

WEBINAR REPORT

The Minor and Young Offender as the Main Actor of the Education Process

23.07.2021, 11:00 CEST

The webinar included the following main content sections:

1. Introductory remarks, presentation of the webinar and its purpose, and of the (organizing) location in Kosovo, were ensured by **Gary Hill, ICPA**.
2. First webinar speaker: **Pamela Wallace, ICITAP Senior Corrections Advisor - Kosovo Contractor (PAE)**

Gary Hill introduced Pamela Wallace's background in corrections – She started her career as corrections officer and advanced in various institutional management positions, including prison warden, for more than 14 years, in Wisconsin's several prison facilities.

Pamela Wallace presented an innovative and successful program for juveniles, from Wisconsin, USA.

The program Stock Market Simulation was implemented in order to: engage students in the learning process; utilize current events to stimulate discussion; real world scenarios that impact life and the market; promote lifelong learning and lessons – risks/rewards.

The Audience of the program included: 1 Teacher, 1 Teacher Aid (can also be a community volunteer), 12 – 15 students per class. The duration of the program was 4-9 months (younger students – shorter duration, older students – longer duration). The Competition was: individual, classroom teams, institution teams across the state.

The Exercise within the program included the following:

1. Give each student a 1 - 10K simulated bank account – can be an excel spreadsheet;
2. Monitor current events and discuss how this impacts the market;
3. Read the newspaper;
4. Teach them about the stock market and exchange;
5. Discuss risks and rewards;
6. Have the students select individual stocks/bonds/money market;
7. Have teams of 3 students combine their funds and select stocks;
8. Encourage watching the daily news;
9. Encourage institution wide engagement (advertise);
10. Give students the assignment of talking with at least one staff a day to get their perspective.
11. Encourage the students to engage with all staff to discuss perspectives: Security, Social Services, Administration, Education,
12. Teacher to be the monitor of the “exchanges” as well as bank account balances: Develop charts, graphs and other visual aids; review gains/losses periodically; use current market values for exchanges; charge them an exchange fee; also track what would have happened had they kept something they chose to exchange.
13. Teach the student to balance a bank account.
14. At the end of the exercise have students present their findings and outcomes.

Safety Net:

1. Allow students to continue to earn points “money“, especially those that lost all their “money” to get a second job to “earn money”.
2. Provide point coupons for volunteering to work around the institution.
3. Points can be traded in for simulated money in their bank account (Pick up garbage – 5 points, Help in the kitchen – 10 points, Clean common areas – 5 points, Clean their cell – 5 points).

Reward winners (individual and teams) with achievement certificates and consider option of one day of special privileges such as extra recreation time. Or reward them with a book of the teachers choosing.

3. Second webinar speaker: Catalin Bejan, International Consultant.

Gary Hill introduced Catalin Bejan’s background in corrections.

Catalin Bejan offered more details, presenting his 21 years’ experience in the Romanian Prison System, starting from being a corrections officer to general director of the Romanian penitentiary administration.

The presentation focused on the following main ideas:

*What do we expect juveniles to gain through educational activities? **It is obvious that the following ideas are equally applicable in society, not only in prisons.***

- ⇒ Nothing in life is for free;
- ⇒ Work is noble and working is not shaming;
- ⇒ Achieve the meaning of personal responsibility;
- ⇒ Take care of others and of yourself; the sense of care as a core value;
- ⇒ Reward/payment is the result of the work done;
- ⇒ Respect of the social, moral and legal rules are mandatory and in line with the principle of normality.

Education and success are processes.

Two examples of educational projects (successful in the Romanian prison system):

A. First one was developed by the Educational Centre in Buzias, in cooperation with a local NGO, involved in juvenile’s education - **the Car project** (building an exposition car several pieces, under the coordination of a specialized partner from the NGO “The association of Christian men”).

B. The second project was developed in two adult prisons (**Animal assisted therapy**) and replicated in our educational centers. It implies taking care of dogs, cats, different pets.

4. Third webinar speaker: Ioan Batinas, associate professor.

Gary Hill introduced the background of the webinar speaker: 27 years in corrections, Former warden of Gherla Maximum Security Prison, Associate Professor at “Babes-Bolyai” University, Romania (security studies and international affairs).

The presentation includes two dimensions:

A. Education for Minors and Youth Offenders under Formal Supervision in Prisons

Education and school attendance are normal developmental milestones for youth and can serve as important protective factors against delinquency.

They can also have long-term positive effects on employment and desistance of crime.

However, poor academic performance, school suspension and expulsion, and school dropout are among known school-related risk factors for delinquency, crime, and serving sentences in the justice system.

Youth involved in the juvenile justice system are less likely to benefit from education-related protective factors and more likely to experience negative outcomes related to learning challenges and school failure.

In most of the correctional systems, educational risk factors are associated with juvenile and adult offending, justice system involvement, and recidivism. These risk factors include low academic achievement, academic failure, negative attitudes toward school, low bonding to school, low school attachment and commitment to school, frequent school transitions, low academic aspirations, suspensions and expulsions, truancy and absenteeism, inadequate school climate, and school dropout.

Education is the central pillar in shaping the personality of the individual, and formal education is the one that creates the premises for socio-professional (re)integration. Thus, the pursuit of school and vocational training courses should represent the priority direction in the social and professional reintegration of young delinquents.

B. The second direction of presentation

As former prison worker, as well as a university teacher, the speaker underlined the evolution of the young generation, the change of their aspirations, ideals and motivation.

A realistic perception, based on a x-ray of the contemporary society, on what the family, school, society in general do or do not do for these young people, would contribute to improving the education provided both at different levels of education in the free society, and in detention & educational centers.

The speaker underlined that the teenagers of 2021 are different in comparison with those of 10 years ago and very different from those of 30 years ago (their parents' teenage generation).

One of the most relevant difference is that they grew up in an age of technology. Today's teenager was born at about the same time as the internet, and online social networks have significantly changed communication and interpersonal relationships. Today's teenagers have had them since the first day of school. They are the first schoolchildren "proudly posted" by their parents on Facebook; they are the first to be "live" at a sports competition or a music contest. Today's children are the first babies whose photos have gathered likes. The fact that technology and adolescence go hand in hand makes today's young people anchored in a much wider world, with a huge cultural and social impact; they know the whole world through the internet, which for their parents was just a sci-fi movie script.

Considering today's socio-political and cultural environment, as well as increasing individualism and access to the media, today's adolescents have more contact with violence, in all its forms. From ugly words to images of fatal accidents, from obscene gestures, to live crimes, from civil war, to armed attacks - all of this is today's teenagers no strangers. In addition, they saw them live or through a screen from a very young age. What their parents process and internalize with the minds of adults, children and young people are obliged to see and understand with a tender and forming self.

Another factor that dramatically influences today's adolescents is the concept and model of the family. Divorce, single-parent families, LGBT couples, cohabitation and other forms of distortion of the classical family in which their parents lived, make today's teenagers understand fundamentally different interpersonal relationships, especially family life. Many of the attitudes, stress and alienation, depression and even violence have their cause in the pressure that young people must adapt to new types and models of family. In addition, in the past the extended family, the group of friends, the local community had an increased influence and represented a point of support for adolescents; today social fragmentation and individualism have led to the disappearance of this mental and even physical comfort, when we talk about safety. If in the past on the way from school to home, teenagers met with neighbors, relatives, acquaintances, today they are strangers in big and crowded cities.

Another difference between today and yesterday's teenagers is that of the neutrality of moral and religious values. Today everything is relative, the rules are optional, and life values are set according to circumstances. There are no certainties in the field of morality or religion. An entire generation, and probably the ones that will follow, will grow up without a set of definite collective moral values.

5. Fourth webinar speaker: **Dorin Muresan**, ICPA Board member, Co-chair of the Staff Training and Development Network of ICPA

Gary Hill introduced the background of the webinar speaker in corrections and ICPA - 25 years' experience in the Romanian prison system, former governor of the Dej Penitentiary Hospital.

The speaker focused his presentation on the normalization principle, in order to prioritize the learning process in the prison environment.

It was also underlined, during the presentation, that it is crucial:

- ⇒ to give importance to facilitating the adaptation process of the prison teachers and other staff categories involved in the learning/educational process;
- ⇒ to analyze not only the quantitative, but also the qualitative results in any educational process.

In the final section of the webinar, Gary Hill invited the participants to address questions and, then, he summarized a few closing remarks.