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Your donation is welcome in order to keep the book selection up-to-date.

Prison Libraries Association
(Förderverein Gefangenenbüchereien e.V.)
Bank account number: 34 135 996
Bank code: 400 501 50
Bank: Sparkasse Münsterland-Ost
Reference: ‚Bücherei JVA Münster‘

By means of book donation

If you like to donate books which are not older than 5 years, please contact the librarian directly:

Gerhard Peschers
Gartenstrasse 26
48147 Münster
Phone: 0049-(0)251-2374-116
Fax: 0049-(0)251-2374-201
e-mail: Gerhard.peschers@jva-muenster.nrw.de

For more information on prison libraries:
www.gefangenenbuechereien.de

For more information on the Prison of Münster:
www.jva-muenster.nrw.de
Link to the prison library click ‚Aufgaben (functions)→Freizeit (spare time)‘

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Translation: Raimund Fischer

What can a library in a prison achieve?



Librarian Gerhard Peschers comments:

‘A scientific survey of the University of Münster, done in the prison of Münster, found more than 75 percent of the prisoners to claim ‘Reading’ their primary spare time activity ranging even before watching television.’ More than 80 per cent of the prisoners use the library regularly.
‘Every second prisoner comes to the library once a week, particularly remand prisoners.’
“Every second of the respondents uses non-fictional or specialized books to further education, every third one reads literature to get to know oneself better.” ‘The prison library is an important factor contributing to our concern of a penalty enforcement in dignity: building bridges via literature and language for the prisoners according to their interests, thus, they can make best use of their time, find entertainment, further their education, discover other worlds, and do something for their soul inside.’
‘We do not need a bigger selection, but we have to update it regularly.’

To open up insights



The Prison library of Münster



Bibliothek
des Jahres
2007

LIMITED SPACE – UNLIMITED CONTENTS



The selection

The prison of Muenster built in 1853 is the oldest one in the federal state of 'North-Rhine Westphalia' and has the most modern prison library. The renowned architect's office Bolles+Wilson, that created among other projects the design of the public library, developed in 2005 a convincing new design of the library room at the intersection point of two prison cell wings. The executive officer P. Wilson rates the result of the restoration works: 'The library room presents itself and the book media in a clearly arranged way and in a light and friendly atmosphere.' The room was optically enlarged by mirrors on the side walls (above the book shelves) – a kaleidoscopic effect, a seemingly unlimited library – an impressive place – a (railway) station for literary travels. The library was awarded the German library prize 'Library of the year 2007'

The demand

More than 80 percent of the prisoners use the prison library. They are even allowed to look around the bookshelves themselves for a quarter of an hour once a week, whereas in other prisons they are only allowed to choose from a boring catalogue staying in their cells. The selection contains fiction, non-fictional or specialized books, comic-books, but also audio books, audio CDs and DVDs. Even detective stories the interested reader does not have to do without. The international range of the selection is broad in correspondence with the multinational origins of the prisoners. Books written in 30 different languages invite them to read in their mother tongue and give practical answers to questions in life, no matter if in Russian, Turkish, Polish, Serbo-Croatian or Arabic. – 'Here the world comes together.' – Not few prisoners discover for the first time their reading interest here. Many of them first go for a comic-book or illustrated book to be distracted, not seldom, however, the way goes on with poetry, classics, best-sellers and even specialized books with the effect of gaining more knowledge

The benefit

Maria Look, head of the prison of Muenster, attaches high importance to reading activity in prisons: 'On the one hand reading a book helps prisoners to be distracted from their situation for some time with the effect of being more relaxed facing and dealing with it afterwards. On the other hand reading can show various ways of life possibly offering new perspectives for the prisoners' own lives. Who discovers reading books during imprisonment to be a valuable spare-time activity, gets the chance to integrate this experience in his life after custody dismissal. This way an important task of the penalty enforcement has been achieved – helping prisoners to make good and meaningful use of their spare time – particularly nowadays at times of high rates of unemployment that many prisoners had to face before and will often be confronted with again after their time in jail.'