

Summary

Fourth measurement of the monitor of aftercare for former prisoners

To reduce high recidivism rates among former prisoners, reintegration-related issues of prisoners are tackled before their release during imprisonment. By facilitating cooperation between prison services, municipalities, and other co-operating partners, the Ministry of Security and Justice (*Ministerie van Veiligheid en Justitie; MVenJ*) tries to properly prepare prisoners for their return to society. The MVenJ and the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (*Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten; VNG*) composed a manifest containing the aims and methodology of the reintegration policy.

For an optimal reintegration five basic conditions need to be met: obtaining a valid identity card, acquirement of income and housing, an inventory of outstanding debts and strategies how to deal with those debts, adequate physical and psychological care. The Monitor of Aftercare for Former Prisoners describes the situation of former prisoners with regard to these basic conditions immediately prior to imprisonment, immediately after release from imprisonment, and six months after release. The current report concerns the fourth measurement of the monitor, and focuses on detainees who were released from prison in the second semester of 2011 and 2012, and addresses the following research questions:

- 1a What are the problems of former prisoners released from prison in the second semester of 2011 and 2012 regarding the five basic conditions of reintegration (identity card, income, housing, debts, and care) immediately prior to imprisonment and immediately after release from imprisonment?
- 1b What are the problems of former prisoners released from prison in the second semester of 2011 and 2012 regarding work and income six months after release from imprisonment?
- 2a To what extent do the problems of former prisoners released from prison in the second semester of 2011 and 2012 regarding the five basic conditions of reintegration (identity card, income, housing, debts, and care) change during imprisonment?
- 2b To what extent do the problems of former prisoners released from prison in the second semester of 2011 and 2012 regarding work and income change during the first six months after imprisonment?

Methods

As in the previous measurements, only prisoners who were detained for at least two weeks were included. This group constitutes approximately three-quarters of all detainees released in the second semester of 2011 and 2012. Data on reintegration-related issues prior and during imprisonment were obtained from DPAN, a registration system used in penitentiary institutions. In the previous reports of the Monitor of Aftercare for Former Prisoners data were obtained from multiple municipalities to describe the situation six months after release. The current measurement was limited to one municipality on this matter beyond our control. Henceforth, no representative results were available for former prisoner's situation six months after release, with the exception of income-related issues, which were alternatively ob-

tained from Statistics Netherlands (CBS). Furthermore, another significant change occurred in the source (DPAN) from which data were normally obtained. A newer version of DPAN was launched in December 2010, and due to its discrepancy with older versions, the current results cannot be compared with the previous results from earlier years. Also, due to registration errors the amount of missing data is considerable (e.g., the release data was inaccurate). Lastly, for all participants prior to and during imprisonment, and six months after release socio-economic indicators were obtained from CBS.

Results

Situation immediately before and after imprisonment

- Approximately 85% of former prisoners are in possession of a valid identity card immediately before and after imprisonment.
- Between 80% and 90% of former prisoners have an income and/or housing immediately before imprisonment. Case managers expect that 90-95% of former prisoners have income and/or housing immediately after imprisonment.
- Most former prisoners who have an income immediately before imprisonment, and an expected income immediately after imprisonment, receive income from labor or welfare benefits. Less common sources of income are disability benefits, student loans, or other types of benefits.
- Former prisoners who have housing immediately before imprisonment typically live in a rented house or with family. The same goes for the expected housing situation immediately after imprisonment.
- The percentage of prisoners with debts immediately before and after imprisonment is about 57% (not counting claims made by the CJIB). Between 14-18% of former prisoners with debts immediately before imprisonment no longer had them after release.
- Approximately one quarter of all prisoners had a care plan immediately before imprisonment. Contrastingly, immediately after imprisonment only 8% of former prisoners had a care plan. These percentages refer to all prisoners, not only to those who are in actual need for care.
- The data derived from the CBS showed that approximately two-thirds of former prisoners received an income or benefits, or had received education one month prior to imprisonment. One month after imprisonment this was the case for 66-70% of former prisoners, taking into account that the relative number of former prisoners with work or following an education is lower, and the relative number of former prisoners receiving benefits is higher than one month before imprisonment.

Changes in the basic conditions during imprisonment

- Most former prisoners keep their identity card during imprisonment.
- It is expected that virtually all former prisoners maintain an income and housing during imprisonment.
- The majority of former prisoners with debts immediately before imprisonment still have debts immediately after imprisonment.
- Approximately one quarter of prisoners without an identity card immediately before imprisonment obtain one during imprisonment. It is expected that about 70% of prisoners without an income immediately before imprisonment obtain income during imprisonment, and that approximately 55% of prisoners without housing before imprisonment obtain such during imprisonment.

- In 2011 one quarter of former prisoners *without* debts immediately before imprisonment have debts immediately after imprisonment. In 2012 this percentage is 28%.
- Care seems to develop in a negative way during imprisonment. About 80% of former prisoners who had a care plan immediately before imprisonment lose this care plan during imprisonment. Of former prisoners who did not have a care plan immediately before imprisonment 3% had one booted up directly after release. The question is whether these percentages give an accurate picture of the problems in care. The responsibility for care during detention is namely with the psycho-medical consultation (PMO), and the question is whether case managers are informed of the treatment of prisoners and the agreements made with care institutions to receive care after detention. In addition, it is questionable whether this is also recorded in DPAN, as this is not the system in which such information is kept by default.
- Of prisoners who worked or attended education one month before imprisonment 60-62% did so too in the month following release.
- About 3% of prisoners who received benefits one month before imprisonment had work or attended education one month after imprisonment.
- Contrastingly, 11% of the prisoners who received benefits one month before imprisonment did not have work, did not attend education, and did not receive benefits one month after imprisonment.
- Approximately 67-71% of prisoners who did not have a job, nor attended education, or received benefits a month before imprisonment were in the same situation a month after imprisonment, while 23-24% of this group received benefits a month after imprisonment, and 7-9% had a job or attended education.

Situation six months after imprisonment

- Of prisoners 72-72% received income (through labor or benefits) or attended education six months after imprisonment.

Changes in the basic conditions during the first six months after imprisonment

- Maintaining an income during imprisonment appears easier than obtaining income in the six months after imprisonment, and the majority of former prisoners (71-72%) kept their work or education in the first six months after imprisonment.
- Of the former prisoners who received benefits one month after imprisonment, 84-88% maintained benefits in the first six months after imprisonment, whereas 5-6% obtained work or started an education, and 7-10% got into the situation that they did not have work, education, or benefits.
- Among former prisoners who did not have work, received no benefits, and did not attend education one month after imprisonment, 17-23% received benefits six months after imprisonment, and 13% had a job or attended school. The other 64-70% stayed did not obtain a job, started an education, or benefits.

Limitations

Due to the new version of DPAN, the current results are incomparable with previous measurements of the monitor. For instance, currently the *expected* income and housing situations of former prisoners immediately after released is measured, instead of the actual situation which was assessed in older version of DPAN. Thus, inaccurate assessments of (non-)issues after release are possible. When comparing the DPAN results with similar data from CBS, the latter provides a less positive out-

look on the income situation of former prisoners after release. The CBS results *are* more in line with the results of previous measurements. Further steps should be to investigate whether the CBS has data available on other reintegration-related issues besides income, and if so, whether this data can be used.

Other limitations are the considerable amount of missing data; many DPAN-files are missing in its entirety, or are empty. Furthermore, limited information was available from municipalities on the situation six months after release.

A point of attention is how to describe the needs for care of (former) prisoners before and after detention. We are in this study using information from DPAN. Information about the needs for care of prisoners is missing from this source; therefore we use information about whether a care plan is drawn up between care institutions and prisoners. As case managers are not leading in terms of care to prisoners, the question is whether they are properly informed, and, if so, whether they then record this information in DPAN. DPAN therefore does not seem the right source to use in describing the problems in care. From this it can be concluded that DPAN, which is primarily a tool for information exchange between PI's and municipalities on the problems of prisoners with regard to the five basic conditions of reintegration, does not properly address the problems in care and that the municipal coordinator after-care thus is not being fully informed of the care problems of returning prisoners.

Conclusion

In line with the results of previous measurements, we found that prisoners have considerable problems regarding income, housing, debts, and care when they go to prison. Due to changes in the way information is registered in DPAN, no complete or trustworthy sketch can be provided of the issues former prisoners have immediately after release. For future measurements, we recommend to explore whether the CBS has, besides data on employment and income, data available concerning the other basic conditions (i.e., identity card, housing, debts, and physical or psychological healthcare). This approach is preferable over gathering data from municipalities, as municipalities usually do not register reintegration-related issues of newly arriving former prisoners.