



Crime and Punishment

Task: Drug Decriminalization

Activity 1: Listening

Welcome to a practice listening task for the GESE 9.

You are going to hear a talk about **drug decriminalization**. You will hear the talk twice. The first time, just listen. Then I'll ask you to tell me generally what the speaker is talking about. Are you ready?

Audio Script

Portugal took an interesting stance in 2001 against drugs. They decriminalized drugs in their country. Only when decriminalizing drugs did the country of Portugal get to witness firsthand all the added benefits. So, you may be wondering what were the results after they did this?

First and foremost, it is important to mention that there was a huge drop in drug arrest and incarceration since drugs were decriminalized in Portugal. When that happened, the government must have realized that they would need to provide more resources for people that were wanting to stop taking drugs. That is just what they did. In other words, more people were assessing taking drug treatment, in order to eliminate their addiction. This is something that couldn't have been done before as openly, because of the crime of taking drugs and the cost of rehabilitation. Furthermore, this reduced the number of overdoses in death. Not only did that happen, but also reduce the problematic drug use for adolescents. Adolescent years should be known by most as some of the most complicated years in somebody's life. It is amazing that this has had such a positive effect on adolescents as a whole.

It is easy to see all the benefits that this has brought, but what is more is that HIV, also known as aids, has reduced in incidence, which is outstanding. We can also see that apart from HIV, hepatitis decreased dramatically. Also, they continue to see no major increase in drug use since decriminalizing drug use. On top of that, drug related crime saw a significant decrease. Since users didn't feel that they needed to hide, they didn't have to place themselves in areas that invited other crimes, whereas in the past they made themselves easy victims and criminals at the same time. Since the government took an active role in improving the drug situation, they tried making it safer for users, for instance by either making safe areas where they could consume drugs without having to be in public or hiding in questionable areas. This certainly made it better for the citizens that used drugs, but as mentioned before, the incarceration rates had decreased considerably, hence relieving financial pressure on the government for supporting prisoners, and therefore being able to use that money for something that could even further help society in the future. Portugal has one of the lowest fatal overdose rates in Europe. That is to say, they have been extremely successful in their plan to clean up drug usage and crime rate in their country, namely through the way of thinking out of the box and going the opposite direction of what other countries are doing.

To make a long story short, what Portugal has done to fight against the effect that crime has on the it's country has been more than successful. If only other countries would follow it's model of drug use, then perhaps there would be less problems and crime when having to do with drugs.

Can you tell me in one or two sentences what the speaker was talking about?

Now listen to the talk again. This time make some notes as you listen, if you want to. Then I'll ask you to tell me about the benefits of decriminalizing drugs that were seen in Portugal.

Now tell me about the benefits of decriminalizing drugs that were seen in Portugal. You have one minute to talk.

This is the end of the listening task.

Answers:

Benefits from Decriminalizing Drugs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Huge drop in drug arrest and incarceration● More people assessing drug treatment● Reduce number of overdose deaths● Reduced problematic drug use for adolescents● Reduce incidence of HIV / Aids● HIV and Hepatitis decreased dramatically● No major increase in drug use● Drug related crime saw a significant decrease● Incarceration rates decreased considerably● Portugal has one of the lowest fatal overdose rate in Europe
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