

Prison overcrowding - involving different actors to combat it



Col. Attila Juhász
Heves County Penitentiary
Institute
Eger, Hungary

Hungary

Population:	9.839.000
Number of inmates:	18.244
Official capacity:	12.604 inmates
Imprisonment rate:	184 inmates/100.000 citizens
Female inmates:	1227 inmates
Juveniles:	468 inmates
Overcrowding:	143%
Annual budget of the Prison Administration:	188 M EU

Reasons of overcrowding

Changes in legislation

- longer sentences (use of middle term)
- introduction of ,Three strikes'
- stricter measures regarding minor offences

Long period in remand custody

Social issues/high rate of unemployment (9.8%)

Public expectations

Regional differences/low mobility rate



Heves County Penitentiary Institute

Year of establishment: 1908
Official capacity: 126
Operational capacity: 210
Number of staff members: 99
Annual budget: 1.746 million EURO
Medium security female prison
Remand institute (females and males)
Average number of inmates:

2007	144 inmates
2008	161 inmates
2009	164 inmates
2010	196 inmates
2011	201 inmates
2012	207 inmates

Problems/inmates

More inmates in a cell: free space/person under 3 square metres,
more conflicts among inmates,
less private area,
more intensive prisonisational effects,
more disciplinary cases.

Problems/staff

More workload,
more disciplinary investigations,
less time for individual programmes,
burn-out faster,
security related issues.

Problems/budget

More catering related costs,
more equipment, clothing,
more overtime,
more transportation related costs.

Solutions/general

Equalisation programme,

re-opening older prison units,

building new prisons: 3535 places by the end of 2015,

introducing alternative measures:

- reintegrational custody,
- EM,
- mediation.

Solutions/local

More programmes/innovation,

more volunteers,

closer cooperation with NGOs and local organizations,

multi agency approach,

communication - with the inmates,

- with the staff members,

- with the public.

Solutions/local/programmes

Prison for the City - restorative programmes
Theatre

Storybook Dads - family oriented approach

Education/vocational training

Leisure time activities, hobbies

Drug prevention and harm reduction programmes

Individual and group activities focus on aggression management

Volunteers/peer support

Overcrowding makes life difficult, still...

no escape since 1981 (1-2 cases/year in Hungary),

no suicide since 1999 (5-8 cases/year in Hungary),

no serious injuries or deaths among inmates,

no mobile phones found since 2011 (437 in 2012 in Hungary),

increased number of programmes.

Conclusion

In the past 68 years, only 7 years were without overcrowding in Hungary.

Overcrowding is not good,
overcrowding creates problems,
overcrowding creates more work,

BUT

has to be managed and be positive, that ...

- with the 3535 new places to be built by 31.12.2015,
- with the extensive use of alternative forms of sanctioning,
- with the progressive local initiatives,
- and with a bit of luck ...

**THE FUTURE
IS BRIGHT!**

Thank you for your attention!

juhasz.attila@bv.gov.hu