

Good practice: Modular training for argon welder

21st Century Skill connected:

Learning skills: collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving, creativity

Literacy skills: technology literacy

Life skills: productivity & accountability, leadership and responsibility, adaptability

Give an explanation of how this good practice works. Examples from websites, videos or other media are necessary.

Social skills allow people to communicate, connect and socialize with others. They generally include multiple cognitive, affective, and behavioural processes, such as problem-solving, perspective taking, moral reasoning, self-control, and positive behavioural skills. They improve the way person present, cooperate and relate to other, and help them to improve the quality of their lives.

Lacking social skills has been associated with various life problems. Studies over the past decades have repeatedly linked a lack of social skills with reoffending. Therefore, as a risk factor for delinquency, social skills are often targeted in the treatment for convicted persons to prevent reoffending. The assumption is that reducing social skill deficits that led to initial delinquent behaviour will reduce subsequent delinquent behaviour and can improve their re-integrative process in the society.

Social skills are highly prized on the labour market these days. They are important for both, professional development and vocational integration and employability. That competencies help to increase individuals' employability, but the penal institutions consistently forget their responsibility in providing SST for convicted persons. Former inmates face a number of other barriers to ensure employment, including lack of experience in the work environment and also prejudice – having a criminal record as a key barrier to job obtaining. Because, employment plays an important role in decreasing the chances of re-offending, is crucial to address the social skills gaps through learning opportunities which improve social skills and competences, relevant to the (local) job market. Joint work with employment services in the area of vocational training, ensure that the training provided will prepare the individuals for the labour market. (Hawley, Murphy & Souto-Otero, 2013)

Besides specific vocational skills, basic skills required by employers, such as motivation, reliability and team-working skills are also important. (Hawley, Murphy & Souto-Otero, 2013). Most jobs require not only knowledge and specific technical competencies, but also social and emotional skills enabling workers to work in teams, to motivate themselves when confronting problems, to solve interpersonal disputes, and to tolerate high levels of stress. Therefore, the social skills should be incorporated in the vocational programs, because they will lead convicted persons to successful integration into society and can improve inmate's employment opportunities after release.

One of vocational trainings in Macedonian prisons is the Modular training for argon welder, conducted in the prison in Kumanovo in 2018, provided by professors from Kumanovo's Vocational school "Nace Budjoni". The timeframe of the training is 180 hours or 13 weeks (12 weeks for theoretical lessons and practical work and one week for assessment and exams).

Training curricula is prepared, adapted on the needs of the convicted persons in prison. The training/program contains 5 sessions with theoretical topics and practical work related to:

1. Technical drawing

2. Machine materials
3. Machine elements with mechanics
4. Technology and welding
5. Business and entrepreneurship

Every topic include concise explanations regarding the training's purpose, methodology, maintenance procedures, session structure and thematic units, expected training outcomes, methodology evaluation, and knowledge acquisition evaluation.

The practical work was organized in teams of 10 to 15 inmates, by four teachers in order to improve inmate's professional competencies and skills. Each participant had his own workplace, with necessary tools and material for the implementation of practical work. With this vocational training, the convicted persons beside gaining new knowledge and acquiring competencies are also enhancing important social skills related to employability. Namely, the educator determines the methods that will be used based on the character and needs of the participants and in cooperation with them. Using certain teaching methods, such as role play, computer simulation of situations, presentation of small projects, work in teams, discussion, resolving problematic situation, the participants are developing creativity, collaboration, communication, critical thinking and problem solving, ICT literacy, productivity, accountability, adaptability and flexibility. These skills will help them in their working environments after release, which presumes better reintegration in the local community.

Assessment and evaluation of participants' achievements according to the objectives of the curriculum is through continuous monitoring of their progress during program implementation. After completing the expected number of lessons, those who will pass the knowledge test can get certificates.

Explain how this good practice helps solve problems/stimulates social vocational skills in your country. If possible, provide data of how successful the good practice is.

Particular topics covered by the program include pedagogical methods, like teamwork, discussion, demonstration of small project, role play, computer simulation of situations, that enable the participants to develop skills related to employability, especially those related to 21st century skills: learning skills (collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving, creativity), literacy skills (especially technology literacy) and life skills (productivity & accountability, leadership and responsibility, adaptability). A pedagogic strategy used in this practice is considered to be effective, promotes self-reflection and also group cooperation. The interest and the competencies of the participants in the training, was proven to be a great start of implementing such programs that will help participants to receive new knowledge, develop competences, and enhanced the social skills, that will enable them to receive employment after their release from the prison.

According to information received from the prison in Kumanovo, 11 convicted persons finished the training and received certificate. Therefore, this program is considered to open opportunity for participants to promote new learning and self- reflections on their life path. It can helps them to gain a deeper understanding of themselves and their experiences. In addition, the acquired knowledge, competencies, and skills are protective factors allowing these individuals to be more confident and to avoid some risky situations that might drag them back into crime.

Explain in one or two sentences how this good practice matches with the connected 21st Century Skill.

Developing social skills is a powerful way to prepare convicted persons for real world. Most are 21st century skills (critical thinking, communication, collaboration, conflict management) which are essential in building personal and professional relationships.

Supporting documents attached:

- Best practice 2. Argon welder curricula. (in Macedonian language)
- 17 Drawing exercises
- Picture

