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PRIORITY DIRECTIONS OF CREATING A BARRIER-FREE ENVIRONMENT IN PENAL INSTITUTIONS AND DETENTION CENTERS IN THE ASSESSMENT OF EMPLOYEES OF THE STATE CRIMINAL-EXECUTIVE SERVICE OF UKRAINE

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The study is dedicated to finding out the vision of employees of penal institutions and pretrial detention centers of the State Criminal-Executive Service of Ukraine, whose duties are related to working with people with disabilities, priority directions for creating a barrier-free environment in penal institutions and pretrial detention centers.

Eighty-eight research participants were united into four focus groups; the task of each was, based on their own work experience, assessments the relevance of problems related to the maintenance of persons with disabilities in the penal institutions, as well as the available capabilities of the institutions, to form a list the most priority directions and methods of barrier-free environment creation.

The content analysis and generalization of the obtained data showed that additional socio-psychological support, removal of physical barriers on the territory and in the buildings of institutions, and ensuring the availability of physical support services by specially trained personnel and other convicts turned out to be the most priority areas of barrier-free implementation in the participants' evaluations. At the same time, several important directions, such as the elimination of informational, economic, and educational barriers, were not included in the lists of most groups, which, according to the authors, may indicate both an underestimation of these components of barrier-freeness by the study participants and lack of opportunities for their implementation.

Development of psychological and pedagogical programs and formation of the readiness of the State Criminal-Executive Service staff and selected convicts to provide physical support services to persons with disabilities, including barrier-free communication skills, monitoring the special needs of convicts and prisoners with disabilities, according to the authors, along with other measures, will contribute to the purposeful implementation of the Strategy for the introduction of barrier-free access in places of deprivation of liberty.

Key words: barrier-free environment, prisoners and convicts, penal institutions and pretrial detention centers, staff of the State Criminal-Executive Service of Ukraine.

ПРІОРИТЕТНІ НАПРЯМИ СТВОРЕННЯ БЕЗБАР'ЄРНОГО СЕРЕДОВИЩА В УВП ТА СІЗО В ОЦІНКАХ ПРАЦІВНИКІВ ДКВС УКРАЇНИ

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Дослідження присвячене з'ясуванню бачення працівників установ виконання покарань та слідчих ізоляторів Державної кримінально-виконавчої служби України, виконання службових обов'язків яких пов'язано з роботою з особами з інвалідністю, пріоритетних напрямів створення безбар'єрного середовища в установах виконання покарань та слідчих ізоляторах.

Вісімдесят вісім учасників дослідження були об'єднані в чотири фокус-групи, завданням кожної з яких було, спираючись на власний досвід роботи, оцінку актуальності проблем, пов'язаних з утриманням осіб з інвалідністю у їхніх закладах, а також наявні можливості установ, сформувані перелік найбільш пріоритетних напрямів та способів безбар'єрного середовища для засуджених та ув'язнених.

Контент-аналіз та узагальнення отриманих даних показав, що додатковий соціально-психологічний супровід, усунення фізичних перешкод на території та в будівлях закладів, забезпечення доступності послуг фізичного супроводу силами спеціально підготовленого персоналу та інших засудже-

них виявилися в оцінках учасників найбільш пріоритетними напрямками впровадження безбар'єрності. Водночас ряд важливих напрямів, таких як усунення інформаційних, економічних та освітніх бар'єрів, не потрапили в переліки більшості груп, що, на думку авторів, може свідчити як про недооцінку цих складових безбар'єрності учасниками дослідження, так і про брак можливостей для їх реалізації.

Розробка психолого-педагогічних засобів та формування готовності персоналу ДКВС і виділених засуджених до надання послуг фізичного супроводу особам з інвалідністю, включно з навичками безбар'єрного спілкування, моніторинг особливих потреб засуджених та ув'язнених з інвалідністю, які перебувають в УВП та СІЗО, на думку авторів, разом з іншими заходами сприятиме цілеспрямованій реалізації Стратегії із впровадження безбар'єрності в місцях позбавлення волі.

Ключові слова: безбар'єрне середовище, ув'язнені та засуджені, установи виконання покарань та слідчі ізолятори, персонал Державної кримінально-виконавчої служби України.

Formulation of the problem. The effective development of society as a complete social system is based on socially oriented state measures to benefit people and their well-being. To a large extent, society's development level is determined by the attitude towards its least protected and most vulnerable members. Social integration and rights protection of persons with disabilities are considered relevant throughout the civilized world [1].

Various barriers inherent in modern society that do not allow an individual to participate fully in all spheres of social life significantly reduce the quality of his/her life. As a result, they do not allow the full realization of the potential of each citizen for the benefit of the common good.

In modern Ukraine, the policy of a barrier-free society that creates conditions for equal access to all opportunities for citizens with disabilities is actively pursued. The National Strategy for Creating a Barrier-Free Environment in Ukraine has been approved and is already at the practical implementation stage. The purpose of the Strategy is to create a barrier-free environment for all population groups, to ensure equal opportunities for each person to exercise their rights, to receive services on a par with others by integrating physical, informational, digital, social, civil, economic and educational accessibility into all spheres of state policy [2].

The problem of ensuring barrier-free functioning and development concerns detained and convicted people with

disabilities because their opportunities for independent living and meeting their needs are often minimal. Therefore, creating and maintaining a barrier-free environment for such people is an essential task for the staff of penal institutions.

The study aims to identify a vision of priority directions for creating a barrier-free space in penal institutions and detention centers for employees of the State Criminal and Executive Service of Ukraine, whose duties are related to working with persons with disabilities.

Analysis of recent research and publications. According to paragraph 2 of Article 14 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), "States Parties shall ensure that if persons with disabilities are deprived of their liberty through any process, they are, on an equal basis with others, entitled to guarantees by international human rights law and shall be treated in compliance with the objectives and principles of the present Convention, including by provision of reasonable accommodation" [3].

Vynogradova S. O. emphasizes Ukraine's improper fulfillment of its obligations regarding the implementation of international standards in penitentiary practice and the number of issues related to the detention of convicts with disabilities in prisons: social inequality in terms of living conditions; quality and sufficiency of nutrition; medical care (population density in cells/rooms, the opportunity of receiving paid medical services, medicines); lack of permanent employment; improper detention conditions in some facilities; lack of adapted sources of information for persons with visual impairments; lack of practice of informing about the complete list of normative legal acts regulating the rights of persons with disabilities. On the other hand, the author states that despite the significant theoretical and practical significance of the problem of execution (serving) of punishment of convicted disabled persons in places of deprivation of liberty, she did not find proper scientific development in the legal literature of Ukraine [4].

Based on the analysis results of the genesis of the serving criminal punishment by convicts with disabilities in places of deprivation of liberty, I. H. Bogatyrev and I. K. Laptinova formulated the definition of "disabled convict under the conditions of serving a sentence," which should be understood as a person

who had a particular disease before the conviction, was recognized by the medical commission as a disabled person of the I-III group, necessarily needs social protection by the current legislation and was sent to serve the sentence to a specialized correctional colony. The authors understand the rehabilitation of convicts with disabilities while serving a sentence as a complex of legal and social measures implemented by the state, penal institutions, public, religious, and other organizations to create proper conditions for correction and resocialization [5].

Nowadays in Ukraine, in accordance with the National Strategy for Barrier-Free Implementation, the priority areas of barrier-free policy are:

1) accessibility (availability of goods and services; market promotion of auxiliary devices);

2) involvement (ensuring the opportunity to use all the benefits of citizenship; removing barriers to equal participation in public life and leisure; promoting the provision of quality services in communities);

3) equality (removing discrimination and supporting equal opportunities);

4) employment (increasing the participation of persons with disabilities in the labor market, where they are currently underrepresented);

5) education and training (promoting inclusive education and lifelong learning);

6) social protection (maintenance of decent living conditions, fight against poverty and social exclusion);

7) health (supporting equal access to medical services and relevant facilities);

8) external actions (advancement of the relevant agenda within the EU enlargement programs and international development programs) [2].

Popowych A. M. emphasizes the need for a comprehensive approach to implementing the rehabilitation process, which requires an interdisciplinary team to overcome (mitigate) the following barriers: informational, educational, social-labor, socio-cultural, and spatial-environmental [6].

Sample of the research. The sample was comprised of 88 participants of the training "Physical support and barrier-free communication of the penal staff with convicts and prisoners with disabilities." All of them are employees of penal institutions and pretrial detention centers of the State Criminal-Executive Service of Ukraine, whose duties relate to working with persons with disabilities. One participant represented one institution, i.e., the study covered all penal institutions and pretrial detention centers of the State Criminal-Executive Service of Ukraine.

Research method. As a method of data collection, the brainstorming of participants in focus groups during the "Directions and methods of creating a barrier-free environment" exercise was used.

The general goal of the training was to develop the skills of physical support and barrier-free communication in the participants, as well as a tolerant attitude towards convicts and prisoners with disabilities. The program included sections such as the basics of barrier-free communication, the ethics of communicating with people with disabilities, physical support for people with disabilities, performing exercises to practice the skills of barrier-free communication, and a tolerant attitude.

Four focus groups were formed after completing the main part of the training, and the participants were randomly selected. Each group was tasked with conducting a group brainstorming session on the question, "What are the priority areas and methods of creating elements of a barrier-free environment in pretrial detention centers and penal institutions?" and preparing a shared vision from the subgroup.

The obtained data were processed using content analysis.

The main results of the research. After brainstorming, each group presented a list of priority directions for ensuring a barrier-free environment in pretrial detention centers and penal institutions, which was developed due to group work.

Group 1 list.

1.1. Removal of physical obstacles to movement inside the access zone, the facility's buildings, and the adjacent territory.

1.2. Arrangement of railings to facilitate the movement of persons with disabilities and call buttons.

1.3. Installation of ramps at the entrances to residential premises, dining rooms, administrative buildings, and service premises.

1.4. Physical support services within the institution should be provided for convicted and imprisoned persons with disabilities at their request.

1.5. Educational work with employees of institutions regarding barrier-free communication with convicts and prisoners with disabilities.

1.6. Provision of special training for the institution's employees, whose duties include physical support of convicts and prisoners with disabilities.

1.7. The allocation of individual convicts and prisoners whose duties will include providing physical support and daily assistance to their neighbors with disabilities in the cell or departments of social and psychological services when necessary. Provision of special training for such convicts.

1.8. Social-pedagogical and social-psychological work with convicts and prisoners with disabilities in order to find out their unique needs, monitor the degree of their satisfaction, and optimize their emotional state.

As we can see, the representatives of the first group consider, among the priority areas of ensuring a barrier-free environment in pretrial detention centers and penal institutions, the removal of physical obstacles to the movement of persons with disabilities. As possible providers of physical support services, both the employees of institutions and other convicts were named, while the need for special training of support agents was emphasized. The members of the group also consider the removal of communication barriers and socio-pedagogical and socio-psychological work with convicts and prisoners with disabilities to be essential directions.

Group 2 list.

2.1. Equipping buildings and the adjacent territory with identification signs that allow convicts and prisoners with disabilities to navigate space better and reach their destination.

2.2. Installation of sound signaling devices to aid orientation.

2.3. Providing blind convicts and prisoners with special Braille literature that they can read independently by touch.

2.4. Examining workplaces where convicts and prisoners with disabilities could work and ensuring appropriate working conditions according to their special needs.

2.5. Arrangement of ramps at the entrances to buildings.

2.6. Examination of the movement routes of convicts and prisoners on the premises and on the territory of the facility, identification, and removal of obstacles and sharp corners that may impede movement and be potential sources of injury.

2.7. Introduction of additional measures to promote social and psychological adaptation of convicts and prisoners with disabilities to the conditions of the penal institution.

2.8. Involvement of other convicts in assisting their comrades with disabilities.

2.9. Ensuring access to information of convicts and prisoners with disabilities.

From the list of Group 2, we see that, unlike Group 1, it also includes providing educational opportunities for convicts and prisoners with disabilities, eliminating economic barriers by creating appropriate conditions for work, and measures to create a barrier-free information environment. The common points are the inclusion of such directions as social and psychological support for adaptation, removal of physical barriers, and emphasis on the expediency of involving other convicts in assisting.

Group 3 list.

3.1. Special training of the penal staff to provide physical support services to those prisoners and convicts who need it.

3.2. Conduct training with the staff to form their communication skills with prisoners and convicts with disabilities.

3.3. Provision of educational opportunities for prisoners and convicts with disabilities, taking into account their health disorders.

3.4. Carrying out socio-psychological work with the aim of improving the emotional state and creating mutual support groups for persons with disabilities.

3.5. Creation of additional psychological relief rooms.

Representatives of group number three specified the direction of social and psychological support, proposing the creation of mutual support groups among prisoners and convicts with

disabilities and arranging additional rooms for psychological relief. The direction of meeting specific educational needs was also included in the list. A place is also given to the special training of the personnel of the penal institutions, both for the provision of physical support services and for the formation of barrier-free communication skills. Instead, the possibility of involving other convicts was not recognized as a priority.

Group 4 list.

4.1. Creation of specially equipped cells for the detention of persons with disabilities, taking into account their health disorders and needs.

4.2. Conducting socio-psychological work with co-residents of persons with disabilities to form a tolerant attitude in them.

4.3. Implementation of enhanced individual supervision of prisoners and convicts with disabilities by medical workers, psychologists, and heads of the penal institution's social and psychological service departments.

4.4. Joint cultural and educational activities of convicts with disabilities with the staff of institutions: listening to music, watching movies, and doing artistic work.

4.5. Location of persons with disabilities on floors with shower cabins.

4.6. Appointment and training of designated convicts and prisoners who can provide physical support services to their fellow residents with disabilities.

4.7. Special training of the penal staff to provide physical support services to convicts and prisoners with disabilities.

The representatives of group four added the creation of specially equipped cells for the detention of persons with disabilities, taking into account their health disorders and needs, and the formation of a tolerant attitude towards persons with disabilities to the already highlighted areas of providing a barrier-free environment in pretrial detention centers and penal institutions. An interesting proposal is to organize joint cultural and educational events for convicts with disabilities and the staff of institutions.

The results of the frequency analysis of including the individual directions to the lists compiled by focus groups are presented in Table.

Table – Directions for creating a barrier-free environment in penal institutions and pretrial detention centers in employees' assessments

№	Direction	Defined as a priority			
		Group № 1	Group № 2	Group № 3	Group № 4
1	Additional social and psychological support	▼	▼	▼	▼
2	Removal of physical obstacles	▼	▼		▼
3	Provision of physical support services by personnel	▼		▼	▼
4	Provision of physical support services by other convicts	▼	▼		▼
5	Special training of personnel to provide physical support services for persons with disabilities	▼		▼	▼
6	Formation of barrier-free communication skills of staff with convicts and prisoners with disabilities	▼		▼	
7	Elimination of information barriers		▼		
8	Elimination of economic barriers (creation of specially equipped workplaces)		▼		
9	Eliminating educational barriers			▼	
10	Special training of selected convicts to provide physical support services for persons with disabilities	▼			
11	Formation of a tolerant attitude among other convicts				▼
12	Organization of leisure time				▼

We can see from Table 1 that the direction related to the provision of additional services of socio-psychological support for convicts and prisoners with disabilities turned out to be the highest priority for respondents - it is included in all four lists. "Elimination of physical barriers" was not noted by the representatives of one of the groups, but, in our opinion, the fact that the list of this group contains "providing physical support services by personnel," as well as the fact that the direction of physical barrier-freeness turned out to be the most concretized in the answers of the participants, allows to attribute it to the priority directions as well.

Also, we can see from the results that according to the research participants, physical support services for convicts and prisoners with disabilities should be provided both by the staff of the institutions and by other convicts. However, most groups consider special training for agents of physical support to be appropriate only for personnel. The same applies to the formation of barrier-free communication skills with convicts and prisoners with disabilities – it is provided only for the staff, and for other convicts, it found its expression in the "formation of a tolerant attitude."

There is a particular concern that such vital areas of creating a barrier-free environment in places of deprivation of liberty, such as the elimination of informational, economic, and educational barriers, were not included in the lists of most groups, which may indicate an underestimation of these components of barrier-freeness by the participants of the study and about the lack of opportunities for their implementation.

Conclusions and prospects for further research

1. The problem of providing a barrier-free environment for detained and convicted people with disabilities is urgent, given the limited opportunities for independent living and meeting the needs of this cohort even in normal conditions, not burdened by deprivation of liberty. Creating and maintaining a barrier-free environment in physical, social, economic, social, informational, digital, and educational dimensions for such people is an essential task of the staff of penitentiary institutions.

2. As the priority areas of creating a barrier-free environment for convicts and prisoners with disabilities in prisons and pretrial

detention centers, the participants of the study - employees of the State Criminal-Executive Service of Ukraine featured additional social and psychological support, the removal of physical obstacles on the territory and in the buildings of institutions, ensuring the availability of physical escort by specially trained personnel and other convicts. Instead, such vital areas as the elimination of informational, economic, and educational barriers were not mentioned in most groups, which may indicate an underestimation of these factors by the study participants.

3. As promising directions for further research, we see the development of psychological and pedagogical means of forming the penal staff and selected convicts' readiness to provide physical support services to persons with disabilities, including barrier-free communication skills and monitoring of the special needs of convicts and prisoners with disabilities.

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