

EFFECTIVE SUPPORT FOR REINTEGRATION OF RELEASED INMATES

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In theory, “external factors of society, such as economic difficulties, inequality, social persecution, and inhumanity in human relations, form the basis for some individuals to commit crimes that result in feelings of guilt, such as assault, withdrawing from society, and becoming violent”. Therefore, it is agreed that the transition from external social factors to internal subject matter is carried out in harmony with social psychology.

I. INTRODUCTION

As a prison institution, socialization work has been implemented step by step to achieve the objectives of criminal punishment, reintegrating individuals who have committed crimes back into society, and offering psychological rehabilitation and support via social work services. This process commenced in 2004, when a professional social worker was designated for the first time. Subsequently, several key milestones have marked the development of these efforts: in 2009, the comprehensive “Work Program for Convict Socialization” was introduced, and in 2010, guidelines for educational activities within prisons (the “Instructions for Educational Work Among Prisoners”) received official approval. Notably, since 2018, the “Methodical Guidelines for Social Work” have been put into practice, solidifying our commitment to holistic prisoner reformation.

Although our organization is undertaking the aforementioned tasks and initiatives, unfortunately, it has been twenty years since the implementation of measures aimed at rehabilitating prisoners; regrettably, the number of recidivists has shown no decrease – amounting to a dismal 52.6 per cent of the entire captive population.

II. CURRENT SITUATION AND PRACTICAL CHALLENGES IN INMATE REINTEGRATION

Socialization essentially occurs through three primary mechanisms. Firstly, it naturally transpires due to the economic and socio-cultural influences of the society and country in which we reside. Secondly, socialization takes place within specific environments. In this context, individuals gain experience by addressing challenges they encounter within the realms of legal, economic and welfare services. This type of socialization occurs through gradual accumulation. Thirdly, intentional, directed and organized activities are thought to facilitate socialization, aimed at fostering the development and moulding of individuals.

For Mongolia, in the realm of ex-prisoner reintegration, pertinent laws include but are not limited to: the Law on Enforcement of Court Decisions, the Law on Promoting Youth Development, the Law on Promoting Employment, the Law on Social Welfare, the Law on Combating Domestic Violence, the Law on Prevention of Crimes and Offenses, and the Law on Enforcement of Court Decisions. Notably, despite an adequate body of legislation governing implementation across various government agencies, such as the Law on Legislation, no legal framework existed to coordinate the interactions between them.

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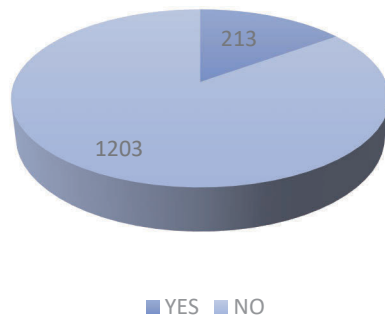
Under the scope of the aforementioned legal regulations, prisons and institutions independently and in collaboration with non-governmental organizations arrange training, measures for behavioural intervention, professional education and work skill development for prisoners serving their sentences, both within classrooms and online. However, it is indeed a fact that specific outcomes have not shown a notable increase.

This is due to the fact that the optimal governmental mechanism for furnishing aid and support to citizens who have been released from prisons has not yet been established. As a result, this task is currently being undertaken primarily through the initiatives of a limited number of non-governmental organizations.

In order to find a solution to this problem, we utilized the results of a 2022 survey involving 1,416 recidivist prisoners. This survey aimed to gather insights into the factors contributing to reoffending, the outcomes of pre-release preparations and the challenges encountered after release. The findings of this survey played a crucial role in the development of the release preparation programme.

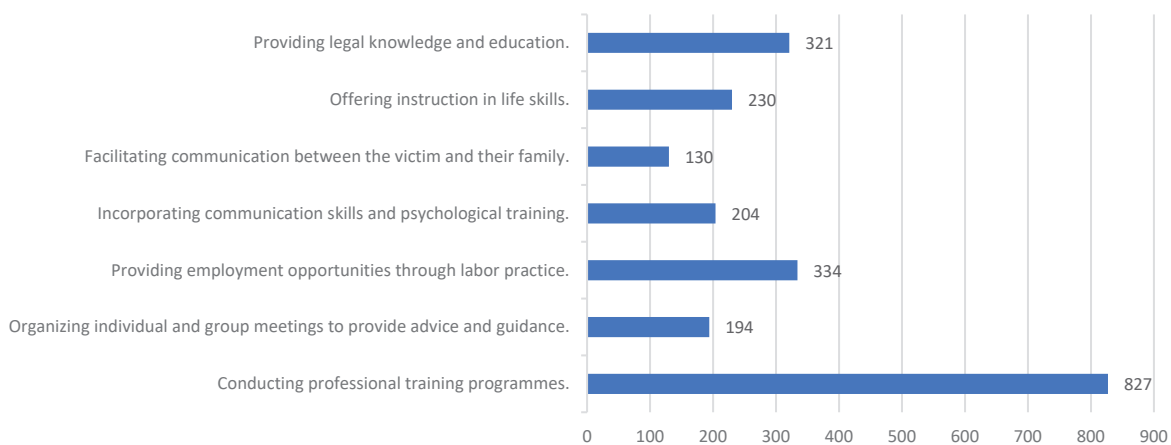
As per the survey, when recidivist prisoners were asked about receiving any form of welfare after their release from prison, out of the 1,416 prisoners surveyed, 1,203 individuals (approximately 85%) indicated that they had never received any form of welfare, while 212 prisoners (around 15%) stated that they had received some type of welfare. This suggests that a significant number of former prisoners are unaware of the resources available to them.

Figure 1: Results of a survey on whether or not they received public care after being released from prison:

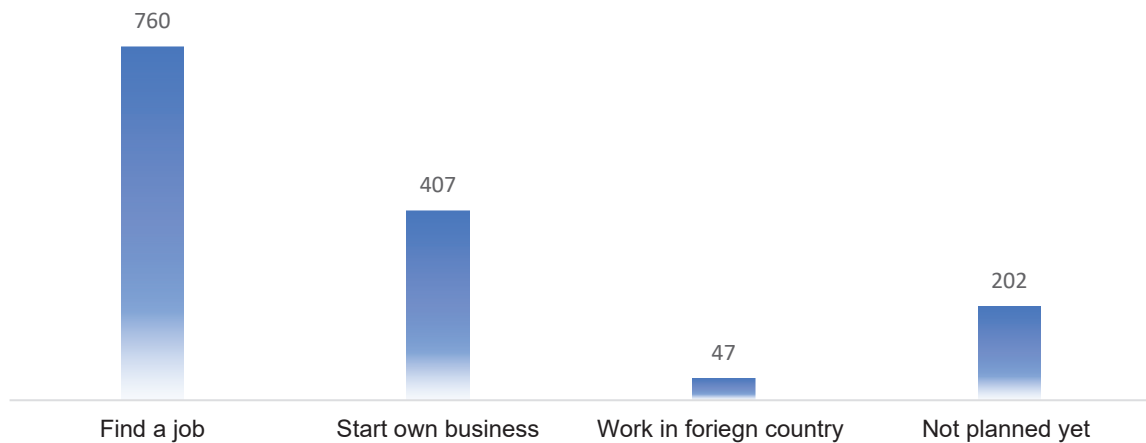


The prisoners who participated in the study conveyed their needs. Out of the 827 opinions received, 37 per cent expressed a desire to acquire a profession, 334 opinions (23.5%) showed interest in obtaining employment through labour practice training, and 321 opinions (22.6%) indicated a desire to engage in legal training. Additionally, 10 per cent of the prisoners expressed their wish to partake in life skills training.

Figure 2: Results of the Survey in the Field of Release Preparation:



Out of the 1,416 inmates who took part in the study, 763 individuals, or 54 per cent, responded to the question regarding their goals after their release from prison.

Figure 3: Survey on Life Goals After Release:

Based on the research findings, the conclusion was drawn that the prisoners' preparation for release should primarily focus on community integration, cultivating positive habits and adherence to commonly accepted laws.

III. EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS, TREATMENT AND SUPPORT FOR RELEASED INMATES

The main objective, given the current circumstances of imprisonment, is to ensure that released prisoners seamlessly integrate into social interactions and gain the capacity to independently make decisions within legal boundaries. To achieve this goal, the State Secretary of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security took a significant step on 14 October 2021, by issuing Order No. 148. This initiative brought together a team of experts, including scholars and researchers from various institutions: the Ministry of Labor and Social Security, the General Executive Agency of Court Decisions, Scientists from the Center for the Study of Court Decisions, and the University of Home Affairs. Their collaborative efforts resulted in the creation of the comprehensive "Programme for Preparing Prisoners for Release".

This innovative programme received official endorsement from two key figures: the Minister of Justice and Internal Affairs, H. Nyambaatar, and the Minister of Labor and Social Security, A. Ariunzaya. The practical implementation of the programme was set in motion through the joint order, No. A/167 and A/233, dated 30 August 2022.

Drawing from the research findings and the requirements of recidivist inmates, the release preparation programme will offer a range of services to participating inmates. These services encompass:

1. Arranging training and conducting guidance activities by accommodating the soon-to-be-released prisoner within a specifically designed "*Preparation house*". This arrangement aims to facilitate the individual's adjustment to the social and family environment;
2. Because prisoners often lack the skills to effectively address and resolve challenges in a constructive manner, it is essential to involve them in training programmes designed to foster "Personal Development";
3. Ensuring genuine access to government services for citizens released from prison, facilitating their independent and lawful living and assessing their capacity to function within the community is crucial. This assessment also aids in evaluating the outcomes of socialization efforts and subsequently incorporating individuals into social care, protection and employment mediation services to support their reintegration;
4. Raising families' awareness of their responsibility towards their children and engaging in more

individual-focused activities, it is important to offer family-oriented counselling, create a welcoming environment, mediate and provide professional services to both families and communities, which serve as prisoners' primary social environment based on their needs. This initiative also involves providing "*Family Reconciliation*" services;

5. Facilitating engagement in social and civil legal interactions and to ensure non-discriminatory access to government services, informative training sessions should be organized by professional organizations. Collaborative efforts should be made to effectively deliver "*Civil Documentation Services*";
6. Providing services geared towards establishing liveable conditions;
7. Coordinating research and mediating employment after release;
8. Integration within social care and service frameworks;
9. Service offerings promoting participation in communal affairs;
10. Clarification and inquiry servicing relating to release processes.

As part of the Programme for Preparing Prisoners for Release, the intention is to conduct socialization activities.

IV. CONCLUSION

The implementation of this programme aims to enhance the involvement of both governmental and non-governmental organizations in the preparation of inmates about to be released from prison. This assistance helps them integrate into society by addressing and resolving post-release challenges, ultimately decreasing the reoffending rate. The anticipated outcomes include the following:

1. According to the research, approximately 1,200 prisoners are released from prisons each year. Thus, it was determined that a minimum of 70 per cent of the prisoners released in the present year should partake in this training programme. This participation aims to prevent situations wherein an individual might recommit a crime due to their psychological traits and level of socialization.
2. Based on a survey conducted to ascertain inmates' needs, 54 per cent indicated a desire to secure employment. Consequently, the programme's objective incorporates ensuring that a minimum of 50 per cent of individuals released from prison gain employment. This objective stems from the recognition that honest work is essential for improving our financial situation and addressing life's crucial necessities. The success of this programme is anticipated to yield results that align with this perspective.
3. As the study revealed, 6.2 per cent of reoffenders, equivalent to 89 inmates, were without a permanent residence. Given this finding, it becomes imperative to furnish individuals released from prison and lacking a home with temporary housing and welfare services.
4. Prisoners' socialization work has shown that running prisons alone is not sufficient. Therefore, the experiences of foreign countries have demonstrated that involving and increasing specialized civil society organizations is more effective. Therefore, it is intended to introduce the leading experiences of developed countries and increase the number of non-governmental organizations and enterprises participating in the programme to 30 within the scope of social responsibility of civil society organizations.
5. The anticipated outcome is the elevation of voluntary programme participants to a count of 10 individuals in each province and locality.