

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SOCIAL REHABILITATION MEASURES IN LITHUANIAN CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS: THE IMPROVEMENT OF EXISTING PRACTICES

Summary

As scientific studies have shown, adaptation of various programmes of social rehabilitation alone does not guarantee their effectiveness. In accordance with modern theoretical approaches (Risk- Need- Responsivity Model and Good Life Model) and best practice (for instance Scandinavian penal systems) correctional interventions contribute to reduce recidivism rates and integrate inmates into the community. However, effective correctional interventions require eligible attention in their constant monitoring of implementation and evaluation.⁵⁰ On one hand implementation of programmes depends on objective factors such as appropriate treatment measures based on criminogenic needs, programs variety, complexity and its' systematic implementation; in the other hand contemporary research emphasize that implementation of programmes begins from a positive atmosphere in organisation, development of the institutional culture and provision of the decent working conditions. Moreover, the positive relation between correctional officers and offenders and social climate in the facilities is crucial.⁵¹

As has been argued elsewhere⁵² process of social rehabilitation in Lithuanian correctional facilities is inconsistent, lacks integrity, evident and coherent direction. Though reports focusing on analysis of social rehabilitation prepared by prisons' administrators introduce various correctional programs, there is no knowledge about quality of its implementation, procedures of evaluation and treatment effectiveness. Hence, the aim of this study is using theoretical model, which was created in the theoretical part of this study⁵³, and focus group interviews with correctional officers to analyse correctional interventions programs in Lithuanian penitentiary institutions and to reveal different problematic issues of its implementation. The research is based on empirical data gathered in 5 different Correctional facilities during focus group interviews with specialists of social rehabilitation section (including psychologists).

The research shows that Lithuanian correctional facilities have an ingrained formal approach, based on quantitative parameters, emphasising figures of completed programmes and number of their participants. It helps to demonstrate that programmes are applied and the employees are fully trained and properly prepared to perform these programmes. However, the specialists of social rehabilitation, who participated in the study, state that the managing authorities are rarely interested in the quality of the programmes that are

⁵⁰ See Lipsey M. W., Landenberger N. A., Wilson J. S., 2007; Andrews D. A., Bonta J., Wormit J. S., 2011.

⁵¹ See Landenberger N. A., Lipsey M. W., 2005; Stasch J., Yoon D., Sauter J., Joscha H., Dable K. P., 2018.

⁵² More: Dermontas J., 2001, 2004; Malinauskaite A., Uscila R., 2010; Sakalauskas G., 2015, 2017; Žemaitaitytė I., Čiurinskienė D., 2004.

⁵³ See Vaičiūnienė R., Viršilas V., 2017.

implemented. Employees expressed their great disappointment regarding the existing approach to the correctional programmes and their application. On the one hand, employees said that social rehabilitation is deemed a secondary objective of the institution, to which the aforementioned formal implementation should be fully sufficient. On the other hand, all capabilities of institutions are focused on the performance of protection and supervision functions of the sentenced persons; meanwhile, social rehabilitation remains a declarative aim, depending on the initiative of employees.

It is also important to emphasise that a long-standing debate on the revision of functions performed by the specialists of social rehabilitation, does not acquire any realistic, practical basis. Employees feel underestimated because they are often required to solve domestic issues and to perform functions related to such matters; thus, their competences related to the social work remain hidden and invisible. The application of dynamic security, which had to solve redistribution of functions, not only didn't help to restructure departments and functions of social rehabilitation, but also increased conflict between specialists of social rehabilitation and, in their opinion, a prioritised level of protection and supervision. Therefore, specialists of dynamic security, who had to become an integral part of the social rehabilitation system, currently are oriented to the fulfilment of the needs of protection and supervision department by their subordination and functions. However, some successful examples of dynamic security in the Lithuanian correctional facilities raise hopes that good practice will be taken over and implemented in the entire system over time.

According to the study participants, the matter of motivation of employees remains extremely sensitive in such gloomy context regarding the support of social rehabilitation on the organisational level. Although the participants viewed favourably to qualification development opportunities, related to the performance of social rehabilitation programmes; however, they expressed hard feelings towards motivational measures due to the existing careless approach to one of the primary functions, performed by social rehabilitation employees – the fulfilment of correctional programmes. In fact, priorities given to the functions, which are not related to rehabilitation, demotivate employees; therefore, the lack of a clear motivational system is particularly prominent. It can be assumed that programmes are held by demotivated and undermined officers, who lose their faith due to an existing belief that interventional programmes may not have a positive impact on the resocialisation progress of offenders. Thus, the number and a variety of programmes, adapted under such conditions, completely lose their sense.

The risk assessment tool "OASys" is the most extensively applied measure in Lithuanian correctional facilities, however, it can be stated that "OASys" is not performed in its full scope at the correctional facilities because the part, allowing to evaluate the risk of serious harm, is not performed; therefore, level of risk assessment of criminal behaviour is not fully justified. The study participants have also emphasised that they feel the lack of support from the controlling bodies (in this case, the Prison Department), which do not avoid to express their mistrust in employees by holding meetings of instructing nature, where doubts are expressed regarding competences of employees, instead of training of officers (interventions and supervisions) and development of their qualification. Such institutional approach of the highest level has a significant negative impact on the officers' motivation to work, as well as self-assessment and evaluation of their contribution to the entire correctional system.

Having analysed the application of the approved programmes, it can be stated that programmes, which are most widely used in the correction houses are “EPP” (Behaviour-Conversation-Change), “R.A.K.T.A.S.”, “Tik tu ir aš” (One-to-One) and “Development of Social Skills of the Sentenced Persons”, as well as, “EQUIP” and “EPP” in the juvenile correction houses. During the study, many social rehabilitation specialists were sceptical about the approved programmes. The study shows that employees lack the encouragement to perform these programmes. Such sceptical opinion occurs due to the culture of disbelief in correctional programs, formed by the authorities of institutions, and mistrust in personnel, who is conducting these programs, as well as the lack of studies that would demonstrate the efficiency of such programmes and scientifically justify their effectiveness.

The study also shows that rehabilitation work in the correctional facilities is mainly based on the large number of unauthorised correctional programmes and positive employment measures, fulfilled by social rehabilitation specialists and psychological service officers, using external partners from the state and municipal institutions (schools and labour exchange), as well as religious communities. However, the effectiveness of these programmes cannot be measured because documentation of the aforementioned measures is not collected; meanwhile, training of officers how to apply such programmes is not defined and, in fact, is the result of officer’s self-education because supervisions and interventions of programmes are not performed, and content of such programmes are not always fully understood.

In conclusion it is important to note that in order to achieve the qualitative progress of application of social rehabilitation in Lithuanian correctional facilities, it is important to focus on the motivation and qualification of social rehabilitation specialists, and, above all, on the development of institutional culture, supporting and appreciating the objective of social rehabilitation. The application dynamic security should be improvement and performed by taking over the good practice. Successful application of dynamic security could also become an important element forming the qualitative approach to social rehabilitation in all largest Lithuanian correction houses.