

## **Re-Socialization of Prisoners. The role and importance of this process in reducing the number of recidivists in Kosovo's correctional system**

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### **Abstract:**

*The role and importance of correctional institutions in the process of re-socialization is significant, comprehensive and substantial. The present research paper focuses on the importance of the process of re-socialization for a modern society like Kosovo. The process of re-socialization and the effects of this process depend on a number of factors, one of which the most important is the work of social workers with prisoners. Those who successfully pass the re-socialization training have easier integration in their families and in the society in general. Given the lack of literature on correctional systems in Kosovo; the author has consulted with regional literature far that has led to the use of the comparative method in the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data in this paper. The results of this research paper support the hypothesis that the social worker has a direct impact on the rehabilitation of prisoners which consequently creates a more healthy and safe society.*

**Key words:** Correctional Service, resettlement, rehabilitation, recidivism, social worker.

### **Introduction**

The current research topic covers the period from 1999 to 2013 because of the fact that the Kosovo Correctional Service before

1999 was under Serb control. Only after 1999 security institutions began their work, including the Kosovo Correctional Service. In addressing this topic the author has complied with analytical and comparative research methods. The main focus of the study is the work of social workers in the training process of re-socialization and rehabilitation and vocational, the development of sports and cultural activities. In general, it considers all the work that has particular significance in a return to "normal life" of prisoners, their rehabilitation and reintegration into society after being released from the prison in order to contribute to the family and society in general.

The first part of this research paper will explain the main concepts upon which the hypothesis are set. Moreover, author offers a depiction of Kosovo's correctional system, its role and importance. A case study of the correctional center in Dubrava is used to support the hypothesis. Overall, this paper offers recommendation that will add to the body of knowledge regarding the social workers in the correctional system in Kosovo and their effectiveness.

It is important to define basics concept that will be used in relation to the newly created reality of Kosovo Correctional Service in terms of re-socialization of the prisoners. This research paper will be led by the following questions: what is the re-socialization process? Is re-socialization helping the rehabilitation of prisoners? How it is realized? What is its role? What are the working methods and what are the hardships of this process? What are the necessary reforms for the advancement of this process? In a detailed review of this topic it is concluded that the social worker is of paramount importance in the process of rehabilitation and re-socialization of prisoners. The present research focuses on the period after the war in Kosovo. In this period, with the help of the international community, significant changes are made for the correctional service in particular.

## **Kosovo correctional service, its role and challenges**

KCS was established on 5<sup>th</sup> of November 1999 with the opening of the Detention Center in Prizren. From that time until now, the service evolved together with its organizational structure as well as personnel. Staff recruitment started in the year 2000. The fundamental mission of KCS is to respect the laws and regulations, to correct and re socialize prisoners while respecting their rights guaranteed by law regardless of their race, language or religion, and provide a safe environment for its staff, prisoners and society. KCS aims to develop, promote and professionalize in full compliance with the law, norms and international standards.

### **Challenges facing the Kosovo Correctional Service:**

1. Reduction of Smuggling<sup>1</sup>,
2. Corruption,
3. Nepotism,
4. Building an effective staff,
5. Re-socialization,
6. Training,
7. Cooperation with relevant stakeholders,
8. The transport of prisoners,
9. Equal treatment of prisoners,

Correctional Service has started to be operational in November 1999, initially in Prizren detention center. The situation in the initial period of its functioning was in its worse, with destroyed infrastructure; there was lack of the basic requirements to operate.

Initially with the help of donors and the work of all staff at all levels some basic conditions were established. Now, the

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<sup>1</sup> In the second half of the 2014 only in Dubrava Correctional Center, 138 telephones were smuggled, 13 cases of the narcotic were registered, in total 43 cases (Data are retrieved from the security sector of Kosovo Correctional Service Archive).

correctional service was operates under administration and institutions such as:

- Dubrava Correctional Center;
- Lipljan Correctional Centre;
- Prizren Detention Center;
- Detention Centre Pristina;
- Gjilan Detention Center;
- Peja Detention Center;
- Mitrovica Detention Center;
- High Security Prison in Gerdoc.

### **The legal basis of the Kosovo Correctional Service:**

1. Law on Execution of Criminal Sanctions, 2013;
2. Code of Juvenile Justice 2010;
3. The Code of Criminal Procedure 2012;
4. International instruments on human rights (children, prisoners, etc.) and
5. The work of Correctional Services is based on the European Prison Rules.

### **Re-socialization process**

The re-socialization process is led by social workers that have the skills, values and the body of knowledge to handle the necessary tasks. The core of this profession entails many disciplines that focus on understanding people's needs and behavior. These include psychology, psychiatry, counseling, and cultural anthropology<sup>2</sup>.

### **Re-socialization program includes:**

Placement in the institution or in a sector within the institution, participation in educational activities, participation

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<sup>2</sup> Zastrow, 2004 as cited by Karen Kirst-Ashman, 2010, p.16.

in vocational training activities, participation in cultural, educational and sports, work and improvement of professional skills, family ties and contacts with outside world, conditions for profit the right to rest at home, to bail or early release, measures aimed at preparation for the final release<sup>3</sup>.

Many professional institutions function within correctional service. These services are essential for the running of the institution and creating conditions for the establishment of prisoners, their socialization, respect for the rights of prisoners, lawful execution of sentence while respecting fundamental principles and freedoms human rights. Correctional services vary from capacity and the type of institutions. However, in most correctional institutions main services are:

1. Security service,
2. Re-socialization service,
3. Health Services,
4. Law and administrative services,
5. Financial services.

This paper is to a degree the result of field research, although mostly it is based on the current situation in Kosovo's Correctional Service in comparison in with correctional services in different European countries.

Re-socialization of the prisoners is realized based on Sentence Planning regulation, where generally the main purpose of this regulation is to determine and define all the procedures and activities, which will the prisoner, perform from the moment of detention until his/her release. Planning the sentence "is the term that explains the individual plan for the prisoner which reflects the program planning and other psycho-social interventions based on the riskiness and prisoner's specific needs<sup>4</sup>"

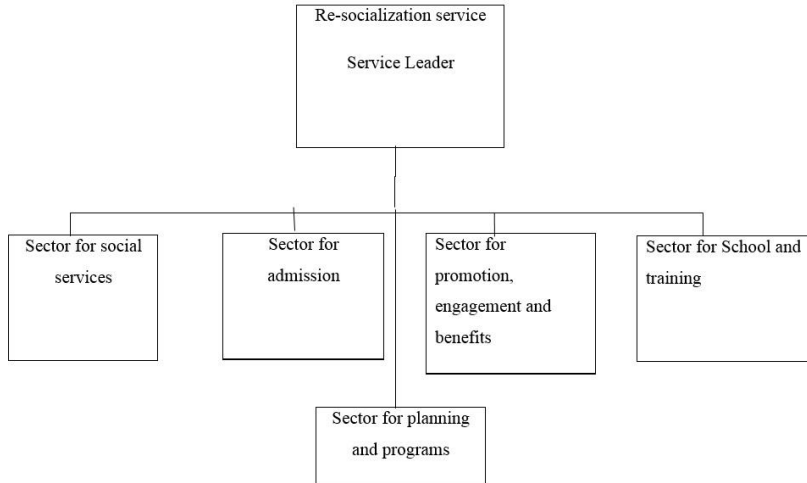
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<sup>3</sup> LEPS, law on the execution of the penal sanctions, article 55, p.15.

<sup>4</sup> Regulations for planning the sentence, Prishtina, December 2011, p.2

## **Re-socialization service**

Tabular representation of the re-socialization service



(source: organizational structure of the correctional service, the re-socialization center of Dubrava)

Service of re-socialization is among the most important services in relation to prisoners in correctional institutions. Officials working in the service are directly associated to work with prisoners from their admission to the institution of up to release. Initially they help them to adapt and rehabilitate with the institution, then engage them in various programs in order of their socialization during their stay in prison.

This service is directly connected by means of working with prisoners from the observation phase, sentence planning, classification, and adequacy of treatment, engagement in programs, parole, and help on various occasions. Within this service several sectors operate, the most important are:

1. Department of Social Welfare Officials, who also are the backbone of this service. This sector makes sentence planning

for prisoners which includes all specifications and movements, his commitments from admission until release<sup>5</sup>.

2. Section of admission (admission rooms), after receiving the Institution prisoners are initially placed on admission Pavilion, where the personality observations are performed by a team (panel) of mixed professional, since it is classified in the adequate treatment depending on the behavior and the time sentenced.

3. Sector for advancement, commitment and benefits, has the responsibility to monitor the prisoners and to instruct other phases or stages that includes tracking and training courses, engaging in educational, occupational and leisure activities, sports and cultural entertainment provided Internal Rules of Procedure, Sentencing Planning Regulation.

4. School and Training Sector, in the sector of offenders attend low and medium to good standards and certified for directions where appropriate. In addition, there are specific workshops, which are offered, and at the end there are certificates for completion.

5. Sector of plans and programs, in this sector drafting of plans is completed and programs of short and long term professional team are appointed by the Director or Deputy Director of the Institution.

The officials of this service have a duty to constantly talk with prisoners in order to influence them positively, and at the same time to increase the sense of personal responsibility and certain improvements that may have giving them the moral support, counseling, and social skills development.

Re-socialization service aims to help prisoners overcome negative obstacles that appear to their confinement, to help them to be more active in constructive activities, to assist them in developing a sense of responsibility, self-confidence, the promote positive interest in their treatment, always bearing in mind the skills and expectations that will improve the

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<sup>5</sup> Internal regulations of conduct, Sentence Planning 2009.

prospects of each sentenced to a successful integration, preparing them how to have an independent life in socio-economic terms.

Bearerers of the process of re-socialization are the social workers; they are part of this process from admission until his/her release and in some way they present a bridge between prisoners and the outside world.

Engagement of prisoners at work according to the Professor Ragip Halili "is among the most powerful methods and means for the realization of the process of reintegration"<sup>6</sup>.

"Social-work officials have a duty to assist the prisoners, so that they fit as easily in the institution, to overcome obstacles without serious difficulties arising on the occasion of their imprisonment, to assist in broken relationships and marital family and other relationships which have an effect upon the prisoner and his/her awareness, to repent sincerely for the offense committed and trained to make a life in accordance with the law after release"<sup>7</sup>.

Following from the reviewed literature the following hypothesis emerged: ***Kosovo social worker has a direct impact on the rehabilitation of prisoners, which consequently creates a healthier and safe society.***

## **Research results**

The work of social workers is assessed based on conversations with prisoners and how they succeeded in their rehabilitation and prevention of negative phenomena for example suicide, escape from prison, conflict with others while in prison, recidivism etc.

This research analyzed:

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<sup>6</sup> Halili Ragip: "Penology" the science on the execution of penal sanctions, Prishtina, 2005, p. 172.

<sup>7</sup> Dreshaj Arben: "Role and importance of correctional institutions in re-socialization", Istog, 2010, p.48.



1. Number of conversations that the workers have completed with prisoners,
2. Statistics of the number of prisoners.
3. Recidivism

Conversations conducted in years:

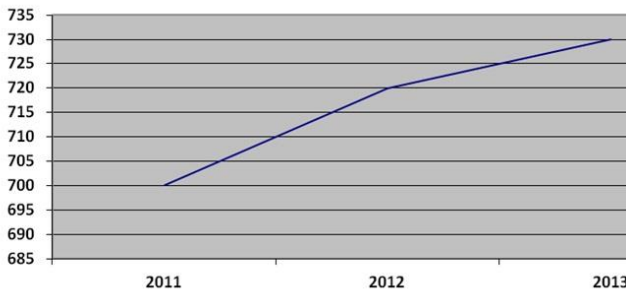
During the period 2011 until 2013 social workers in Dubrava Correctional Center have developed a total of 25,322 interviews with prisoners, or yearly:

2011	2012	2013
7721	9582	8019

If we compare this number compare with the number of social workers appears that each social worker has developed 1,688 calls per year or 7 calls per day.

### **Recidivism**

Based on statistics which are analyzed in the KCS have concluded that the recidivism in prisons in Kosovo is 27%, which is small compared with other countries like in Great Britain where the recidivism is about 47% recidivism.

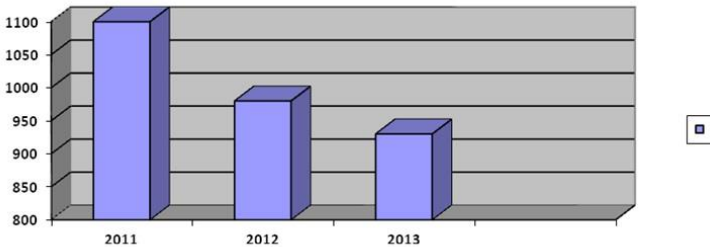


According to data noted that recidivism is increasing compared with the years 2011 to 2013, this statistic indicates that additional actions should be taken by KCS in particular by the social workers and must make deep reforms associated with

their work, primarily focusing at additional training organization.

**Number of prisoners in years:** data from the Correctional Centre Dubrava:

2011 ..... 1100  
2012 ..... 980  
2013 ..... 930



**Source: Data provided by social workers Archive from Correctional Centre Dubrava.**

Statistics provided in Dubrava Correctional Center Archives show that the number of prisoners compared with the years 2011, 2012 and 2013 is decreasing.

These data show the role and importance of social workers in raising the awareness among the prisoners and "delay" in repentance depends in large part of the re-socialization and the fact than those after completion of the sentence would be useful for families and ultimately to society. The prison runaways, even though they are still behind numbers of such cases that happen in correctional system from

the region, is still considerably increasing and needs to be addresses by the state<sup>8</sup>.

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Sweden	61	40	35	24	25
Norway	27	90	58	78	64
Iceland	-	-	-	-	-
Finland	56	69	56	85	65
Denmark	90	68	88	77	87
Kosovo	3	4	0	17	

This supports the claim that social workers play a crucial role in the prevention of suicide cases in KCS.

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Denmark	5	5	2	5	4
Finland	4	1	4	7	2
Iceland	-	-	-	-	-
Norway	7	1	2	4	5
Sweden	6	2	3	7	7
Kosovo	-	-	-	1	-

(Source: Kristoffersen, Ragnar: Correctional Service of Norway Staff Academy, Correctional Statistics of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, Oslo, 2013, p-38).

Data on the number of suicides in prisons in Kosovo are provided by KCS archive. Analysis made in Dubrava Correctional Center shows that this center has 15 social workers compared with the average number of prisoners falls to a social worker must work an average of 60 prisoners, this number compared with data from other countries is an average number, that requires greater commitment to social workers.

The analysis made in this center proves that social workers have good academic background, but not adequate, the number 15, only 5 of them have adequate education, sociology or, which hinders their professional work and may have an

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<sup>8</sup> Kristoffersen, Ragnar: Correctional service of Norway Staff Academy, Correctional statistics of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, Oslo, 2013, p. 34 – 36.

impact on the final outcome. There are other elements that affect the result of their experience, age etc.

### **Conclusions and recommendations:**

One of the conclusions supported by this research is that the role of social workers in the process of rehabilitation, socialization and correction of prisoners is irreplaceable, and that this process should be further advanced.

Tests performed on KCS especially in Dubrava Correctional Center show that to achieve precision in this process should:

1. Re-socialization service have advanced even further by organizing additional training both domestically and abroad,  
Social
2. Social-workers should realize planning (according to the sentence planning)  
Social
3. Social-workers should have adequate education to perform the job successfully.
4. It should convey experiences from other countries in order to advance the work.
5. All prisoners should be treated with respect and dignity as human beings.
6. Social-workers should prevent any kind of discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property or other status.
7. Suitable environment should be provided for the observance of religion, and other cultural norms.
8. Social-workers with the purpose of socialization should create environment for participation in cultural and educational activities,
9. It should enable prisoners to have access to health services that are available without discrimination.

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## **Abbreviations**

KMLDNJ ... Council for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms

KRCT .. Kosovo Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims

OSI ... Open Society Institute

MD ... The Ministry of Justice of Kosovo

SH.K.K .....Kosovo Correctional Service

Q.K.D ..... Dubrava Correctional Center

Q.K.L ... Lipljan Correctional Centre

CDC ... ..... Correctional Center Smrekonicë

QPP ..... Detention Center Pristina

Q.P.P ..... Detention Centre Prizren

Q.P.G..... Detention Centre Gjilan

CET..... Mitrovica Detention Center

Q.P.L ..... Lipljan Detention Center  
SH.S.K ..... S tester Kosovo Service  
LSP ..... Law on Execution of Criminal Sanctions  
OSCE ..... Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe  
UDHR ..... Universal Declaration of Human Rights  
EIDHR .....European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights  
EULEX ..... Rule of Law Mission of the European Union in Kosovo  
ECHR..... European Convention on Human Rights  
GCC ..... Criminal Code of Kosovo  
KPCC ..... Criminal Procedure Code of Kosovo  
UNDP..... United Nations Development Program  
RSM ..... Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners