# Education and Rehabilitation of Adult Persons with Disabilities

Thematic Collection of International Importance

# Education and Rehabilitation of Adult Persons with Disabilities Thematic Collection of International Importance

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## VOCATIONAL TRAINING AS A FACTOR IN THE REHABILITATION OF INMATES IN INSTITUTIONS FOR ENFORCING PENAL SANCTIONS

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#### **SUMMARY**

Numerous studies show that the educational level, work experience and skills of prisoners are below the average of the general population. The low level of qualifications has negative effects on the employment prospects of inmates after release from prison, and it was found that it is one of the key factors for recidivism. Therefore, education and vocational training has a special significance for inmates in institutions for enforcing penal sanctions.

Basically there are a few prison programs that prepare inmates for life after prison, including: educational programs, vocational training, prison industry and developing skills for employment.

Education, vocational training and work engagement of inmates in institutions for enforcing penal sanctions in the Republic of Serbia are discussed in this paper. The following options are available for them while serving a prison sentence: completing educational level provided by education system in the Republic of Serbia, vocational training for certificates of competency in particular craft and work engagement within or out the institution for enforcing penal sanctions. However, small number of inmates is using the resources available to obtain higher level of education while serving their sentence.

Key words: vocational training, educational programs, inmates, institution for enforcing penal sanctions

#### INTRODUCTION

Education is a basic human need and a human right. In addition, labor and employment are an important part of life for many people and one of the key elements of the psychological well-being of every person. Especially in modern, Western society, work is considered an important contribution in terms of personal status and value as well as maintaining the health and well-being through exercise and the establishment of social relationships (Grint, 2005). Those who are excluded from professional associations and paid employment are themselves on the margins of society (Odović et al., 2011 by Abberley, 2002).

Education and training, besides at a school, can be carried out at other institutions, including prisons. These institutions have a specific learning environment that differs from that of the regular education and training systems. Accordingly, on the international level, there has been an increase of interest in education and training in prisons after inmates are returned to society. This interest is also in line with the lifelong learning concept, which sees each educational activity as part of a lifelong process.

Numerous studies show that educational level, work experience, and skills of inmates are below average of the general population. The low level of qualifications of inmates has negative effects on their employment prospects after release from prison, and it was found that this is one of the key factors that influence whether the ex-inmate becomes a repeat offender (Hawley, Murphy & Souto-Otero, 2013). Facilitating the acquisition of basic educational skills, in particular, vocational training in prisons has an important role in the reintegration of inmates into society.

Inmates who gain general education and vocational training are significantly less likely to return to prison after release and are more likely to find employment than others who do not take advantage of such opportunities (Davis et al., 2013).

#### Vocational education and training

Vocational education and training (also called Career and Technical Education), is preparing students for jobs that are based on manual or practical activities, usually non-academic, and completely related to a particular job or occupation.

Training is actually focused on building skills for paid employment or contract work as well as for all other types of work that can be found in modern societies. Vocational training, unless one needs to train people for all types and modes of operation, is necessary to train them for life in the community in order to understand the relation between society and labor. Therefore, it can be said that professional training includes both training for work and training for life in the community. In this sense, the general and internationally accepted definition states that "vocational training activities are aimed at identifying and developing human capabilities for productive and satisfying work time. Those who participate in vocational training activities should be able to understand and, individually or collectively, influence the working conditions and social environment" (ILO, 1975).

In practical lessons, learning is the adoption and application of expert knowledge, training skills, and habits of certain working operations in the production process (Stošljević & Odović, 1996).

Like other types of education, vocational training has a pedagogical component, but there is a stronger emphasis on the technical and technological aspects. Compared to other forms of education, vocational training demonstrates the need for a deeper reflection on the relationships between the content and methods of training, including both the changes that take place within the realm of production and working society.

Grubb and Ryan (1999) have classified professional education and training from a theoretical point as follows:

- Pre-employment vocational education and training prepare individuals for initial employment; in most countries this usually comprises programs of professional education and training in schools. They occur both in schools and in enterprises that fall within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education;
- Upgrade training provides additional training for those who are already
  employed, given the ever-evolving nature of their jobs and technology and the
  growing complexity of the work environment, or perhaps because they thrive
  in the company;

- Retraining provides training for people who have lost their jobs, so they can
  find new employment, or for those who want a new career and need to acquire
  the necessary competencies for employment. People in vocational training, by
  definition, already have experience in the labor market, and retraining may not
  have a direct connection with the interest they already hold;
- Remedial vocational education and training provides education and training for
  people who are in some way marginalized or fall outside the regular workforce.
  They usually have not been employed for a long period or have no experience at
  all in the labor market. They are usually dependent on financial aid from society.

Vocational education and training is only one phase on the path of acquiring knowledge and skills for employment. The phase that immediately precedes vocational education and training is the period of vocational guidance, which is an organized system for providing continuous social and professional assistance to individuals throughout their entire professional development, free choice of direction in education and professional activities. The process of vocational guidance requires a multidisciplinary team and includes pre-professional assessment, professional information, and advice for career choice. During the final career consultation, three equally important factors are considered: the desire and interest of the person, his/her physical and mental abilities, and occupational requirements.

Vocational education and training not only takes into account the development of professional knowledge and skills, but also the period when social skills important for the integration into the working environment and the community are acquired, as well as the skills to find a job.

#### The legal framework for the vocational training of inmates

Ratified international treaties and rules of international law have significantly influenced the development of the system for completing penal sanctions in the Republic of Serbia. The two most important international documents are the United Nations' Standard Minimal Rules for the Treatment of Inmates and the European Prison Rules. In keeping with the theme of work, attention will be paid to international standards that are important for organizing fields of education and work opportunities for inmates.

The United Nations' Standard Minimal Rules for the Treatment of Inmates require the provision of education to all inmates and the compulsory education of illiterates and young inmates. The European Prison Rules provide that every prison should allow all inmates access to educational programs, and that priority should be given to the illiterate and those sentenced without a basic and vocational education. Education shall have the same status as inmate employment. Moreover, efforts should be made to integrate inmate education into the national system of education, and it should be organized by educational institutions outside prisons.

According to the Standard Minimal Rules for the Treatment of Inmates, all workingage inmates should be engaged in work. Inmate work should not be humiliating but rather meaningful and contribute to the maintenance and improvement of their working abilities. The organization and operation of the convicted persons should comply with the conditions for maximum work opportunities outside the institution

in order to adequately prepare them for employment upon release from prison. The interests and vocational training of inmates shall have precedence over financial gain from their work. Inmates should be primarily employed in industrial plants and farms that are under the supervision of the prison administration, and every other working arrangement requires constant monitoring by prison staff and administration. In accordance with general regulations, regulations governing occupational health and safety, compensation for injury or occupational diseases and inmate work-time shall be issued as well. Inmates are entitled to compensation for their work and they should be able to freely dispose of one-half of their profits, while the second part they are compelled to save, which will be delivered to the inmate upon release from prison. Along these same terms, inmate labor is regulated by the European Prison Rules.

Positive laws and by-laws of the Republic of Serbia in the field of penal sanction enforcement contain provisions relating to the education and inmate employment.

According to the Law on Enforcement of Penal Sanctions, inmates have the right to primary and secondary education, which is organized in an institution for the enforcement of the sentence. In addition, institutions may organize other forms of education or the inmate may authorize part-time education at their own expense. The issue of education for inmates carrying out penal sanctions is regulated by the Rulebook on the treatment, treatment programs, classification and re-classification of inmates and the House Rules of prisons and county institutes.

The Rulebook on the treatment, treatment programs, classification and reclassification of inmates provides for the mandatory assessment of the needs of inmates with vocational training and education, in order to determine individual treatment programs. House Rules regulations in prisons and county institutes envision that institutions will organize free literacy, basic education, and vocational training, the provision of examinations in the institution and beyond, and to provide the conditions and time needed for learning.

In terms of work opportunities for inmates, the provisions set forth in the Law on the Execution of Criminal Sanctions stipulate that work is an integral part of the treatment program, and its purpose is the acquisitions, maintenance, and improvement of work skills, work habits and professional knowledge. Inmate work must be meaningful, and the type of work is determined by mental and physical abilities, qualifications, inmate preferences and the capabilities of the institution. Inasmuch as it is possible, the inmate work shall be organized in a way that is similar to the arrangement and mode of work outside the institution. Prisoners work a normal 40-hour per week schedule and are entitled to compensation for the work, occupational safety, daily, weekly, and annual leave, and the protection of their intellectual property. Training and employment services ensure the training of prisoners for work and organization of their work. The Rulebook for treatment, treatment program, classification and re-classification inmates provides that, when creating individual treatment programs, one should take into account data on the inmate's employment prior to arriving at the facility. According to House Rules regulations at prisons and county institutes, prisoners are trained to work and develop professionally through theoretical preparation and practical training in accordance with the capabilities of the institution.

### Vocational education and training in institutions for serving penal sanctions

A review of research on the benefits of vocational education and training refers to research that was conducted in twenty-one European countries since 2005. Until 2009, the benefits of professional education and training can be grouped using the classical typology based on the nature of the results. It is possible to identify two main categories, namely economic and social benefits. The social benefits of vocational education also occur at the macro-, meso-, and micro levels. One important result concerns the positive impact of parents on their children: parents who participated in secondary professional education programs tend to create a stimulating environment and are more committed to learning activities than those who have not participated in the programs. Positive effects have been shown in the field of health in the prevention of unhealthy behavior such as smoking and drug addiction. In addition, reports indicate that professional education and training programs are associated with a reduction in criminal activity (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, 2011).

Education is therefore one of the key aspects of the inmate rehabilitation process, and often indirectly, it has an important role in many other rehabilitation processes in which the inmate may participate. It is not just a tool for the occupational employment of the inmate but could also be a springboard for the inclusion of prisoners who face social exclusion often before prison and after release. Creating a positive learning environment in prisons provides inmates the opportunity to take advantage of the time they will spend serving their sentences to fill gaps in knowledge and skills, improve their employability, and change their personal views and perceptions, including developing new perceptions and attitudes that can help them to understand the reasons and consequences of their actions.

The reality is the fact that people have specific characteristics that must be taken into account when developing program interventions. Each inmate represents a unique profile in terms of his previous work experience, health, life skills, criminal record, demographic characteristics, and this should be taken into account when developing and implementing remedial programs.

Generally, there are a few prison programs that focus on preparing inmates for life after prison. Lawrence et al., (2002) suggest that there are four categories of programs that develop skills and knowledge: educational programs, vocational training, prison industry, and developing skills for employment.

Educational programs typically involve basic adult education (training in reading, writing, and arithmetic), secondary education, and post-secondary education. The purpose of launching educational programs for inmates is to acquire basic academic skills or to improve work skills through post-secondary education. Rotman (1971) states that remedial education in the U.S. has been a part of the prison system since it was first established.

Broadly defined, professional training includes the acquisition of practical skills for the jobs inmates will do after their release from prison. This training includes the following areas: carpentry, automotive repair, electronic service, graphic arts/printing, horticulture, painting, welding, etc.. The special importance of vocational

training is the fact that offenders often lack the skills necessary for success in the labor market (LoBuglio, 2001).

Unlike the professional training related to developing skills for employment, programs in the prison industry focus primarily on inmate employment and ensuring that prison systems are self-sufficient. Although they have always served the needs of the state by decreasing inmate unemployment and the costs of prison industry, but they have also become an important aspect of developing the skills and training to work (Lawrence et al., 2002). These programs typically involve work in the usual prison industry (production of license plates, laundry, food service) as well as in agriculture, textile and restoration, including repairing computers.

Programs designed for inmates to develop skills for employment and job retention may be as important as the programs that trained them for the job. It is usually understood that training offered by employment services for developing skills for getting and keeping a job include the development of job interview skills, CV writing and developing professional habits required for the workplace.

However, these are not the only programs that are offered to inmates. Corrections agencies, as the hallmark of their work, offer training in life skills (e.g., maintenance of housing and maintaining appropriate interpersonal relationships), treatment for mental health, substance abuse treatment, religious programs, and other types of interventions (Lawrence et al., 2002).

# The importance of vocational education and training for the reduction of recidivism

One of the roles of the prison system is to provide an efficient environment that reduces the risk for repeated offenses. Reducing the rate of recidivism has benefited the entire community. In addition to the enormous social costs there are also great costs for recidivism. Without effective rehabilitative interventions, prisons offer short-term social medicine to reduce recidivism. Time spent in prison can cost a person his/her home, contact with family, work, and leave him/her completely unable to break the pattern of bad behavior. However, prisons can provide a stable, controlled environment in which inmates are empowered to accept personal responsibility for their behavior and its consequences (Bracken, 2011).

Many inmates have a level of education and skills well below the average of the general population, so they are more likely to be unemployed, which subsequently will affect their health and the possibility of independent living. Professional education and training programs, as part of the rehabilitation of the prisoners, seem to be an adequate solution to reduce these shortcomings. In addition, it increases the likelihood for successful reintegration into the community and reduces the risk of repeated offenses. The primary objective of the corrective system is changing the behavior of offenders through prison sentences and the use of psychological programs, education, and training programs focused on the factors that influence the behavior of offenders.

A study of prison camps for training in the U.S. has shown that the most effective programs for the reduction of recidivism are professional training, education classes, and therapy groups. Furthermore, intensive oversight after inmate release and

employment services are equally significant (Russo-Lleras, 2003). A study by Gordon & Weldon (2003) compared the recidivism rates of those who completed vocational education, those who completed their GED and participated in professional training, and the recidivism of inmates who did not participate in educational programs in prison marched. The study included inmates enrolled in educational programs from 1999-2000. From the total sample of prisoners, 53 were released after completing their professional education, 13 were released after completion of GED and vocational training, and 96 did not participate in educational programs in prison. Those who have completed vocational training had a relapse rate of 8,75%, the prisoners who participated in GED and vocational training had a relapse rate of 6,71%, and inmates who did not participate in educational programs had a relapse rate of 26%. Davis et al., (2013) examined the impact of correctional programs on the reduction of recidivism. Their meta-analytic study also provides data that education in prison reduces the risk that an individual will be a repeat offender after release. Inmates who participated in educational programs in prisons were 43% less likely to relapse than inmates who did not. However, the authors state that it was not possible to separate the effects of these different types of educational programs, given that the curriculum overlaps and that there is a lack of data for just how intensive these programs should be. So, it is not possible to argue, for example, that a secondary education program has a greater effect on reducing recidivism than educational programs after high school.

Some studies have shown that, compared with younger offenders for many offenders in their late twenties and older, getting a job is one major milestone for staying away from a life of crime (Uggen, 2000). Davis et al., (2013) examined the relationship between education and employment in prisons after inmate release and found that the chances of obtaining employment among inmates who participated in education in prisons (academic or professional education) were 13% higher than the chances for those who did not. When one looks at the relationship between vocational training, academic education in prisons, and employment after inmate release, the authors concluded that those who took part in professional training programs have 28% higher chances of getting a job than those who did not participate in professional training. Participation in academic programs gives individuals an 8% higher chance of getting a job than those who did not participate. Although the results suggest that vocational training programs have a greater effect than academic programs in securing an inmate a job after his/her release from prison, there was no statistically significant difference between the quota parameters for these two types of programs.

However, participation in educational programs in prisons reduces relapse, suggesting that education is a factor for change. Technical knowledge and skills are a precondition for employment, and this has been confirmed by preliminary research results, indicating a positive relationship between education in prisons and employment after release.

# Vocational education and training in institutions for enforcing penal sanctions in the Republic of Serbia

In the Republic of Serbia, there are 17 district prisons (hereafter: DP), 7 detention facilities (hereafter: DF), one female prison (Pozarevac), and one juvenile detention center (Valjevo). Since 1991, the prison system has recorded a large increase in the number of prisoners and convicted persons as a result of stricter judicial policy. This phenomenon has become especially pronounced since 2003 (Kuzminović & Palibrk, 2012).

According to the Annual Report of the Administration for Enforcement of Penal Sanctions, the total number of inmates incarcerated in 2012 was 8270. Moreover, out of 8270 inmates incarcerated during 2012, 5452 inmates were between 18 to 40 years of age; the years that young professional men are most active (Table 1).

Tuble I contribute persons by age admitted in I at I				
Age	Male	Female		
18 – 21 years	207	12		
22 – 27 years	1433	44		
28 – 40 years	3812	149		
41 – 50 years	1498	51		
51 – 60 years	703	47		
61 – 70 years	247	13		
70 years and above	52	2		
Total	7952	318		

Table 1 Convicted persons by age admitted in 2012

As mentioned, the educational level of prisoners is lower compared with the general population. Results of Adult Literacy Survey show that only 51% of inmates had completed high school, compared to 76% of the general population (Kerka, 1995). Similarly, Eikeland and Manger (2004) found that 51% of the inmates in Norwegian prisons had completed 1, 2, or 3 years of upper secondary school (school for those between 16 and 19 years of age). However, only 35% of inmates under 25 years of age had completed any level of upper secondary education. In comparison, 74% of the equivalent general population age group in Norway had completed 3 years of secondary education.

Among the c. 640000 strong prison population in the EU there is a significant proportion of low-skilled Europeans. Even though there is no exact data on the qualification levels of prisoners, it has been estimated that only 3-5% of them would be qualified to undertake higher education, and in many countries there is a high instance of early school leaving among prisoners (Hawley, Murphy & Souto-Otero, 2013).

Convicted persons by education as at 31 Dec 2012 in the institutions of Republic of Serbia, according to the Annual Report of the Administration for Enforcement of Penal Sanctions is shown in Table 2. The majority of male inmates completed only primary school, and others only the the third and fourth grade. On the other hand, most female inmates had at least a fourth-grade education, followed by prisoners with primary and elementary school education. However, a significant number of prisoners were illiterate or had not completed any primary or secondary school whatsoever.

Table 2 Convicted persons by educationas at 31 Dec 2012

Education	Male	Female
Illiterate	104	16
Incomplete primary school	442	36
Complete primary school	1796	50
Incomplete secondary school	251	3
Acquired 2nd degree	561	1
Acquired 3rd degree	1036	28
Acquired 4th degree	1571	88
Acquired 5th degree	5	0
Incomplete two-year post-secondary	49	0
education or university		
Complete two-year post-secondary	73	11
education		
University degree	106	12
Master studies	1	0
Doctoral studies	0	0

During the initial admission period to the institution for enforcement of penal sanctions, an inmate's educational needs are analyzed by a professional team consisting of a psychologist, educator, and social worker in collaboration with practical teaching instructors to determine the inmate's education level and professional profile. Length of a sentence is a determinant for the inclusion of inmates in education or vocational training. In some institutions (eg DF Ćuprija) primary education is offered, and the prisoners involved in the educational process (i.e. students) are allowed to attend school activities. For the purposes of carrying out literacy education, mainly librarians and sometimes highly educated inmates are employed.

A maximum year-long penalty (in the case of recidivists for another six months), suggests that an emphasis is not placed on the education of prisoners, but preference is given to vocational training (DP Subotica, DP Zrenjanin, etc.). The institutions trained the inmates in various trades, including: carpenter, hairdresser, baker, turner, machinist, mechanic, tinsmith, etc. Prison labor cannot be evaluated on the basis of pre-set criteria, but the opinion of the instructor or persons from the office for treatment and employment services. Control and evaluation of inmate work includes a degree of diligence in the carrying out of duties, motivation to work, and the quality of the finished product. Upon completion of training, inmates receive a certificate of competency for a particular type of work. The certificate does not mention the place where the training was done in order to help inmates become more recruitable after discharge from the institution.

Table 3 Educational programs for convicted persons in 2012

Education programs	Inside institution		Outside institution	
Education programs	Male	Female	Male	Female
Literacy	25	0	7	0
Primary school	39	0	1	0
Courses	59	24	2	0
3rd degree secondary school	29	0	2	0
4th degree vocational training and general secondary school	0	0	7	0
6th degree post-secondary education	0	0	6	0
7th degree – university	0	0	17	0
Total	152	24	42	0

According to the Administration for Enforcement of Penal Sanctions, a total of 218 inmates were involved in educational programs during 2012 (Table 3). Male inmates attended courses, completed elementary school, three years of high school, and trained to read and write. These educational programs are attended by the institution and beyond. Women exclusively attended courses within the institution. Compared with the number of prisoners incarcerated in 2012 (8270), it is clear that a small number of these individuals had been involved in educational programs.

Hawley, Murphy & Souto-Otero (2013) state that the survey findings show participation in education and training amongst adult prisoners tends to be lower than 25% in the majority of European countries. 15 European countries reported participation levels between 0 and 24% (e.g. Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, UK-Scotland and UK-Wales). As the data does not reveal whether the participation rate is below 1% or above 23%, it is possible that considerably less than a quarter of prisoners take part in learning. Those prisoners who do take part in education and training are generally able to acquire the same qualifications as those awarded outside of prison (Hawley, Murphy & Souto-Otero, 2013).

Work engagement represents the primary part of an inmate's daily activities in order to create structure, and does not stand out as a separate factor that solely contributes to employment opportunities after leaving the institution. Due to lack of resources, primarily financial and secondarily physical, there are hardly any job offers in the institution that later provide any opportunity for employment after release. The assignment of prisoners in institutions for specific tasks shall be performed in accordance with prescribed rules, and some of them regard safety and hygiene. Therefore, for the agricultural activities, persons from the open department are exclusively employed, whereas jobs within the institution are filled by inmates from the semi-open department. All persons working kitchen jobs must pass special sanitary inspections. One of the areas where inmates are engaged in work is the institution's internal economy. Food is produced on large plots of land for personal use and for sale on the market. Cattle, sheep, pigs, poultry are bred, grains, vegetables and fruits are grown, and eggs, milk, and milk products are produced. Most DP's (Cacak, Kragujevac, Pancevo, Sabac, Rovinj, etc..) and DF (Cuprija, Padinska Skela etc.) have their own internal economy.

In addition to the internal economy, inmates can work to engage and train in commercial units that exist in certain institutions:

- DP Novi Sad has its "Novi putevi" (New Paths) economic unit, which comprises the operation of a concrete plant, cardboard plant, and its own internal economy;
- DP Pancevo's "Nadel" economic unit includes the following: the growing of cereals and other crops, fruit and vegetables, raising pigs and cows, and milk and egg production. Its processing industry includes: the manufacture of wood, manufacture of bricks, tiles, and construction products made from baked clay;
- DF Sombor's economic unit "Elan" mainly involves wood processing production (wooden containers – pallets, joinery and fittings, painting equipment – easels and blind frames. It also engages in vegetable and livestock production, which provides food for inmates, as well as service activities and craft works in construction;
- DF Sremska Mitrovica's economic unit "Spring" engages in tourism and hospitality, as well as crop and livestock production. Its "Dubrava" economic unit, in its scope, includes a metal plant, wood plant, as well as a cardboard and printing plant.

Although most of inmate work takes place within the institutions themselves, occasionally contracts for hiring inmates in public and private companies in the local community are offered. Such contracts are offered by DP Kragujevac, DF Krusevac, DP Novi Sad and DF Ćuprija. Some jobs include the demolition of dilapidated buildings, digging canals, cleaning streets, picking fruit, etc. As required by law, inmates receive monetary compensation for their work, which is 20% of the minimum wage.

Inmate work engagement in 2012 is shown in Table 4, as based on the data from the Administration for the Enforcement of Penal Sanctions. The majority of inmates mainly engaged in business within the institution and custodial/house-work. Among the inmate population were also those who have a limited ability to work or are unable to work whatsoever.

	Convicted			
Housework	1401			
Inside institution	5188			
Outside institution	659			
Occupational work	403			
Educational work	102			
Limited capacity for work	368			
Incapable for work	110			

Table 4 Work duties of convicted persons in 2012

### CONCLUSION

Education and vocational training are among the key factors in the rehabilitation of inmates in institutions for the enforcement of penal sanctions. However, many prisoners are not involved in education and vocational training. Legislation and prison rules are currently structured so that there is no obligation for inmates to take part

in these programs. Due to the large number of prisoners having acquired only a low level of education (often having only completed primary school), including among them the illiterate, it is clear that for them there is a low level of motivation to participate in learning activities. In addition, due to lack of resources, primarily financial and secondarily physical, for adequately carrying out the education process, there are hardly any job offers in the institution that later provide any opportunity for employment after release.

Therefore, experts in institutions for the enforcement of penal sanctions, in addition to their own activities, should direct their attention towards raising awareness about the situation within the inmates population, emphasizing the importance of education and earning qualifications to work, with the goal of motivating them in some way. Financial support from state institutions for improving the spatial and material conditions for vocational training would also greatly enhance the inmates' chances for earning their qualifications and subsequent employment after release.

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