**Prison employment training programs and post-release community integration indices**

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One of the main challenges around integrating inmates into the community after their release from prison is their absorption into the labor market. Integration into legitimate employment allows released inmates to earn a living wage and strengthen their self esteem, and provides them with a positive social network and sense of belonging within the community. Participation in the labor market can even serve as an informal mechanism for monitoring their behavior. In an effort to increase inmates’ chances of being accepted into the labor market post-release and earning a living wage, prisons in many Western countries operate various vocational training programs. To date, the research literature has examined the effectiveness of different training programs by comparing rates of recidivism in a study cohort and a control group. However, very few studies have examined the effectiveness of training programs in terms of other indices, including post-release employment integration characteristics—a direct outcome measure of the programs. This study focuses on examining the effectiveness of a unique training program that prepares inmates for the workplace, and inter alia, incorporates content related to managing small businesses, managing personal budgets, managing business budgets, and preparing for the workplace (resume writing, conduct in a job interview). In order to match a control group to the inmates in this program (n=758), Propensity Score Matching was used. As part of the study, recidivism rates among the inmates in their first five years post-release were examined. In the second phase, additional indices were examined including mean annual wage, number of months of employment, welfare referral rates, and mortality rates after release. Although only limited success was found in reducing recidivism rates among the inmates participating in the program, it appears that average wages, average months in employment per annum, and rates of welfare referrals were significantly higher compared with the control group. These findings demonstrate the importance and necessity of examining inmate rehabilitation programs using indices other than recidivism when outlining treatment policies in general, and in particular in terms of social and personal costs and benefits.