

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE FINAL REPORT

on the implementation of the project “Education Opens
Doors” and changes in the attitude of prison inmates
and correctional staff to lifelong learning



Prepared by a group of authors within the project
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Executive summary of the final report on the implementation of the project “Education Opens Doors” and changes in the attitude of prison inmates and correctional staff to lifelong learning

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The final report was prepared at the final stage of the implementation of the project "Education Opens Doors". The objective of the final report is to collect data on the results achieved during the project implementation, to identify changes in the attitude of target groups (prison inmates and penitentiary institutions personnel) to lifelong learning.

Within the report, the following activities were conducted:

Analysis of the implementation of educational mini-projects in 6 correctional institutions in Gomel Region and the evaluation of the results by prison inmates and personnel who took part in the educational programs. A total of 245 questionnaires filled by the inmates after receiving training within the project were analyzed. The results of the analysis are provided in Paragraph 3.

Opinion poll among prison inmates and analysis of their attitude to the educational system in correctional institutions and their need for educational services. In total, the survey polled 500 inmates serving sentences in 6 correctional institutions in Gomel and Gomel Region (320 male inmates and 180 female inmates; inmates' age ranged from 18 to 50).

Within this activity, a comparative analysis of the survey conducted within the initial research in 2015 and the research in 2016 was carried out. General attitude of prison inmates to the project "Education Opens Doors" was analyzed. The results of the analysis are provided in Paragraphs 1-3.

Opinion poll among prison personnel and analysis of their attitude to the organization of educational processes in correctional institutions and their need for additional training in the sphere of adult education. A total of 21 staff members from 6 correctional facilities in Gomel and Gomel Region (10 staff members who participated in the project and 11 staff members who didn't participate in the project directly) were interviewed. A comparative analysis of the survey conducted within the initial research in 2015 and the survey in 2016 was carried out. The results of the analysis are provided in Paragraphs 1-3.

Opinion poll among trainers implementing educational programs within the project and analysis of their views on the experience gained in the sphere of education in penitentiary institutions. A total of 5 trainers were interviewed. The results of the analysis are provided In Paragraph 1 and Paragraph 3.

1. Broadening access to education in correctional institutions of Gomel Region within the framework of the project

The overall objective of the project "Education Opens Doors" is to contribute to the humanization of penalty system in the Republic of Belarus, to promote the education as a fundamental human right, and to prepare prison inmates to social rehabilitation after serving their sentences. International standards in the sphere of prison education provide the following recommendations: all prison inmates should be provided with access to a wide range of educational projects that should meet their individual needs and should be adapted to the expected duration of stay in a correctional facility; priority should be given to prison inmates who do not have general secondary education (basic) or vocational education; prison education should be included in the national system of general education and vocational education under the auspices of educational institutions in order to insure that prison inmates will continue to receive education after serving their sentences.

Analysis of the regulatory and legal framework of the Republic of Belarus carried out in 2015 established the following: although the regulatory and legal framework of the Republic of Belarus takes into account universally recognized principles of the international law in exercising inmates' right to education, there are certain problems in the following spheres:

Ensuring access to all levels of main (core) education.

Continuity of the educational process.

Access to adult education with a wide range of educational programs that facilitate social adaptation of prison inmates and take into account their needs, duration of their sentences and confinement conditions.

Prison education should be included in the national system of education.

Implementation of the mini-projects and various educational programs in 6 correctional institutions in Gomel Region allowed to obtain the following assessment results regarding a number of approaches to solving the problems mentioned above.

Ensuring access to higher education

The baseline study allowed to draw a conclusion that penitentiary institutions in the Republic of Belarus mainly focus on vocational education. Although the regulatory and legal framework states that persons in correctional institutions have a right to receive specialized secondary and higher education, prison inmates were not able to exercise this right, as correctional institutions had no suitable conditions. Within the framework of the project in 2015, E-learning Center was established on the premises of Penal Colony No. 4, Gomel City, in partnership with Minsk Innovation University. The Center was established as a pilot project aimed at providing higher education by means of distance learning. The Center provided prison inmates with the opportunity to receive education on the following topics: "Psychology", "Information Management", "Accounting, Analysis and Audit", "Economics and Enterprise Management".

Inmates' attitude to education (according to the questionnaires). All prison inmates highly appreciate the benefits of being able to receive higher education through distance learning (75% of the respondents rate it 5 on a 5-point scale, 25% of the respondents rate it 4), and 100% of the respondents state their willingness to continue education. The majority of the inmates are motivated to get education for the following reasons: employment prospects (83.3 %), professional development (74.5 %), everyday life (budget planning, household management, etc.) (33.3 %), and social interaction (33.3 %).

Inmates' behavior. Analysis of behavioral and disciplinary patterns of the inmates enrolled in a higher educational institution shows almost 100% rate of law-abiding behavior. Although inmates with disciplinary penalties (around 20%) were part of the target group, a minor violation was committed only once during the entire period of the mini-project implementation. At the same time, the unserved part of the sentence was replaced with a milder sentence for 20% of the inmates who showed their willingness to maintain law-abiding behavior.

Outcomes. In 2015, 15 prison inmates received training (12 inmates started their first year of studies, 2 inmates were reinstated as 2nd-year and 3rd-year students, one of the inmates received a new qualification). All students successfully completed their first year of studies and were transferred to the next course. This fact shows a high level of academic achievement: the average tests score was 8, practical classes score was 7.1, final tests score was 8.7. Eight new inmates were admitted as students on October 1, 2016.

Access to adult education with a wide range of educational programs that facilitate social adaptation of prison inmates and take into account their needs, duration of their sentences and confinement conditions

Correctional institutions mainly focus on providing the inmates with a qualification as a part of vocational education. However, not every inmate is able to get vocational education due to the following reasons:

In order to get vocational education, a prison inmate should have a certificate of general basic education or a certificate of general secondary education. A certain category of prison population has no education at all, while some do not have any academic credentials.

Vocational education is carried out over a certain period of time and is linked to an academic year. These facts make it difficult (and in most cases impossible) for prison inmates serving short sentences to receive vocational education.

Certain types of punishment prevent inmates from getting vocational training due to the lack of conditions for education.

The amount of professions available to prison inmates in correctional institutions is limited.

In some correctional facilities, there are no educational institutions or their branch offices.

Adult educational programs implemented within the framework of the project "Education Opens Doors" are aimed at providing opportunities for the inmates who are not able to receive education due to the reasons mentioned above. These programs fall into 2 groups:

Educational programs aimed at obtaining professional skills that prison inmates could use in their employment after release.

Educational programs aimed at acquiring socially valuable skills and skills that can play a positive role in their social adaptation.

Educational programs aimed at obtaining professional skills. Within the mini-projects, the following educational programs aimed at obtaining professional skills were implemented:

Educational programs that allow to get the following qualifications: "Nail and Make-Up Artist" (Penal Colony No. 4, Gomel City); "Stove Setter", "Computer Operator", and "Electric Welder" (Penal Colony No. 20, Mozyr Town).

Adult educational programs that allow to get additional training: "Hairdresser" and "Computer Literacy" (Penal Colony No. 24, Zarechye Town); "Computer Graphics" (Open Regime Correctional Institution No. 21, Mozyr Town); "Computer Literacy" (Penal Colony No. 20, Mozyr Town).

Inmates' attitude to education (according to the questionnaires). 95% of the inmates positively evaluate the mini-projects (rate marks "good" and "excellent"), and 79% rate the mini-projects as "excellent." 59% of the respondents state that they would use the acquired skills in everyday life; 50% would use them in some professional activities; 48% would try to find a job with the provided skillset.

77% of the respondents state that they would continue their education; 11% need more time to decide; 9% would not continue their education. It should be noted that female inmates are more motivated to continue their education (91% would continue their education).

Inmates' behavior. There were no cases of voluntary termination of training among female inmates who applied for the following courses: "Hairdresser", "Computer Literacy", and "Nail and Make-Up Artist". During the implementation of the educational programs, 4% of prison inmates committed violations (the rate was up to 12% prior to the start of the educational programs).

A female inmate who successfully passed courses "Nail and Make-Up Artist" was released in November 2016 and got a job at a hairdressing saloon in Mogilev. The unserved part of the sentence was replaced with a milder sentence (transfer to an Open Regime Correctional Institution) for another female inmate. At the moment, she is in the middle of acquiring a bill of health for further employment.

Male inmates who received the qualifications "Stove Setter", "Computer Operator", and "Electric Welder" show a slightly lower level of discipline. The rate of violations is up to 6%. However, the rate of violation dropped more than 2 times (from 14% to 6%) if compared with the 4-month period prior to the start of the educational programs.

Outcomes. Female inmates studying at "Nail and Make-Up Artist" courses (6 inmates) stated their interest and willingness to get education at the very first class. 100% of the inmates state that they do not regret participating in the project.

"Computer Literacy" (12 inmates) and "Hairdresser" (10 inmates) courses: female inmates did not terminate their training; 90% of the inmates expressed their willingness to continue studies in order to develop their professional skills and to increase the chances of employment.

According to the data received in 2016, 69 out of 75 inmates passed the qualification exams in such professions as "Stove Setter" (25 inmates), "Computer Operator" (25 inmates), and "Electric Welder" (25 inmates) and obtained state-approved certificates. Six inmates did not get the certificates due to early release or transfer to a different correctional institution.

Educational programs aimed at acquiring socially valuable skills. Within the mini-projects, the following short-term educational programs aimed at acquiring socially valuable skills were implemented:

"How to Find a Job" and "Prevention and Resolution of Conflicts" (mini-project "Psychological Laboratory", Detention Facility of Penal Colony No. 20, Mozyr Town); "Budget Planning" and "Cooking Courses" (mini-project "School of Food Culture", Open Regime Correctional Institution No. 17, Gomel City); "Management of Volunteer Activities" (mini-project "Volunteer Initiatives Center", Open Regime Correctional Institution No. 21, Mozyr Town).

Inmates' attitude to education (according to the questionnaires). 98% of the interviewed inmates positively evaluate the mini-projects (rate marks "good" and "excellent"). The highest rate was awarded to the course "Management of Volunteer Activities", the second highest rate was awarded to the mini-project "School of Food Culture".

64% of the respondents state that they would use the acquired skills in interpersonal communication, 59% - in everyday life, 48% - in professional development, and 32% of the respondents would use the skills while applying for a job. The course "How to Find a Job" is considered the most beneficial: 100 % of the respondents plan to use the acquired knowledge in every sphere of life.

66% of the respondents state that they would continue their education; 29% need more time to decide; 5% would not continue their education. All the inmates who finished such courses as "How to Find a Job", "Prevention and Resolution of Conflicts" and "Management of Volunteer Activities" would continue their education. The inmates who finished the course "Prevention and Resolution of Conflicts" have the highest motivation to continue education: 80% of the respondents intend to continue education.

Inmates' behavior. The course "Prevention and Resolution of Conflicts" is considered the most effective. The target group was formed from the inmates inclined to conflict manifestations and to resolving disputes with violence. Within the 4-month period prior to the start of the educational programs each of the inmates committed 1-3 violations because of conflict situations. During the implementation of the mini-project, no such violations were committed. Two inmates (out of 20 participants) committed violations not related to conflict or aggressive behavior.

Several short-term seminars and workshops were held as well: seminar "How to Find a Job" (Penal Colony No. 24, Penal Colony No. 20, and Detention Facility of Penal Colony No. 20); workshop "Public Speaking and Successful Self-Presentation" (Open Regime Correctional Institution No.17).

Attitude of prison staff to educational programs

Most of the interviewed staff members at correctional institutions (those who participated in the project (60%) and those who did not directly participate in it (46%)) believe that information on training and participation in seminars organized within the framework of the project "Education Opens Door" caused apparent interest among prison inmates. It should be noted that none of the staff members chose the answer "there was no attention to this information" in the questionnaire. 50% of the respondents believe that it can be explained primarily by the willingness to receive education, get a qualification, and to acquire new knowledge.

Staff members who participated in the project (50%) state that inmates' interest to education remained at a satisfactory level throughout the project: 30% notice a decrease in inmates' interest; 20% highlight keen interest to education. Staff members who did not participate in the project also confirm that inmates' interest remained at a satisfactory level (46%), and 18% of the inmates experienced keen interest to training. A slight decrease in interest was noticed by 18% of the respondents. Thus, the majority of the respondents (around 70%) state that inmates' interest to education remained at a satisfactory level or increased. It indicates that the majority of the inmates remain motivated to receive education.

Staff members who participated in the project (50%) believe that relevance of the acquired knowledge is one of the facts that would explain inmates' interest in the courses: 30% note that the

decrease in inmates' interest can be explained by the lack of personal time; 20% think that it is caused by the difficulties in mastering learning materials.

46% of the staff members who did not participate in the project state that the decrease in inmates' interest is explained by the difficulties in mastering learning materials; 27% blame the lack of personal time.

Some staff members (27%) did not notice any difficulties. In other words, all the staff members believe that lack of time and difficulties in mastering learning materials are the factors causing decrease in inmates' interest to education.

The research also concentrates on the changes education causes in inmates' personal qualities and beliefs. Staff members who participated in the project note some positive changes in inmates' personal qualities: 60% note that the changes occurred only with several groups of inmates; 40% note that the majority experienced positive changes in attitude towards life. Staff members who did not participate in the project have the following point of view: 27% note positive changes; 18% note positive changes only in several groups of inmates; 27% chose variant "most probably there are no positive changes"; 9% notice no positive changes; 18% are not able to answer.

Staff members who participated in the project state that the majority provided positive feedback: 50% note positive feedback, 40% note mainly positive feedback; 10% note mixed reviews. Staff members who did not participate in the project have the following opinion: 64% note mainly positive feedback, 18% note mixed reviews, 18% note critical feedback. Overall, the majority of the specialists in correctional facilities state that the inmates are satisfied with the project.

Staff members who did not participate in the project highlight an important fact: 37% of the respondents state that the inmates involved in the process of education were treated negatively by the inmates who were not attending courses; 27% think that the inmates involved in the process of education were treated positively; 27% would describe the situation as neutral; 9% are not able to answer. This fact requires additional attention and development of measures aimed at providing psychological support in order to form and ensure proper motivation to education.

2. Attitude of prison inmates and correctional facilities staff to prison education (according to the questionnaires). Comparative analysis

Comparative analysis of the questionnaires provided by prison inmates and personnel involved in the project in 2015 and 2016 allows to draw the following conclusions:

1. The amount of inmates aware of their rights in the sphere of education has significantly increased; the amount of those who do not have the corresponding knowledge has decreased. The amount of inmates fully aware of their rights in the sphere of education increased more than 3 times in 2016 (from 16.2% in 2015 to 57% in 2016); the amount of inmates who know almost nothing about their rights in the sphere of education has decreased almost 4 times (from 27.7% in 2015 to 7% in 2016). Moreover, all the interviewed groups of inmates (regardless of age and level of education) notice this positive tendency.

2. Inmates' awareness regarding the possibility of getting education while serving sentence in a penitentiary institution has increased.

The amount of inmates who are fully aware of educational opportunities in the correctional facility they stay has increased almost 3 times (from 17% in 2015 to 53% in 2016). The amount of those poorly informed about these opportunities (answers "I know almost nothing" and "I do not know anything") decreased 2.5 times (from 37.3% in 2015 to 15% in 2016).

In 2016, according to the results of the survey, the overall level of awareness can be estimated as high: 85% of the respondents (answers "I know quite fully" and "I know in general terms") are aware of educational opportunities provided in correctional institutions.

3. The inmates notice an improvement in education opportunities in correctional facilities where they stay.

53% of the interviewed note that education opportunities changed for the better. In their opinion, the changes affected the educational process and services. 51% note that new forms of education appeared; 48.8% state that a range of qualifications extended.

4. The amount of inmates involved in the education process has increased.

The amount of inmates who received education or receive it at the moment has increased (from 16.5% in 2015 to 50% in 2016). 59.6% of the inmates at the age of 18-28 are actively involved in education processes; 75% of the inmates at the age of 50 and older do not receive education.

5. The amount of inmates who want to get education in correctional institutions has increased.

In 2016, 57.6% of the inmates want to increase their level of education and get a qualification (45.6% in 2015); 22.4% state that they "might want it" (28.4% in 2015); 9.8% do not think it is necessary (11.1% in 2015).

More than 80% of the correctional institutions staff members point out that inmates are interested in getting education and want to study.

6. The overwhelming majority of inmates and staff members believe that education can have a positive impact on further social adaptation and rehabilitation.

In 2016, inmates have not changed their position on the importance of education. Inmates mostly think that education in penitentiary institutions is "the opportunity to acquire knowledge valuable in everyday life", "the opportunity to acquire a profession", and "the opportunity to obtain a certificate of education".

In addition, staff members believe that inmates' interest in education is often caused by the opportunity to spend their time effectively. Staff members do not think that inmates get education in order to receive special treatment from administration of the correctional institution; 80% state that social rehabilitation after release will benefit from education.

7. Education influences inmates' personal characteristics.

In 2016, 50.4% of the inmates state that education improved their personal qualities. 38% believe that the improvement was caused by their willingness to study; 17.8% think that it was caused by their willingness to change for the better and get early release.

The research allowed to determine the relevance of education at different levels, requested spheres of education, forms of work, and some opinions of the staff members on these issues.

Relevance of education levels:

The amount of inmates who want to get higher education by the means of distance learning has increased (19.3 % in 2015 and 24.6 % in 2016).

The amount of inmates who want to get vocational education has increased (17.4% in 2015 and 27.6% in 2016).

The amount of inmates who want to get general basic and general secondary education increased (9.3% in 2015 and 14.8% in 2016).

The amount of inmates who want to prepare for entering an educational institution has increased (3.2% in 2015 and 8.8% in 2016).

Short-term courses and specialized educational programs that can be organized in correctional institutions remained in high demand. What is more, 70% of the staff members believe that short-term courses are important.

The most requested spheres are computer literacy, psychology, foreign languages, economics, and legal expertise. More than 60% of the staff members confirm that computer literacy is the most popular and demanded skillset; 40% note that a certain level of expertise in labor legislation is requested. Several areas got support in the amount of 30% of the respondents' votes each: legal expertise, sewing, household management, healthy lifestyle, and cooking.

The inmates consider the following areas of psychology most useful: interpersonal communication (with employers and other people), conflict management, making rational decisions and assessing life situations, family relationships. The inmates who are not included in the educational process prioritize the skill of overcoming addiction (drugs, alcohol, etc.) the most.

Most of the inmates consider it necessary to develop educational prospects in penitentiary institutions and positively assess the initiatives under the project "Education Opens Doors".

The majority has positive attitude to further development of education in correctional institutions: 70% of the respondents think it is necessary to further develop education in penitentiary institutions; 12.4% think it is probably necessary; only 4.6% consider it a waste of time.

75.2% of the inmates positively assess the initiatives under the project "Education Opens Doors". They note that additional courses are beneficial for those who want to receive education.

Less than 1/3 of the inmates have the opportunity to pay for their education. Only 31% of the inmates confirm that they can pay tuition. It practically coincides with the data from the previous survey: in 2015, 28.6% of the interviewed considered it possible to pay for education by themselves or with the help of some relatives.

The research allowed to elicit some major factors that contribute to raising inmates' interest to education.

According to staff members, the main motivational factors contributing to inmates' interest to education are the following:

The emergence of programs that inmates find promising (81% in 2015 and 90% 2016).

Emergence of new forms of education (around 65% in 2015 and 2016).

Better conditions for getting education (47.6% in 2015 and around 60% in 2016).

The amount of staff members who believe that the ability of an inmate to choose whether to study or to be engaged in manual labor is important has significantly increased (23.8% in 2015 and around 50% in 2016).

The staff members consider the involvement of external partners an important factor in the development of prison education.

They unanimously state that it is necessary to involve external partners in order to organize educational activities in correctional institutions (100% of the staff members participating in the project and 64% of those who did not participate).

However, opinions on what kinds of partners should be involved were different. 50% of those involved in the project and 0% of those not involved in the project note the involvement of non-governmental organizations; 30% and 18% note the involvement of state organizations; 10% and 27% note the involvement of commercial organizations; and 10% and 27% note the involvement of faith-based organizations.

Most staff members emphasize the need to introduce special courses for prison personnel involved in the educational process. Being asked the question "What are the needs of correctional staff in acquiring additional knowledge, skills of organizing and conducting educational activities for prison inmates?", around 50% of the respondents note the necessity to introduce special courses for prison personnel.

The study identified the main problems and difficulties in organizing educational processes in correctional institutions.

Both staff members and inmates note the lack of time for studies as one of the main factors hampering education; among other factors are inmates' fear of the new, lack of material resources, and decrease in motivation in the process of education.

Staff members also note that the lack of specialists qualified in the field of education significantly complicates the educational process, since prison personnel have to combine their official duties with organizing the educational process.

Some proposals were collected in order to improve the educational process in correctional institutions.

The steps aimed at improving the organization of the educational process should also target the following areas:

More opportunities for inmates to get education.

More employment guarantees for the inmates who received a qualification after their release.

Improvement of material and technical base.

Involvement of external partners (experts) who would regularly engage in educational activities.

3. Results of the project "Education Opens Doors" and their promotion in correctional institutions of Gomel Region and in the penitentiary system of the Republic of Belarus

The international project "Education Opens Doors" is quite far-reaching.

First, its multi-vector nature should be taken into account. Despite the fact that the initial concept of the project was primarily educational, the project's subsequent activities (mini-projects) covered a wide range of issues related to the organization of psychological, educational and social work with the inmates, which led to the involvement of a wide range of participants. They fall into several groups:

Type of ownership (state institutions, public authorities, NGOs, private and public educational institutions).

Spheres of activity (Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Belarus, Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus, institutions of higher education, vocational education institutions, correctional institutions of various regimes).

Functional specialization in the penitentiary system (vocational education trainers, staff of the disciplinary service, penitentiary psychologists, heads of correctional institutions).

Position in the penitentiary system: staff members directly working with the inmates (detachment leader, psychologist); managers (head of correctional process department, deputy head of department, head of psychological support department); heads of correctional facilities (head of the institution and his deputy); staff members of the regional and central apparatus of the Department of Penalty Execution of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Belarus.

Therefore, the problems of prison education were examined from various angles. Different points of view were expressed during the development of the mini-projects and their implementation. It caused heated discussions, but eventually led to some compromise solutions. Many of the solutions turned out to be highly effective; they were later adopted by the Department of Penalty Execution of the Republic of Belarus in order to improve prison education.

The project "Education Opens Doors" encompasses practically all types of correctional facilities of the penitentiary system of the Republic of Belarus:

Two institutions that carry out punishment in the form of restraint of liberty ("semi-freedom") – Open Regime Correctional Institution No. 17 and Open Regime Correctional Institution No.21.

Three institutions executing punishment in the form of deprivation of liberty – Penal Colony No. 4, Penal Colony No.20, and Penal Colony No.24.

The institution that executes sentences in the form of arrest (conditions of strict isolation from society for a short period of time) - Detention Facility of Penal Colony No. 20.

In addition, the institutions differ in gender composition. In particular, in Penal Colony No. 4 and Penal Colony No. 24 the inmates are female, in other institutions the inmates are male.

Staff members training in order to implement educational programs

An important stage of the project was devoted to the training of correctional institutions personnel. A number of activities were carried out: a 4-module training course on custom-made educational programs; visits to Germany and Latvia in order to get acquainted with educational activities in correctional institutions abroad; seminars for teams implementing the mini-projects; expert consultations on various issues.

Training of staff members is an important condition for improving educational processes in correctional institutions. It is attested by the fact that in 2016 staff members who received training and participated in the project put development of special competencies while providing educational activities in the top three most promising areas that will help to improve educational processes in correctional institutions (50% in 2016 and 33.3% in 2015). In 2015, this aspect was only in the 5th place. It means awareness of the staff members has increased. The second place is awarded to

accumulating experience of state, public, commercial, and international organizations working in the field of education in the penitentiary system (70% in 2016 and 57.1% in 2015).

The training of the representatives of partner organizations is equally important. Thus, representatives from partner organizations involved in the project note the following: "Trainers who are to work with prison inmates need to become more familiar with the psychological and pedagogical aspects of prison education" and "It is necessary to know the specifics of working with the inmates. Maybe legal issues. Understand the constraints associated with the location of the courses. Better skills in working with adults. Your emotional state should be stable".

Broadening educational opportunities in penitentiary institutions

Within the framework of the international project "Education Opens Doors", a number of new approaches to educational, psychological and social activities in correctional institutions implemented or planned for implementation was successfully tested:

In 2016, an experiment to provide prisoners sentenced to deprivation of liberty with access to higher education by means of distance learning (established in Penal Colony No. 4) was introduced in Penal Colony No. 2, Penal Colony No. 22, and later in Correctional Facility No. 2. Currently, around 100 inmates receive higher education. In 2017, E-Learning Centers are planned to open in three other correctional facilities.

In January 2017, the Department of Penalty Execution initiates the establishment of a joint working group (together with the Institute of Vocational Education) with the aim of developing an effective mechanism to organize additional courses that would provide the inmates who have no general basic education with a qualification (based on the mini-project "Professional training and development of social competencies").

In February 2017, the results of the mini-project "Psychological Laboratory" were generalized, and a decision was made to distribute them throughout the country (in 2017 it is planned to establish "Psychological Laboratories" in every correctional facility of the penitentiary system).

The results of the mini-projects "Centre of Volunteer Initiatives" and "School of Food Culture" have become the subject of some scientific research that would allow to determine a new approach to the organization of work with the inmates.

4. Main conclusions and proposals for further improvement of educational processes in correctional institutions

The project "Education Opens Doors" is characterized by a multi-vector nature and wide coverage, which is determined by the following:

Involvement of a wide range of participants providing educational activities for the inmates.

Coverage of all types of correctional facilities existing in the penitentiary system of the Republic of Belarus.

Staff members training that ensures participation in various project activities.

Different gender composition of inmates.

A variety of topics, forms and types of educational activities that were tested in the sphere of prison education.

Within the framework of the project, new approaches to educational, psychological and educational activities in prisons have been tested and received positive evaluation. As a result, several activities are planned in order to accumulate experience gained within the framework of the project "Education Opens Doors". This fact indicates that the project had a positive impact on the situation in correctional institutions where the mini-projects were implemented and contributed to broadening the horizons and improving the penitentiary system of the Republic of Belarus.

Implementation of the project allows us to talk about the important role of education as it allows the inmates to be aware of and to exercise their right to education and encourages the inmates to receive it.

The project once again stressed the positive role of prison education. The overwhelming number of inmates consider educational activities beneficial. The absolute majority of the inmates who receive education have some interest in gaining knowledge and possess a high degree of motivation towards the learning process. The inmates are interested in continuing education. A significant number of inmates and staff members believe that education can have a positive impact on social adaptation and rehabilitation.

Education positively affects the inmates' behavior. The inmates who receive education are characterized by the absence of or significant reduction in violent tendencies. Education contributes to their positive attitude. According to staff members, the majority of the inmates experience positive changes in personal characteristics. The changes are reflected in their behavioral patterns and moral attitude. The project and the study conducted within its framework confirms the importance of education as it is a tool that helps to correct behavioral patterns and to prevent crimes.

Improvement of professional skills of the staff members and trainers is an important and necessary condition for improving prison education. Most specialists emphasize the need to introduce special courses for staff members involved in educational processes.

Correctional facilities personnel consider the involvement of external partners to be an important factor in the development of prison education.

Proposals for further improvement of educational processes:

To develop a mechanism that will allow to establish a public fund at each correctional institution in order to provide financial assistance to the inmates with positive personal characteristics (less than $\frac{1}{3}$ of the inmates have the opportunity to pay for their education).

To include in the list of educational programs sponsored by the state budget vocational training programs and adult education programs that will have a positive influence on social rehabilitation of the inmates.

The educational needs of the inmates identified during the research should be taken into account when there is a need to organize short-term courses in correctional institutions.

Consider the possibility of admission of inmates to educational institutions in order to obtain vocational education with just a copy of any education certificate.

The specifics of inmates' personality and the duration of their sentences should be taken into account when developing and adapting educational programs for correctional facilities.

Correctional institutions should develop cooperation with state, private, and public organizations to expand the range of educational programs and strengthen material and technical base.

To develop and implement educational programs for advanced training for correctional institutions personnel.

To develop an educational program for representatives of educational institutions and public associations carrying out pedagogical activities in the spheres of criminal law, correctional pedagogy and psychology, etc.

To use the data obtained in the course of this study in scientific activities, in developing proposals for improving prison education.

To consider the possibility of putting the inmates serving sentences in correctional institutions into a separate category of students and to introduce some changes to the Education Code of the Republic of Belarus.

To implement the acquired experience and educational programs in other correctional institutions of the Republic of Belarus.

To develop a system of encouragement for participation in educational activities (in particular, to provide for the possibility of changing the conditions of detention, the type of correctional facility, the conditions of the regime, etc.)



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE FINAL REPORT

on the implementation of the project “Education Opens Doors” and changes in the attitude of prison inmates and correctional staff to lifelong learning (within the framework of the project “Education Opens Doors”)

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