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Social Rehabilitation of Prisoners on the Basis of the Programme “Theatre, Mummy, Daddy and Me” in the Light of Document Analysis

Proces readaptacji społecznej skazanych na przykładzie programu „Teatr, mama, tata i ja” w świetle analizy dokumentów

ABSTRACT

The article is based on a method of analyzing documentation on a prisoner social rehabilitation programme, which is focused on repairing broken bonds and consolidating relationships between parents and children. The programme’s objectives are discussed here, along with its methodology and evaluation process.

The research material comprises various documents developed as part of the planning, implementation and evaluation of the programme, including workshop plans and evaluation and observation

KEYWORDS

social rehabilitation of prisoners, the child’s right to parental contact, Convention on the Rights of the Child, children of incarcerated parents

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE

resocjalizacja skazanych, prawo dziecka do kontaktu z rodzicem, Konwencja o prawach dziecka, dzieci osadzonych rodziców

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sheets generated in 2016–2018. The innovative prisoner social rehabilitation programme is discussed in detail in this article on the basis of the building and consolidation of parental bonds. Most social rehabilitation programmes of this type are informed by the social rehabilitation methods listed in Art. 67 § 3 of the Penal Code (1997), in which maintaining contact with family and the outside world is listed next to learning, work, cultural and educational activities, sport and therapy. The “Theatre, Mummy, Daddy and Me” programme is based on contemporary cognitive and behavioural approaches in psychology and therapy, and additionally also draws on a multi-systemic approach to environmental therapy.

In the context of the need to secure children’s rights and protect prisoners’ rights, it is the obligation of penitentiary institutions to secure contact between the incarcerated parents and their children.

ABSTRAKT

W artykule wykorzystano metodę analizy dokumentów. Materiałem do analizy były dokumenty programu readaptacji społecznej skazanych, polegającego na nawiązywaniu i wzmacnianiu więzi pomiędzy rodzicami a dziećmi. W artykule opisano cele programu, metody wykorzystywane podczas jego realizacji oraz sposoby ewaluacji i jej wyniki.

Materiał badawczy poddany analizie stanowią dokumenty zastane, przygotowane w procesie tworzenia i realizacji oraz ewaluacji programu, takie jak scenariusze zajęć, ankiety ewaluacyjne oraz arkusze obserwacyjne z lat 2016–2018.

Artykuł opisuje innowacyjny program readaptacji osób osadzonych w zakładzie penitencjarnym, którego celem jest budowanie i wzmacnianie więzi między rodzicami a dziećmi. Współczesne programy readaptacji społecznej skazanych bazują na podstawowych środkach resocjalizacji wymienionych w art. 67, §3 Kodeksu karnego wykonawczego z 1997 roku, w którym utrzymywanie kontaktów z rodziną i światem zewnętrznym wymienione jest obok nauki, pracy, zajęć kulturalno-oświatowych i sportowych oraz terapii. Program „Teatr, mama, tata i ja” opiera się na współczesnym podejściu kognitywno-behawioralnym w psychologii i terapii, czerpie też z podejścia wielosystemowego w terapii środowiskowej. Natomiast w kontekście ochrony praw dziecka oraz ochrony praw skazanych zapewnienie kontaktów między rodzicami aresztowanymi lub odbywającymi karę pozbawienia wolności a ich dziećmi jest obowiązkiem instytucji penitencjarnej.

Introduction

Maintaining contact with family and close relatives, in particular with children, is a major protective factor in the process of the social rehabilitation of prisoners, aimed at the prevention of recidivism. As children's rights to contact with parents belong to the catalogue of basic rights protected by the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, the obligation to exercise them lies with parents, guardians and institutions required to act in the child's best interest. On the other hand, prisoners' rights are subject to the universal protection of human rights even though detailed regulations safeguarding prisoners' right to contact with others are regulated by the provisions of UN documents and European regulations. The social rehabilitation programme for prisoners serving custodial sentences in Areszt Śledczy w Kielcach (Kielce Remand Centre), Poland complies with the binding legal norms and various contemporary approaches to the risk assessment of recidivism.

Prisoners' contact with children and family in social rehabilitation programmes

Maintaining contact with family and relatives in the social rehabilitation process is amongst the strongest protective factors in recidivism prevention strategies, as discussed in conventional Polish social prophylactics and rehabilitation pedagogy (Barczykowska, Dzierżyńska-Breś and Muskała 2017) and in contemporary analyses based on methods for evidence-based practice.

Research confirms that maintaining bonds with family and relatives is a factor considered in the process of recidivism risk assessment (Andrews and Bonta 2006), as is the essential role of staying in touch with the family, particularly with children, in the entire social rehabilitation process (Gendreau, Little and Goggin 1996). At the same time, research based on meta-analyses allows for the conclusion that being a father may be one of the high-risk factors of recidivism in the case of men serving long-term sentences, as it has been linked to the effect of losing contact with a child while remaining in custody. In fact, correctional facilities seem to reinforce the sense of being a "bad father," which most of these men already have prior to being jailed

(Liem and Garcin 2014). The conclusions from a meta-analysis of 10 studies published in 1991–2014 on the subject of prisoners’ contacts with their families confirm that visits of family members have an impact on the prisoners’ well-being as well as on a number of violations of prison rules and the probability of recidivism (De Claire and Dixon 2015). The studies included in the meta-analysis were case-control and cohort studies of uneven methodological standards, which still however demonstrated that visits of family members resulted in reduced depressive symptoms both in women and children and also reduced the number of violations of prison rules. Two methodologically thorough studies strongly indicate that maintaining contact with the family reduces recidivism among male prisoners (De Claire and Dixon 2015; Poehlmann et al. 2010).

The rights of convicted persons, including the right to family and private life, freedom from torture and any other form of inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and freedom of conscience and religion, are protected by the general principles of human rights. Contact with family and the outside world is guaranteed to convicts by the provision of the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners of 1957,¹ rule 37, which states that “prisoners shall be allowed under necessary supervision to communicate with their family and reputable friends at regular intervals, both by correspondence and by receiving visits.” EU jurisprudence followed the UN regulations, and the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners were introduced in 1973 (CM, Rec (73), 1973). The rules were similar to the UN regulations and provided convicts with the right to regular family contact. The European Prison Regulations of 1987 did not revise any of the previous provisions regarding prisoners’ contact with their families (CM, Rec (87), 1987), but the new version of 2006 introduced a rule that family contact should

¹ Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners Adopted by the First United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held at Geneva in 1955, and approved by the Economic and Social Council by its resolutions 663 C (XXIV) of 31 July 1957 and 2076 (LXII) of 13 May 1977. On 7 October 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, the so-called Nelson Mandela Rules, which are an updated version of the 1955 UN Model Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. The aim of the resolution is to improve the situation of prisoners globally.

be allowed without delay and by various means of communication. Any restrictions of this rule must be justified and an acceptable minimum level of contact must still be permitted (CM, Rec (2006), rule 24.1 and 2; Wedeł-Domaradzka 2016: 305); additionally, any ‘supervision’ of correspondence must be justified by the suspicion that the contents may be illegal (Commentary to Rec (2006) to rule 24; Wedeł-Domaradzka 2016: 305). What has been observed since the 1980s in the European documents is the growing engagement of society in the punishment and conviction of prisoners and the provision of special regulations for different groups of convicts, including foreigners, long-term prisoners or female convicts. As early as 1981, the regulations of the Council of Europe introduced a more considerate form of family visits as they “positively affect the prisoner’s emotional stability and sense of duty. The least restrictive approach to visits is also suggested, including permitting visits of a personal nature” (Wedeł-Domaradzka 2016: 306). New guidelines were also introduced in relation to female convicts, specifying that the effects of imprisonment should not impact their children. The most important of these is the recommendation of 1997 (CM, Rec (1997)), which clearly states that punishment by imprisonment has negative consequences for the convict’s family, especially when prisoners are stripped of parental rights and consequently lose contact with their children (Wedeł-Domaradzka 2016: 306). The recommendation states that “[t]he Ministers’ Committee should encourage member states to improve conditions in which family visits take place, particularly to create places where prisoners and their families can spend time alone” (Wedeł-Domaradzka 2016: 308).

The Polish regulations place family visits and contacts with the outside world among the fundamental means of correctional rehabilitation (Executive Penal Code 1997, Art. 67 § 3). The scope and manner of implementing prisoners’ rights to family contact depend on the type of penitentiary (open, semi-open or closed regime), the type of convict (juveniles, first-time offenders, penitentiary offenders, female prisoners and those in military custody) and on the prison’s internal regulations (Executive Penal Code 1997, Arts. 69–70). In a closed-regime facility, convicts have the right to visits twice a month (three times in the case of juvenile offenders); in a semi-open facility, the figure rises to four times a month regardless of the

prisoner's age. In an open-type facility, prisoners have unlimited rights to visits. Most visits last 60 minutes and take place in a common room with no more than two adults allowed in at a time. The number of visiting children is unlimited, but they are not allowed to be left alone with the prisoner. The presence of the child's legal guardians is required at all times (Ombudsman 2019). The right to visits is regulated by Art. 105 § 1 of the Executive Penal Code, which provides for the right to contact and maintain bonds with family and relatives through face-to-face visits, correspondence, telephone calls, parcels, money orders and, where justified and with the consent of the prison governor, by other means of communication, e.g. since 2014 prisoners have been allowed to Skype (Krakowska 2019). People who are considered close relatives are the prisoner's parents, siblings, spouse, children (including adopted children), grandparents, great-grandparents, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, as well as live-in partners (The Penal Code 1997, Art. 115 § 11). According to Polish regulations, and in connection with international regulations, a prisoner or his or her family have the right to request that, for important family reasons, the sentence is served in a penitentiary near their place of residence or near the school or other childcare facility used by the family (Executive Penal Code 1997, Arts. 87a, 100, 105 § 1 and § 3, 165 § 1).

Although most penitentiaries can be an intimidating environment for a child, the right to contact between an incarcerated parent and a child is guaranteed by international and national regulations and must not be restricted without proper justification.

The right of the child to maintain contact with an incarcerated parent

For the issue at stake here, important context can be provided by an analysis of personal communication between a child and an incarcerated parent. In this paper, the matter is approached from the point of view of the rights and protection of the personal interests of the child. Although the right to maintain communications with children is subject to free interpretation within the national legislative frameworks (Justyński 2011: 145–148), as far as the Polish

context is concerned, the terminology itself used to determine the right to maintain contact with a child, or to proclaim the Convention on Contacts Concerning Children, define this kind of communication as the child “staying for a limited period of time with or meeting a person mentioned in Articles 4 or 5 with whom he or she is not usually living” (Convention on Contacts Concerning Children, 2009, Art. 2), shifting the emphasis of family and legal relationships to the adult and his or her rights and obligations. Yet the Supreme Court considered this asymmetry, stating that in the case of relationships between parents and children “we are dealing with a special relationship in which children are subordinate to parents, hence the relations between parents and children are characterized by this principle (Resolution of the Supreme Court, 1973, No. 7–8, item 118), even though the literature on the subject highlights the fact that the child’s interest should always prevail over the interest of the parent or parents” (Stadniczeńko 2015: 89).

It seems indisputable nowadays that children who are in the special situation discussed in this paper, with one or both parents being imprisoned, are the subject of human rights in general, and in particular the rights of the child, and even more specifically the child whose parent or parents are incarcerated. So it is especially because of the child’s psycho-physical immaturity and the exceptionally difficult experience that she or he has to go through that such children must be treated with respect for their human rights and with due attention given to their special needs (CM, Rec (2018), 5: 5), as well as with attentiveness in recognizing their best interest. The related doctrine continually seeks to clarify the meaning of these terms. In many of these theoretical approaches, the doctrine stipulates that the child’s ultimate good is paramount and should be the main evaluative criterion when decisions are made in all matters related to the child, or when settling disputes in which the child’s interest collides with the rights of others, particularly parents (Stojanowska 1999: 82–87; Winiarz 1965: 65–81; Kuztal 2018: 145–198; Krupa-Lipińska 2016: 7–27; etc.). This is an important issue because contact with loved ones belongs to the category of human/children’s personal rights (Grudzińska 2000: 14) and human/children’s freedoms (Justyński 2011: 131), including the freedom to maintain communications with the detained parent, and the violation of these

rights and freedoms may affect the child's other personal interests, such as his or her private life (Holewińska-Łapińska 2008: 120) or the right to grow up without stigmatization or discrimination related to the parent being forcibly confined (CM, Rec (2018), 5: 5). Hence the protection of the child's personal right to family bonds must be guaranteed in every case in which maintaining communication with loved ones is consistent with the child's ultimate good.

The child's right to maintain contact with their loved ones, as regulated by the law, does not involve special provisions for the children of incarcerated parents. The child's relatives have a choice of legal instruments that they can use to exercise their right to maintain communication either on the basis of the Civil Code and protection of personal interest, the Family and Guardianship Code, or judgements of the Supreme Court. If unsuccessful, they can also pursue their rights in the international arena or process their claims within the procedures of international conventions. In every case, in accordance with Art. 23 of the Civil Code, personal rights are protected by civil law, regardless of the special protection delivered by other provisions. For the time being, however, the children of an incarcerated parent – even though they have the same human rights – cannot, in principle, effectively demand the protection of their right to maintain contact with a parent remaining in custody. The lack of legal provisions or limited legal or procedural capacity (Civil Code, 1964, Arts. 12, 15), restricted by the provisions of the Code of Civil Procedure, essentially prevent children from pursuing legal claims regarding contact with their relatives or, if deemed not to be in the best interest of the child, lead to the effective revoking of the right to such contact. This particular interest should be secured on the child's behalf by the appointed legal representatives (Code of Civil Procedure, Art. 66 in relation to the Family and Guardianship Code, 1964, from Art. 98 § 1), but they most frequently violate this right, either by failing to follow the court's judgement or through the ineffective protection of the child's interests. In such situations, the child's rights can be secured by appointing a probation officer (Family and Guardianship Code, 1964). A claim on a child's behalf can also be made by the Public Prosecutor's Office. Alternatively, children can demand compensation for having been deprived of contact with close relatives when they come of age (Grudzińska 2000: 14–18). This does not, however, actually

protect the child's current rights there and then, in the demanding situation of the parent being held in custody. Under the circumstances, the best solution would be to add an unequivocal clause to the Civil Code that would clearly state that the implementation of parental rights, particularly the right of contact between the child and the parents, should take place with respect for the child's personal rights. Consequently, a new legal procedure should be introduced to enable children to protect their rights when they are violated by parents or legal guardians (Grudzińska 2000: 16; Cisek 1990: 27–40).

The clarification of the protection of the principles of a child's personal rights in the form of communication with imprisoned relatives can be found in Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)5 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States concerning children with imprisoned parents, which includes the following:

1. Children shall be provided with the opportunity for their views to be heard, directly or indirectly, in relation to decisions which may affect them.
2. Where a custodial sentence is being contemplated, the rights and best interests of any affected children should be taken into consideration.
3. Whenever a parent is detained, particular consideration shall be given to allocating them to a facility close to their children.
4. The prison administration shall endeavour to collect and collate relevant information at entry regarding the children of those detained.
5. National authorities shall endeavour to provide sufficient resources to state agencies and civil society organizations to support children with imprisoned parents and their families to enable them to deal effectively with their particular situation and specific needs, including offering logistic and financial support, where necessary, in order to maintain contact.
6. Staff who come into contact with children and their imprisoned parents shall receive training in areas including respect for children's needs and rights, the impact of imprisonment and the prison setting on children and the parental role, how to support imprisoned parents and their children and better understand the specific problems they face, how to make visits child-friendly, and searching children in a child-friendly manner.

The consolidation of children's rights pertaining to the ability to pursue, personally or through the legal representation of a third party, the right to maintain contact with a parent requires that the full implementation of their fundamental right – the right to remain in contact with relatives – is observed. These principles were followed in the social rehabilitation programme discussed in detail below, which was developed for the prisoners of the local remand centre in Kielce, Poland.

The “Theatre, Mummy, Daddy and Me” programme in the social rehabilitation of prisoners

The “Theatre, Mummy, Daddy and Me” (*Teatr, Mama, Tata i Ja*) rehabilitation programme was implemented from 2015 up to December 2019 by the team of the “Kubus” Puppet and Actor Theatre and employees of the Kielce Remand Centre, with the financial support of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and several other public institutions and private local entities. From its very beginning in 2015, the programme engaged several partners, including local government institutions (Kielce Municipality) and NGOs providing support to families, children and teenagers in the local community, such as Centrum Profilaktyki i Edukacji w Kielcach (The Świętokrzyskie Province Prophylactics and Education Centre in Kielce) and local companies providing additional financing (Kowalska 2018). This rehabilitation initiative is an example of a multi-systemic approach in the local system of the prevention of social marginalization and recidivism.

Several groups were the addressees of the programme – among them children, adolescents and parents (both mothers and fathers) serving prison sentences but also children's legal guardians and employees of the Kielce Remand Centre (prison staff), animators and artists of the “Kubus” Puppet and Actor Theatre. From 2017 the project also involved representatives of the academic community.

The programme was introduced in 2015, following the observation that several of the women held in the remand centre avoided contact with their children. The prisoners' children were at the time fostered by relatives or stayed with other foster families or in

the institutions which observed the obligatory visits. The situation was particularly difficult as some of the mothers independently surrendered their right to contact to help the child avoid the stress of having to visit the prison and the related stigma. This is when the administration of the remand centre, in cooperation with representatives of local cultural circles, initiated the practice of organizing meetings between the mothers, fathers and their children outside of the prison walls. The first group recruited for the purpose included 35 people (5 female and 3 male prisoners, 15 children and 12 guardians attending for security reasons). The recruitment of participants was subject to a procedure implemented directly by the remand centre. Participation was on a voluntary basis; the recruiting criteria were that the inmates who remained in a semi-open facility had to have intact parental rights (Kowalska 2016: 6) and were parents of children aged 2–15.

In the group of children, the first sub-group included children who came from one-parent families and had a parent who remained in a form of custody which considerably reduced any communications between that parent and the child. The second sub-group comprised children who lived in a two-parent family but had a close relative who was serving a prison sentence. The third group comprised female and male prisoners held in Kielce Remand Centre. The women on average mothered 1–3 children but their bonds with the children were evaluated as weak. The men in the group had no contact with their children at all, which in most cases was caused by the children living far away or a lack of regular visits based on the provisions of the Executive Penal Code of 1997 and the regulations on the terms and conditions of custodial sentencing of 2016 (Executive Penal Code, 1997; Regulation of the Minister of Justice, 2016). The third group consisted of prison officers who became involved as supervisors and educators, providing them with an opportunity to do corrective and rehabilitation work and acquire new competences.

The main programme objectives were to support and consolidate the social and caring function of the families in which one of the parents was serving a custodial sentence. This was based on the idea that the prisoners' contact with the family, and particularly with their children, is a protective factor in the social rehabilitation process. Some of the more specific goals of the programme were altered

during its implementation, following the results of the formative evaluation, carried out throughout the subsequent implementations, and also in response to the needs of the participants. The following are some of the most significant rehabilitation goals:

- rebuilding and consolidating family bonds (between children, partners, spouses or other family members) with mothers or fathers serving a custodial sentence;
- shaping a sense of responsibility for relationships with children and maintaining contact with them;
- developing a sense of agency, initiative and independence in undertaking life tasks through cooperation between programme participants;
- creating the need for self-realization through participation in culture and being involved in artistic and cultural activities;
- shaping self-confidence and self-esteem by discovering new skills and creativity training.

From the perspective of the participating children, the fact that the rehabilitation activities were taken out of the prison, which is hardly a suitable place for building positive family relationships between parents and children, seemed the most important factor. Importantly, in this context, securing the right of contact with a parent who is serving a prison sentence and creating the proper conditions for parent-child visits is the responsibility of penitentiary institutions.

The aim of the programme was to support children who lived in one-parent families or in dysfunctional settings in order to prevent or eradicate emotional problems. The sense of stigma attached to being the child of an incarcerated parent and its effects on the child's socio-emotional development may be mediated by the process of de-stigmatization through involvement with theatre, being among people who are not associated with the prison and being involved in the process of the creative construction of a new, non-deviant identity (Konopczyński 2014, after Goffmann 2005).

For prison employees, the programme objectives were defined as follows:

- providing inspiration for prison employees to construct corrective rehabilitation programmes using cultural education;
- improving their skills in the methodology of working with prisoners;

- acquiring new competences in the methodology of art therapy in cooperation with the animators of the “Kubus” theatre.

The social rehabilitation methods focused on an interactive workshop method. The assumptions behind the project corresponded with the creative approach to rehabilitation (Konopczyński 2014: 108–109). The organizers’ objectives were to “develop creative passions and ideas, inspire to action with reference to the individual daily experiences of each participant. Giving each participant full acceptance was a necessary condition for personal creative development” (Kowalska 2016: 6). The workshop methods included experimenting, brainstorming, imaginative thinking and pedagogical play (creating space, games, improvisation, creativity training and art therapy techniques, such as drawing, painting, embroidery and decoration, bibliotherapy, music therapy, drama) (Kowalska 2016: 7).

Each cycle of the programme took 12 months and was planned as monthly 4-hour meetings held on Sundays (in 2016 the meetings were organized on a 3-hour basis). The workshops were held for 8 months, from May to December, and were divided into two parts: the first was an art class held in a theatre studio, where parents and children worked with animators. These classes consisted of painting, sewing and creating masks, theatre costumes or elements of stage design: “*The participants could perform individually or together with a family member, which gave them an opportunity to express different emotions related to separation in a safe, non-verbal way*” (Kowalska 2016: 7). The second part of the meeting was movement workshops (using musical instruments, mainly percussion). These consisted in developing verbal and non-verbal communication skills, expression, integration and consolidation of the child-parent bond via them watching a theatre performance together or performing drama-based activities or on-stage improvisations. This part gave everyone a chance to get acquainted with acting and stage design: “*The workshops were designed both as fun and as a method of developing self-esteem and bodily expression, releasing emotional tensions, relieving aggression, learning positive communication and building an atmosphere of trust in a safe environment*” (Kowalska 2016: 7). The techniques used “*played an important role not only in the formation of positive character traits, but also in improving the ability to concentrate and developing visual and auditory coordination, providing shy people with an opportunity to open up*

to the group and to the “new” content while some of the more hyperactive individuals could practice and improve their concentration and develop determination” (Kowalska 2016: 7). The elements of mindfulness and aggression-replacement training (Goldstein 1994), along with parenting workshops, were included in 2018. These involved two 2-hour meetings held in the remand centre, devoted to conscious parenting and communication with the child and exploring anger and other emotions in the relationship with the child. The meetings were held by Anna Dąbrowska and Katarzyna Śmiłowska (Śmiłowska 2018). An important part of these sessions was a break for a shared meal, during which the participants could discuss their family matters while the programme organizers observed them as part of their evaluations, making comments and notes. Each workshop group included up to 15 people; among the facilitators were cultural animators, psychologists, pedagogues, prison wardens and therapists, who could adjust the course level to the requirements of specific groups.

Programme evaluation began from the start, in 2015, and due to the seasonal cycles following one another it was realized with the organizers’ own diagnostic tools. Evaluations were carried out at the beginning and end of each edition, which took place over a period of 8 to 9 monthly meetings. We focus now on the evaluations carried out between 2015 and 2019 with the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods. Among the instruments used in the evaluation process were (i) questionnaires completed by the individuals participating in the programme, (ii) observation sheets filled in by animators and facilitators of the parenting and integration workshops, and (iii) questionnaires for unstructured interviews and association maps for children (Kietlińska 2018). The evaluation surveys for the programme participants comprised the following evaluations: the assessment of the overall atmosphere and organization of the workshops. The observation sheets included the group characteristics (number of participants, gender, quality of contact, behaviour, engagement, distinguishing features), parental characteristics (relationships among family members, external relationships between families, involvement in the workshop tasks), characteristics of the remand centre supervisors (relations with other prisoners, relationships between supervisors and their engagement in the workshops), workshop facilitators’ characteristics (relations between facilitators and participants,

engagement, difficulties) and a description of the process (exercises, games, level of engagement in carrying out tasks and requests, response to each element of the workshop, relationships during games and play). The assessment of the effectiveness of the programme was incomplete at the time of writing this article, as was the programme itself. Altogether, 44 inmates and 79 children participated between 2015 and 2019. However, three areas of effective change have already been identified: (i) reinforcing the factors that determine the effectiveness of the social rehabilitation process, (ii) implementing the child's right to contact and supporting the inmates' parental involvement, and (iii) the development of an institutional artistic and socio-cultural initiative that targets local communities.

As far as the first area is concerned, two female inmates had their custodial sentences conditionally reduced by ten months as a result of their participation in the programme in 2015 and 2016. Also, one of the prisoners carried on working in the theatre setting and participated in some initiatives as a voluntary worker in the theatre's art studio after his sentence had been served.

The results of the formative evaluation served the purpose of improving the quality of programme activities and designing changes to be introduced in subsequent seasons, with a view to securing the child's rights of contact with the parent and encouraging a better quality of parental involvement and care. Having analyzed the evaluation materials, the organizers concluded that the parental competences workshops needed improvement to give more consideration to the subject of children's developmental needs, proper communication between parents and children and other mechanisms underlying these relationships.

Also crucial to the organizers and other participants who worked as animators, therapists and administrators was the evaluation by the programme's financing institution – the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage – which appreciated its role in supporting the process of the social rehabilitation of prisoners through the involvement of local social and cultural circles and cultural institutions in rebuilding and repairing prisoners' family bonds, and it granted more funds for the three seasons to follow.

Conclusions

The aim of this article was to discuss the social rehabilitation process of inmates involved in the programme “Theatre, Mummy, Daddy and Me,” implemented by the remand centre in Kielce, Poland between 2015 and 2019. The programme, which was initially designed as a cultural adaptation initiative, turned out to have broad rehabilitation and reintegration potential involving parents, children, employees of the remand centre and theatre artists. The process of social rehabilitation itself was reinforced by such protective factors as rebuilding or consolidating family bonds through contact with children, which helps the incarcerated parents to become engaged with the children’s upbringing and care. An important aspect of the programme analysis in the sphere of the social rehabilitation of inmates was the protection of children’s rights and, more precisely, the guaranteeing of the child’s right to contact with parents. As mentioned before, in the current legal setting this right should be secured by a child’s legal guardians, yet they have often been found to fail in this role or, as incarcerated persons, have limited contact with the outside world. Although the practical implications of the analyses discussed here have not been finalized, it should be clearly stated that the process of the rehabilitation of prisoners should always consider the best interest of the child and that the prison administration should contribute to the building and consolidating of bonds between parents and children, in this way optimizing their own work towards social rehabilitation. The authors believe that giving support to the family’s caring function as a protective factor in the social rehabilitation process is one of the most significant factors preventing recidivism (Andrews and Bonta 2006: 58–60).

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