

## An Evaluation of the Work Social Worker in the Imprisonment With Active Preparation for Post-Penitentiary Care in Slovakia

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### Abstract

The aim of social work in social services in the treatment of a prisoner is the mitigation of social problems or the elimination of their possible causes, and the preparation of a prisoner for release from prison. Social work, social services and social counselling are the specialised forms of care for an individual, the enhancement of his individual potentials, the optimisation of behaviour in the specific moments of his life. A relationship between a prisoner and a social worker is an important milestone which affects the quality of the counselling activity. However, the relationship develops step by step, and the social worker gradually gains trust and authority. However, in the development of such a relationship, the social worker in the helping profession must have certain principles to be followed. Social work in serving custody and serving an imprisonment sentence is a professional activity focused on clarifying the social problems of the prisoners which influenced their criminal activity, or whose existence is a risk factor for the resocialisation prognosis, so-called information assistance, support and counselling focused on limiting the negative effects of the prison environment and eliminating or minimising the causes of social problems. Social work in helping professions with prisoners belongs to a science area of social work. According to the place of work, we can divide social work with the punished persons into two subgroups: social work in the prison – i.e. penitentiary social work; and social work following the imprisonment sentence – post-penitentiary social work.

**Keywords:** Social worker; Imprisonment; Freedom; Preparation; Care; Prisoner.

### 1. Introduction

The first contact of the social worker with the client is crucial in terms of meeting all objectives and further cooperation. This first contact of the social worker with the prisoner will affect the quality of social assistance provision. They find out objective information about the sentenced client; the social worker uses social diagnosis focused on identification of and finding the reasons and causes of the social problem (Vanková, 2017).

An elimination of the contact with their loved ones is the first thing the prisoners in serving the sentence realize. It is influenced mainly by the fact that the individual was secluded from his well-known environment which he leaves; on the other hand, also by the fact that there is a disruption of contacts with his family and close persons. However, the hardest is the separation of a mother from her children. At this point, there is a need for an intervention by the social worker who visits both the prisoner and his family. At the beginning of the incarceration, this task is very important; the loss of contacts after a short period of time causes that the prisoner becomes emotionally inaccessible and it disrupts the emotional side of his personality. It results in even more difficult return to society.

The social worker carries out social work with prisoners and the accused based on:

- A written petition of the accused or convicted (intervention and social counselling are conducted);
- An initiative of the Corps member (intervention, social counselling and awareness-raising activities are conducted);
- Letters of tender (social counselling and awareness-raising activities are conducted);
- An established programme of treatment for the prisoner;
- A schedule of activities of a specialised unit;
- An initiative of a probation and mediation officer, or other bodies and institutions;
- A written initiative of a person close to the accused and sentenced.

Social diagnosis is an integral part of the work of the social worker. In accordance with it, the social worker along with his client will prepare further steps of social assistance. It must be unambiguous, tailored to the specific characteristics of each client and his individual problem.

The effectiveness of meeting the social work objectives increases through active cooperation of the social worker with other professionals working in penitentiary conditions, such as educators, psychologists and spiritual workers.

There is a need to realise the difference in social work orientation to two types of clients:

- *Accused clients who may be released from prison at any time.* In this case, social work should focus on resolving urgent social problems. In this context, we speak about a crisis intervention (Vanková, 2021).
- *Sentenced clients who are in an institution for sentence execution for a specified period of time,* and therefore working with them should have the nature of a planned longer-term preparation for their release (Kleskeň, 2016).

The responsibilities of the social worker working with the prisoner include mainly professional activities oriented towards a seamless transition of the prisoner to the proper civilian life. Besides other things, the social worker participates in the development of the concept of treating the prisoners, regulates social assessments, cooperates with the relevant social security authorities, provides social and legal counselling, implements educational and counselling activities for the prisoners, retains direct working contacts with the government authorities and religious, charity and interest civic associations at the place of the prison. At the place of the prisoner's permanent residence, the social worker makes the necessary contacts with the family members and participates in the resolution of various social problems (Vanková, 2021).

Based on the above-mentioned social worker's responsibilities in the process of working with prisoners, we could argue that social work with the prisoner is not straightforward and requires a lot of time to ensure that all activities are implemented.

A prisoner in prison is indeed often an abandoned, "dried out" individual who is due to his limitation of rights, resulting from the essence of the sentence execution, reliant on others' assistance. The social worker, therefore, has an irreplaceable role in his life. As a prerequisite for social workers to be successful, in addition to the use of their social skills and attitudes, they must also follow certain ethical principles which, in penitentiary social work, derive from the humanistic, religious ideals and are used to address the needs of the prisoners and develop their potential.

Another important fact is that the social worker is in contact with the prisoner during the whole sentence. From the start of the imprisonment to the release from prison. However, social work does not have to finish there. At this point, it depends on the prisoner whether he will cooperate with the social worker who was assigned to him also after the release from prison.

Social work carried out in the prison also includes certain strategies and approaches that have proved to be positive. They include mainly education of the prisoner, and the abilities to manage that the prisoner can make full use of his free time in prison. It turns out to be unrealistic that the prisoner would be able to spend his time meaningfully and even to be motivated after the release from prison.

The basic strategies in working with prisoners are:

- Education and training for employment after the end of imprisonment;
- Job and free-time activities offers;
- Social and legal counselling with reflection on post-penitentiary care,
- Shaping a personality through spiritual services.

However, for the social worker to carry out his work to the fullest, he relies on the specific legislative background, including the acts, decrees, regulations, obligations and the possibilities which result from them. They include, besides others, social rules and social norms, standards that represent the allowable boundaries in human relationships in various situations.

The social worker should get to know the prisoner from several points of view to work with him effectively. He should also identify the reasons and causes of the impact of his client. If the social worker gets to know his client in the penitentiary conditions, a more open and more personal relationship may develop (Vanková, 2019).

Social work in the prison is a professional activity focused on clarifying the social problems of the prisoner (which influenced his criminal activity, or whose existence is a risk factor for the resocialisation prognosis) through information assistance, support and counselling focused on limiting the negative effects of the prison environment and eliminating or minimising the causes of social problems (Collection of Orders of the General Director of ZVJS - Order no. 66/2015 on social work in custody and imprisonment).

One of the primary tasks of the social worker in the penitentiary conditions is support and assistance in coping with the extreme changes the prisoner is exposed to. These changes include, besides others, the interruption of the established life programme and lifestyle and the change from "an ordinary individual" to "a client". Also, the fact that the prisoner becomes a dependent person who gets in a disproportionate subordinate status and who has the precise role, rights and obligations different from the previous ones.

If the social worker detects a long-term, complicated and time-consuming problem in the prisoner, he should act as follows. The first, basic step in its course is developing a plan of social assistance that results from the social diagnosis, the information from a psychological examination of the prisoner's personality, the duration of the sentence, and the analysis of a social infrastructure, i.e. the possibility of post-penitentiary care after release of the prisoner from prison. In this context, also the social problem, partial and main objectives, and selection of methods and procedures that result from the real possibilities and a potential of the prisoner are stated. Each social worker should also consider the specificities of the various categories of the prisoner – whether they are men, women, or juveniles. He should consider their individuality and resocialisation needs. Then the social worker informs the prisoner about the plan and explains it. All the collected data are archived electronically; the effects of the methods and procedures should be permanently verified by the social worker (Kleskeň, 2016).

As shown above, there is a sequence of steps that the social worker should follow if a more complex problem is detected in the prisoner that needs to be addressed. The methods of work should be gradually and regularly checked.

Social intervention is the second step in the process. It relates to cooperation with the prisoner to solve the problems and maintain family relationships, actively seek employment, and acquire job skills. In this case, the social worker recommends and mediates the social services of a crisis intervention and participation in resocialisation programmes. The most commonly used techniques of social work are interview, counselling, encouragement, practice of social skills, and distribution (Kleskeň, 2016).

However, the intervention by the social worker in the penitentiary conditions does not only consist of the above stated activities; he is also responsible for the administrative activity he is in charge of. In the prison, the social worker must keep:

- *The client's personal file* which includes the social problems and ways of resolving them; the sheet about the social situation of the prisoner; and the visiting book with the information about all the visits by state and non-state bodies in the prison to carry out social work activities, and the visits by the social workers;
- *Data on the client's striking behaviour and behavioural changes* recorded in the personal file;
- *Data on the client's presence in the group form of social work*,
- *Records on social work with the prisoner* which the worker performs after processing the electronic application of the programme of serving custody and serving the sentence in the electronic form only;
- *Records on the communication with the institutions and authorities* which is in the written form and stored in accordance with the internal rules;
- *The processing of statistical information in compliance with the extent given by the electronic application of the programme.*

The most frequent forms of assistance used by social workers include social counselling. They define the counselling process as "counselling based on the relationship of assistance, while the counsellor attempts to promote growth, development, maturity and better adaptability of the client for him to be able to orient himself in the world and cope with his life more effectively". The stated can also be used within the relationship between the social worker and the prisoner in the sentence execution; in this case, the authors pointed out that the relationship should be based on assistance, counselling and developing a real view of the reality.

Counselling is one of the specialised forms of care for the individual, an enhancement of his individual potentials, the optimisation of behaviour in the specific moments of his life.

A relationship between the prisoner and the social worker is an important milestone which affects the quality of the counselling activity. However, the relationship develops step by step, and the social worker gradually gains trust and authority. However, in the development of such a relationship, the social worker has certain principles to be followed. They include: individualisation of the prisoner; justified expression of feelings of the prisoners; recognition of the prisoner's need to respond to his emotions and feelings; acceptance of the prisoner; non-judgemental attitude towards him; recognition of the client's right to make his own decisions; and the necessity of confidentiality of information.

Social workers can assist their clients to stabilise their social situation; strengthen and verify their motivation for positive changes in their lives; seek employment; and develop the skills and abilities necessary to apply in the labour market. To find a job, it is good to use the active employment policy tools to increase client's qualifications and to eliminate the obstacles in the path to being successful on the labour market.

The relationship between the social worker and the prisoner must be based on a sensitive approach. Its elementary components are acceptance, empathy, and agreement. Social workers are confronted with various types of clients. They may be psychosocially impaired individuals, or individuals with an immature personality, or they experienced difficult life situations. They are not used to trust anyone, and their behaviour is often hostile, aggressive and insincere. Therefore, the methodology of working with each client should be individual; it should also be complemented by well-organised group work. However, the difficulty of the whole process with the prisoner often does not allow an effective application of group forms of social work or methods that require more time (Kleskeň, 2016).

According to the Decree No. 368/2008 of the Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic of 3 September 2008, by which the Order on Serving an Imprisonment Sentence is issued, the social worker in tackling a social problem will provide assistance to a prisoner, mostly in the form of counselling activities, methods and procedures of social work, in particular the training of social skills focused on promoting the prisoner's pro-social behaviour, change of attitudes and actions.

If the at-risk client manages to get a job and successfully join society, it can be a significant milestone in his life out of prison. As stated by the author, the job search for the prisoners or clients in post-penitentiary care is not one of the classic activities of the social worker, but this activity can significantly help them in their life out of prison.

Social work with the prisoner after their release is another step to prevent the clients from committing crimes and to help them get fully involved in civilian life; therefore, in the following sub-chapter, we state how social work is implemented after the release if the prisoners are interested in it.

## 2. The Period after the Imprisonment and His Return to the Natural Environment of the Individual

The hardest period for an individual after the imprisonment is the period immediately after the termination of the imprisonment. An irreplaceable role in life of the released from prison, or the infliction of one of the alternative sentences, is played by the social worker – the probation officer who has effective social support instruments.

The return of the freed prisoner to the environment is often based on turbulences of attitudes due to the imprisonment, isolation from the family and community, or from the sense of injustice resulting from the severity of the punishment. The process of developing social bonds, which is very complicated and long-term, is often based on the above-stated prejudices of the freed person which impose an enormous and long-term burden on any individual returning from the imprisonment (Vanková, 2018).

The country and the Slovak self-government are time-limited in their activities and rely on the utmost cooperation of the individual gradually to be included in the normal life without further support. In the ex-prisoners, the initiative is a natural moral commitment to society, and recidivism is not expected. However, there is a question whether society and not only the competent public authorities create adequate conditions for individuals to be able to manage this transition.

Therefore, in our opinion, a very important moment in the approach to the ex-prisoners is post-penitentiary care, which is closely related to penitentiary treatment of the prisoners (Vanková, 2021).

In dealing with prisoner's social problems through post-penitentiary care, the prisoners are assisted by social workers of the Corps of Prison and Court Guard in cooperation with probation officers, local authorities, asylum centres, children's homes and resocialisation centres. Social assistance through post-penitentiary care focuses on their resocialisation, with the focus on the development of social skills, changes in attitudes, shaping their prosocial behaviour in order to establish the elements of accountability and autonomy.

Social services implemented in the context of social work, which is used after the release of the prisoner from prison, is an important and interesting process. If the prisoner still would like to cooperate with the social worker, the probation officer. It is so-called post-penitentiary care, which is carried out exclusively after the release of the prisoner from prison. It is in the interest of each prisoner whether he uses the assistance and services of the social worker, the probation officer.

*The concept of post-penitentiary care is still not very well known to the public*, but experts from various fields do not always see the same content in it.

Kleskeň (2016), states that the most reputable sources for anchoring post-penitentiary care are legislative standards, such as the Criminal Act, the Collection of Laws on Probation and Mediation Officers and the amendment and supplementing of certain laws, or the Collection of Laws on the Corps of Prison and Court Guard. Furthermore, he states that most often the released individuals are in contact with social workers when they are out of prison, because several positions in this area are covered by the profession of a social worker.

Post-penitentiary care follows the results of penitentiary care, and therefore the quality cooperation of the social worker and probation officers from the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family is necessary.

The moment when the prisoner is released from prison is the riskiest period for the future path of the released person. Such a situation could be likened to a cultural shock, especially if the sentence lasted for more than ten years. In many cases, such a type of client is vulnerable and disorientated. The client experiences a sense of helplessness and disorientation, does not behave competently, and he can lose and be able to perform their roles. He finds the sense of security and support in people and groups he was in contact with before the conviction and that most likely got him into prison (Vanková, 2017).

In this case, the social worker's task is to show the client how to live by an independent way of life. He assists him so that he can cope with worries about his own mistakes, and to be able to become responsible for his mistakes and correct them. He directs the client so that he understands that mistakes are a daily part of life, and that everyone makes them. Permanently, he provides support in responsibility for his actions and life and leads him to self-help. We can argue that the client is an active element of the whole process (Kleskeň, 2016).

The recurrence of criminal behaviour occurs most frequently in the adaptation phase. It is caused by a "shock" when entering the hard reality of life out of prison, the long-term frustration of the space he returns to, etc. Based on the aforementioned fact leading to post-penitentiary care, there is a link with Kleskeň (2016), where both authors related the first moments after the release with a feeling of shock, which the prisoner faces after the termination of the sentence of imprisonment. Furthermore that feelings of frustration may occur at this point too.

Independent post-penitentiary care can be considered as tertiary crime prevention, because it includes resocialisation and reintegration measures aimed at those who have committed unlawful action before (Kleskeň, 2016).

## 3. Compliance with the Social Worker's Rules in the Legislation on Post-Penitentiary Care in Slovakia

We perceive post-penitentiary care as care for the persons after their release from a correctional-educational facility, including re-education of the offender and the educational activities in other members of society. It is care provided after the re-education of the prisoner, starting from the release from prison, institutional or protective education, or protective treatment. Its primary task is to finish the re-education of the released through developing an active relationship to work, the community and its legislative standards, and to assist in integration into society.

Post-penitentiary care is purposeful support for an individual after his release from prison during his reintegration into civil society. It is the final phase of the correctional-educational process in persons in which the effect in the resocialisation process was not achieved.

The genesis of post-penitentiary care penetrates from the fact of continuous and uncompleted constitutional, correctional-educational, and re-educational activity in the penitentiary process. Therefore, it is necessary to intervene in the action in order to achieve a change of behaviour also after the client is released from prison. The most significant is the action on criminogenic factors that are a threat of antisocial attitudes, social inadaptability and recurrence of crime.

The fundamentals of post-penitentiary care were laid after the Second World War by the Decree No. 88/1945 Coll. on General Occupational Care, which defined more complete measures to ensure the re-education of persons released from correctional facilities. At the time, care for released persons was a responsibility of the departments of labour force, social security and health services of the district national committees whose duty was to submit vacancies and recommend an admission of such persons.

The Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 305/2005 Coll. on Social Protection of Children and Social Guardianship took effect on 1 September 2005; according to it, the Authority of Social Protection of Children and Social Guardianship is obliged to ensure social guardianship also for adult persons released from prison, or the participants in probation and mediation. According to the Act, by implementing the social guardianship measures, the social worker keeps a written and personal contact with the person during his imprisonment and participates in solving his personal, family and social problems.

Since placing the prisoner to penitentiary facility is a special interference in the integrity of the individual's personality, the interest of the social guardian in the client during imprisonment is an important element for the development of a good relationship. The social guardian assists in dealing with personal and relationship problems, after returning to the family or work environment, as well as in the search for a shelter. He motivates the released person to a proactive approach in the job search and to maintain his job skills. The social guardianship measures are carried out particularly in the natural family environment, or anywhere the person released from prison usually resides (Vanková, 2019).

The social guardian keeps a written and personal contact with an adult natural person during the imprisonment. He is involved in re-education of the prisoner. Depending on the severity of the life situation and the problem of the prisoner, he assists the prisoner in dealing with his personal, family and social problems. He assists to maintain and enhance the family bonds between the prisoner and his family and participates in the preparation of the prisoner for his release from prison (Vanková, 2021).

After the release of a person from prison, the social guardian assists the ex-prisoner particularly in facilitating his return to his family, finding a job and accommodation, finding the possibility to continue in further training for a profession. He motivates him to treatment of drug addictions and other addictions and offers him participation in resocialisation programmes. He motivates him to participate in self-help groups aimed at solving personal problems and relationship problems, and he may involve a municipality or an accredited entity in the cooperation. During the implementation of the social guardianship measures, he follows a plan of social work with the released person.

In the place of the usual residence, the released person can apply for assistance at the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, the Department of Social and Legal Protection of Children and Social Guardianship. He may also apply for a resocialisation allowance which is meant for resocialisation of the released, particularly for the provision of the necessary things for personal use, and the arrangement of the identity documents. The released person is not entitled to receive a resocialisation allowance automatically. The deposited and other funds paid out to the released person are considered when deciding on the resocialisation allowance. A citizen may apply for the resocialisation allowance only if he applies for the assistance at the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family within eight full working days after being released from prison, or if the custody lasted for more than 30 consecutive days. The total amount of the resocialisation allowances granted to the same citizen or a foreigner in the calendar year shall not exceed 40 % of the subsistence minimum (Vanková, 2018).

A resocialisation allowance may be provided in a material, financial, or combined form. From 1 July 2019 the maximum amount of the resocialisation allowance is 84.08 €.

#### 4. The Importance and Role of Post-Penitentiary Care

We can characterise post-penitentiary care as a comprehensive use of the various forms, methods and techniques of assistance that enable positive adaptation to society and re-socialisation of the person after imprisonment, while respecting his individuality (Kleskeň, 2016). Post-penitentiary care is not used for its own sake; it is intended to complete a re-educational process and is a form of crime prevention. Its imposed forms are a form of repression; in the past, post-penitentiary care was an integral part of the resocialisation process. In the present, however, we divide it into imposed and voluntary.

- The imposed form is the supervision of the behaviour of the person released from prison, or any of the alternative penalties was imposed, and protective supervision was imposed on the individual.
- The voluntary form is the supervision by the bodies providing social services and material-need benefits.

Post-penitentiary care functions on a voluntary basis, because it aims to prepare individuals after imprisonment for reintegration into society. Thus, this form of assistance is provided if the persons after imprisonment show their interest in it.

Post-penitentiary care is the final phase of re-education of the prisoner, whose importance is in the deliberate, purposeful and controlled educational action in order to achieve resocialisation and rehabilitation of the released,

with a certain degree of social development of the socio-economic formation. We state the types of post-penitentiary care interventions in the following table 1.

**Table-1.** Types of post-penitentiary care interventions

<b>Types of post-penitentiary care interventions</b>
Individual counselling
Group counselling
Arranging a placement in a resocialisation centre
Mediation of assistance in dealing with a social problem of the convict
Preparation for inclusion in the work process
Arrangement of accommodation after imprisonment
Collaboration with family and significant others of the released person
Spiritual and pastoral service

Education is one of the most effective means. The process causes a change in the ability of a person to decide and act and helps the prisoner to use new possibilities of asserting himself in life. The essence of the strategies is not only the focus on the internal formation of man, but the prisoner should also get an offer for a meaningful manual activity to maintain or adopt work habits. Work helps to create a sense of usefulness in the prisoners, it is important to promote their creativity, uniqueness and individuality. In the present, the situation in the prisons is characterised by high employment of prisoners where they get used to the daily performance of work. An important used strategy is the spiritual service which is currently organised by the individual recognised church communities. The spiritual and pastoring service in the conditions of the Slovak prisons is most often implemented by the Catholic Church. [Temiaková \(2021\)](#) In all the institutions, the activities with prisoners are conducted in accordance with the requirements defined in the Slovak legislation and aimed at developing the personality of prisoners, their behaviour and value orientation in accordance with the rights and obligations, and based on financial possibilities of the institutions under the guidance of relevant educators and social workers.

The implementation of the post-penitentiary care programme is the diagnostic process during which the social worker collects, sorts, evaluates and classifies all knowledge obtained about the prisoner during his imprisonment and then uses it in the context of his integration into society. The aim of post-penitentiary care is to shape such inherent efforts of a person that correspond not only to the written and unwritten norms of the value orientation of one's own self-satisfaction, but also the moral requirements of democratic society.

## **5. The Factors Affecting Resocialisation of Prisoners from the Perspective of Social Workers**

In the prison environment, prisoners lost many customs and habits, so it is necessary to continue in support and guidance even after their release. During their imprisonment, the interned persons are to be continuously prepared for life out of prison by learning socially acceptable ways of behaviour and self-control.

The release from prison is a major burden. A long-time horizon of imprisonment can be perceived very critically by the released persons, because it is a kind of trauma resulting from a sudden change of the environment. The feelings of the persons released from prison are very mixed; out of prison, the released individuals do not have a social background, have nowhere to live, a loss of family. Some persons released from prison do not have any social relationships, they are often accepted only by the released co-prisoners, which increases the possibility of recidivism and criminal behaviour.

Another post-penitentiary problem is the poor financial situation, because the person released from prison lacks funding and motivation to work. These people do not manage the burden of stereotypes that employment brings. Another burden is a low offer of employment, the society's apathy to employ a person coming from a correctional-educational facility. The released who were not imprisoned for a longer period have a greater chance of employment because they have preserved work habits.

Long-term limitations in meeting one's needs follow the unrealistic expectations that are motivated to be saturated immediately. Another risk of failure leads most frequently to inadequate sexual activity, aggression, violence under the influence of alcohol, etc. The recurrence of criminal behaviour occurs very often in the so-called adaptation phase when the released persons get used to the new environment. The adaptation period lasts for up to two years.

The factors influencing the successfulness of the management of the adaptation phase include:

- Personality of the released person – motivation, competency, experience, resistance to stress, etc.
- Objective factors – social conditions, housing, employment, financial situation, social relationships, family situation, etc.

The individual's behaviour is often purposive, and his component will is so weakened that he is not able to help himself, his family or loved ones on his own. If post-penitentiary care is not provided, adverse consequences in individuals released from prison are manifested gradually, because the individual's socialisation is very difficult.

States the factors stimulating the necessity of post-penitentiary care:

- Unmet penitentiary objectives during the imprisonment,
- Critical first days after the release when an individual can commit crime,
- Recidivism during the first year after the release,
- An inability to solve problems due to helplessness and worries,
- Worries about overcoming the stigma of a criminal,
- Experiencing social rootlessness after long-term and repeated sentences,
- Reducing the value of oneself, the difficulty in finding a new sense of life,
- Problems in restoring or searching for partner relationships,
- Lacking material conditions,
- Unemployment.

It follows that the an insufficiently prepared individual is a personality that is inappropriately adjusted, as manifested by the violation of socially established norms. In order to achieve the effective fulfilment of the purpose of penitentiary care, it is necessary to pay attention to the factors affecting the resocialisation of prisoners through social work already in the period of preparation for their release.

## 6. An Intervention by a Social Worker in the Imprisonment in the Implementation of Social Work with Prisoners

The social worker follows the methodology that enables a flexible and realistic procedure to solve a problem. When implementing the procedures, the social worker considers the peculiarities of individual categories of clients, whether they are women, men or juveniles, as well as other conditions and possibilities of the institutes resulting from their profiling, degree of guarding, and observance of safety conditions. There are administrative activities important for each work and they must be carried out by a worker. The activities involve the registration and sorting of the information and records necessary as a basis for management and performance of the activities. The social worker performs social work with the accused and the convicted on the basis of a number of facts, e.g. a written application of the accused or the convicted; an initiative by a member; an established programme of treatment for the convicted; a schedule of the activities of a specialised unit; and an initiative by the probation and mediation officer, or other bodies and institutions. According to the Internal Materials of the General Directorate of the Corps of Prison and Court Guard of the Slovak Republic, the social worker shall carry out an initial interview with the convict at the beginning of his imprisonment to obtain the information related to his social situation. Also, he shall try to identify his current social problems or their possible emergence. He records the findings in the prisoner's personal file. The quality of social assistance results from the first contact of the social worker with the prisoner. The social diagnosis method is used to obtain the most objective information about the prisoner. After the social diagnosis, a social assistance plan follows, based on the knowledge of the positive features of convicted persons and the experiences in the field of interpersonal relationships. In dealing with a specific situation, through the appropriate choice of methods, forms and a degree, social assistance – which must be individual because of the uniqueness and special needs of each prisoner – is used. Social assistance is carried out in the form of individual and group work. The social worker carries out individual and group social work in the range of his professional competency and participates in the work of a group led by another expert of the institute. In the counselling activity, the social worker provides the prisoner with the information on the possibilities how to resolve his social situation and suggests how to apply for the forms of social assistance. Before the release of the prisoner from prison, the social worker pays special attention to him, informing him mainly on the provision of social assistance in the context of post-penitentiary care, the conditions for obtaining a resocialisation allowance, and the exercise of social guardianship by a relevant office of labour, social affairs and family. In this context, it can be stated that the return of the prisoner to society out of prison is often accompanied by several problems which may result in recurrence of criminal activity.

## 7. Conclusions

The initial form of post-penitentiary care is individual social work and a community system that focuses on and integrates all its components to achieve the defined objectives. The community system is a way of implementation of work with prisoners which is carried out based on active participation of the whole community in the process.

Currently, there are *the entities providing post-penitentiary care*:

- The public authorities – in the imposed form, they are the entities providing the execution of criminal sanctions after the imprisonment. They include the probation and mediation officers, the authorities of the social and legal protection of children and social guardianship, state and municipal medical facilities, social facilities, and many others.
- Social services providers – including legal entities managed by municipalities or self-governing regions that have the status of a public provider. The co-participants in this relationship are a person as a receiver and the social service provider the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, a community, a self-governing region.
- Assistance by private individuals – the assistance is accidental, unorganised. It is mostly related to the provision of clothing, food, sanitary aids, etc. It includes the assistance by family members of the released persons.

In our opinion, it is very important to pay much attention to post-penitentiary care in combating crime. Based on its profile, post-penitentiary care is an expression of the human idea and assistance to society in connection with

those citizens who, after the termination of the imprisonment sentence, leave a correctional-educational facility and are interested in their smooth integration into life in society.

Various strategies and approaches are used in social work in the prison. Their effect is in the fact that they are repeated daily and have a strong experience form. The positive effects of the strategies of and approaches to education of the prisoners are in the ability to help the prisoners meaningfully use their time in prison. It is unrealistic for the individual after serving the sentence to be motivated and use his time out of prison meaningfully. The basic strategies in working with the prisoners include education and training for employment after the termination of the imprisonment, job offers, free-time activities, and shaping a personality by spiritual services.

Finally, we can only conclude that the increase in the number of people with behavioural deviations in the present that are not accepted by society requires more intensive social work focused on elimination of the adverse social phenomena, while the profession of a social worker arose as a response to the need to address adverse social situations. By its intervention, it acts in favour of the client, contributes to the improvement of his situation, and encourages him to correct attitudes. We may add that the intervention by the social worker in the prison is only a certain part of provided care of assisting professions, but there is a necessity of a functional network of providers. Despite the motivation, provided counselling, and several practical acts by the social worker, the success of the client's integration cannot be predicted for sure; it often depends on his decision and willingness to change his way of thinking and behaviour. Intervention procedures cannot be universal and general, but they should consider the specificities of each client's personality. Furthermore, it is necessary to educate also the field social workers, because the individual released from prison returns to his natural environment that he comes from.

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