1) Georgia - №16 Low Risk and Preparation for Release Penitentiary Establishment

Digital University in Georgian Penitentiary System

In order to further increase access and quality of higher education within PEs of Georgia, Special Penitentiary Service, has recently introduced Digital University in Georgian penitentiary system, enabling convicts to get high-quality higher education via distance learning. The digital learning platform is implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science. Leveraging technology and partnerships with authorized universities, the projectoffers remote higher education to incarcerated individuals, enabling them to enroll in accredited undergraduate and master's degree programs, attend virtual lectures, and engage directly with lecturers in real time. By prioritizing rehabilitation and resocialization, the project promotes personal development, self-improvement, and positive behavior change among inmates, ultimately contributing to their successful reintegration into society and reducing recidivism rates. The Digital University project serves as a model of innovation and best practice in inmate education, with potential implications for international jurisdictions seeking to improve outcomes for incarcerated individuals

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2) Ireland - Cork Prison

Open Door Restaurant

The Irish Prison Service, Munster Technological University (MTU), and IASIO hosted the third "Open Door Restaurant" at Cork Prison on March 12, 2024. Six prisoners completed an eight-week Practical Culinary Skills program, gaining practical experience by serving guests and potential employers. The initiative addresses the hospitality sector's labor shortage and aims to provide prisoners with realistic employment opportunities post-release. Cork Prison Governor Liam Spacey emphasized the program's role in rehabilitation and community safety. Managed by the Irish Prison Service, MTU, and IASIO, the program enhances prisoners' culinary skills and workplace readiness, facilitating their reintegration into society. MTU President Maggie Cusack praised the transformative impact of the course, which has won national and international awards. IASIO Operations Manager Jacob Harmon highlighted the potential for this initiative to be replicated nationwide, linking qualified prisoners to sustainable jobs. The program demonstrates the diverse work and training opportunities available to prisoners, with past graduates now employed in hotels and restaurants, gaining further skills and qualifications, and being valued by employers.

3) Portugal - Estabelecimento Prisional de Torres Novas

Vertical Horticulture, Horizontal Solidarity

Our project, "Horticultura Vertical, Solidariedade Horizontal," implemented at Torres Novas Prison in Portugal in collaboration with the local NGO Upfarming, establishes a transformative approach to prison rehabilitation and community support. Through the installation of a vertical farm comprising 40 aeroponic towers, we empower inmates with certified training in Sustainable Agriculture, enhance the nutritional quality of prison diets by cultivating KM0 vegetables, and provide social support to vulnerable families through the distribution of fresh vegetable hampers. This innovative initiative addresses poverty and social exclusion, benefiting both the prison community and 175 needy families in partnership with local IPSS organisations including Red Cross, Caritas, and CRIT. Recognised for its excellence, our project has received the BPI Foundation "la Caixa" Solidarity Award 2022 and commendation at the 55th Session of the UN Human Rights Council.

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4) Scotland - The Bella Centre, and the Lilias Centre

Community Custody Units

Our Community Custody Units (CCUs) - The Bella Centre, located in the Hilltown area of Dundee, and the Lilias Centre, in the Maryhill area of Glasgow - opened in August and October 2022. These units provide safe accommodation to support the needs of women who will benefit from closer contact and access to local communities and services. The CCUs represent a significant advancement in the role that the Scottish Prison Service plays in providing women with gender-specific care which places the needs of women at the heart of their function and design. They address the necessity of offering women in custody trauma-informed services, strong and meaningful relationships, a safe and nurturing environment, and a chance to live more independently and autonomously ahead of their return to their communities. Staff at the CCUs understand their role in this journey for women in custody and have worked hard to create an environment that allows women the chance to thrive and develop a network of support beyond the prison walls.

5) Ukraine - Odesa Correctional Setting №14

Person-Centered Approach to Harm Reduction Services in Prisons

The project implemented at the State Institution “Odesa Correctional Setting (№14)” with the support of the FREE ZONE Charitable Organization is the first of its kind in Ukraine within a penal institution. It is based on a peer-to-peer principle, where inmates are employed as consultants and social workers. For the first time in Ukraine, the needs of prisoners were assessed using the digital public health solution FREE LIFE. The project addresses the specific needs of prisoners, facilitating effective communication with the institution's administration and encouraging active participation in medical and social services. Key achievements include the launch of a syringe exchange program within the penal institution, the employment of 13 inmates as peer-to-peer social workers contracted with an NGO, engaging 592 prisoners, providing 19,542 harm reduction services, and expanding the experience to an additional institution. The project promotes the health and social adaptation of prisoners, changes the approach of the penitentiary system to addressing addiction issues, and has the potential to be scaled up to other penal institutions.