

Working with vulnerable groups in probation. Mentoring programs for offenders

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Iuliana CĂRBUNARU

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Why developing mentoring programs?

- targeting the risk of reoffending
- positive outcomes from social and behavioral perspective - pro-social benefits
- promoting successful transitions from prison to community
- Mentoring is a promising, not necessary proven method to reduce recidivism – at least for now...in this part of Europe!

Mentoring programs for offenders - Examples

Canada - Community Adult Mentoring and Support (CAMS) targeting people with high risk of recidivism before releasing from prison and during conditional release period

USA - A similar initiative as in Canada introduced after the approval of the second chance act in 2008 a mentoring scheme has been established in order to support offenders prior their release from prisons

UK, Netherlands - Mentoring for youth arrested or incarcerated

UK – Mentoring for short term prisoners

Canada and Australia - Mentoring for women offenders

Norway – Mentoring project for radicalized offenders

.... And many other initiatives in different parts of the world!

Mentoring programs for offenders - Examples

Any examples from your jurisdictions?

Mentoring programs for Roma offenders

Bulgaria

Implemented by an NGO – IGA

In a special area - Plovdiv (55% of offenders are Roma)

Selection of the mentors (different criteria including criminal record)

Training of the mentors

Mentoring (during the entire period of the sentence, part of the sentence, incidental mentee)

Mentoring activities (meetings, mediation, supervision)

100% completion of the sentences

Czech Republic

Implemented by an NGO – SPJ

Training the mentors (theory and practice)

Mentors employed by SPJ (15-20 hours/month)

Mentoring (for former prisoners, for juveniles in different institutions)

Mentoring of the probation clients with difficulties in fulfilling the conditions of the sentence

Mentoring activities (support to meet the conditions imposed by the court, returning from prison to community):

- Social skills
- Debts counselling
- Activities with the families

Mentoring programs for offenders in Romanian Probation Service – The Context

The context - 1

The project - *“Strengthening the capacity of the Romanian probation system for delivering effective alternative to prison interventions”*

Mandatory that 10% of the Justice program budget allocation for activities targeting the Roma minority

Activity - Providing a mentoring service for assisting Roma offenders under probation supervision

Indicators

20 mentors recruited and trained

10 probation services delivering mentoring services, programs or activities for Roma offenders

Our goal

- ✓ Performing a sustainable exercise for community development
- ✓ Offering positive examples of activities to diminish the negative public perception about offenders
- ✓ Connecting the sectorial policies developed at the probation service level to the broader
- ✓ Encouraging and preserving the cultural values, including the use of Romani language

Mentoring programs for Roma offenders in Romanian Probation Services – Method

- ✓ 20 mentors recruited and trained to act as supportive person, role model, advisor for Roma offenders under probation supervision (with the support of the National Agency for Roma)
- ✓ 2 training sessions for mentors
- ✓ 26 persons under probation supervision involved in mentoring activities from 10 probation services
- ✓ Mentoring period – 8 months (January – September 2015)
- ✓ Translating into Romani certain documents issued by the probation services when supervising the Roma offenders



MENTORATUL proces de inserție socială



MINISTERUL JUSTITIEI
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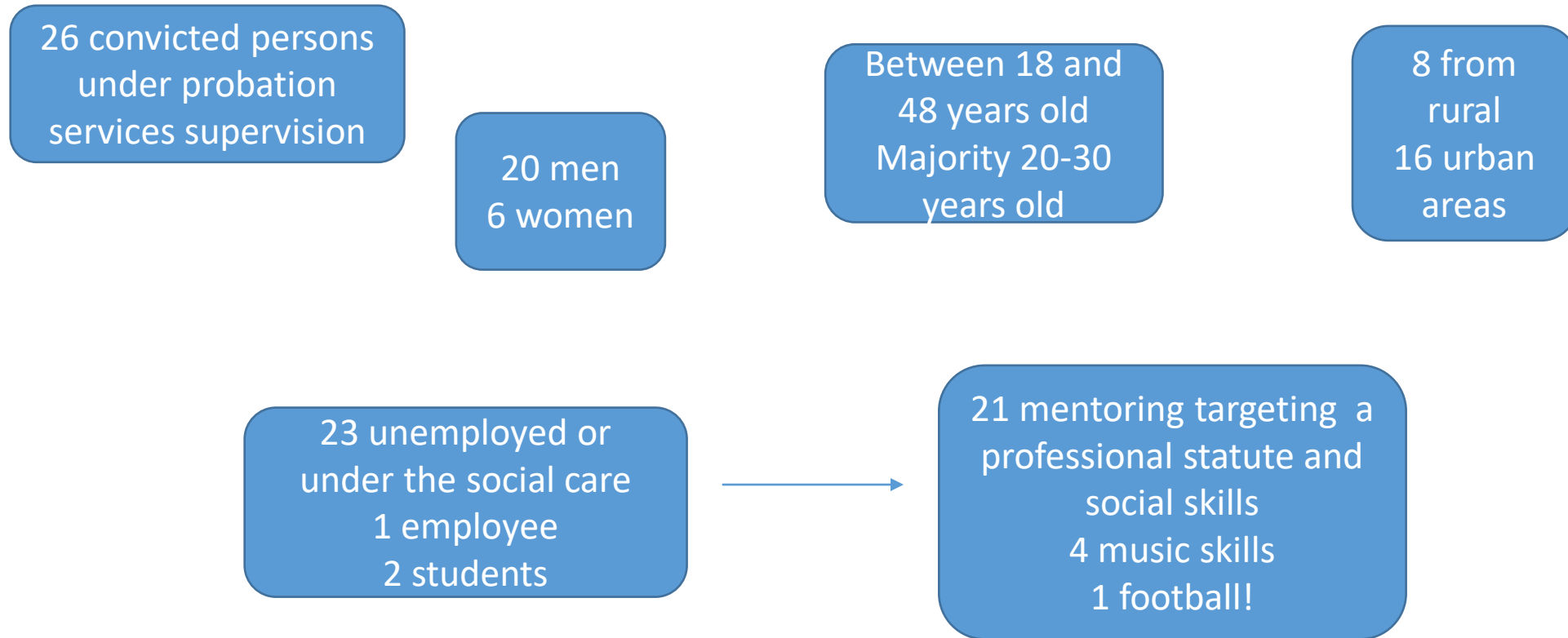


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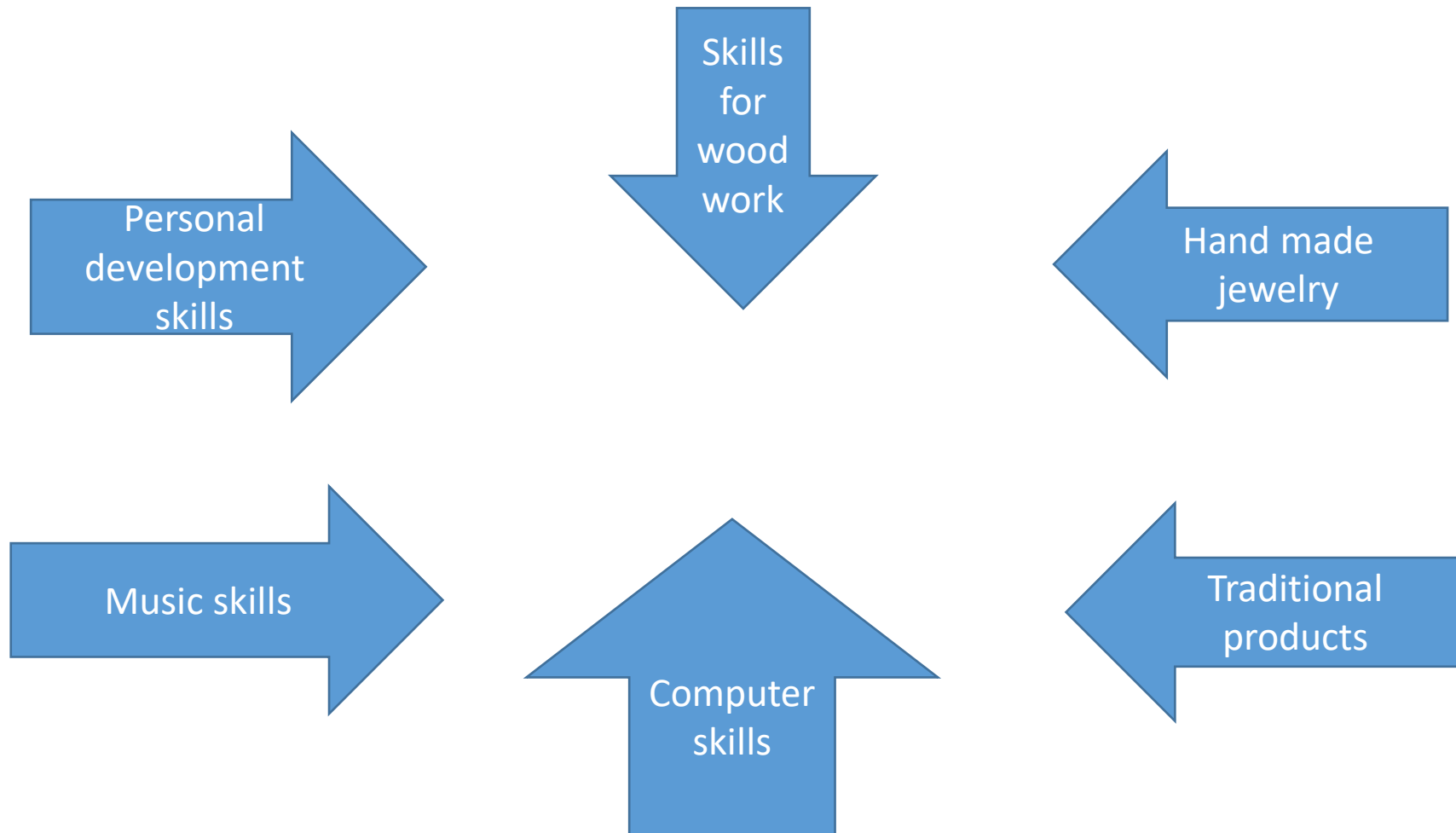


norway
grants

Mentoring programs for Roma offenders in Romanian Probation Services – Who are our mentees?



Mentoring programs for Roma offenders in Romanian Probation Services – Mentoring Activities



Mentoring programs for Roma offenders in Romanian Probation Services

The Outcome

25 of them finalised their probation period successfully; 1 committed a new crime while on probation

Gathering abilities in the fields explained before, targeting the unemployment

Exercising pro-social behaviours

Transferring life models from mentors to mentee

Building trust between mentors and mentee

Personal development process (new information, new abilities, increasing the self-esteem)

Planting the seeds for a new practice in probation services – a guide developed regarding the best practices

Changing lives?

....

Mentoring programs for offenders in Romanian Probation Service – The Context 2

The context - 2

The project - *“ERASMUS + project – Peer pro-social modelling in probation”*

- implemented by ESC (Ro) in partnership with the Portuguese Prison and Probation Service (Portugal), IPS (Portugal), Aproximar (Portugal) and Ankara Probation Service (Turkey)

Activity - developing a rehabilitation program for offenders delivered by former offenders.

Indicators

Project goals

- ✓ To build a "Peer a Pro-Social Model" team, trained by the professionals in this field;
- ✓ To train a sample of offenders as “Pro-Social Models” where a newly structured life skills programme will be delivered by them;
- ✓ To train a group of offenders to work as peer trainers for the other offenders;
- ✓ To deploy a programme in which peer trainers work voluntarily, as a part of the community-work obligation, under the supervision of training experts.

Mentoring programs for offenders in Romanian Probation Services – Method 2

- 5 probation services involved
- a curriculum on Peer Training developed
- a “PeerTrainer’s Manual” prepared
- a “Pro-SocialModel Manual” prepared
- a Trainer’s manual and toolkit produced for both training of probation experts and training of selected offenders



PPROMPT
Peer Pro-Social Modelling in Probation

Lessons Learned - 1

- ✓ Observe other practices and be inspired!
- ✓ A thorough documentation – cultural sensitivities, legal background, literature review
- ✓ Work in partnership with other agencies – ANR, CoE, knowledge builders
- ✓ Attract the NGO sector
- ✓ Use some famous faces for visibility
- ✓ Planting some seeds for reversing the Roma label!

Lessons Learned - 2

- *Oliver D. (2021)* - My experience with the Probation Service and some of the counsellors during the supervision period meant to rearrange my personal values and a reconnection with myself. During the program I felt that I became more responsible, it awakened in me the determination to use my knowledge and daily practice of the sport - Traditional Shotokan karate Do, as well as life experience to be able to provide a clear example for those who do not have the necessary means to make changes in their lives!”

Lessons Learned - 3

- *Oana A (2022)* - `For me – Oana the human being, going through this program means realizing the purpose in life, the meaning of my life in relation to myself and my significant others. For me, Oana - probation counsellor, Peer Pro Social Modelling means connecting to the process of real change, through which the people under supervision are going. The authenticity and consistency of the program's message is what makes it a successful program ... `

Questions ??

www.cep-probation.org
icarbunaru@just.ro



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