

CALYPSOS NEWSLETTER

"**CALYPSOS**" is a program aimed to support social inclusion as well as the specific needs and improvement of basic skills for inmates in Europe. It is developed as a strategic action composed of four European universities (Universidad de Almería, Universidade do Minho, Universidad de Roma Sapienza and Universidad de La Laguna), Spanish Government Secretaría General de Instituciones Penitenciarias, two NGOs (Plena Inclusión Canarias, ADIS Meridianos) and an Italian public entity called Istituto degli Innocenti, all of them coordinated by the Centro de Educación de Personas Adultas Santa Cruz de Tenerife.

The priority of the Strategic Association CALYPSOS focuses on considering prison education as one more aspect of education in diversity, fighting against discrimination and segregation of the group of inmates. A considerable part of the prison population can be classified as having specific educational support needs (NEAE). NEAE related to academic performance are addressed from the detection of deficiencies in executive functions (FE), mainly cognitive deficits, difficulty paying attention, to structure thinking, working memory deficits, poor self-control, difficulty solving problems, etc.

It is argued that improving these FEs will be able to increase school success and degree rates, that at this point respond to very low levels. CALYPSOS claims that one of the fundamental reasons concerns with the aforementioned difficulties, and is linked to the specific NEAEs of these students.

In fact, in the Meta-analysis about the relationship between Executive Functions (FE) and offending behaviour, carried out from the University of Almería, a relevant relation has been found between the deficits of executive functions among the incarcerated subjects in comparison with other normalized subjects, from the analysis of 58 studies that correspond to 3210 participants.

The deficits found can be grouped into 4 blocks: work capacity, planning, cognitive flexibility and attention.

These dysfunctions can be related to low scores and arithmetic results, recall of new learning (e.g. new languages), slow processing capacity, reading, reasoning, making decisions and daily activities (such as planning, organization), time organization, poor organization of new perceptions, and poor change.

Based on these findings, the Calypsos association has adapted and redesigned the original research to complete the collection of information in the three participating countries and in the five selected prisons, two Spanish, two Italian and one Portuguese.

The sample is composed of about 300 prisoners and about 130 standardized persons. The groups of prisoners, with and without a background in Juvenile Justice, are considered as a key element within the objectives of the project, in such a way that the project also analyses the training structures provided for young people in the Juvenile Justice Systems of the participating countries.

The general variables analysed are Impulsivity, Psychopathy, Clinics Symptoms, Reward and punishment and Social Desirability, being the specific ones Working Memory, Interference, Planning, Intelligent, Attention, Cognitive flexibility, Planning, Spatial Memory, Verbal fluency, Prefrontal Syndrome, Reading, Calculation.

These variables have been evaluated in individual and group sessions, which is one of the largest studies carried out in Europe on the variables considered in the prison population.

Preliminary results point to the existence of cognitive deficits in this population, and it can be stated that, in general, and taking the imprisoned subjects as a group, they can be considered as subjects with special educational needs due to the deficits in executive functions found and which limit the correct learning of the academic tasks aimed at obtaining regulated school certification and other tasks related to the adaptation to their daily environment.