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Ladies and Gentlemen,

The changing socio-economic environment in Bulgaria during the period of transition placed a number of hardships in front of many groups of citizens. The detained people are one of these troubled groups.

The unemployment, the structural changes in the economy and the qualification of human resources represent significant barriers for their social inclusion after release.

The restructuring of the economic activity to a new technological base gave rise to changes in the character of the working activity and the professional characteristics of the work force.

Accordingly, the changes in the public life in Bulgaria represent the outstanding character of the issue of vocational education and training in prisons and its main function as an institution for resocialization.

The education and training in general is most frequently understood as:

- Mastering of the public experience, acquired up to the moment;
- Specific type of a cognitive intellectual activity;
- Process of teaching and mastering of general or specialized knowledge, skills, habits or behaviour;
- Joint activity of the trainer and the trainee.

The specialized pedagogical literature defines the training as: "...organizational and functional unity of teaching and learning, enabling the direction of the external and the internal activity of the student, leading to the acquisition of certain knowledge, skills, habits and ways for cognition".

The educational status of the detained people is as follows: illiterate – 14%, primary education – 21%, basic education – 41%, secondary education – 16% or 76% of them have a very low level of education.

The vocational training in the prisons in Bulgaria is intended to improve the employment prospects of the detained people through facilitating their access to vocational training, consistent with the real needs of the employers.

The carrying out of new relevant vocational training courses aims at the improvement of the qualification of the detention facilities' inmates, as well as correction of their behaviour from asocial to corresponding to the public standards.

The conception of continuing education and life-long training becomes more important not only in terms of vocational training, qualification and prequalification, but also in respect of equal opportunities, self-perfection and personal development, as well as of providing a second chance for self-actualization, realization and carrier.

The implementation of a purposeful policy, concerning the vocational training in prisons shall take into consideration the following important issues:

- Vocational training, conformable with the new requirements of the labour market, different from the traditional one;
- Use of socio-pedagogical models for support of the resocialization of the detention facilities' inmates;

- Opening of the educational prison system to new pedagogical models, consistent with the idea of life-long learning;
- Use of interactive methods in the training of the detained people;
- Establishment of partnership relations with non-prison organizations /universities, educational centers, social services, NGO, etc./

It is important to motivate the participation of the detained people in as many as possible education and qualification forms. In relation to the above-mentioned, many prison students confess that the time spent at school passes quicker and more usefully than when attending the usual working programmes. The educational programmes positivize the detained people and create an impression that the time, spent in prison, is not wasted.

The fundamental aims of the general and vocational education in prisons as a whole shall be as follows:

- Primary educational preparation /literacy courses for those, who need them, as well as professional orientation/;
- Raising of the professional qualification /for the detained people, who are already qualified and shall not stop their professional development/;
- Prequalification of the detained people /opportunity to acquire new profession and knowledge/;
- Professional preparation for the persons, who have interrupted their working activity for a long period of time /re-adaptation/ or for the persons, who have partially lost their professional suitability /reactivation/;
- Direction and adaptation, aiming at the orientation in the present conditions and requirements of the labour market /especially useful for the persons, serving long-term prison sentences/.

#### CHARACTER OF THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN THE DETENTION FACILITIES

The vocational education in the detention facilities shall be based on the opportunity for a professional realization of the people, who will, in near or not so near future, leave the prisons. The prison is no longer considered only as a place for serving a sentence. It shall prove its important role of a place, providing an opportunity to the detained people to improve their everyday life skills and, in this way, to be rehabilitated into the society with their new knowledge and skills.

The working activity has long proved its effectiveness for the socialization of different groups at risk. The detention facilities continue to provide an opportunity to their inmates to work. However, the opportunity to provide additional qualification of the inmates, which will contribute to their well-being after leaving the prison, is quite often underestimated.

Before enrolment at vocation training programmes, the status of the educational level of each candidate shall be identified. This means that the prison education shall be directed to primarily providing literacy to the inmates, followed by vocational training and prequalification. In no case, this shall be understood as hindering the illiterate inmates from acquiring new professional skills and habits in parallel.

The qualification training shall be organized in accordance with the individual needs of the detained person.

- Primary vocational qualification – for persons without a profession. They acquire a primary qualification for a certain profession.
- Additional qualification – opportunity for updating and mastering of the already acquired knowledge and skills, as well as acquiring of new ones.
- Prequalification – acquiring of a new profession, different from the one, practiced up to the moment.

It is important to focus on the duration of the vocational training. At present the State does not fund short-term vocational qualification courses. Tone Petersen from the Trondheim University in Norway underlined the fact that only half of the people, studying in prisons, attend the vocational courses that they prefer. This means that the variety of vocational training specialties shall be enlarged.

It is necessary to ensure providing of short- and long-term educational services to the detained people. The primary qualification of these people is also of importance. The training of the people with different educational levels, acquired outside the prison system, shall be organized in different ways. According to the official data, in 2004 there were 1308 illiterate prisoners in Bulgarian prisons, 1944 – with primary education, 3775 – with basic education. It is an undisputable fact that the average number of the people who need to become literate within the prison system is quite bigger than that of the general population.

About 70% of the detained people are without or with primary or basic education. The official data reveal the fact that the lower educational level of the accused or defendant suggests a greater opportunity this person to be sentenced to effective detention.

The bigger part of the accused in serious crimes consists of people with primary and basic education and the bigger part of the accused in minor crimes consists of people with secondary and higher education.

All these issues represent an additional barrier to the vocational training, due to the low educational status of the detained people and the presence of illiteracy. In this respect, different approaches shall be explored, besides the traditional ones that are used in the prison school system. The partnership with non-governmental organizations is a quite welcomed initiative. For example, the Center for integration of crime manifested and risk groups developed a project "Integration through providing literacy to Roma offenders", that is implemented in the prisons of Parazdjik and Bobov dol. The project is implemented by the Center for integration of crime manifested and risk groups and is funded on the "Social integration" programme of the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works.

Besides the educational status, another important factor for the orientation of the vocational training is the age of the detained people. The bigger part of the detained people is between 19 and 30 years of age, followed by the detained people in the age group: 31 – 40. The other age groups are relatively poorly represented in the prisons.

It is clear that the vocational training and education in prisons shall be in conformity with the principles of the adult education. Quite often, however, the syllabus of the prison schools is similar to the syllabuses of the general schools, without conforming to the different age of the students.

The course, implemented on a training programme or project, may be divided into several main stages:

- Preparation of the educational documentation. This includes identification of the problem and content of the training process, goals, curriculum and syllabus,

expectations, methods of control and evaluation, forms of communication and cooperation;

– Popularization and enrolment. This is done in different ways in the aim to provoke the interest and motivation of the potential students in advance. It is extremely important to emphasize on this in the detention facilities. The trainees shall be motivated to participate in the vocational training and education.

– Introduction and start of the course. The aim is the organizers to acquaint the participants with what they are going to learn, explaining the organization and the training methods, as well as the control and expected results.

– Implementation of the course. This is the process of effective organizational and pedagogical achievement of the predefined goals. By means of appropriate methods, forms and procedures the trainees are taught and acquire knowledge, skills and habits, which are intended to change and develop their competences.

– Measuring, evaluation and summary. This is the final, conclusive stage of identification of the training results /examinations, tests, practical knowledge, etc./ and their comparison with the predefined training goals. When the result is positive, the training may be considered as successful.

Besides the traditional professions, for which the detained people are trained, attention shall be paid to new skills, which will be useful to them after the end of the sentence.

The training for starting a business after leaving the detention facility is an appropriate and adequate vocational training. This programme shall be based on the "step-by-step" principle, and the vocational training as a whole – on the module principle. It shall include the fundamental principles of the development of a viable business idea, by evaluating its financial and economic opportunities and the subsequent actions for starting of a small business.

The detention facilities already provide computer literacy training. This type of training shall be further developed and shall include larger numbers of people. The general programme in the detention facilities includes the study of operational systems, "WINDOWS" in particular, document processing programme – "Microsoft WORD" and electronic calculation tables programme – "Microsoft EXCEL". The computer literacy training may be enlarged, depending on the different start qualification of the trainees. Along with the implementation of the programme, there is another important issue – the updating of the teachers' qualification, necessitated by the rapid development of the information technologies. In this respect, there is an opportunity for a good partnership between the Pedagogic Department and the school in Stara Zagora.

Due to the natural resources of Bulgaria, after the release, the detained people have the opportunity to devote themselves to different activities in the sphere of agriculture and stock-breeding. The programmes, implemented by "Agriculture" Fund within the framework of the European Union programmes, provide more opportunities for employment in this sector.

The training in the detention facilities shall provide for the opportunity of the detained people to acquire competence and fundamental skills for communication with important institutions and public organizations. It is also important to teach the detained people how to present themselves and their competences. Therefore, the detention facilities shall keep up contacts with different institutions and provide an opportunity to their experts to meet with the detained people. These are mainly the

“Social support” Directorates, Employment Offices, Social Security Directorates, Municipal Administrations, Health Insurance Fund and other important institutions.

The module training is an appropriate form of vocational education in prisons, and hence, it is more and more often applied in the organization of different training courses. This type of training uses a technology of dividing of the educational process into separate parts. It is quite appropriate for groups of trainees with different educational status. Each of the trainees has the opportunity to decide which module corresponds to his/her individual needs.

The vocational training and education in prisons may also make use of the traditional training forms:

Lecture: due to its monologous and unidirectional character of communication, the lecture is quite often criticized as being a boring and inefficient training method.

However, this training method has some advantages that shall be underlined:

- It is an acceptable training form from an economical point of view;
- It provides an opportunity for the systematic presentation of a considerable volume of educational material;
- Large numbers of people may be trained;
- It can be presented in the form of a dialogue, discussion or even provocation;
- It allows for the use of visual aids;
- It provides an opportunity for an active partnership with the trainees.

In view of all the above-mentioned, the lecture shall not be rejected as a training method and its different modifications may be used in the detention facilities.

Seminar: it is another recognized training form, whose obvious advantage is the engagement and the activity of the trainees. Its goal is, by means of questions, posed by the trainers in advance, and materials, independently prepared by the participants, the trainees to be able to:

- Acquire knowledge independently;
- Relate the theoretical knowledge to the practice;
- Formulate their own opinion and defend it with appropriate arguments;
- Work with literature sources;
- Acquire knowledge, related to research, comparison and analysis;
- Apply the acquired knowledge into the practice;
- Polemize, etc.

The seminar is an appropriate form for the detention facilities in terms of vocational training and other social issues that are directly related to the everyday life of the detained people.

Practice: as a training form the practice is characterized by a variety of activities, by means of which, under the guidance of the teacher, are acquired specific practical skills and habits in a certain sphere.

The vocational training can make use of different methods and approaches that are not so theoretical:

- Rotation of positions or activities;
- Targeted working projects or assignments;
- Attachment to other participants in the training process, possessing bigger experience;

- Demonstrations;
- Situation analysis, etc.

It is important to make the vocational training in prisons not only an organized form, but also part of the everyday life of the detained people and hope for a better future.

The vocational training in prisons shall use other methods of education and acquiring of everyday life skills as well.

#### INTERACTIVE METHODS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND LIFE-LONG SKILLS

The interactive methods are based on the simultaneous acquiring of knowledge, formation of skills and building-up of dispositions through engagement of the participants in situations of interaction and activity. In the context of the education in detention facilities, we can summarize the following positive results of the implementation of the interactive training methods:

- Aim at more intensive and qualitative relations among the detained people and between them and the trainer;
- Provide an opportunity for personal development of the detained people, based on common experience, dialogue, analyses and decision-making skills;
- Allow for a constant feed-back between the participants in the training and the trainers, as well as for permanent engagement and making of common decisions;
- Provide an opportunity for a mutual construction of the pedagogic reality, so that everybody can assume his/her share of the responsibility for the training process;
- Provoke the participants to develop different strategies for a socially acceptable behaviour.

Some of the fundamental interactive methods that may be used in the vocational training and education of the detained people are:

Group work: it is based on the group experience and group activities.

Brainstorming: provides an opportunity for a short-term presentation of a large number of ideas on a certain case or issue.

Discussion: this method consists in clarification of the different points of view, formulation of hypotheses, evaluation of the expressed opinions and outlining of solutions.

Role playing: this method contributes to the understanding of a certain problem or conception by the participants playing certain roles.

Debate: this method allows for the carrying out of a structured debate on a predefined topic.

Simulation games: they represent a model of different processes, for example: the detained people may enact a trial, re-producing the reality as close as possible.

Project: method, allowing for solving of a problem by means of a sequence of planned activities with a predefined goal, way for achieving it, deadlines, use of specified resources and identified criteria for measuring the results. This method may be used in the business training for elaboration of projects for successful businesses.

The use of the interactive methods shall be in accordance with several fundamental principles:

- Openness;
- Activity and initiativeness;

- Focusing on the strengths of the person;
- Equal treatment of all the participants;
- Inviolability of the person;
- Freedom of speech;
- Support.

The everyday life skills training in its nature is an appropriate educational approach for the persons, who are serving long-term sentences, and as a result of this have lost the basic skills of living at liberty. These skills include a number of psycho-social competences and interpersonal skills, helping the detained people to be realized as complete persons outside the detention facility.

The combination of the words "everyday life" and "skills" does not need an explanation. It signifies a number of skills, needed in the everyday life.

First, we shall pay attention to the skills, related to the family and the parent's responsibilities. Many of the detained people already have their own families; others have not yet had this opportunity. Both cases need building up of family planning skills, skills for being a good parent, as well as skills for planning and management of the family budget. It is important that the present and the future parents realize the responsibility that they are assuming, as well as acquire skills, related to the upbringing of their children. This is important for the detained people, most of whom have had problematic childhood.

The skills, related to the personal world and self-knowledge, include skills for assertive behaviour, skills for safe behaviour and self-care. They also include skills for defending of the personal rights and choices.

The skills, related to the social and professional realization, include skills for effective interaction with the institutions, for professional choice, job seeking and, of course, time planning and management. In this respect, shall also be mentioned the communication skills, problem solving skills, team work skills and, of course, leadership skills.

The training, oriented to the development of the everyday life skills, has a special structure and needs planning in advance. It is different from the traditional training in respect of working methods, structure of the educational process and, of course, the roles in the educational process /trainer ↔ trainee/.

#### VOCATIONAL AND PEDAGOGICAL COUNSELING AS A METHOD OF SOCIAL SUPPORT OF THE DETAINED PEOPLE

The counseling is in its essence a diverse activity that can be analyzed from different points of view. In the detention facilities, it is mainly used as a method of social support.

Within the framework of the socio-pedagogical activity, the counseling gained popularity as a method of support of people in a difficult position.

The term "counseling" comes from the Latin "consilium", which means consideration and understanding. Therefore, the counseling is related to attentive listening in the first place, and then to talking.

It aims at supporting the individual to make independent and well-grounded decisions, concerning his/her training, education, profession. This support shall be provided before, during and after the decision.

Some authors /Crites, 1981/ consider that the vocational counseling may be of therapeutic significance, because the professional success is positively related to the good health of the individual. The interesting data, related to professional success counseling, presented by Crites, reveal that the expectations for success

are at least 25% higher than these of the psychotherapy.

In the international dimension, the professional counseling is closely related to the educational system. It can play the role of a supporting process and contributes to the solving of specific problems, like socialization /for example/ of the detained people.

The counselor shall provide for a suitable atmosphere before the start of the mere process. It shall be favourable for the stimulation of the personal responsibility and self-support motivation of the detained person. The counsellor shall possess characteristics like empathy, respect of the individual and emotional warmth, specificity of expression, spontaneity, etc. /Egan, 1981/

The vocational counseling may be used in the prison education, as well as a specific method, intended to support the individual in the understanding of his/her own problem in the context of the situation that he/she is in. The counseling shall provide an opportunity to the detained person to identify the different possible variants for overcoming the difficulty.

The vocational counseling as a process shall be carried out by specially trained experts.

In this view, the idea of an exchange between the teachers at the prison school in Stara Zagora and the lecturers at the Pedagogical Department of the Thracian University in Stara Zagora is well-timed and welcomed.

The exchange between the two institutions is multidirectional; besides the providing of methodological support on behalf of the Pedagogical Department for the implementation of the interactive methods for training and education, we intend:

- Training of the staff, working with detained people by lecturers from the Pedagogical Department, related to vocational training and counseling;
- Providing an opportunity to "Social pedagogy" students from the Pedagogical Department to work as volunteers in the prison within the framework of their compulsory traineeship programme;
- Joint participation of prison staff, engaged in the vocational education and counseling and lecturers from the Pedagogical Department in scientific projects and conferences.

The initial training of the prison staff, engaged in the vocational education and counseling, will positively affect their work.

All specialists, engaged in the vocational education and counseling in prisons, shall have the opportunity at least one per month to receive professional guidance and support from a specialist from an outside organization, like the lecturers at the Pedagogical Department. This may be done on an individual, group or team basis. The important is to provide an opportunity to the prison staff to continuously raise their qualification and receive a feedback about themselves and the efficiency of their work.

Recommendation N° R 8912 of the Committee of Ministers to the Member States of the Council of Europe on Prison Education encourages the development of research programmes. This is namely the stimulus of the team of the Pedagogical Department for joint activities with the prison. The vocational training in prisons shall be constantly analyzed and updated in accordance with the principles of the educational models for adult education.

In view of the good practice of group counseling, the Pedagogical Department is planning to support the detained people in the formation of a Personal change group. The group shall be intended to create a self-support community among the prisoners in the aim of restricting the negative effect of their institutionalization, as well as the transfer of asocial behaviour among the detained people.

Last, but not least important is the opportunity of the Pedagogical Department to

support the teachers at the school in the identification of more effective training methods for adults.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues,

I could further discuss the issues of prison education, but my report is intended to present only a summary of this issue.

I would like to conclude with the following summary:

The prison education is a process that can be characterized as important, complicated, contradictory, ambiguous, conservative and outstanding. It has organizational and pedagogical dimensions, as well as age, social, intellectual, economic and correctional characteristics.

Unfortunately, quite a few research specialists (at least in Bulgaria) are devoted to this process and, perhaps, the innovations and good practices are forthcoming. Furthermore, it is generally very difficult to follow up the results of this education, especially after the release of the detained people.

In general the education may be considered as the bridge, connecting the present with the future, and leading the people ahead, generation after generation. Is the prison education a chance for a better future? Chance – undisputedly! But it is only a chance, not a guarantee. It depends on the goals and the efforts for their achievement. We know that. And if they know that as well, let's do it!

Let's make the changes together!

Please, accept my best wishes for your future personal and professional success!  
Thank you!

