

**SOCIAL INCLUSION AND EDUCATION WORK
WITH INMATES DURING AND AFTER
IMPRISONMENT.
REVIEW OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
AND GOOD PRACTICES AND ITS PUBLISHED
COLLECTION OF PAPERS**

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Abstract. The present article surveys the International Conference in Scientific Research and Good Practices in the field of *Social Inclusions and Education Work with Inmates During and After Imprisonment*, held on November 21, 2024 at Sofia University *St. Kliment Ohridski*. The reports presented at the conference and included in the same interdisciplinary collection of conference papers are reviewed within the framework of a very broad context – historic, legal, social, pedagogical, and philological fields. The conference main goal was to support the Faculty of Pedagogy students training in social inclusion and education work with offenders, being also useful for others such as researchers, specialists and experts interested in this scientific field.

Keywords: social inclusion and education work; imprisonment; international conference in scientific research and good practices; collection of scientific papers

The criminal acts increased dynamics as shown in statistics, raising, as well as the crime structure incremental diversification, illustrated by the emergence of new illegal acts, determine the relevance of needed work with offenders, including in penitentiary institutions. The detainees' social inclusion's most significant means are social activity and education work, focusing on supporting their personal change and formation of skills and abilities for a decent social lifestyle. Such goals inevitably impact the training of higher education specialists prepared for working in the prevention, correction, education and social inclusion system.

An important feature in the students prepared for work in the prevention, correction, education and social inclusion system is shaping specific competencies both in impris-

oned persons – for their successful social rehabilitation, and in the specialists working with them in the penitentiary institutions. The Faculty of Pedagogy in Sofia University *St. Kliment Ohridski* has established traditions in training specialists for work in social and educational prevention and correction units, including in penitentiary institutions, their competencies being formed and specified in numerous disciplines, such as: in the specialty Pedagogy – Bachelor degree with major field *Preventive and Correctional Pedagogy* – preventive education, systems for prevention and correction-education activities, methods of working with children and young people with deviant and delinquent behavior, practice within the studied discipline, etc.; in Master program *Pedagogy of Deviant Behavior* – social inclusion education, management of social inclusion institutions, methods of prevention and correction-education activities, penitentiary pedagogy, etc.; in the specialty *Social Action*, Bachelor degree in *Social Works* – social work with people with deviant and delinquent behavior, methods of work with children and youth with deviant and delinquent behavior, social work with individuals during and after imprisonment, etc.

To expand and deepen acquired competencies in these disciplines, a connection between theory and practice must be established. Such a connection grows through visits by students to the busiest prison in the country (Prison – Sofia) within the study of relevant academic disciplines in such major fields as *Pedagogy* and *Social Action* in the Faculty of Pedagogy within the framework of an agreement with the General Directorate *Execution of Sentences* on training institution for students professional and practical workups. The practical need and usefulness of exchanging experience, increasing the effectiveness of the educational process and the training of future personnel for the penitentiary system, eased the signing in 2024 of a Cooperation Agreement between Sofia University *St. Kliment Ohridski* and the General Directorate *Execution of Sentences* at the Ministry of Justice.

One result of the signed agreement is the implementation of an intra-university project on the topic: Training of specialists for social inclusion and education work in the penitentiary system through cooperation with the General Directorate *Execution of Sentences*, funded with budget allocated for scientific activities from the State Budget for Sofia University *St. Kliment Ohridski*. The project head is Senior Assistant Professor Daniel Polihronov, PhD, together with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Toni Manasieva – Head of Department *Theory of Education* at the Faculty of Pedagogy. Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Daniela Racheva is also a project team member. The three project team members are holders of academic courses in bachelor's and master's programs at the Faculty of Pedagogy, addressing relevant issues related to the project topic.

Within the project framework, a collection of papers on the topic of Social Inclusion and Education Work with Inmates during and after Imprisonment is published. It is the product of several scholars' creative searches on the topic. The articles included relate directly or are relevant to social and education work with detainees during and after imprisonment. The included papers' context is very broad, covering historic, legal, social,

pedagogical, and philological issues. The collection purpose is to support the students training at the Faculty of Pedagogy in major fields related to social and pedagogical work with offenders, but it would also be helpful for anyone interested in the field.

The papers arrangement in the collection follows the curriculum logic for social inclusion work with detainees during and after imprisonment, presented in the report by D. Polihronov *Model for Professional Competence in Social Inclusion Work with Inmates during and after Imprisonment*, taking into account the fundamental nature of some papers (Polihronov 2024, pp. 15 – 28).

The fundamental problem of penitentiary social inclusion and education work - social readapting of criminal offenders after imprisonment for sentence on another crime entered into force (pursuant Art. 27, para. 1 of the Criminal Code), is detailed in the B. Stankov article *The Problem of Recidivists Reintegration in Conditions of Social Disintegration*, with special focus on minors (Stankov 2024, pp. 29 – 35).

For understanding the prevention, correction, education and resocialization action, the article with focus on pedagogy by T. Manasieva *No, Boychinovtsi is not an Education through Labor School!* provides important insight. The study exposes and justifies with relevant arguments the main differences between the punishment of imprisonment (for minors – in a correction house) and the education measure of placement in a boarding school (for minors and juveniles), and hence the differences between the two institutions (Manasieva 2024, pp. 36 – 48).

Follow articles providing a historical perspective on imprisonment. Such are the articles *Under the Old Prison "Shadow," where Legends are Born* by V. Stoyanov (Stoyanov 2024, pp. 49 – 59) and *The Prison for Political Inmates in Sliven – Institution, Functioning and Regime /Based on Data and Memories in the Regional History Museum – Sliven archives between 1918 and September 08, 1944/* by D. Rankova and I. Kostova (Rankova, Kostova 2024, pp. 60 – 70). The researchers present the Old Prison in Sliven history, as well as its future as a museum.

Based on an interpretive analysis of Dacia Maraini novel *Memoirs of a Female Thief* (1972), R. Gesheva takes us to the 1970s in Italy. In her article *"The Idea of Body-Prison in 20th-Century Italian Literature," she presents the stereotypical perception of a vulnerable category of persons deprived of their liberty – women* (Gesheva 2024, pp. 71 – 77).

In a comparative European perspective, the articles of D. Lengvinas, which present legal analysis of the regulatory framework of minors criminal liability in the Republic of Lithuania (Lengvinas 2024, pp. 78 – 84), and of O. Ling, which, based on biographic analyses of young people from the Czech Republic serving a prison sentence, traces the development and risk factors for imprisoned young people (Ling 2024, pp. 85 – 101).

Two of the articles focus on education, training and qualification in a penitentiary environment. In his article *The Importance of Education for Implementation and Achievement of Prison Sentence Goals*, K. Manov analyses the criminal law framework on the education process (Manov 2024, pp. 102 – 113), while D. Racheva, in her article *School*

Education Action in Places of Imprisonment, presents historic development and current state of the penitentiary school network in Bulgaria (Racheva 2024, pp. 114 – 126).

Next article is by T. Milusheva, dedicated to prejudices in penitentiary and post-penitentiary social inclusion work (Milusheva 2024, pp. 127 – 137).

G. Georgiev presents a study on the significance of tattooing, one among many negative phenomena in penitentiaries – *Tattooing in a Penitentiary Environment – Status Symbolism or Marginalization* (Georgiev 2024, pp. 138 – 147).

In his article *The Path to Change: Professional Interventions for Domestic Violence Perpetrators in Penitentiaries*, G. Milkov shares his experience implementing a program dealing with anger and aggression in domestic violence perpetrators during imprisonment and detention in custody (Milkov 2024, pp. 148 – 159).

In a study dedicated to students' attitudes toward working with individuals during and after imprisonment and their motivation for working with this specific group of individuals, author T. Milusheva shares results accumulated with students from the Faculty of Pedagogy at Sofia University (Milusheva, 2024, pp. 160–171).

Some of these attitudes are discussed in the articles of students from both *Social Action* and *Pedagogy* majors:

M. Emanuilova's article discusses the childhood mental trauma on shaping criminal personality. It is named: *Trauma and its Role in Shaping Criminal Behavior* (Emanuilova 2024, pp. 172 – 177).

In her article *Libraries' Role in Personal Life during and after Imprisonment*, S. Sivkova explores the importance of penitentiary institutions' libraries for further social inclusion of inmates (Sivkova 2024, pp. 178 – 183).

P. Kamburski article *Boys from Correction Houses – According the Letter of the Law and through Media Accounts* is dedicated to minors and juveniles. The specifics of socio-pedagogical work in the correction houses for boys are analysed in the light of media accounts and ethics of the issue, journalist coverage is commented on (Kamburski 2024, pp. 184 – 197).

How does serving the sentence affect the children of prisoners and how can the “cycle of intergenerational imprisonment” be broken? These are the questions that P. Petrova seeks answers to in her article *The Children of Prisoners and Their Future*, indicating the relevant of providing social support for these children and their families (Petrova 2024, pp. 198 – 205).

We were able to enjoy some of the collection reports on November 21, 2024 during the International Conference in Scientific Research and Good Practices *Social Inclusion and Education Work with Inmates during and after Imprisonment*, held in the auditorium and meeting rooms 1 and 2. The conference organizing committee included a team of lecturers from the Department of *Theory of Education* at the Faculty of Pedagogy of Sofia University *St. Kliment Ohridski*: Senior Asst. Prof. Daniel Polihronov, PhD – Chairman; Assoc. Prof. Toni Manasieva, PhD and Senior Asst. Prof. Daniela Racheva, PhD – Members. The organization also included an International Scientific

Board: Prof. Ilona Klaniene, PhD and Donatas Lengvinas, PhD – lecturers at the Department of Pedagogy in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities at Klaipėda University, Republic of Lithuania, as well as Assoc. Prof. Vera Voitova, PhD – Head of the Department *Special and Inclusive Education* in the Faculty of Pedagogy at Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic. They were remote conference participants.

The conference official guests came from various human rights and law enforcement institutions, as well as other higher education institutions and organizations, such as: Sofia District Court, Sofia District Prosecutor Office, General Directorate for Penitentiary Services in the Ministry of Justice, territorial units in the General Directorate of Penitentiary Services (Sliven Prison and Pleven Prison), Central Commission for Combating Anti-Social Manifestations in the Council of Ministers, General Directorate National Police in the Ministry of Interior, Criminal Police Department (Child Crime Sector and Operational Service of Sector Penitentiaries). Also present were representatives of: Agency for the Quality of Social Services, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Ministry of Interior Academy, New Bulgarian University, Bulgarian Association of Criminology, State Psychiatric Hospital for Treatment of Drug Addiction and Alcoholism – Sofia, Regional History Museum – Sliven.

The Sofia University was represented by: Prof. Sonya Mileva, EcScD – Deputy Rector, Assoc. Prof. Vanya Bozhilova, PhD – Faculty of Pedagogy Dean, as well as representatives of the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology. Students from the Faculty of Pedagogy, various major fields and courses studying disciplines related to the conference issues attended.

The conference main purpose was to support the training of students at the Faculty of Pedagogy in disciplines dealing with social inclusion and pedagogical work with offenders, but they could also be helpful for any interested, such as researchers, specialists and experts in this scientific field.

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