



VICTORUPESI

Unity in diversity

Vocational Innovation using Creative new Technologies
resulting in Upskiling Pathways for Social Integration

National Report

Persons involved:

Eduard Claudiu Brăileanu

Elisaveta Drăghici

Gelu Cătălin Rîșnoveanu



Panait Istrati
Biblioteca Județeană Brăila



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1. Desk Research

Panaït Istrati County Library from Brăila used secondary resources and literature to explore the topic of target group people deprived of their liberty and their social inclusion, including the needs of social media to aid inclusivity. We also developed connections with relevant stakeholders which enabled two other methods of research to be conducted for this study.



Results of desk research:

1. National legislation / policies / funding / initiatives supporting people deprived of their liberty in social inclusion

As a process, social inclusion involves a set of measures and actions taken in many fields of social protection like employment, habitation, information dissemination and communication, mobility, social security, justice and culture. The meaning of the concept of social inclusion is stipulated in Romanian legislation by the Law no. 292/2011 (The Social Assistance Law), art. 6, lit. cc.

In Romania, the employment domain is regulated by a set of laws that are in accordance with the European labor policies. The right to work of the Romanian citizens is written in the Romanian Constitution, art. 41. The content of this article is as follows:

“(1) The right to work cannot be restricted. Citizens have the right to freely choose their profession or their occupation, as well as the place where to practice it.”¹

The national authority in charge with monitoring the compliance with labor legislation is *Inspekția Muncii* (The Labor Inspectorate - central body administration) which acts to ensure the social protection of labor. At county level there are Territorial Labor Inspectorates.²

In the field of employment, Romania has developed a set of laws and regulations to fight unemployment. After the fall of communism, the country faced major economical challenges (due to the shift from a centralised economy that was owned by the state to a free market economy) and had to elaborate appropriate legislation in order to provide the social protection of an increasing number of people losing their jobs, and then to stimulate employment. The vocational training and employment legislation has been elaborated gradually, being harmonised European policies.

At the national level, the authority in charge with managing the issue of labor and unemployment is the National Agency for Employment (a government structure subordinated to the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection). The organization and functioning of the National Agency for Employment is regulated by Law no. 202 of 22 May 2006 (**republished**) on the organization and functioning of the National Agency for Employment.³ The local subsidiaries of the National Agency for Employment are the County Agencies for Employment, one agency in each county.

¹ The Romanian Constitution:

http://www.cdep.ro/pls/dic/site2015.page?den=act2_1&par1=2#t2c2s0sba41

² Labor legislation can be found at: <http://mmuncii.ro/j33/index.php/ro/2014-domenii/munca/programe-si-strategii>

³ <https://www.anofm.ro/>

The Romanian employment policy oriented towards both passive, as well as active measures. Passive measures provide for benefits such as unemployment benefits or retirement or the increase of the length of training for young people. Active measures are provided through training strategies or subsidies to employers to cover employment costs and stimulate new jobs.⁴

The field of vocational training

In Romania, both the public sector as well as the private sector can provide vocational training. Both sectors are regulated by law.

- The public vocational training sector includes:
 - vocational training done by the education system (initial vocational training): vocational education, high school education - technological field, post-secondary and university education - licensing.
 - adult vocational training (continuing vocational training) carried out through introductory programs (acquisition of competencies specific to a qualification), qualification/ requalification (set of professional competencies needed to carry out one or more occupations) and advanced training/ specialisation. Adult vocational training is managed by the National Center for Adult Vocational Training (Centrul Național de Formare Profesională a Adulților - CNFPA). These are part of the National Education and Vocational Training System (Sistemul Național de Educație și Formare Profesională).⁵
 - vocational training carried out through County Employment Agencies, addressed to the unemployed and/ or to those looking for a job, who are in the records of the County Employment Agencies.

Adult vocational training is carried out in many forms:

- a) courses organized by training providers;
- b) courses organized by employers within their own units;
- c) internship and specialization in units in the country or abroad;
- d) other forms of vocational training⁶

- The private vocational training sector
 - Vocational training offer through private centers and/or authorized vocational training service providers, based on the Ordonanța nr. 129/2000 of 31 august 2000 *** Republished, regarding adult vocational training (registered as economic agents or NGOs).

In order to carry out vocational training activities the vocational training providers must obtain an authorization from the County Commission for the Authorization of Vocational Training Providers. On the web site of the Ministry of Labor there is a list containing both the authorized providers, as well as the providers who's authorisation has been withdrawn.⁷

Vocational training of people deprived of their liberty

⁴ Georgescu, M.A, 2006, <https://www.revistacalitatevietii.ro/2006/CV-1-2-06/12.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.tvet.ro/index.php/ro/sistemul-national-de-educatie-si-formare-profesionala.html>)

⁶ Acc. To Ordonanța nr. 129/2000 din 31 august 2000 *** Republished, regarding adult vocational training, art. 10, al. 3, [http://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/MMJS/Legislatie/Munca/2017-03-03-OG nr. 129 din 2000 privind formarea profesionala.pdf](http://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/MMJS/Legislatie/Munca/2017-03-03-OG_nr._129_din_2000_privind_formarea_profesionala.pdf))

⁷ <http://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/index.php/ro/2014-domenii/munca/programe-si-strategii/5163>)

The authority in charge with the direct management of the issue of people deprived of their liberty (including the vocational training policy of detainees) is the National Administration of Penitentiaries (Administrația Națională a Penitenciarelor).⁸

The educational activities carried out during the execution of sentences include information and professional counseling activities, labor mediation and vocational training of people deprived of their liberty. Each detention unit designates a person who is responsible for organizing these activities (the person is a member of the education service/office).

In the penitentiary system, schooling courses are organized for compulsory general education. Courses for other forms of education can also be organized. No mention is made on the diploma issued with reference to the period the execution of the sentence. The people deprived of their liberty may attend vocational training courses (introductory courses, qualification, retraining, further training or specialization) in accordance with their options and skills. Illiterate people and young people have priority in school training activities. Young people have priority in vocational training, too.

People deprived of their liberty that are in the custody of the National Agency of Penitentiaries may benefit from courses organized through the County Agency for Employment and/ or authorized providers of vocational training services.

The courses organized in collaboration with the County Agencies for Employment and Vocational Training (based on collaboration protocols) are funded by the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Labor and the National Administration of Penitentiaries. In the case that contracts for the use of detainees at work are concluded, the economic operators may carry out or materially support vocational training courses and attestation on their trades.

The organization of information and professional counselling as well as that of vocational training is regulated in penitentiaries, being provided for in the legislation and in the Methodology on the Organization and Conduct of Information and Professional Counseling Activities, Labor Mediation and Vocational Training of People Deprived of Their Liberty, in the Penitentiary Administration System.

Funding

The financing of government programs aimed at achieving the objectives of public policies on vocational training and support for entry into the labor market are provided from the state budget. The complex of passive measures (unemployment benefits) and those active for employment provided by the National Employment Agency are financed from the unemployment insurance budget.⁹

The state social insurance budget is approved annually by law - for 2020 the budget was approved by Law no. 6/2020.¹⁰

Financing of adult vocational training (acc. to Government Ordinance no. 129/2000 on vocational training):

Art. 46 The training and evaluation of the results of the professional training of the adults are financed from the following sources: a) own funds of the employers; b) the unemployment insurance budget; c) sponsorships, donations, attracted external sources; d) fees from the people participating in the professional training programs;

Art. 52 Vocational training programs organized by the National Employment Agency are financed from the unemployment insurance budget, in accordance with the law.¹¹

For the development of projects in support of disadvantaged categories for access to the labor market, including vocational training, non-reimbursable funds can be accessed.

⁸ <http://anp.gov.ro/>

⁹ https://www.anofm.ro/upload/12845/b-raport_de_activitate_2019.pdf

¹⁰ <http://www.cdep.ro/proiecte/2019/600/60/8/pl668.pdf>

¹¹ [http://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/MMJS/Legislatie/Munca/2017-03-03-OG nr. 129 din 2000 privind formarea profesionala.pdf](http://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/MMJS/Legislatie/Munca/2017-03-03-OG_nr._129_din_2000_privind_formarea_profesionala.pdf)

The programs available for organizations in Romania, in the field of human resources but also to support disadvantaged groups, are: POCU - Programul Operațional Capital Uman (The Human Capital Operational Program); POC - The Competitiveness Operational Program; POAD - The European Aid Fund for the Most Deprived; EEA and Norwegian grants; Programs managed by the EU (some of them are: the European Union Program for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI), the "Europe for Citizens" Program, the "Justice" Program, the "Erasmus +" Program, the "Rights, Equality and Citizenship" Program, etc.).¹²

Initiatives that support the social inclusion of the target group of people deprived of their liberty

The issue of penitentiaries has been analyzed and debated in countless situations: from the conditions of detention, to the exercise of rights in the penitentiary environment or social assistance measures to prevent recidivism and facilitate access to the labor market in order to achieve social reintegration.

***Initiatives of the National Administration of Penitentiaries**

On the official website of the National Administration of Penitentiaries there is a centralization of completed projects, organized by the year. We have selected some that refer to vocational training and / or placement on the labor market of people deprived of their liberty: ICT training at European standards in the Romanian penitentiary system - FSE/POSDRU/96/6.2/S/60031 (2013); The return of former detainees on the labor market and their integration into society Project Life behind bars (2014); ACCESS for all - Access for people with disabilities to employment and services (2015); National program of alternative education for juveniles and young people in prisons (2015); JUST2013JPENAG4605 „Support for Transfer of European Prison Sentences towards Resettlement” (STEPS 2 Resettlement (2016); Establishing an ecological mechanism for the social reintegration of detainees (2017); Vulnerable young people accessing and supporting vocational training and apprenticeships (2018); MenACE – Mental Health, Aging and palliative care in European prisons (2019).¹³

*** Initiatives of the National Employment Agency**

In order to ensure measures to stimulate employment, the National Employment Agency has carried out 13 projects supported by the European Social Fund by 2020. In March 2020, it received an opinion from the Ministry of European Funds, for obtaining a financing amounting to 93 million euros from the European Social Fund through the Operational Program Human Capital 2014-2020, Priority Axis 3 - Jobs for all.¹⁴

Other Agency projects: "ACTIMOB 1-Activation and mobility of young NEETs", with general objective: Increasing the opportunities for the employment of 1200 unemployed young NEETs registered with the Public Employment Service (SPO), implementation period: January 2018 - December 2018 (12 months)¹⁵, "ACTIMOB 2 ALTERNATIVE Project - Activation and mobility of young NEETs" addressed to people aged 16 to 24 who did not have a job and did not follow a form of

¹² <https://mfe.gov.ro/programe/https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=325&langId=ro>

¹³ <http://anp.gov.ro/proiecte-finalizate/>

<http://anp.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Raport-de-activitate-Anul-2019.pdf> (ANP's annual report for 2019)

¹⁴ https://www.anofm.ro/upload/11214/comunicat_proaces_3.pdf)

¹⁵ <http://193.169.6.21/files/Fisa%20proiect%20ACTIMOB%201-%20Activare%20%C8%99i%20mobilitate%20tineri%20NEETs.pdf>

education and / or training¹⁶, "UNIT 4 RMPD - Apprenticeship and traineeships for non-NEET unemployed in Less Developed Regions" - POCU / 277/3/14/121994. The National Employment Agency will financially support employers who employ, through apprenticeship or internship programs, unemployed over 25 years of age (non-NEET), registered in the records of the Public Employment Service (SPO)¹⁷. Other ANOFM projects can be found on the official website.¹⁸

* Initiatives of non-governmental organizations

Numerous initiatives of non-governmental organizations, local or national, aimed at providing a set of support services to detainees but also to staff working in prisons. Without claiming to make an exhaustive analysis of the initiatives to support the social reintegration of people deprived of liberty, we mention some of them that have taken place over time in Romania.

Among the non-governmental organizations that have carried out projects in penitentiaries we mention:

- Romanian Group for the Defense of Human Rights –GRADO (proiecte precum: "Alternative education program for juveniles in detention" – 2003-2004, "Second chance - collaboration between NGOs and penitentiaries"¹⁹, "Professional qualification for the development of local communities" (2009-2012)²⁰, project "Stay free! - Social reintegration of persons deprived of liberty" (2017-2019)²¹
- The Romanian Center for Education and Human Development - CRED – proiecte precum: "Social Economy - A new challenge in the labor market insertion of detainees" (2010-2014)²², "Transition to freedom through Regional Centers for Social Inclusion" (2011-2014)²³.

In 2011, the Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Protection announced the start of activities within the strategic project "Life behind bars" (ID 60000) co-financed by the European Social Fund through the Sectoral Operational Program Human Resources Development, under priority axis 6 "Promoting social inclusion".²⁴

In 2015, the Birmingham City University launches the Project Access and Follow-up by Vulnerable Young People of Vocational Training and Apprenticeship Programs (Grant Contract Number: 2015-1-UK01-KA202-013612), in which the Timișoara Penitentiary was a partner. One of the objectives of the project was to create new ways of learning, by sharing appropriate activities for disseminating activities and learning from the experiences of other organizations.²⁵

¹⁶ <http://193.169.6.21/files/Informare%20GDPR%20ACTIMOB%202-28.11.2018.pdf>

¹⁷ <http://193.169.6.21/files/Comunicat%20de%20presa%20proiect%20UNIT4%20RMPD.pdf>

¹⁸ <http://anofmvechi.anofm.ro/proiecte?page=1>

¹⁹ <https://blogunteer.ro/2012/07/a-doua-sansa-colaborarea-dintre-ong-uri-si-penitenciare/>

²⁰ http://grado.org.ro/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/carticica_proiect_final.pdf

²¹ <https://grado.org.ro/ramii-liber-reintegratearea-sociala-a-persoanelor-private-de-libertate/>

²² <http://www.economiesociale.net/m1-0-0-ro-Despre-noi>
<https://brailachirei.wordpress.com/2011/06/30/persoanele-private-de-libertate-invata-meserie-prin-proiecte-europene/e> insertion on the labor market for people deprived of liberty

²³ <http://www.proiecteue.ro/proiecte.php?proiect=15228>

²⁴ <http://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/index.php/ro/comunicare/comunicate-de-presa/2039-ref-fonduri-europene-pentru-calificarea-detinutilor-si-integrarea-lor-pe-piata-muncii>

²⁵ <http://anp.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Raport-rezumat.pdf>

Botoșani Penitentiary carried out the project "Partnership for Reintegration and Social Inclusion of People in Need - PRISON" co-financed by the European Social Fund through the Sectoral Operational Program Human Resources Development 2007 - 2013 Priority Axis 6 "Promoting social inclusion", KAI 6.2, access and participation of vulnerable groups on the labor market ", in partnership with: Poarta Albă Penitentiary, Codlea Penitentiary, Giurgiu Penitentiary, Association of the Romanian Institute for Education and Social Inclusion Galati and Solidarity and Hope Foundation Iasi (2014-2015).²⁶

Another project "Return of former detainees to the labor market and their integration into society" funded by SOP HRD 2007-2013 and implemented by ANP (beneficiary), United Nations Development Program, National School for Political and Administrative Studies, West University of Timisoara and Regional Center for Vocational Training of Adults Calarasi.²⁷

2. Existing strategies in the country dealing with the problem of people deprived of their liberty social inclusion.

We consider that the most important strategy regarding the issue of social inclusion of people deprived of their liberty is the one elaborated by the National Administration of Penitentiaries - respectively the National Strategy for Social Reintegration of People Deprived of Their Liberty 2020 - 2024.²⁸

In addition to an in-depth analysis of the current stage of the intervention in order to ensure a return to society of those who have served their sentence (in order to prevent recidivism), the current system designed to provide assistance (with its strong and weak points), also contains the strategic objectives for the next 4 years.

In the introductory considerations, it is mentioned, among others, the strategic target and the priority directions of action of the National Strategy for Social Reintegration of People Deprived of Their Liberty 2020 -2024. Below are the excerpts that explicitly refer to the access to the labor market of people who have served a custodial sentence, taken from the text of the Strategy:

Strategic target: „The strategic target for the period 2020-2024 is the functional reintegration of people deprived of their liberty in the family environment, in the community and on the labor market, by consolidating, optimizing and developing the necessary legal and procedural mechanisms.”

Priority direction: „A priority direction of action, in accordance with the provisions of Government Decision no. 389/2015, aimed at mobilizing local public authorities in the process of social reintegration of people who have been criminally sanctioned. Thus, it was appreciated that the development of social support services, available locally to the direct beneficiaries, people returning to the community, may contribute to the finality of integrative efforts, which aim to increase community safety and prevent recidivism. Despite the combined interinstitutional efforts, the experience of implementing the National Plan for the Implementation of the National Strategy for Social Reintegration of People Deprived of Liberty and, in particular, Strategic Objective III - Facilitating

²⁶ Source: <http://www.fundatiasolidaritatesisperanta.ro/ro/proiecte/prison>

²⁷ Source: Rusandu, Olivia, 2019, *Guvernare incluzivă. Compendiu de bune practici în domeniul incluziunii sociale*, <http://www.sipoca202.ro/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Compendiu-de-bune-practici-%C3%AEn-domeniul-incluziunii-sociale.pdf> .

²⁸ <https://sgg.gov.ro/new/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/ANEXA-14.pdf>

Systemic Post-detention Assistance demonstrated that the involvement of local public authorities in the process of social reintegration remains a resource that is difficult to access and mobilize.”

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Another strategy of interest in the field of training and employment is being developed by the Ministry of Labor, respectively the National Strategy for Employment 2014-2020. The National Employment Strategy 2021-2027 is underway (the period of public debate ended on November 28, 2020).

The vision of the strategy: „By 2027, the Romanian labor market will become dynamic, sustainable, resilient, pro-active and based on social innovation. The workforce will be sustainably employed and equipped with the skills needed to cope with technological, digital and global trends. The labor market will ensure sustainable competitiveness and with flexible and adapted flexible social protection systems.”

General objective of the strategy: „Increasing employment through measures to activate inactive working people, the unemployed, especially the long-term unemployed, young people, including NEETs, by ensuring rapid and quality employment transitions for young graduates, by developing human resources, by stimulating culture and entrepreneurship and by stimulating the creation of new opportunities and jobs. The process of achieving the general objective will be based on social innovation, respectively new ideas, services and models of public and private services, including in the framework offered by partnerships that generate adapted solutions and comprehensively address the increased societal complexity of contemporary Romania.”²⁹

3. Statistics regarding:

a. the profile of the people deprived of their liberty in Romania

According to the data presented in the Brochure for the presentation of the National Administration of Penitentiaries, the execution of custodial sentences and educational measures is carried out in:

- 34 penitentiaries (including one women's penitentiary);
- 2 educational centers;
- 2 detention centers;
- 6 penitentiary hospital.
- Of the 33 penitentiaries, 8 have the role of coordinating the units located in a certain geographical area.³⁰

At 03-12-2020 the ANP announce on its website that there are 21632 people deprived of their liberty.³¹

The basis of the presentation of the following statistical situations was the content of the National Strategy for Social Reintegration of People Deprived of Their Liberty 2020-2024. The subchapter “Relevant Elements Regarding the Characteristics of the Prison Population” presents the

²⁹ For more details see: <http://e-consultare.gov.ro/w/proiect-de-hotarare-privind-aprobarea-strategiei-nationale-pentru-ocuparea-forței-de-munca-2021-2027-si-a-planului-de-actiuni-pe-perioada-2021-2027-pentru-implementarea-strategiei-nationale-pentru-o/>

http://www.ajofmbuzau.ro/files/inf_strateg.pdf

³⁰ (<http://anp.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Brosura-de-prezentare-a-sistemului-penitenciar-ilovepdf-compressed.pdf>)

³¹ <http://anp.gov.ro/blog/lnk/statistici/>

population in penitentiaries, having as reference date the end of the first semester of 2019 - According to the computer application held by PMSWeb (August 2019).

The majority of the population taken into consideration for this study is adult population - 95% of the prison population was represented, at the same reference date, by people aged between 18 and 60 years.

The structure of the penitentiary population according to the level of education was as follows (in August 2019):

- 7% illiterate people;
- 16.83% of people who attended primary education;
- 39.18% of people who attended lower secondary education (gymnasium);
- 17.67% of people who attended upper secondary (high school) education courses;
- 10.91% people with vocational studies;
- 0.7% of people enrolled in post-secondary courses or foremen's school;
 - 3.41% of people who attended university level education.

The structure of the people kept in penitentiary regime according to qualification, respectively the occupational status was:

- 65.23% stated that they did not have a trade/ profession;
- 74.77% stated that they did not have an occupation;
- about 30% of detainees were involved in gainful employment, mainly in unskilled labor.

Statistics showed that 52,04% of the people deprived of their liberty were coming from the urban areas, while 47,16% had their origins in the rural zones.

From a religious point of view, 89,57% of the guarded people belonged to the Christian Orthodox rite.³²

The statistical situation of ANP, by March 2017 shows that 1,215 young people (aged between 18-21) were serving the custodial sentence, of which 1,175 boys and 40 girls. There were 248 young people in detention centers (127 at Detention Center from Tichilești and 121 at Detention Center from Craiova).³³

b. the use of vocational trainings

Statistical data on people deprived of their liberty who have been included in training programs, free of charge:

In 2018, a report of the National Employment Agency states that, 31 people released from detention and 143 people in detention took qualification courses until 31.10.2018.³⁴

The report also mentions the main trades/occupations for which courses were organized but it doesn't refer to the number of people with a custodial sentence who were included in the qualification programs.

In accordance with the demands of the local labor market, the following courses were organized: trade worker (21,662 people), human resources inspector (referent) (14,703 people), security agent (14,004 people), introduction, processing and validation operator data (12,255 people), cook (9,086 people), plant culture worker (6,997 people), barber-hairdresser-manicurist-pedicurist (6,878 people), English language skills (5,639 people), accountant (54,810 people), plumber technical-

³² <https://sgg.gov.ro/new/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/ANEXA-14.pdf>

³³ <http://anp.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/SITUA%C5%A2IA-LUNAR%C4%82-martie-2017-cu-CE-si-CD.pdf>

³⁴ <http://193.169.6.21/files/Raport%20formare.pdf> – p. 2 - Raport privind stadiul realizării planului național de formare profesională la 31.10.2018

sanitary and gas (41311 people), hairdresser (39,612 people), waiter (waiter) seller in food units (38,513 people), manicurist pedicurist (34,914 people), worker in construction structures (30,015 people), caregivers domicile (298 people).³⁵

In 2019, the "Report on the state of implementation of the national vocational training plan on 30.09.2019" presented by the National Employment Agency shows that in January-September 2019, a number of 9,318 people, belonging to disadvantaged groups, were included in vocational training programs, as follows, including people deprived of their liberty: 28 persons released from detention and 154 persons in detention (other categories of persons who have been qualified: 1,494 long-term unemployed; 6,954 unemployed in rural areas; 30 unemployed with disabilities, 515 Roma unemployed, 3 post-institutionalized unemployed; 140 other people from rural areas).³⁶

Qualification courses attended in penitentiaries by detainees from the target group, according to the data presented by ANP: a numerical situation of the people deprived of liberty who attended qualification courses in the period 2014-2018 is presented below:

Year	Total no of people deprived of their liberty included in vocational qualification courses	Of which no. people deprived of their liberty included in vocational qualification courses in European funded projects
2014	2.569	2.013
2015	2.378	1.828
2016	519	80
2017	388	0
2018	179	0

Source: ANP, 2019³⁷

According to the 2019 ANP's annual Report, the participation in schooling programs in 2019 (compared to 2009) is as follows:

- Primary school level: 687 people (fewer than in 2009, when there had been 1205)
- Gymnasium/inferior secondary school level: 880 people (compared to 1245 in 2009)
- Vocational and high-school/ superior secondary and professional school level: 432 (increasing compared to 2009, when there were only 353)
- University level: 2 people (compared to 23 in 2009).

Participation in job vacancies, organized in collaboration with AJOFMs, is:

- 775 people deprived of their liberty (compared to 729 in 2009)
- 2044 employers (compared to 454 in 2009)³⁸

4. Opportunities for people deprived of their liberty

• An opportunity to be seized in the context of this project is related to the elaboration of the new national strategy of the National Administration of Penitentiaries. Similarly, the National Employment Agency will soon have to implement the National Employment Strategy. With these two new strategies, the issue of people deprived of their liberty must find its place, so that, through

³⁵ <http://193.169.6.21/files/Raport%20formare.pdf> – pag. 6 - Report on the state of implementation of the national vocational training plan on 31.10.2018.

³⁶ https://www.anofm.ro/upload/9383/Raport_formare_septembrie.pdf

³⁷ <https://sgg.gov.ro/new/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/ANEXA-14.pdf> . (pp. 15-16)

³⁸ <http://anp.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Raport-de-activitate-Anul-2019.pdf> , p. 27

vocational guidance and professional training, an increased number of people who have served time should be integrated on the labour market;

- The existence inside penitentiaries of structures (directions for psycho-social integration) concerned with the development of psycho-social intervention programs and encouraging the participation of detainees in vocational training;

- The existence of governmental vocational training programs for access to the labor market (through the AJOFM Vocational Training Centers);

- The involvement of NGO's which, obtaining European funding, contribute to the provision of vocational guidance, counseling services for access to the labor market and qualification courses;

- The existence of a policy on the development of the social economy, which offers greater chances to people who have served a sentence to perform work activity (this reduces the risk of being excluded from the labor market);

- Internet access is easy, with local authorities (through public libraries) providing free internet access to facilitate job search on brokerage platforms or to apply to various employers announcing vacancies on the internet.

5. Main challenges for people deprived of their liberty

A very useful identification of the main challenges regarding the target group of people deprived of their liberty can be found in Study Report „Identifying the needs for facilitating the social reintegration of persons deprived of their liberty” (as mentioned in the National Strategy for the Social Reintegration of People Deprive of Their Liberty 2020 -2024). We will consider them in our study starting from the premise that they were identified by specialists from the penitentiary system who know the problem very well.

Following the analysis of the issues they faced, either during detention or upon returning to the community, the main issues identified are:

Obstacles: during detention

- the lack of valid identity documents;
- difficulties in returning to the family and community;
- the lack of a home / shelter; -lack of financial resources / lack of food or clothing, after release;
- difficulties in identifying a job in general or a job according to the qualification acquired;
- difficulties in accessing post-release health services, in the case of people without health insurance;
- difficulties in continuing studies;
- difficulties regarding access to the labor market, in the context of the existence of criminal records;
- lack of support from the community

Obstacles: after liberation:

- the insufficient knowledge of the socio-family environment from which the person deprived of liberty comes (marital status, number of children, material situation of the family, relationships with close people, addictions, behavior problems, the way he/she is perceived by the community etc.) and difficulties in maintaining contact with the support environment;
- the lack of certainty regarding the level of education declared by the detainee, in order to continue the schooling during detention;
- the lack of a professional qualification to ensure released persons access to the labor market;
- the lack of respect for social values and the potential for the development of criminal behaviors, which may have an impact on the risk of recidivism;
- the weak involvement of the person in the process of preparation for release, respectively in establishing the short and medium term path;
- insufficient information on the services that can be accessed in the post-detention period and on the

institutions that can provide support.³⁹

Other identified obstacles:

Only a small number of NGO's are active in relation to the penitentiaries, hence a limited number of projects that sustain the vocational training and the integration on the labor market of people that have served the custodial sentence;

The lack of a strategy regarding the training/employment of people who have been in detention from the part of the Ministry of Labor. In the study made by the aforementioned ministry there is no reference to the category of adults with a criminal record (there are references to children, women, young people, working force in the rural areas). The category of people deprived of their liberty can be classified as vulnerable to the risk of social exclusion.⁴⁰

The risk of recidivism generated by returning into the criminal environment (family with criminal concerns, circle of friends etc.)

The lack of a specialized post-detention assistance system (in principle, the person who has left the penitentiary can address the Social Assistance Directorate from where he establishes his residence) where the former detainee can request support, but in some situations immediate specialized intervention is needed to help the person to reintegrate as soon as possible.

³⁹ Source: STRATEGIA NAȚIONALĂ DE REINTEGRARE SOCIALĂ A PERSOANELOR PRIVATE DE LIBERTATE 2020 -2024 (THE NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE SOCIAL REINTEGRATION OF PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR LIBERTY) <https://sgg.gov.ro/new/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/ANEXA-14.pdf>

⁴⁰ For further details, visit:

http://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/MMPS/Rapoarte_si_studii_MMPS/DPOCM/Analiza_socio-economica_domeniul_ocupare_2014-2020FazaIII.pdf

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Ministerul Muncii și Protecției Sociale: <http://mmuncii.ro/j33/index.php/ro/>

Funding sources:

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2. Focus Groups

The second part of this research consisted of focus groups. The aim of these discussions was to understand the training needs of persons sentenced to deprivation of liberty. Two focus groups were organized, one consisting of six specialists working in the field of social / professional reintegration of persons deprived of liberty, the other consisting of six persons deprived of liberty from the penitentiary.

A methodology for conducting focus groups (in accordance with the specialized literature) and the

use of a question guide were followed. The focus group with the specialists took place face to face, and the one with the people from the penitentiary took place online. We will present below our findings from the focus groups.

Research Report on the Results of the Application of the Focus Group Method - Target group: specialists

Training needs of the target group (TG1) in digital skills

Identifying the use of social networks

In the process of announcing training or information offers (for access to courses) several social networks are used and working models are applied:

County Agency for Employment (AJOFM): Announcing the course offer on the agency's website (after the annual training plan has been developed). Other ways: display on notice boards and press announcements. Those who are registered with the agency as looking for a job are issued a written recommendation (for each person who meets the qualities to take a course).

One of the employers (who is also a vocational training provider) has used several ways to announce vocational training offers: virtual (posted on the company webpage) and a banner in public space (at the gate of the shipyard), but especially direct presentations in schools and universities (Lower Danube University, Faculty of Ships in Galati and Faculty of Engineering Brăila). They also advertise in the local media. An important component is the partnership with the County Agency for Employment (AJOFM). A professional training plan is used based on the requests of people from all the departments of the shipyard (there are courses that are done periodically, because they are imposed by ISCIR, CERONAV). Scholarships for the qualification period are offered to attract labor.

The second employer involved in the focus group uses the internal training of its own employees.

The penitentiary, in its actions of ensuring the professional training of the detainees, starts from the idea of identifying the schooling offer. Depending on the level of schooling, they identify the people who need vocational training courses. After the discussions with the AJOFM representatives and depending on the offer and the possibilities of organizing the courses, the courses that can be held in the penitentiary in the following year are established, one calendar year in advance. The address expressing the desire to participate in vocational training is submitted in order to be included in the national vocational training plan. After the approval of the courses and depending on the budget, AJOFM contacts the penitentiary, specifies the period in which the courses can be held, and the penitentiary provides the spaces and students. Persons deprived of liberty are informed when courses appear and the selection is made (conditions, and necessary documents are displayed on the notice board; 12-14 people from those who register are selected, according to the established criteria). Another way to capitalize on training offers is to collaborate with non-governmental organizations. The Brăila Penitentiary guards not only people from Brăila but also from the entire south-eastern area and collaborates with the county vocational training agencies in the entire country.

Detainees are informed about jobs in their places of origin.

Another way of information is the direct one, ensuring the access of persons deprived of liberty to the headquarters of public agencies even during the detention period - participation in information sessions, job vacancies (where they have the opportunity to meet directly with employers and know the conditions of employment after release). Other offers are not analyzed, the collaboration being with AJOFM and sporadically with NGOs that have ongoing projects.

Identification of digital tools familiar to the target group

Regarding the digital tools that the job candidates need, the participants in the focus group appreciated that:

The level of knowledge on the use of digital tools depends on the profession (in some cases minimal knowledge is required, in others extensive knowledge);

The basic requirements are: to know all the interfaces; know how to use Microsoft Windows, Excel, Word; to know how to complete a notice in electronic format, to upload an invoice (primary documents);

In a production unit (eg shipbuilding), beyond supply, design, etc. where everyone has to be familiar with all the interfaces, computers are used up to the level of the master: they have to know how to use the computer, to orient themselves in the network, to access certain plans that they have to use in execution; to communicate through the Teams network (internal platform), Zoom, Google Meet. The use of the necessary software in the respective (specific) area is subsequently solved through trainings, either assisted by experienced colleagues or provided by the one who sells the equipment. Minimum requirements for the potential employee: to be able to communicate on the internet, e-mail, to know the MS Office package.

An identified barrier to the use of digital tools: socially disadvantaged groups (in our case persons deprived of their liberty) are illiterate or functionally illiterate. There are two categories with distinct characteristics: those who have no education, do not know how to write/read and those who are professionally trained, have studied, have worked (have professional experience). There are people who drop out of school as children and end up in prison, but there are also people with education who commit crimes and are deprived of liberty.

It is considered that it would be necessary for those without education to be able to follow training for the development of digital skills.

From the perspective of the level of digital knowledge / skills of potential employees, during the discussions, a distinction was made between young employees and elderly employees.

It is considered that young people were born with "technology in hand", but they do not know how to use these tools for educational purposes (for training / self-training). On the other hand, there are young people who are not interested in taking qualification courses. A paradoxical aspect was also reported - young people, knowledgeable in the use of technology, came to not know how to address in writing (they do not know what forms are needed and how to fill them up).

Although IT&C (information technology and communication) is studied in school, there is no identical level of knowledge for each person: some know more, others less. They are concerned with technological skills, but it seems that not with everything that would be useful in their professional development. They are interested in certain segments and focuses on those.

Older people do not master digital tools - they show resistance, sometimes incapacity, or need more time to assimilate (sometimes they exclude themselves for this reason). It is considered that, regardless of age, there is an inertia when removing a man from the environment in which he is accustomed and trying to change the environment. It is also necessary to work with adapting to new work situations.

Overall, they know and used: smart phone, computer, tablet. The Internet is used for information (we no longer open books to study, we search the internet).

Another problem reported:

In some cases, the problem is no longer digital skills, but the knowledge of handwriting and the writing of a request (both for young people and adults).

Spending a lot of time in virtual space, young people develop less social inter-relationship skills (poor vocabulary because they no longer read), poor self-knowledge (what ability, resources they possess).

Current gaps in training provision (related to social inclusion and social capital building)

All participants in the focus group appreciated that the acquisition of digital skills is a necessity, because the technology used involves knowledge of certain notions of digitization.

The needs of the employers (involved in the focus group) in the field of digital skills regarding potential employees have been addressed in at least two ways:

- vocational training - at work through apprenticeship
- collaboration with the school inspectorate for the introduction in technology education of some classes of technicians (Autocad, shipbuilding, etc.)

It has been and still is difficult to organize vocational training courses in technical trades, where practice hours are essential. Some courses have been suspended for a period of time. The Employment Agencies no longer provided the courses (they were suspended).

Openness to a new type of support services needed for the development of digital skills

It was mentioned that the Vocational Training Standards also include IT&C classes, in addition to communication in a foreign language. Occupational standards can emphasize IT&C training. Similarly, the technological chain can focus on the Autocad program.

As new support services for persons deprived of their liberty, identified by the participants in the focus group were mentioned:

Mentoring or supervision (a person who is a role model for the former detainee, who guides him at work).

One of the employers mentioned that in his unit mentoring is done, formally or informally, for graduates.

The possibility for persons sentenced to deprivation of liberty to benefit from courses in the period before release, but also after release; to make a connection between AJOFM and the local social assistance service (following models from abroad).

Finding the VET requirements that companies need in terms of the need for workers

Identification of digital tools used by employers

For the employer with the specifics of shipbuilding, the use of digital tools takes place at all levels, from sheet metal cutting (computer coordinated) according to the execution plans available through the internal network, to human resources and accounting, they all use software. It is estimated that about a third of employees use computer technology. For the second employer present in the focus group, the use of digital tools takes place on a smaller scale (operators, weighing, human resources).

Digital skills required by employers

The need for future employees to have digital skills is related to the specifics of the job. It is desirable that potential employees have digital skills (at least at a minimum). There is a concern and willingness on the part of employers to provide digital training for their own or future employees ("we need to prepare them. Software is evolving, technology is changing"). The willingness to hire people who have been in detention exists, expressed through the organizational conduct of the private sector, not to request a criminal record for employment.

Research Report on the Results of the Application of the Focus Group Method - Target group: persons deprived of their liberty

Training needs of the target group (TG1) in digital skills

Identifying the use of social networks

In general, people deprived of liberty participating in the focus group use both virtual networks and interpersonal relationships as sources of information (either in general or when they want to find out about jobs or qualification courses). Among the most used virtual networks are Google and Facebook. The groups they use are: group of friends and family. At the same time, some people turn to specialists in the field of labor and/or to non-governmental organizations.

The networks they trust the most are: specialists (they are the best trained in the field), Google (because it provides any information), family and friends ("I ask their opinion because I trust them").

The participants state that after the release they will use for information (in order to develop digital skills) the following virtual networks: Facebook, e-jobs, tutorials on platforms, blogs / vlogs.

There were people who said they had the experience of searching the internet and followed some web pages as well as some websites for courses, but they did not search with a definite motivation, only noticed, at random (did not deepen the searches, were not that curious).

In the future, they will follow social networks (for specialization, those aimed at developing skills).

Identification of digital tools familiar to the target group

Known or used digital tools (up to the penitentiary) are: computer, laptop, smartphone, tablets, notebook, scanner, printers, video projectors, GPS, navigation system and infomedia (car). All participants stated that they used a PC.

Knowledge of PC operation differs from person to person: if some participants have minimal knowledge, how to use, respectively to surf the Internet, to play ("that's how I started"), to communicate (on the network, e-mail, yahoo, badoo, skype), others have more advanced knowledge (edit articles or create games etc.).

The use of the computer was done mainly for personal situations (personal study) and less for the professional one. Only two people said they used it in their job, one to write articles for magazines and the other to create games.

Ways to search for information on the Internet are known to them - they have searched for movies, music, bought goods (online shopping, real estate purchases), used the Internet for socializing, for documentation (to fix something) or for general culture (improving knowledge of history), information in the field of car mechanics (for short moments, not for long study).

There was no interest for aspects of professional integration, only one person mentioned a passing experience in which he looked at a job website.

In the experience of looking for a job, it was stated that there were employers who asked the candidate to have knowledge of working with the computer.

It is considered that a qualification diploma is required in the field of PC and that training is required to acquire digital knowledge and skills. For this, it is useful to know how to work with Microsoft Word, Excel, Power Point, Autocad, how to create web pages, to install programs, to access the internet (theory and practice).

Persons deprived of liberty included in the focus group consider that they must learn with priority the field of IT&C, the use of a PC and the observance of the legal provisions ("not to make illegalities with it"). They would use this knowledge and skills to:

- get a job and keep it ("I could communicate with the company, order parts" etc.);
- to create music and movies (it is a passion and can continue as a job);
- for personal purposes ("when I need to install a program, I won't need to turn to someone else").

The COVID-19 pandemic did not have a particular impact in terms of access to training, use of ICT knowledge or digital skills. It was mentioned that the detention regime (deprivation of liberty) does not allow access to certain devices.

Current gaps in training provision (related to social inclusion and social capital building)

The focus group participants consider that currently the training providers have a limited offer of courses in this field. One of the participants stated that the topic of the course is not offered (so that those who want to enroll should know the level of training). It is considered that whatever is done in the field of informatics is a plus for reintegration into society.

In order to acquire digital skills in a formal setting, focus group participants want vocational centers to offer them:

- Necessary conditions for learning (a PC, a course support, education);
- To encourage them, to give them information about a job and even job offers ;
- Qualifications in the field of IT&C in relation to the needs of employers.

Finding the VET requirements that companies need in terms of their need for workers

Regarding the professional experiences in the relationship with the employers, the persons deprived of liberty stated that the first had the following requirements from the employees: professionalism, safety in the execution of tasks (to know what to do); punctuality.

The persons deprived of liberty on the other hand would like that the employers provide them with: opportunity and chances of employment, trust, seriousness on the part of employers (to respect the rights of the labor code: leave, promised salary) and to pay their salaries on time.

3. In-depth Interviews

In order to ensure a deep understanding of the process, we conducted the in-depth interviews both with specialists working in the field of social reintegration (six people) as well as with persons deprived of liberty (4 people). Below are the findings from the 10 interviews.

Research Report on the Results of the Application of the In-depth Interview to the Group of Specialist in the Field of Vocational Training

Profile of specialists

1 specialist representative of a non-governmental organization that carried out projects for the reintegration of persons deprived of their liberty

3 specialists from the penitentiary, involved in the social reintegration of persons deprived of liberty

1 specialist representative of the county employment agency

1 representative of a local employer, involved in the selection of staff

1. Legislation

Well known to specialists who either represent the Public Employment Agency (AJOFM) or work in penitentiaries, and partially known by specialists working in non-governmental organizations that support people in prisons, the legislation is considered to be responsible for much of the training needs of persons deprived of their liberty.

It is considered that compared to previous years (more than 5 years ago) the legislation is much more comprehensive. However, some improvements are needed in some areas, namely:

1. Greater financial support for the organization of qualification courses for persons deprived of their liberty during detention - increase of the hourly wage for lecturers providing vocational training (it was not possible to organize courses in penitentiaries through AJOFM in previous years because lecturers did not accept to teach at an hourly rate considered too low);
2. Vocational training courses should be linked to labor market demands. In addition, the range of courses offered to persons deprived of liberty should be more varied (a wider range to choose from);
3. The participation of detainees in courses should be possible during the entire period of detention, not only in the last year of serving the sentence. After completing the course, there should have the possibility to work ("to create the exercise of working");
4. Vocational training of persons in penitentiaries should be completed with the conclusion of employment contracts (for work performed both during detention and for the moment of leaving the penitentiary; in this way, when leaving the penitentiary the person should already have a job);
5. The penitentiary should have its own policy through which to contact and work with many companies that employ detainees. Penitentiaries should have a certain flexibility;
6. In the case of persons deprived of their liberty who work outside the penitentiary and who need to be supervised, the legislation shall provide that this supervision shall no longer be carried out by the penitentiary staff but by the employers (by the employee with whom they team up);
7. The legislation should be more permissive, to allow the County Agencies to make analyzes of the labor market (employers' requirements, types of jobs sought). And to allow employers to organize courses in prisons.

From the employer's perspective, the legislative path of professional training is well regulated. The mention made by him refers to the age and health restrictions imposed on some workers (eg crane operators, for which the age limit is 55 years and conditioned by health). The employer stated that

they did not always find skilled labor in certain occupations (electricians, forklifts, crane operators) and were forced to train insiders (respectively dockers or others) at AJOFM.

2. Policies

From the perspective of penitentiary specialists, the policies that provide measures for people in penitentiaries correspond to the needs of penitentiaries to provide them with support. One of the specialists mentioned that the policies do not provide for penitentiaries to be providers of professional training, this role being provided by AJOFMs. What is missing in the National Strategy for the social reintegration of persons deprived of their liberty is the lack of continuity in ensuring the support of the person leaving the penitentiary in the use of the services offered by AJOFM, Social Assistance Services, etc. (presence of a contact person). The policy of supporting persons deprived of their liberty is not global.

The representative of AJOFM chose not to express a point of view, considering that other people are able to make such assessments.

The specialist working in the NGO mentioned some aspects: the need for private entities working with detainees / former detainees to be financially supported. Social policies support the education-training process and do not support when entering the production regime. An example is the social economy sector, which is doomed to failure as long as there is no market for their products (it must be borne in mind that social economy units work with "people who will not reach productivity and discipline").

From the employer's perspective, policies discourage the option for work (due to ensuring the guaranteed minimum income, social assistance, heating aid). People are not motivated to get a job when they can receive an income, even if it is small, month by month. They are content with that income.

Regarding the perception of how public policies correspond to the needs of persons deprived of their liberty, the representatives of the penitentiary and the employment agency responded in the affirmative, emphasizing that in detention people are eager to take qualification courses. As a less pleasant aspect, it is mentioned that the access to courses depends on the level of education, which makes it difficult to qualify the workforce that has not completed 8 grades. From the perspective of the non-governmental specialist, these policies are not in the attention of persons deprived of their liberty (those who have served a sentence are interested in an immediate financial gain), but the rulers are not really concerned either.

The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

For the penitentiaries, the Covid 19 pandemic meant a cessation of any activities with the persons in custody. The access of external collaborators was blocked. In order to continue the online school, some investments were made, because the technical support left much to be desired. In the penitentiaries where the physical school was continued, cases of Covid 19 were quickly registered. Freedom of movement was also affected (it was no longer possible to go out of the penitentiary, job vacancies were no longer organized). Activities were limited to information per room, individual preparation for release and information on job vacancies.

For the Employment Agencies this period meant no organization of vocational training courses for which practice was essential. Only language courses and data operator courses were held. They could no longer provide counseling in penitentiaries (which was done monthly), but they did not take place online either (there was no request from the penitentiary). Employers had an advantage, with a stable workforce ("people were no longer tempted to go abroad; especially those with young children.").

There was no support from the higher forums for this period - the penitentiaries were helped only to conduct online schooling courses. No financial support was granted to any public institution (penitentiary or AJOFM) and the interviewed employer did not have financial benefits either.

3. Financing

In addition to the funding provided by the public budget and the European projects, it was also mentioned the provision of training expenses by the employer (by 3 people out of the 6 specialists interviewed).

The need for funding expressed by specialists in the penitentiary system is to ensure a higher, motivating hourly payment for trainers, so that they become involved in the training of persons deprived of their liberty. Other needs expressed: spaces and people and funds to be able to organize as many courses on trades (trades are sought).

4. National/local initiatives

National and local initiatives in the field of vocational training and access to the labor market for persons deprived of their liberty are perceived as few and isolated. People who leave the penitentiary are stigmatized and would need actions to support them when they are released. Non-governmental organizations are not so well developed and their presence is very low in counties. Most are active in Bucharest.

One of the specialists mentioned that the projects initiated by various institutions are sporadic and face the problem of bureaucracy; appreciates that he cannot claim that there is a consistent, coherent, clear initiative.

Only one person (representative of the public institution to stimulate employment) appreciated that there are enough organized actions but he also mentions that the involvement of non-governmental organizations would be needed.

From the employer's perspective, there are meetings between employers in which labor-related issues are discussed (legislative issues, labor migration, issues related to the functioning of the social economy, etc.). The idea that National and Local Programs should target financial, emotional and goal-oriented education has been advanced. Young people need to be taught in school how to manage their resources, what goals to have, how to reach those goals.

5. Areas of application for training

The areas in which the training actions carried out by the interviewees took place are:

- Public catering: cook, waiter
- Services: hairdresser
- Agriculture: plant culture worker, vegetable grower
- Construction: metal construction worker, construction finisher, bricklayer, welder
 - mechanic

It is appreciated that these areas continue to be of interest (for example: plant cultivation for those in rural areas) and it was emphasized that persons deprived of their liberty are interested in taking courses.

The need expressed by the employers is for qualification in occupations such as: electricians (for overhead cranes), forklifts, cranes and salesmen (commercial operators - but they must have technical knowledge and organization and planning).

Other new areas in which it would be necessary to professionally train the former detainees mentioned were:

- The field of animal breeding, plant breeding;
- Public catering: chef, home delivery for restaurants;
- Areas of interest: electric cars, private kindergarten;
- Port operations: heavy cranes operators, storage specialists (warehouse optimization), locksmith;
- Construction: electricians, interior designers, painters, masons (as wishes expressed by persons serving a sentence but also as a requirement expressed by the employer).

There is also interest for training in the field of digital skills. The employer stressed that the training of digital skills is necessary, given the fact that Romania has begun to implement the process of digitization, of technical development. It is necessary to take digital skills courses aimed at those

who have less than 12 grades as well, so that the machines equipped with software (eg cranes) can be handled.

The economic areas in which it is considered that vocational training should be carried out for the integration of prisoners into the labor market are:

- Constructions (they have experience, have worked before but they do not have a course); are the most convenient, the work is outdoors;
- In agriculture (some want to go abroad and believe that a course in this field helps them);
- Entrepreneurial education - but there is some restraint;
- Industries - car production, machine repair;
- Production, services;
- IT;
- Courses for those with a low level of schooling (less than 8 grades graduated).

The employer's expectations regarding the digital skills of the persons deprived of liberty are related to the availability of learning ("we found that middle-aged people were more open to learning to work on the computer"), to accepting the idea that they will make a difference in employment.

6. Challenges for the target group

From the perspective of specialists, the problems (difficulties) faced by people who have been in detention when they want to enter the labor market are:

- Labeling, first of all ("ex prisoners"), stigmatization, reluctance of society, companies; discrimination, prejudice of others;
- Lack of a supportiv environment (help / advice from a specialist immediately after leaving the penitentiary);
- Lack of housing - they are rejected by their families and need housing;
- Lack of family doctor (they are not in the records of any family doctor);
- No documents: invalid ID, no birth certificates;
- Motivation for work is low (especially for those who have earned money from drug trafficking);
- Lack of will of the persons deprived of liberty;
- The level of wages on the labor market in relation to their needs and expectations;
- Employment difficulties (a legal framework that would support employers who hire people who have served a sentence would be useful); reluctance of employers;
- Problems of social adaptation - the detention environment has made a change, there are many who feel rejected by friends, acquaintances, families (social rejection);
- Their own fears (they have to prove that they still have something to offer), the psychological factor-they have low self-confidence that does not allow them to overcome the moment;
- Checking made by the police officer at work (in one case a former detainee had quit his job because he felt uncomfortable with colleagues - there were reactions from those around him because he was being checked by the police).

Difficulties faced by vocational centers for people leaving the penitentiary:

- Refusal of those who were in detention to take a qualification course (through AJOFM). Those who are enrolled in the Probation Service are more receptive (they go to classes). Those who come from the penitentiary are difficult, they do not understand the legislation, the fact that they have to respect it, that there are certain steps that you have to take in order to integrate. Their mentality leaves much to be desired, they are not cooperative when you want to help them;
- Lack of common procedures between AJOFMs and penitentiaries.

In the process of identifying those aspects that need to be developed / modified / improved so that more persons deprived of their liberty to access vocational training services for social and economic integration, the interviewees mentioned the following:

- The actors involved must collaborate (to harmonize the provisions of the legislation specific to each one, to discuss in the meetings, at the round tables organized at local level);

- Trainers should be encouraged to take courses for detainees;
- To have a varied offer of courses; the courses should be taken during the entire expiration of the sentence, not only in the last part of its execution;
- To be able to do school or courses with a smaller number of students in penitentiaries (5-6 people);
- Much money allocated for training;
- To hold as many counseling sessions as possible in detention centers with persons deprived of their liberty, to prepare them for what happens when they leave the penitentiary; to inform them about changes in legislation and around the world, in general;
- The former prisoners must have the will to work, to reintegrate;
- Education, mentality, trust, acknowledging that each of us should learn, assuming the consequences of our actions;
- The role of the media;
- Social responsibility education;
- Education for business.

In order for employers / companies to better respond to the training / employment needs of vulnerable groups, it is considered necessary to develop / modify / improve the following:

- Education and work vision of vulnerable groups;
- The mentality of employers - it is about trust, about assuming the consequences of one's deeds;
- The qualification centers should also provide counseling to those in the penitentiary (before and after release) and to their families, too. These can be adjacent activities that should be budgeted, settled;
- One thing that should be considered (as a policy at the general level) is to put private and state actors on an equal footing;
- Access to the social canteen should no longer be conditioned by many documents (more than 20 documents are required - far too many). The certificate that he / she came from the penitentiary must be sufficient documents to automatically accept him / her in the canteen for a number of days, during which time he/she will be helped / advised to get hired.
- When leaving the penitentiary the former detainee should be helped to settle in another locality if he/she so wishes, in order to have the chance to reintegrate (the person no longer wants to return to the village where he/she lived because he/she would be rejected by the inhabitants), to be eligible for social assistance in another place (now not possible because he/she does not reside in the locality where he/she wants to settle down).

Research Report on the Results of the Application of the In-depth Interview to the Disadvantaged Group Persons Deprived of Liberty

Number of interviewees: 4 persons deprived of their liberty, male.

1. Legislation

The level of knowledge of the legislation on vocational training and access to the labor market is almost zero (they have not read the legislation). Only one in four people (although they did not read the legislation either) mentioned aspects of training in schools, free and paid, vocational training that is

done on the job and in projects (the student receiving financial support). Another respondent stated that "society supports you to have a profession and be useful to it (and vice versa)".

In the absence of the experience in participating in vocational training courses inside the penitentiary, the participants could not appreciate the extent to which the current legislation helps them in addressing vocational training needs. But they still believe that this is helpful, that others have taken courses in other prisons, and that compared to other years (5 years ago) they now receive more consistent support in the penitentiary (an interviewee appreciating that he learned a lot in the penitentiary and that he received support services - counseling, information). It was stated: "maybe it helps those on the outside, but less on us... we have different kind of characters".

They considered that the legislation should allow those who reach a semi-open or an open regime to be able to practice certain trades, to participate in courses, and for vocational training agencies to inform that courses are organized, to make qualification courses according to everyone's needs, and to give the detainee the possibility to choose and allow him to do so in advance. One person claimed that he was absent from the country and that "what existed then does not exist anymore", thus justifying his inability to specify what is missing in Romanian legislation. Another interviewee stressed the need to provide a form of support for those who are released from prisons (eg. psychological support, participation in courses).

2. Employment Policies

Employment policies are also unknown to those who took part in the interview. One respondent appreciated that there is a lack of involvement of those working in the field of labor (unlike the existing involvement in the penitentiary by educators and social workers – which make the support in the penitentiary to be real). Another person appreciated that it will be harder for him, once he leaves the penitentiary, considering that qualification courses can be taken at any time but employment is not ensured upon graduation.

The measures that could be helpful, mentioned by the interviewees, are quite little known. It is considered that most of those who leave the penitentiary want to go abroad, for a higher salary. One of the respondents presented the existing support measures in penitentiaries in other countries (Italy, United Kingdom) by which persons deprived of their liberty were informed about the courses being organized, they were able to choose a course, were presented with the conditions and benefits, applied and were included in the course.

Another interviewee mentioned as a measure that could be to his benefit, moral support, support in the community (to be informed that there are laws, not to be labeled).

Another measure is to provide them with jobs, to have companies willing to hire them, to provide them with accommodation, food (to have jobs especially for detainees).

The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

From the perspective of the people in the penitentiary, the Covid 19 pandemic affected all areas of prison life: they did not go to work - the companies could not take over detainees as employees, the school was interrupted, the program was turned upside down, the connection with the family suffered (visits were no longer allowed), sociability decreased.

One person appreciated that he also had something to gain because he had meetings with the counselor / educator and thought / reflected more.

They were not asked for proposals to facilitate access to vocational guidance in the context of the pandemic.

Benefits provided - information about Covid 19 per room.

3. Financing

Regarding the financing of vocational training courses, persons deprived of their liberty appreciated that they are provided through European funds / EU projects; one person also mentioned the state budget as a funder for the courses, in addition to those from European funds. Only one person appreciated that he did not know sources of funding for the courses. They considered that these sources of funding were insufficient.

Two people participated as beneficiaries in a vocational training program: one abroad (in the penitentiary) and another mentioned the Romanian school program (apprentice school - carpenter) attended in freedom and a European project carried out by a private provider of vocational training. Another interviewee had the opportunity to attend a course organized by a private school with European funds, but chose to go abroad (before arriving at the penitentiary). Another person did not attend classes during detention (he had an opportunity but was included in the work schedule and was not allowed to attend).

The concrete support they would need to develop the professional skills mentioned by the interviewees consists in:

- family support;
- a new vocational training is welcome, support for employment (to be offered a job) after leaving the penitentiary (considers that it will be difficult for them to get hired due to the criminal record) - „If certain qualifications are made, I still will not find a job, due to the criminal record ”; the need for other trades was also mentioned;
- there should be more involvement from society (there is a social integration program in the penitentiary);
- to go abroad.

4. Local/National Initiatives

Vocational initiatives are perceived as few and isolated. Interviewees believe that there is a desire at the local level, but there are also many obstacles to organizing courses. They believe that there is not enough staff, that there are differences of opinion and that there are many possibilities but few are realized. They mentioned that there is support in prisons (they can work, receive moral and professional support) but it is insufficient.

5. Areas of Application for Training

There is interest in participating in professional training courses: "time passes and you can get a job outside (" you have something to tie yourself to")"; "more specializations do not hurt" another person appreciated.

Courses that were held in penitentiaries: tailoring, barber, cook.

It would be of interest courses in the field of HORECA / hospitality industry / tourism, oil, maritime, car mechanics, in construction (there are attractive salaries) - mason, tiler.

One area considered the most important is that of IT/informatics (one person mentioning that such courses are not taught in the penitentiary, even if he knows that they are taught in schools); automation; PC / laptop use. They need to be familiar with the technology so that they can get a job

when they will liberate. In addition to the attraction for technology, there is also the effect of modernization.

One person stated that he is waiting for guidance - he does not know what other trades are "fashionable".

Regarding areas where the interviewee needs to be professionally trained in order to integrate into the labor market, they mentioned:

- The field of agriculture, animal husbandry, plant crops, establishment of agricultural farms, bakery;
- Technology / IT field;
- The field of construction - but the person who mentioned this field was oriented towards the establishment of a company ("I would hire others");
- The field of private initiative: interest in starting a business and the need to find out how to start one.

One interviewee stated that he does not want to work in Romania.

6. Challenges for the Target Group

The problems (difficulties) faced by people leaving prison when they want to take a course / job mentioned in the in-depth interview are:

- a) Financial difficulties; the need to have a source of income, which imposes the need for a job (the family must be supported);
- b) Lack of accommodation;
- c) Lack of a family;
- d) Society's reaction (they will face labeling, the stigma of being a former prisoner);
- e) Barriers related to cultural and informational regression (the period of detention meant a regression, the language was altered)
- f) The difference of specialization and the types of jobs (they are afraid that they do not have the required qualifications on the labor market). One of the respondents considered that it is not possible to encounter difficulties when following a course but the difficulties appear when hiring.
- g) adaptation (there is a period of confusion, need for guidance); a person is aware that he must be open and willing to integrate.

They considered that the following should be developed / modified / improved so that more people use vocational training services for social and economic integration:

- a) there should be cooperation between the ANP and various companies (so that they employ people who were in prison immediately after release);
- b) more involvement from AJOFM (they should offer free courses and a job at the end);

The Italian model is presented as an example, through which those who left the penitentiary had a secure job, there were companies willing to hire (they had incentives from the state: tax cuts, financial benefits); there were many NGOs involved (providing accommodation, jobs) - some specialists developed business in this field - social workers (accommodation, food) received money from the state, or from European funds.

- c) legislation should "give more power to those who want to do something";

d) there should be support for the professional training process in penitentiaries: to have a more varied offer, to be in the interest of the detainees, to have courses more frequently. The way of conducting in another penitentiary abroad is given as an example: the detainees participated in courses with the penitentiary staff (they felt the same way, "they considered us people, we had some confidence").

It was mentioned the need to change the income of those paid to help the detainees in integration (in the sense of increasing remuneration).

Regarding the follow-up of qualification courses after serving the sentence, a person proposed the possibility to pay the course after the person is hired (as support for those who do not have sufficient income and who want to take a qualification course). Two others did not comment, not knowing the qualification / requalification procedure.

One of the people motivates the inability to make proposals as a consequence of leaving the country for a long time. He worked abroad (England). He explained the valid procedure in England for employment: there are private agencies, you go there, an interview with the agency follows, a contract is signed and in 2-3 days they send you to work. They do not charge an immediate commission but deduct it from the salary. He appreciates that in Romania such a system does not work because it is a different mentality and the agreements are not respected.

Opinions on Digital Skills

Regarding digital skills, the interviewees appreciate that they are not trained / developed in prisons, that they are necessary, because society has evolved, the internet is very much used. One person stated that he was aware of the operating systems.

FINDINGS

The main findings from this research are as follows:

- The training should take into consideration:
 - Sources of information used by persons deprived of their liberty. In the virtual space the most used are: google, facebook, vlog posts; in the real one: friends and family, or specialists, including those from governmental organizations;
 - Areas of interest for persons deprived of liberty: Horeca (Hotels, restaurants, cabins) industry, construction, car repair, agriculture, IT, as well as training in the field of private initiative;
 - The employers' demand for skilled labor (their training and skills requirements vs. those held by detainees);
 - Providing support services, in addition to qualification services (job search counseling, employment mediation, psychological support, etc.);
 - The possibility to contact potential employers interested in the labor force during the course attendance, in order to make the direct transition from the qualification program to the employment program based on a contract;
 - Carrying out information actions at all levels (detainees, vocational centers and companies) on the content of legislation and policies in the field of support for persons deprived of their liberty in the labor market.

- Partners should provide participants with **clear instructions** on:
 - Conditions for enrolling in a course;
 - The content of the training program, the endowments made available during the training;
 - Employment opportunities, including abroad;
 - Existing non-governmental organizations and other social actors providing advice / mediation to persons deprived of their liberty;
 - Social and personal benefits deriving from the adoption of an active behavior on the labor market (for increasing the motivation for work).

- **Flexible training is essential**- many of the target group may have:
 - Need for support for the procurement of documents (study documents, updating of identity documents, certificates from family doctor, etc.);
 - Need for social support for those without family support (housing, financial resources in the period from leaving the penitentiary to the time of employment);
 - Psychological and mentoring support (a specialist to go to after release) during the period of accommodation in society;
 - Need for greater involvement of specialists (local employment agencies, social assistance services, etc.).

- From the focus groups and interviews, it can be noted that **the participants are keen** to:
 - To attend qualification courses since the period in which they serve the sentence;
 - To accumulate information on ICT and to develop digital skills (in the context of the development of digitized services in society);
 - To work abroad, for a higher remuneration for the work done than in Romania.

- Partners should be aware that **training needs are different for each participant** and training should be planned accordingly.

- There are people deprived of their liberty who have a high level of training, who have developed a number of skills and have an increased capacity to accumulate new information;
- There are people who are either illiterate or have finished a few classes but do not have the skills / knowledge to be able to enter the labor market. For them, the access to qualification courses is limited, they must complete at least 8 classes. It would be necessary in this case for training adapted to their level, for the development of professional and digital skills;
- There are high expectations of most of them regarding the salary for the work performed. For this reason, the Romanian labor market is not attractive enough;
- Some people do not know certain legal provisions that are in their support and do not know how to ask for facilities or assistance.

Other relevant findings

- There is a need to encourage local initiatives, to increase community action from both public institutions and the private and non-governmental sectors;
- There is a need to shape the attitude of persons deprived of their liberty towards work by intensifying counseling actions during the period of deprivation of liberty, so that when they return to the community they enter the labor market circuit and are motivated to maintain their status as employed;
- The context of the Covid 19 pandemic has seriously affected both persons deprived of their liberty and the specialists involved in providing specialized support for social reintegration. The detainees no longer had access to counseling services from the specialists of the Employment Agency, they could no longer go out in the community to participate in job fairs or other events that contribute to maintaining contact with society and when accumulating information or skills;
- Even the present research was affected by the Covid pandemic, interviews and focus groups were conducted online, which affected the degree of research data collection.

How are we going to use these findings?

When developing the training materials, the partners will ensure that the content is **clear and easy to understand**, consisted of all the relevant information needed to use **different social media platforms**, and also included information on **safety and security** when using the platforms. With regards to language barriers, all partners **translated the materials into English, Swedish, Italian, Serbian, Slovenian, Romanian and Spanish** to aid the training in the different countries.

When training starts, each partner organization should consider ensuring **that flexible training options are given** to suit those involved, and the **online learning platform** will also be used to supplement the training, in case any information needed reiterating.

The results of this study are useful both for employees and decision makers of the National Employment Agency and the National Administration of Penitentiaries (which apply strategies for integration and reintegration) and for employers - large or small companies, as well as training providers / vocational centers.

Oriented towards ensuring the social and economic conditions of all social categories in difficulty, each of the decision-makers or experts involved in ensuring the support of persons deprived of liberty uses research in the field aimed at highlighting aspects of the need for social protection, so that their intervention fold as needed.

These findings can be useful to third parties (non-governmental organizations, volunteers, specialists in local public services, etc.) in their process of ensuring community development (either in strategic planning or through direct action).

The importance of diversity management!

VICTORUPESI consortium consist out of very divers partners serving very diverse beneficiaries. This represents a micro mirror of the societies each of our beneficiaries are living in and is really important to build the ground for holistic approaches.

Reasons for having holistic approaches in Romania:

- To know all aspects of an issue (public strategies and legislation, access to vocational training, existing services in the field of vocational training and access to the labor market of persons who have served a custodial sentence, knowledge of their perception of work, etc.);
- To identify areas of interest for persons deprived of their liberty in order to be employed, so that possible qualification courses can be tailored to their needs;
- To identify barriers that stand in the way of social reintegration, but also the strong aspects that help people deprived of liberty in obtaining social capital;
- To assess the level of digital and ICT skills and identify the need for training to develop digital skills for detainees;
- To identify the practices (models of good practice) used by specialists in the process of supporting the social reintegration of detainees in order to reduce the risk of social exclusion and highlight the point of view on new conditions / requirements for better social intervention;
- To know the need of the labor force the employers have and especially of the conditions in which a person who has left the penitentiary can be employed by the local companies;
- To be aware of the need for collaboration between all existing organizations, institutions and companies in order to facilitate the access to the labor market of the persons who served the sentence, in view of a real exercise of social solidarity.

The overviews of digital skills

The world is changing significantly, hence the need to keep up to date with technology. With technology advancing at an incredible speed, it is important that we are not lagging behind these changes.

Reasons for having good digital skills in Romania:

- The demand for the development of digital skills is growing, an aspect recognized both by employers and training experts and by persons deprived of their liberty.
- For employers, the need to have employees with digital skills arises from the purchase of run by softwares, from the need for remote communication (e-mail, access to the internal communication network, downloading execution plans, launching execution orders, etc. .), but also to keep records of the company's activity in electronic format (accounting, procurement, sales, management, etc.).
- It is important for people in the penitentiary to have such skills (which they should develop during their detention), all the more so as there is rapid progress in this area, and the period of detention keeps them away from contact with them. The need for training in this area is a condition for minimizing the risk of exclusion (due to the lack of these skills). Everyday life has changed: salaries are transferred to bank accounts, payment is made by card, purchases can be made online, etc., which requires a good knowledge of computer use, familiarity with different interfaces of their platforms, and legal / illegal aspects arising from it. There are also people who, being initiated in the IT field, can develop software programs, a skill that correctly targeted can become a source of income. Digital skills promote access to information, with each person being able to explore the websites of official institutions to solve various issues concerning themselves (like scheduling a consultation, obtaining a document, accessing a facility or tracking job vacancies, conduct a job interview online or accessing general culture sites or communication with other people).

The overviews of the political context in each of the partners countries

Romania is a rule of law, democratic and social, the form of government being the republic. The fundamental law is the Constitution. The state is led by a president, elected by democratic vote by

the citizens. Constitutional democracy is ensured through political pluralism. In Romania there are parties such as The Social Democratic Party, The Liberal Party, The Save Romania Union, The Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania, The German Democratic Forum, The Alliance for the Union of Romanians, etc.

The right to social protection and access to social protection measures are respected. In this sense, Romania has developed strategies for social protection and social reintegration for all social categories. There is legislative support that ensures access to social services and a system of social protection is created (which includes social benefits and services and specialized institutions to support the population in difficulty).

The overviews of the funding of vocational education in each of the partners countries

Vocational education is covered by education and employment policies. Each person has the opportunity to attend free schooling courses, which will provide them with a qualification or competence in different fields. After leaving the public education system, people who have failed to get a job and are looking for a job, can apply to the County Agency for Employment in the county where he resides to receive support for employment, including access to a free training course. In this case, the financing is provided from the state budget.

An alternative to this method is to enroll in various projects with European funding carried out by non-governmental organizations / professional centers, through which qualification / requalification courses are organized. Participation in these projects is also free for the beneficiary, provided that they fall into the category of the target group.

For persons deprived of liberty there is a methodology for organizing qualification courses in penitentiaries.

The overviews of the local companies and industries available to hire our beneficiaries in each of the partners countries

Local companies invited to participate in this study showed their willingness to hire anyone, whether they were in prison or not, the only condition being to have professional knowledge and demonstrate that they have the ability to perform tasks and comply with the work schedule. On the one hand, employers stated that they would rather hire a person who has professional skills and perform work tasks (even if they have done wrong in the past and responded criminally) than to hire a person who has an intact criminal record but causes damage to the job (due to lack of experience or skills required) for which the employer has to pay for repairs. On the other hand, the representatives of the private companies specified that when hiring they do not request a criminal record or information about possible acts committed.

Two areas of activity were addressed in this study, respectively: port operations (loading - unloading of goods, storage) and shipbuilding. These two areas can absorb labor at all skill levels and are interested in maintaining the workforce (in which they invest regular training).