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The Ethics of Training

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My speech focusses on the following 4 points: training, ethics, stakeholders and ethical infrastructure. I summarize the main ideas in the next lines.

1. About training

The mission of the organization is the main point in order to judge if a training is good or bad. The mission of prisons is: 1) social recover one of our citizen; 2) improving competences of the inmates, contributing to his/her human development; 3) public safety and 4) trust administration of justice among citizenship.

Good training contributes to achieving the mission of the organizations through the personal training of the staff. Bad training forgets that organizational missions and priorities the personal development in order to improve her or his personal career.

Good training focuses on inmates, directly or indirectly. Knowledge should be transferred. When one person of staff leaves prison without this transference, waste of knowledge is the result. As a public administration it manages public resources and accountability is expected.

Shortly, a bad training is the one that ignores the goal and circumstances. Bad training is outdated or sparse or biased. In contrast, the best training builds personal and organizational capabilities. Personal capabilities should generate trust, bounds and stability in the organizations. The essential questions to know if training is proper or not, good or bad are: training, what for? What is the goal? Why is training needed? Which is its content? What can be expected from it? Who is the best trainer for this audience?

2. About Ethics

Ethics is a reflection on the 'why' of an action in order to ground it and prioritize it over another one. It is necessary to distinguish between the following four different ethics, depending upon which is the action's context and the criterion used for making decisions:

Personal ethics: the context of personal ethics is that of privacy. The criterion in virtue of which decisions are taken in this context is 'happiness', that is, 'quality of life'. In this sphere, decisions are made according to what each one considers to be the 'good life' for them, according to their own values and circumstances.

Civic ethics: its context is that of the public space which all citizens share –who, by contrast, must not necessarily share the good life's concept, i.e., coincide on



how to live. The criterion for decision making in this context is justice' and 'dignity'. In the public space, the decisions must be based on both the dignity inherent to any person in any place and at any time –dignity is the absolute value; like a right to have rights–, and justice –the acknowledgment of everyone's rights, among which there is the right to be able to choose the own way of living in accordance with one's own values–. Civic ethics is public ethics, i.e., the ethics of individuals not as such, but as citizens, as persons who live together in a same society or city and who have the same rights and duties. The criteria of dignity and justice may lead to dismiss ways of living that are incompatible with the others rights' acknowledgment, so civic ethics has always priority over the personal one. Indeed, it is first necessary to have a society in which dignity and justice are ensured, so that everybody can later choose, respectfully with such principles, an own lifestyle with a view to personal satisfaction.

Professional ethics: the context of professional ethics is that of the specific sector in which one works (for instance, the legal, education, health, police). The criterion for making decisions in this context is the 'quality of the particular service' that one offers as a professional with specific knowledge for performing certain tasks.

Organizational or institutional ethics (in our case, a prison): its context is that of the institution in its entirety in which every professional provides a service within a specific area of expertise. The criterion for the decision making in this context is the 'total quality of the service' offered by the institution; that is, the total quality of the institution, of all its professionals and sectors.

A right ranking of the four ethics that must coexist in an institution is the following one: first, civic ethics; secondly, organizational ethics; thirdly, professional ethics; and finally, in the last place, personal ethics. Understanding the difference between these four ethics is crucial in order to build a quality in training. All of them come into play and must be well harmonized and ranked. Otherwise serious conflicts of interest are guaranteed.

The best training is one that, within civic ethics, generates awareness of belonging to an organization, coherence with its mission and forges corporate identity

3. About stakeholders

Professionals who receive training must participate in the proposal of training plans. They know what they need for their good job performance. This is part of their motivation. But they must then commit to the impact of this training on their daily work.

This point is crucial in the motivation of professionals. The question is not why they chose to work in prison (something that belongs to the past), but why continue in it (something that alludes to the present and the future) Almost all of us work for economic reasons (to earn money at the end of the month), but these



reasons cannot be the only ones or the fundamental ones when we work with people and where coherence, integrity, trust, the work environment, among others, are essential for the achievement of the institutional mission.

Trainers must assume the task and create the capabilities of the workers, looking at the impact on the organization as a result of the training received.

Training should create capabilities, rather than simply provide knowledge or skills. Capabilities refer to what people are capable of being and doing, adapting to the contexts. The mere professional diploma does not guarantee that the knowledge acquired will be transferred in a given context and practice

The organization must be attentive to the needs to update the skills of its workers. For this, it is not enough to attend to the requests of the staff, it is necessary to propose that training that the staff may not ask for, but becomes essential for good organizational development. This is especially important in a fast-paced society like ours and the duty of continuous training in order not to incur obsolescence.

The organization must have criteria about who deserves training: who needs it and who benefits from it. In the same way, it must know how to choose the best trainers, for their pedagogy and for the evidence they provide in the creation of capabilities in professionals who have an impact on organizational improvement and always, directly or indirectly, on the good of the inmates. Thus, training is good oriented and it has sense and sensibility.

It is essential as a public institution not only to attract talent, but also to keep it. For this, bureaucratic, routine climates must be avoided. The reasons why things are done must be understood in order to understand the how and the what. As Nietzsche said: He who has a why to live for can bear almost any how.

Good training, as we have already said, generates skills, bonds (good work environment) and stability in teams. For this it is important that, after a training policy, there is another one of recognition. It is not about giving everyone the same, but about giving more to those who deserve it most. This is the only way to promote the creativity and innovation necessary to keep up to date.

4. *About ethical substructure*

The Code of Ethics, the Ethics Committee and the Ethical Audits are, all of them, constitutive elements of the necessary infrastructure in the penitentiary to incorporate ethics and thus be a humanized and thinking institution, a quality institution.

The Ethics Committee and the Ethical Audits are necessary to reflect on training, which is no longer necessary, which is still and what innovations must be incorporated. The spaces for reflection or ethics committees can fulfill the function



of public use of reason, that is, without falling into narcissism, they can highlight the deficiencies or contradictions that are detected. The objective of training is always improvement through human and organizational development, impossible to achieve without ethics.

Known are the main moral resources needed in a prison: prudence, truthfulness, transparency, respect for human rights, integrity, care, cooperation, trust, confidentiality, etc. The opposite occurs with moral resources than with economic or ecological resources. Of the latter, the more we spend, the less we have. With moral resources, the more we use them, the more we generate.