

Inclusive Entrepreneurship Education in Slovenian Prisons: A Best-Practice Model for Reintegration of Adults with Special Educational Needs

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Abstract

Justice impacted persons (inmates) with special needs including persons with autism spectrum disorders, certain intellectual disabilities, with specific learning difficulties, with ADHD, with motor impairments, etc. have greater barriers to social reintegration, employment and improved quality of life than other justice-impacted persons. This paper uses the inclusive prison education programs offered by the Ljubljana Public Education Centre – Cene Štupar – CILJ as a model for best-practice, as it includes entrepreneurship and sustainability education using principles of andragogy and specific adaptations for adults with special needs. There are formal and informal opportunities for inmates at several prisons in Slovenia, primarily the largest prison in Slovenia: Dob prison. Each year an average of 100 inmates take part in vocational training (e.g. Gastronomy & Hotel Services, Logistics & Transportation) and other programs that develop skills related to entrepreneurship (e.g. business planning, financial literacy, international trade, communication, conflict resolution). Each of these programmes utilizes inclusive andragogical approaches, such as: Holistic Learning (VAKOG), sensory-motor adaptations, developmental hierarchies and five-level support system (teacher assistance, counselling, school support, external expertise, statutory counselling). As well, the non-formal modules provide opportunities for soft skills development, responsibility, digital literacy, sustainable practices and life performance training, as well as pre-release, during release and post-release counselling designed for individuals. By aligning education to the needs of the labour market and the constitutional principle of equality, the model fosters employability, decreases social exclusion from society and improves personal independence and quality of life.

Keywords: prison education, inclusive adult learning, special educational needs, entrepreneurship education, social reintegration, intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders