIDANCE</b>
<b>POETRY</b>
<b>LYRICS, COMPOSITIONS AND SHORT STORIES</b>
<b>PRISON THEATRE</b>
<b>EXPERIENCES OF SUCCESS</b>

### *Creative expression*

For years, prisons have been cooperating with various cultural entities. Creative expression of one's thoughts and feelings has proven to be a successful method of working with offenders. A prisoner can use art to achieve things that they would not achieve otherwise. Creativity-based methods will likely remain important in future.

### *Writing and language guidance*

During the *Kirjastosta juuret elämään* project, several prisons organised writing and language guidance courses to prisoners. In addition to the increased motivation to read and write, one of the most significant impacts of prison-library collaboration has been a heightened interest in proper and correct linguistic expression. A motivated and enthusiastic participant is more prepared to practise other things related to language. The same applies to e.g. learning to play an instrument: the motivation to study music theory is sparked through music – not the actual theory. When a person has the opportunity to write themselves, they will be more likely to pay attention to correct spelling. The passion and need to learn support each other.



## Poetry

*“I am like the hands of a clock. From morning to night, I tick to the same rhythm, the same routines. I am a number and a name. That is what I am, at least for the next ten years, a number and a name. I am like a tiny pebble among a pile of pebbles, in the middle – nothing. The view in front of me is the same view that is all around me, a blank space. I am a life prisoner, that is what I am – a wasteland.”* (Poem: Wasteland. The author is a life prisoner who took a writing course.)

The reasons for writing poems vary between prisoners. Some prisoners might have prior experience of writing poems, others are inspired to do so thanks to a book club. Many write poems to unburden their anxiety, loneliness, longing and other feelings and experiences. Poetry is a great tool for processing one’s emotions through words. The threshold to write other genres also lowers when prisoners first try their hand at poetry. When a person understands that poems do not always have to rhyme, creative expression becomes easier and poetry a more fun and natural form of art.

*“Every morning I mix my tee with the tears I secretly cry in my cell.”* (Poem: Wasteland.)

## Short stories and longer pieces

It is rare for prisoners to write novels or other longer pieces, but some have written short stories. Some prisons have experimented with writing together in groups. The subject matter of short stories and other pieces written by prisoners tend to revolve around and romanticise crime and intoxicant use. It might be a good idea to define the subject matter in advance and discuss with the group that the purpose of the exercise is not to romanticise criminal subcultures. You should also outline the plot before the actual writing begins.

Individual participants have shared longer pieces with the group, e.g. the following extract from a short story called *Happy Birthday*:

### *Happy Birthday*

*“Happy Birthday my friend, it’s been a while since we last met. Does Ostrobothnia still remember the time of the Cruel? It was a shitty affair, hopefully already forgotten. It’s been a long road from our night out to this moment. Do you remember the small girl who was afraid of the nick? My life was shattered then, I was laying in square one with a gun on my temple. It was messy, a lot of screaming when everyone flailed in the dark. Then came the moment when a bright star came out in South Ostrobothnia and the princess dashed off. Ran forward. Trauma in the head, rules in the backbone. The princess took the responsibility for something she didn’t do. The Cruel started a war, took Daddy’s little girl.*

*Then the war was over, peace returned but the princess didn’t. Stronger winds took the princess. On her way to the stars. Sometimes the princess was completely alone, sometimes dashing about all over the world.”*

(Short story: Happy Birthday. The author is a prisoner in a closed institution.)

## *Lyrics and compositions*

Music plays a big role in the lives of prisoners. Prisoners listen to and play a lot of music. Music has proven to have many positive effects on prisoners. It is connected to a person's verbal and mathematical skills as well as their mood and energy. It also improves your brain activity. Writing lyrics is connected to creativity and it is a great way to process both good and bad feelings. All in all, lyrics and music compositions are great ways of processing one's thoughts and feelings.

### *"Honey*

*Hi! How are you? I haven't heard from you in ages. I wanted to write a song to help you understand my true feelings. I have found inner peace. Shitty memories went with ships sailing the oceans. Now I am new. My life is like Moulin Rouge. Dance, dance, blaze of colours and lights. You may think I am crazy, sick, weird, but you are my target and I'm aiming at you with my bow of love. Shall we travel to the stars? Fly to the clouds in our dreams. Only the two of us, space and eternity. Will you join me? I want you in my atmosphere. I'll wrap you in cotton wool, smother you with kisses. You visit my dreams. Fantasies and dreams, my head is full of visions. You are my number one, I won't fail you Honey if you take my hand, you'll lead me. I'll show you and teach you this song. Shall we travel to the stars? We've been through so much, made empty promises. My mouth is now clean from all the shit, I only speak the truth. I don't need money or a fancy car. If I could just sleep next to you every night, Honey, I would have the world."* (Lyrics: Honey. The author is a prisoner in a closed institution.)

## *Prison theatre*

The *Kirjastosta juuret elämään* project has yet to involve theatre art, but there have been plans for visits to the theatre. Generally, theatre visits are not very different from other cultural events or trips.

Prisons should develop further the methods of encouraging prisoners to create art. This is an area of development worth considering. Different cooperation partners and already tested methods may be utilised.

In many countries, prison theatre has a long history. Studies have shown that theatre is an excellent form of rehabilitation. In Finland, prison theatres are managed by e.g. Taittuu ry, which was specifically established for the regulation of prison theatre. Taittuu ry manages prison theatre activities nationwide under an agreement with the Criminal Sanctions Agency. However, prison theatre was a phenomenon even before the founding of Taittuu ry.

Prison theatre activities improve the participants' social skills and sense of responsibility. Theatre helps prisoners process the consequences of their own actions in a constructive way and gives them an opportunity to feel visible and equal. It has positive repercussions on prisoners' family and friends and even society as a whole.

*"This also has an important impact on society. There is no such type of person as a prisoner. There are only people who are, for one reason or another, in prison."* – Hannele Martikainen, developer of prison theatre activities

In 2018, the Criminal Sanctions Agency published Laura Menard's study *Effects and effectiveness of prison theatre* as part of its series of publications. Menard's study showed that the most important aspect of prison theatre is the sense of community, social support and solidarity that arises from the dramatic process. This feeling kept the prisoners going during the tough rehearsal period, prevented them from quitting and made the experience fun. Any feelings of distrust or suspicion disappeared and were replaced by a desire to give and receive help. A prisoner interviewed for the study encapsulated this experience perfectly:

*“Well. I think that I had left everything unfinished in my life. Like, I always gave up immediately. So the idea that I wanted to actually finish something. And then there was the support of the group. Many of us said the same thing. When we were always at the rehearsals. Like, you cannot do it to the others, we supported each other.”*

### *Publication*

Even before this project, exhibitions displaying prisoners' artwork had been organised in libraries and e.g. on the website of the Finnish Foundation for Supporting Ex-offenders at [www.krits.fi](http://www.krits.fi). Just like in all work involving prisoners, it is important to pay attention to data and privacy protection matters when working with prisoners. Prisoners must always be asked for their permission for displaying or publishing their work.

If possible, do not hesitate to try publishing or exhibiting work created by prisoners. Creative expression and publication of one's personal work might open doors to talented people.

# Prison Library Cook Book

## PARENTHOOD



**STORIES VIA VIDEO**

**UNHURRIED  
FORM OF  
INDIVIDUAL  
WORK**

**NERVOUSNESS IS  
NORMAL**

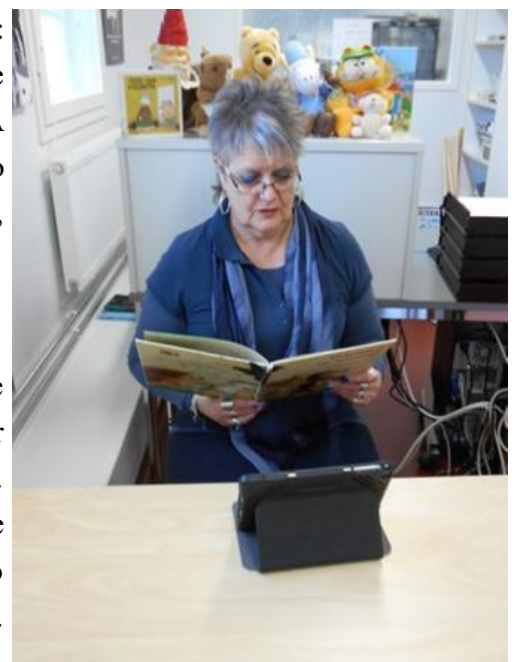
**CONFIDENTIALITY**

### *Read to home*

*Read to home* is an activity where a prisoner reads stories to their children via video. The prisoner is recorded reading a story. This recording is saved according to the prison's rules on e.g. a tablet or a memory stick. The recording is sent to the prisoner's home along with the storybook.

This activity combines the objectives of both libraries and prisons: prisoners are connected to normal services and they can use the opportunity to adapt to the ever-evolving information society. A prisoner must be given the experience of parenthood. By reading to their children, a prisoner is involved in their family's everyday life, which will make their return home easier later on.

Prison personnel decide who gets to participate in this activity. The first meeting between a library employee and a prisoner is for getting to know each other and discussing parenthood in general. Parenthood is approached mainly from the perspective of the library: what does the family read, what the prisoner would like to read to their children and what kind of message they wish to convey.



*Read to home* is a great opportunity to combine child and family work with library services.

The unhurried nature of the situation and the prisoner's feelings should be taken into account when arranging reading sessions. This activity involves much more than just reading, which is why time and patience must be invested in it. A successful reading session is a meaningful experience for everyone involved, but it can be a particularly sensitive and emotional situation to the prisoner. At best, the positive message and impact can be really powerful.

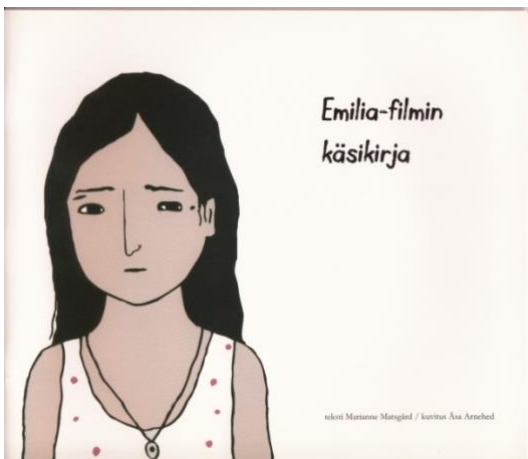
Prisoners can also record fairy tales, poems or stories they have written themselves or sing songs. In most cases, the audience is the prisoners' children, but this service is also provided for prisoners' other family members.

In order to succeed, a *Read to home* session requires the same good ingredients as other prison library activities: a caring and unhurried environment and good interaction and social skills. Mutual trust between the prisoner and the library employee is particularly important since the reading situation can be very personal.

Libraries have many books that have been removed from the collection. Prisoners can read these books and send them to their family along with the recording. A prisoner can read multiple books per session. The subject of the stories might not have great importance to a child. The experience of being read to is more important. This kind of opportunity is especially meaningful to long-term prisoners because they want to maintain a good relationship with their family despite the restrictions imposed by their imprisonment.

# Prison Library Cook Book

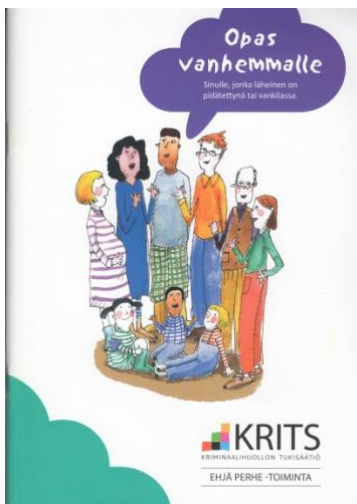
## PRODUCING CULTURE FOR CHILDREN IN PRISON



<b>IMPRISONMENT'S IMPACT ON CHILDREN</b>
<b>PRODUCING CULTURE FOR CHILDREN</b>
<b>EVENTS FOR CHILDREN</b>
<b>FUN ACTIVITIES THAT MEET CHILDREN'S NEEDS</b>

### Imprisonment's impact on children

*“The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child recognises that a separation or other disruption in the relationship between a parent and a child as a result of the parent's imprisonment seriously endangers the child's right to development. Such setbacks impact children in different ways depending on their flexibility, age and circumstances as well as their access to support and care.*”



*The European Parliament has also recognised that the imprisonment of a parent has a number of effects on the enforcement of child rights. In addition, it has recognised that children of prisoners are a vulnerable group similar to disabled children or Roma children. More than 800,000 children are estimated to live inside the EU whose lives are impacted by the imprisonment of their parent. The number of children of prisoners has not been properly charted in Finland. According to a report published by the Finnish Foundation for Supporting Ex-offenders in 2011, the annual figure is approximately 8,000–10,000 children.*

*According to the European COPING study (Children of Prisoners, Interventions & Mitigations to Strengthen Mental Health), children experience a significant need for help and support and an increased risk of antisocial behaviour if one of their parents is imprisoned. Labels, broken parental bonds, financial and social issues and lack of care are*

*connected to the risk of developing mental health problems. Children suffer from shame, labels, loss of self-respect and discrimination. Children and their parents have reported nightmares, grief, separation anxiety and poor self-confidence. They have also brought up the difficulty of everyday life, long trips to meet the imprisoned parent and both good and bad meeting facilities in prisons.” (Finnish Foundation for Supporting Ex-offenders)*

You can learn more about this topic on the website of Europris at <https://childrenofprisoners.eu/>.



The Finnish Foundation for Supporting Ex-offenders has materials for working with offenders' children. Do not hesitate to contact them. The foundation's experts are easy to reach and they know how to handle these issues. There is also other useful information about ex-offenders' support services on the foundation's website: <https://www.kriti.fi/>.

A parent's imprisonment has several effects on a child. Collaboration with libraries can generate many positive and important moments in a child's everyday life and help mitigate imprisonment's impact on them.

### Producing culture for children



Children's culture refers to shows, such as concerts and theatre performances, put up for children as well as various arts and crafts workshops organised with children. The objective is to inspire children and families through culture and art. Another important goal is to use culture and art to reinforce the experience of parenthood and family.

A children's culture planner strives to create conditions for and promote accessible and low-threshold cultural and art experiences aimed at children and families. Among other activities, prisons have organised concerts, painting workshops and circus workshops for prison families. All such activities have been monitored by experts of children's culture. Prisoners' children have also been taken on cultural trips to e.g. museums and concerts on weekends.

Culture and art bring children and their parents together through shared activities. This helps children and parents connect and interact with each other. The goal is to maintain natural family relationships despite one parent's imprisonment.



## Events for children

In autumn 2018, circus workshops were held in Satakunta Prison's units in Huittinen and Köyliö. The reception was good, although the number of participants varied a lot. The workshops were arranged together with the local library and the units' personnel. Circus and theatre association Sirkus & Teatteriyhdistys Aura Company organised the workshops. Two circus performers from Aura Company acted as instructors.

(Circus workshop. Photo: Irmeli Malka-Kannisto)

As part of the project and prison–library collaboration, families have decorated prison facilities with

### *Experiences from Vanaja Prison*

Prisons have a long history of working with children and families. It has been wonderful to see the versatility of the work done with children. For example, Vanaja Prison has organised a wide range of activities for female prisoners and their children. Here is a list of activities organised in Vanaja Prison. The list was compiled by Mia-Riikka Tyni and Tuija Muurinen.

Baby circus – mothers and children from the family ward participate in a baby circus once a week. The prisoners must take part in the activity with their own children. In the baby circus, mothers can play, exercise and relax with their children.

Colour bath – for family ward prisoners. Same principles as with the baby circus. Mothers and children listen to music and express their feelings through colours.

Empowering photography - for family ward prisoners. Mothers and children pose for photographs together. A series of photographs taken during the mother's imprisonment follows the development of the baby and the changes in the mother.

Family day – organised together with the local parish and community sector operators. A family day can involve all kinds of activities, e.g. music theatre, puppet theatre, empowering photography, walks in nature, circus and arts and crafts. Prisoners' families are also welcome to participate: some have invited their child's grandparents and children from foster families to join the activities.

Each room in the family building has a notebook in which the personnel has written instructions for old-school games, activities and exercises – basically anything you can do with your child during family meetings. The notebook includes both outdoor and indoor games. The personnel have also prepared more independent activities for children. For example, children participate in a treasure hunt

illustrations, been given tickets to all kinds of events and attended a children's concert in prison. It is important that children's needs and desires are considered when organising events and activities in prison. Child-centred execution of events requires seamless cooperation with safety and security personnel. The fact that a parent is serving time does not have to be emphasised to the child. Good planning and cooperation are the only correct ways to work with children of prisoners.



# Prison Library Cook Book

## CELIA PARTNERSHIP



<b>DYSLEXIA AND LEARNING DIFFICULTIES</b>
<b>AUDIOBOOKS FOR PRISONERS</b>
<b>WIDE RANGE OF MATERIAL</b>
<b>INSTITUTIONAL CUSTOMERS</b>
<b>AUDIOBOOKS</b>

### *Celia audiobook library*

Celia is a national centre for accessible literature and publishing in Finland that promotes equality in reading and learning. Celia produces and distributes literature in accessible formats together with public libraries and publishers. Approximately one third of all fiction and non-fiction books published in Finland are produced into e-books, Braille books and audiobooks on an annual basis. The majority of books borrowed from Celia are audiobooks.

Print-disabled persons, i.e. persons who are unable to read standard print text due to an illness, disability or another similar reason, are eligible for using Celia's services. Print disabilities may be caused by e.g. dyslexia, learning difficulties, vision impairments, muscular diseases, developmental disability or aphasia.

### *Celia audiobooks for prisoners*

Prisons can offer print-disabled prisoners the opportunity to read audiobooks and other accessible books produced by Celia. To start using the service, a prison has to sign up with Celia as an institutional customer.

After that, the prison is granted credentials for borrowing material.

You can sign up with the service at

[www.celia.fi/palvelut/palvelut-rikosseuraamusalalle/](http://www.celia.fi/palvelut/palvelut-rikosseuraamusalalle/) (in Finnish)

Municipal and city libraries can also offer Celia's services to prisoners: Public libraries cooperating with prisons can loan Celia's audiobooks out to prison libraries without the prisons having to sign up with the service. Libraries can also provide instructions for using the service and create Celia user accounts for prisoners.

### *A wide selection of books*

Celia's book selection consists of thousands of books in accessible formats, including audiobooks, e-books and Braille books. The collection offers something for everyone: non-fiction, poetry, fairy tales, thrillers, memoirs, history, popular fiction, award-winning books and much more. Celia's collection grows by around 2,000 books every year. In addition, Celia has secondary and tertiary school textbooks.

Books are borrowed directly from the Celianet online service at [www.celianet.fi](http://www.celianet.fi). The service is free.

### *Listen to audiobooks on CDs or online*

CD audiobooks can be listened to on a CD or DVD player that supports MP3 audio. CD audiobooks can also be listened to on a computer without an internet connection if separate audio software has been installed on the computer. If the prison has an internet connection, Celia's books can also be listened to online at [www.celianet.fi](http://www.celianet.fi).

The prison library borrows audio books from Celia and then loans them out to its customers on a CD or memory stick in accordance with its lending policy. When a borrowed book is no longer needed, the CD is destroyed.

### *Ask for training and more information*

Customer relations managers **Pirjo Nironen** and **Susanna Ylä-Havanka** are happy to answer your questions about Celia's services and audiobooks.

Contact details:

[pirjo.nironen@celia.fi](mailto:pirjo.nironen@celia.fi), tel. 0295 333 084

[susanna.yla-havanka@celia.fi](mailto:susanna.yla-havanka@celia.fi), tel. 0295 333 107

## Prison Library Cook Book

# MULTILINGUAL LIBRARY



<b>EQUALITY</b>
<b>LANGUAGE STUDIES</b>
<b>MATERIAL IN 80 LANGUAGES</b>
<b>INTERLIBRARY LOANS</b>
<b>HELMET DATABASE</b>

### *Material in prisoners' native language*

The Multilingual Library's task is to offer Finnish residents literature in their mother tongue. The multilingual collection has library items in approximately 80 languages, including languages that do not have many speakers in Finland. The largest collections are in Arabic, Chinese, Somali and Persian (Farsi). The multilingual collection includes more than 21,000 book titles as well as movies, music, audiobooks and magazines. The Multilingual Library also has dictionaries and textbooks.

When a person is skilled in their own native language, they are more likely to learn the language of their new home country. Prison personnel are recommended to actively support foreign-language offenders' reading hobby. Reading in one's native language improves their sense of language, which makes learning Finnish and integration into Finnish society easier.

### *Multilingual material for prisoners*

The Multilingual Library's collections are available in the Pasila Library in Helsinki. Offenders can reserve material through their own prison library. The collection includes books, magazines and music of various genres and themes. The service is free.

### *Ordering material from the Multilingual Library*

When signing up with the Multilingual Library as a community customer, a prison library is granted Helmet Library credentials for borrowing material. The prison library can borrow an entire collection for 3–4 months and renew the loans up to five times. Prison libraries can send their collection requests to [monikielinen.kirjasto@hel.fi](mailto:monikielinen.kirjasto@hel.fi).

### *Finding multilingual material*

You can search for the Multilingual Library's material at [www.helmet.fi](http://www.helmet.fi). Click on "Search for Items" and then "Advanced Search".

The screenshot shows the HELMET search interface. At the top right is the HELMET logo. Below it, there are two search options: "Tarkennettu haku" (Advanced Search) and "Perushaku" (Basic Search). The main search area contains a search bar with the text "(\*) b:h01 l:alb". Below the search bar is a dropdown menu labeled "Hakusana" with a red arrow pointing to it. To the right of the dropdown is a search input field containing an asterisk (\*). Below this is another dropdown menu labeled "JA" with a red arrow pointing to it, and a search input field containing "X". Below these are three buttons: "Lisää hakuoperaattori: JA TAI EI". Below this is a section titled "Kirjastoluettelo" (Library list) with a question mark icon. It contains three dropdown menus: "Aineisto:" with "KAIKKI" selected, "Kokoelma:" with "KAIKKI" selected and a red arrow pointing to it, and "Sijainti:" with "Pasila" selected. To the right of these are two more dropdown menus: "Kieli:" with "albania" selected and a red arrow pointing to it, and "Vuosi:" with two empty input fields separated by a hyphen. At the bottom left is a "Hae" button and a link "Tyhjennä lomake".

Contact details:

[www.facebook.com/monikielinenkirjasto](https://www.facebook.com/monikielinenkirjasto) (in Finnish)

[https://www.helmet.fi/en-US/Libraries\\_and\\_services/Multilingual\\_Library](https://www.helmet.fi/en-US/Libraries_and_services/Multilingual_Library)

[www.kirjastot.fi/monikielinenkirjasto\(in Finnish\)](http://www.kirjastot.fi/monikielinenkirjasto(in_Finnish)) (for professionals)

[Monikielinen.kirjasto@hel.fi](mailto:Monikielinen.kirjasto@hel.fi)

*The Multilingual Library promotes equality in reading and learning. It is supported financially by the Ministry of Education and Culture.*

# Prison Library Cook Book

## COOPERATION



### Päivän ohjelma

12.30–12.45 Tervetuloa! (kirjastopalvelujohtaja Aart de Heer)

12.45–13.15 Yleisten kirjastojen ja vankiloiden yhteistyöseminaari (neuvotteleva virkamies Marianne Mäki)

13.15–13.45 Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriön puheenvuoro (kulttuuriasiantuntija Leena Aaltonen)

13.45–14.15 Iltapäiväkahvi

14.15–15.15 Kirjastosta juuret elämään – projektien kokemuksia ja tapahtumia (projektisuunnittelija Irmeli Malka-Kannisto)

15.15–16.00 Keskustelua: Miten tästä eteenpäin? (palvelupäällikkö Sanna Hemelahti, seutupalvelupäällikkö Ulla-Maija Maunu, erityisasiantuntija Kati Sunimento)

**MAINTAINING A  
COOPERATION  
NETWORK**

**DEMAND FOR  
LITERATURE**

**SHARING IDEAS AND  
EXPERIENCES**

**OTHER PROJECTS**

### *Prisons and libraries cooperation network*

True cooperation means organising activities like the ones discussed in this handbook. The establishment of a cooperation network takes time. The network requires active maintenance in order to evolve. Meetings between library and Criminal Sanctions Agency personnel have successfully developed relationships regarding prison library work. Inviting different operators to join prison library activities and discuss general issues has felt organic. Traditional social work with intoxicant abusers and families can also benefit from prison–library cooperation. The City Library of Turku is responsible for coordinating cooperation between prisons and libraries as part of its regional development work. [[Decree on Public Libraries \(660/2017\) issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture](#)] (in Finnish)

## *Demand for literature*

Prisons organise many kinds of courses and projects that require books on various topics. Prisoners are given the opportunity to study fields that interest them. Some even take university-level courses in prison. These prisoners need books and other material relevant to their studies. Prison libraries can answer to this demand for material by e.g. borrowing material from other libraries or acquiring books removed from other libraries' collections.

## *Finnish Foundation for Supporting Ex-offenders Kritis*

The Finnish Foundation for Supporting Ex-offenders Kritis supports people with a criminal background and offers them various services nationwide. Prison libraries can utilise material produced by Kritis, e.g. the results of the *Oppimisvaikeuksista vapaaksi* project tackling learning difficulties or Kritis' ADHD handbook. Kritis also maintains a website (kritis.fi) and publishes a magazine aimed at prisoners available in all prisons in Finland. Pieces written by prisoners as well as other work are also published on Kritis' website.



## *Two projects: Let's Read Together and Imprisonment as an Opportunity*

*“The ideology behind the Let's Read Together project is simple: by learning Finnish, immigrants adapt to everyday life and services, e.g. grocery stores and healthcare services, in Finland. They also learn to understand Finnish culture, which furthers the integration process. In Let's Read Together groups, the instructors and participants speak Finnish in order to maximise learning. English is used as a support language from time to time. Non-verbal forms of communication, such as facial expressions and gestures, are also important. Images and illustrations play a key role in learning the language. They are particularly important to those who have poor reading or writing skills. With such participants, we begin by teaching them the letters of the alphabet.”* (Kia Toivonen: *Luetaan yhdessä -verkosto opettaa suomea ja auttaa kotoutumisessa – toimintaa ollut myös Vanajan vankilalla jo vuosia.* Article published on the Criminal Sanctions Agency's intranet in 2018.)

The prison–library cooperation project is constantly looking for new cooperation partners. Collaboration with the “Let's Read Together” and “Imprisonment as an Opportunity” (*Vankeusaika mahdollisuutena*) projects have been considered and even partially begun by helping people with a different language and cultural background. At the moment, this collaboration is searching for its final form.