

Summary 'Evaluation Pilots Self-Reliance Detainees'

VanMontfoort, May 2015

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Research Motivation

The research has been conducted in the framework of the Plan of Action 'Innovative and Inexpensive Regimes' which was developed following the master plan DJI 2013-2018 (Custodial Institutions Agency) and additional austerity measures. The aim of the Plan of Action are savings of up to 11.3 million euro (1,100 euro per place) in 2017 by new regimes based on self-reliance of detainees and self-direction of staff. In March 2014 two pilots were launched in the penitentiary Heerhugowaard and the penitentiary Arnhem in which experiments are conducted with the promotion of self-reliance of detainees and self-direction of staff. On the basis of these pilots it is expected that the participating penitentiaries will design a new detention regime which will be introduced nationally, a process that should be completed in 2018.

Research

VanMontfoort has evaluated the two pilots of the Plan of Action 'Innovative and Inexpensive Regimes' in the period of September 2014 till April 2015. The problem definition of the research is as follows: *'Where is space to give detainees and staff (self-reliant teams) more responsibilities in everyday work and life in a penitentiary institution and to what extent do the measures taken in the pilots lead to cost reductions?'* All this while maintaining the quality and safety. On the basis of this problem definition a twofold objective has been formulated: (1) investigate to what extent the detainees and staff can be self-reliant/self-directed in the pilot and finding out where this self-reliance is bound by frameworks with respect to safety, laws and regulations, costs, capabilities of (weak) detainees and detention quality, and (2) investigate whether the measures taken during the pilot lead to cost reductions.

The research covers two pilots, in Heerhugowaard and in Arnhem. Several projects have been developed and implemented within the pilots. In the framework of this research it was decided to focus on a few specific projects. In Heerhugowaard the two largest projects have been evaluated, namely a unit with eight detainees without direct surveillance (unit E1) and a team of detainees who perform maintenance and furniture repair tasks under supervision (the 'klussen' project). In Arnhem a ring with 25 detainees who received more freedoms and a 'special' job with more responsibilities was evaluated (ring D2).

The research has, primarily, a qualitative character. In order to determine possible explanations for the observed results of the projects (in the field of self-reliance) the method of realistic evaluation (Pawson & Tilley, 1997) was used. The results are mainly based on (1) a document analysis (project plans, progress reports and policy documents), and (2) conducting 39 semi-structured

(group)interviews with 57 persons, including project managers, detainees, staff, managers and a representative of the works council. The results have been qualitatively analysed based on the central themes and concepts in the pilot. In addition, some result- and output oriented instruments have been developed for the evaluation. They relate to (a) the development of self-reliance among detainees, (b) the cost-benefit analysis and (c) the development of safety within penitentiaries.

Results

The pilots have been introduced as an austerity measure and as content innovation, which led to some resistance of the staff. This meant that the support among the staff for the pilots was reduced. The staff felt they were working towards their own dismissal and the innovation (of self-reliance) contradicts the prevailing views on detention. Despite these reservations some staff members did dedicate themselves to the pilot, which made it possible to achieve the following results.

Detainees and staff involved in the pilots think that the detainees in the projects have become more self-reliant, as was found during the interviews. We also see this in the results of the questionnaire on self-reliance: both detainees as well as staff report increased self-reliance, with a larger increase in Arnhem compared to Heerhugowaard. Given the small number of questionnaires these results must, however, be interpreted with caution. The non-involved staff only observed an increase in self-reliance because of the special jobs. Detainees and staff do agree that more self-reliance within the penitentiary is especially possible through meaningful work, where the detainees can function independently and gain confidence from the staff. At the moment the possibilities for detainees to maintain control over their own lives are limited in the penitentiaries. Detainees depend on staff for their daily functioning and the daily programme is predetermined as well.

On the ring D2 in Arnhem the detainees became less dependent on staff through the extension of freedoms. They have more time to take care of themselves and to organize things on their own. Other factors that contribute to increased self-reliance are: the responsibility one feels for the functioning of the ring, the mutual relationships and the relation with the staff. On unit E1 in Heerhugowaard the increase of self-reliance primarily comes from the freedom that has been given and the independent functioning of the group without supervision. The participants of the 'klussen' project experience that they can apply their skills, feel more valued and experience pleasure because they are doing useful work. The most important change mechanism identified by the detainees of both pilots are the tranquillity in the unit, the mutual relations and the responsibilities they have been given. The detainees on ring D2 in Arnhem also mention the relation with staff as an important mechanism. The detainees from Heerhugowaard specifically mention the freedom and space they experience to organize their own lives as an important mechanism.

The development towards the promotion of self-reliance for detainees requires a cultural change within the penitentiary. Detainees should be given more freedom and responsibilities, which is difficult in a penitentiary where surveillance and control are very important. For the success of projects aimed at stimulating self-reliance some prerequisites are important: (1) the selection of detainees (calm detainees who are able to deal with more freedom and responsibilities, this might include weaker detainees), (2) a positive attitude of staff, aimed at stimulating detainees and less on surveillance and control, (3) clear rules and consistent enforcement of these rules, (4) the group

size, (5) the support among staff within the penitentiary and (6) clear communication about the implementation and development of the project.

Besides self-reliance of detainees self-direction of staff is a part of the pilot 'Innovative and Inexpensive Regimes'. Within the pilots no major advances have been made concerning the stimulation of self-direction, even though the pilots have been set up from the work floor (bottom-up). The study shows that both directors, managers and executive staff have a positive attitude towards the shift to more self-direction within teams. The possibilities for self-direction within a team are currently dependent on the management style of the manager. Also, a few barriers to self-direction have been identified: (1) the organisation of work within the penitentiaries, (2) the rules from the national government and the works council, (3) the tradition and the culture within penitentiaries and (4) the competences of the employees.

The efforts of the pilots have not (yet) led to the desired and intended cost reductions. The study shows that some reductions have been realized. These cost reductions are, however, only partially supported with actual calculations. Potential cost reductions have been identified by the interviewees. These possibilities for reductions can especially be found by involving detainees in the primary process, in which they take over tasks from the staff and other external contractors and by organizing tasks and functions differently, for instance by combining different functions into one.

The developments within the pilots could not come at the expense of safety within the penitentiary and the quality of detention. Existing quality components, such as the daily programme and conversations with the case manager and mentor continued during the pilots. Generally the safety is well perceived by involved staff and the detainees, in spite of some incidents during the projects. Within the projects the detainees have a meaningful daily programme and they have much to lose. These are factors that enhance the safety. Because of registration restrictions it was not possible to objectively (through registration systems) measure whether the safety changed. The uninvolved staff does have doubts about safety. These doubts are not based on actual experiences but seem to be connected to negative perceptions and poor communication. There are no indications that the pilots negatively affect the safety on other units.

Conclusion

It is concluded that the three projects have led to more self-reliance by the detainees and that cost reductions are partly realized while mostly maintaining quality and with clear indications for unchanged safety. This conclusion is reason to further develop and expand the pilots. For the implementation of these measures within other penitentiaries the (1) change mechanisms or effective factors and (2) the corresponding context are important, in which the scale of the expansion plays a role. Depending on the scale of expansion (small-scale or large-scale) different prerequisites are of importance. The rollout of pilots over the entire institution is not preferred: not all detainees are able to cope with more freedom and responsibilities. Some parts of the pilot can be expanded, such as preparing an evening meal. Other possibilities exist in the creation of more jobs and education for detainees.