



SkillHUBS NEWSLETTER, Issue no5, 16/01/2020

Dear Readers,

New Year, New Newsletter. Here-under you can find the current and interesting situation regarding the pilot training implementation at the Dob prison in Slovenia.

Also a summary of a response to the new report released in the United States 'Equipping Individuals for Life Beyond Bars' .

The SkillHUBS Project aims to develop a transnational counselling and training model for inmates and elaborate recommendations for the introduction of the model into national prison education systems across Europe. Below you will find insightful articles and information on our forthcoming inputs. Do not forget to check out our [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#) Pages and spread the news!

Pilot training implementation for the development of basic and transversal competences at the Dob prison

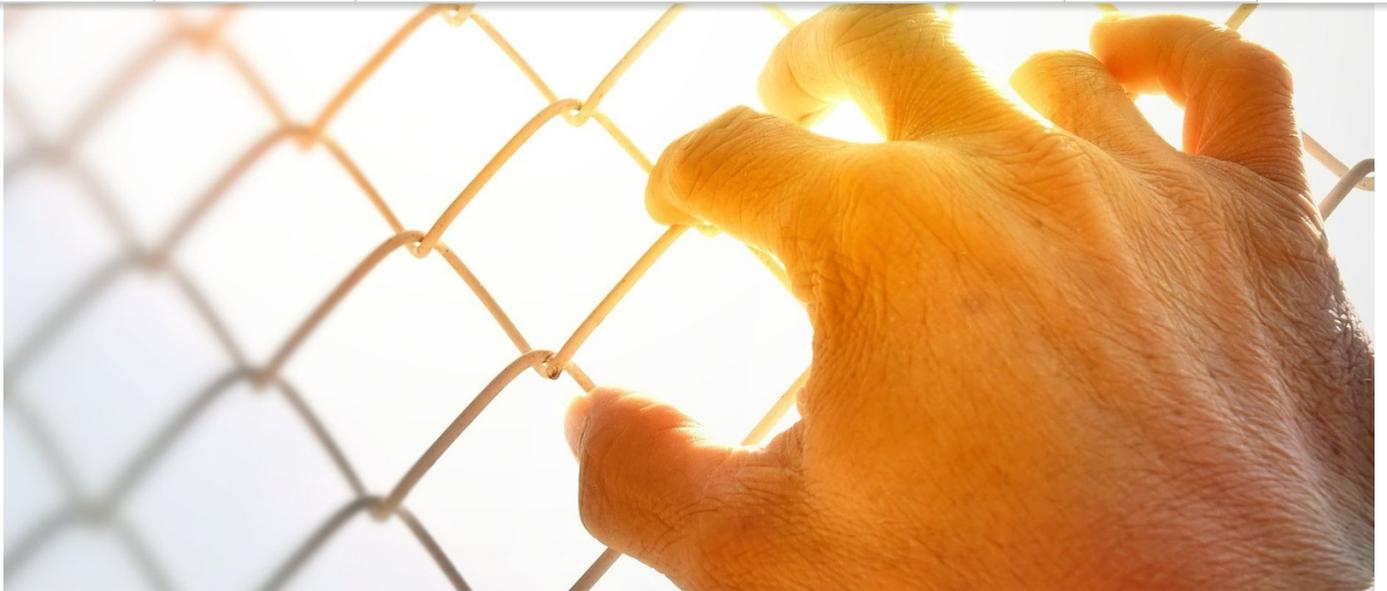
As part of the SkillHUBS project at the Dob prison, we are implementing a pilot training to develop basic and transversal competences to improve the employability of prisoners after their release. The programme was developed in close collaboration with the participants, based on their professional ambitions and personal preferences and with a help of a test of identified weaknesses in the development of basic competences. In setting the goals and basic programme guidelines, we followed conclusions drawn from a previously conducted survey regarding the common skills employers look for in potential employees. We also took into account the opportunities available to adults in our environment to further develop these competences in accessible education programmes.

Programme participants have been chosen and motivated by specialised prison staff. At the first meeting, the two mentors presented programme goals to the participants and through various activities made sure they openly expressed their professional aspirations and personal expectations regarding the programme. We conducted a personal interview with each individual, exploring their prior experiences and competences arising from their past professional and personal lives. Participants were then given a written test, completing practical, everyday tasks used to assess their reading comprehension skills, writing skills, basic mathematical skills, critical thinking and problem solving skills. For the purposes of this test, we used the tasks developed for the PIAAC, a large-scale international programme of assessment and analysis of adult competences, implemented in Slovenia by the ACS, the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education. After conducting the first part, where we highlighted the needs of the individuals and the wider community and the employers' expectations and connected that to the actual condition of the participants' developed capabilities, we completed and signed a learning contract with each participant – a document created during the development stage of the SkillHUBS project.

Following a detailed analysis of all the results obtained, we, the programme mentors, developed the idea to design the programme as a business start-up project. When we introduced the idea to the participants, they were very enthusiastic, for it turns out that freedom and money are the two basic motives that drive prisoners to further personal and professional development. In addition, there are three participants in the group with prior entrepreneurial experience – one is in accountant training, one is a great salesperson, and one a good speaker. In conclusion, there are many opportunities for knowledge and experience transfer among the participants.

This was the origin of a programme, in which participants would set up three different "virtual" companies. Each meeting will function as an individual project – from developing an entrepreneurial idea to creating a business plan. Throughout the process, participants will develop critical thinking, learn how to solve problems they encounter along the way, acquire basic cooperation and communication skills, and enhance their creativity. They will renew and develop their mathematical skills using concrete tasks while preparing a financial plan and calculating costs and prices, as well as improve their language skills reading sources and preparing written documents for their business plan. During individual meetings, participants will receive basic theoretical knowledge from the mentors, presenting them with an opportunity to one day embark on their own entrepreneurial journey, following release.

Text: Sabina Tori Selan - **Centre for Education and Culture Trebnje**



Picture: newamerica.org

Response to the New US report from 2019: Equipping individuals for life beyond bars

The US survey published in 2019 *Equipping individuals for life beyond bar* is addressing the same crucial question the SkillHUBS project deals with: whether educational and employment training correctional programs are meaningful to both re-entry and labour market preparation.

Key findings:

- There is a substantial gap in the basic skills of incarcerated adults and the general population
- Completing postsecondary education while incarcerated has a positive effect on the literacy and numeracy skill levels of incarcerated adults
- Job training has a positive effect on the literacy and numeracy proficiency of incarcerated adults
- There is no relationship between time left in incarceration and interest in/participation in/completion of post-secondary education and job training by incarcerated adults

Recommendations

- Increase the availability of quality education and meaningful job-training opportunities
- Increase the choice of education providers to incarcerated populations
- Provide opportunities to ensure prison education programs lead to opportunities to earn formal qualifications
- Make postsecondary education and job training programs a part of the re-entry process
- Improve the availability of financial support for prison education

The report also suggests that further research is necessary to understand the content and focus of prison education programmes: helping to ensure that quality and meaningful training or learning is available to incarcerated adults.

To learn more about the analysis and research findings read the full report at: <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/reports/equipping-individuals-life-beyond-bars/>

Full text of the response can be found on our [website](#) , written by Ester Možina - **Slovenian Institute for Adult Education**

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Let's continue working together for more inclusive and learner-centred prison education across Europe!

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SkillHUBS – Transnational prison up-skilling guidance and training model

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