

Long Abstract – Monographic Section

INVESTING IN THE SOCIAL REINTEGRATION CARE FOR DETAINEES: TRENDS AND NEW PERSPECTIVES OF THE ITALIAN WELFARE SYSTEM

edited by Alberto Pesce e Veronica Valenti

The Employment Integration of Incarcerated Individuals: Analysis of Experiences and Perceived Effects Among Participants in an Action-Research Project

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The article explores the employment reintegration of incarcerated individuals through the lens of an action-research project carried out at Bollate Prison in 2022. This initiative, part of the "#Riparto da Me" project, aimed to facilitate work opportunities outside the prison system as a means of supporting social and economic reintegration.

Drawing from a well-established body of literature on work release programs (WRPs), the study highlights the critical role of employment in reducing recidivism and fostering social rehabilitation. Empirical research in this area supports the premise that structured work programs significantly enhance post-release employment rates and lower the likelihood of reoffending.

The research adopted a mixed-methods approach, including structured questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and participant observation. These tools were used to explore the perceptions and experiences of 30 inmates who participated in the project. The methodological approach was influenced by existing studies on qualitative research in prison settings, which emphasizes the challenges incarceration poses in obtaining authentic and reliable data.

The "#Riparto da Me" project offered participants personalized support before, during, and after employment placement. The initiative involved multiple stakeholders, including third-sector organizations and local government services. The intervention was structured into six phases: candidate selection, job orientation, active job search support, professional training, workplace integration, and individualized accompaniment during employment. The findings reveal that 23 out of 30 participants successfully obtained a work contract - nine secured permanent positions, while 14 were hired on a temporary basis. However, seven participants discontinued the program due to personal or contextual factors, such as substance abuse issues or difficulty adapting to the work environment.

The qualitative analysis of the interviews highlights several critical aspects of the initiative. Many participants perceived the project as a transformative experience that helped them regain self-confidence and develop professional skills. The involvement of external actors, the emphasis on soft skills, and the provision of meaningful work opportunities were particularly valued. However, some challenges emerged, including administrative delays, difficulties in the selection process, and concerns about the stigmatization of incarcerated workers in the workplace.

The study concludes that structured work release programs, when accompanied by robust assistance mechanisms, significantly enhance inmates' prospects for successful reintegration.

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However, improvements are needed in selection process, administrative efficiency, and the diversification of job opportunities to ensure the long-term success and sustainability of such initiatives. This research contributes to the broader discourse on prison labour policies and provides practical recommendations for refining future iterations of similar programs.

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