

Education Programmes for Prison Inmates: Reward for Offences or Hope for a Better Life?

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ABSTRACT Education is a means to emancipate people from abuse, unemployment and poverty, which is why democratic countries provide basic education for all their citizens, even 'law breakers'. Education for prisoners is gaining currency in many countries. In South Africa, it is both a constitutional right and a foundation stone for rehabilitation. The objective of this paper was to investigate the value of prison education at two correctional service facilities in Pretoria. A qualitative research approach in the form of interviews was used in the investigation. Hundred inmates and ex-inmates participated in the study which found that education for prisoners is not a waste of tax payers' money but has socio-economic value. The major findings of the investigation include the following: the promotion of social cohesion; the re-integration of ex-inmates into the community as reformed members; the provision of knowledge and skills for employment and self-employment through entrepreneurial activities.