

## Community Partnerships for Prisoner Vocational Training and Rehabilitation

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### Prisoner Rehabilitation

The Thai Department of Corrections currently plays a vital role in helping prisoners to reintegrate into society, so that they will be rehabilitated to become decent citizens. The rehabilitation procedure starts when prisoners have been admitted. All prisoners have a prisoner classification. Then they get a sentence plan before attending courses for prisoner rehabilitation procedures. By providing prison rehabilitation procedures The Thai Department of Corrections aims to transform the lives of people working within or the incarcerated within the criminal justice system.

This is because many former prisoners have serious challenges after being released. Specifically, they have difficulty finding jobs due to their criminal background. This issue is one of the main factors which leads prisoners to reoffend. Therefore, the Thai Department of Corrections focuses on prisoner rehabilitation through vocational training. This is to help prisoners prepare their work skills and gain employment in the future. This is beneficial to prisoner reintegration.



Figure 1 Thai Department of Correction has the Memorandum of Understanding with the university partnership



*Figure 2 Thai Department of Correction has the Memorandum of Understanding with the university partnership*

### **Prisoner Vocational Training**

To support the prisoner's quality of life during imprisonment, the Thai Department of Corrections has complied with international standards, especially the Mandela Rules and Bangkok Rules. Specifically, one example is that Thai Department of Corrections provides the appropriate treatments and rehabilitation programs for all prisoners. Not only will all prisons be provided with general education and other rehabilitation programs, but they will also be provided with useful vocational training courses. Vocational training is an important part of the rehabilitation procedure.

Prisoner vocational training has been set up modeled after rules for prisoner rehabilitation procedures in the Mandela Rules. This is to help prisoners to gain new knowledge for vocational skills. They will bring knowledge and skills learned to be used in their future jobs. With vocational training, prisoners can attend courses and programs such as cooking, cosmetology, baking, painting, sewing, dressmaking, carpentry, etc. These courses are designed for prisoners to create their own small businesses after getting released.

To support prisoners who can be trained as skilled laborers in the labor market for the future, the Thai Department of Corrections has created many projects. It has joined hands with public and private sectors in cooperation to support prisoners preparing their skills related to building and maintenance before they are released.



*Figure 3 Dressmaking Industry in female prison*

### **Reintegration and Cooperation with community partnership**

Concerning prisoner reintegration, the Thai Department of Corrections creates many projects and collaborates with many public and private sectors supporting prisoners preparing their skills before getting released. Community partners are key to offenders' ability to return to society effectively.

The Thai Department of Corrections has partnered with various organizations to implement an innovative reintegration support program to address ex-prisoner unemployment rates in Thailand. "1 Region 1 Prison Industry Project" and "Vocational Training in Enterprises Project" are 2 main projects which are important in cooperation with the community partners for prisoner reintegration effectively.



*Figure 4 The correctional administrator had a group meeting to create social participation in helping prisoner reintegration between Thai Department of Corrections and community partnerships.*

## **1 Region 1 Prison Industry Project**

To enhance vocational training and improve the labor skills of prisoners in leading to prison industries, the Thai Department of Corrections initiated the 1 Region 1 Prison Industry Project in 2022. This Project aims to increase and maintain competency of prisons that provide vocational training. The Thai Department of Corrections has decentralized the prison administration into 10 distinct regions. With the high competencies in each region, there are many outstanding prisons providing effective vocational training for prisoners.

Eleven prisons are selected to be the representative of each region. They are the role models for the region. It is important to note these prisons have improved the prisoner training skills to join many industries. There are various types of industries such as; agriculture, service industry (call center), fabric and clothing design industries, baking, food processing industry, including art and craft.

Currently, there are 2 types of prison industries the vocational training works in. The first type of prison creates and runs the industries directly. The second type of prison cooperates with partnerships within their local communities. The partners provide and install machines for training prisoners inside the prisons. Some partnerships invest in building the factory providing facilities in prison areas. This provides workshops for training prisoners.

Chonburi Central Prison models the “1 Region 1 Prison Industry Project” driving the prison industry in Thailand. This prison has good support from local agencies, and entrepreneurs in Chonburi Province to enhance the prison vocational training to be exemplary of the prison industry. Having this project is beneficial to enhancing the labor skills of prisoners and improving the prison products to reach an international level.

This project gets extreme attention from many public and private sectors. They would like to also be a part of the responsibility for communities to help prisoners reintegrate back into society. Now more than 2,000 prisoners are participating in this project and there are more than 150 local and relevant agencies across the country participating in this project.



Figure 5 Male prisoners are training in bicycle industry at Chonburi Central Prison. Chonburi Central Prison is a model and a part of the 1 Region 1 Prison Industry Project.

### **Vocational Training in the Enterprises Project**

The vocational enterprise training is a vital project that was initiated in 2016. This project helps prisoners not only improve their work skills but also learning and adjusting to working with outsiders before returning to their communities. Importantly, this project originated to send prisoners in training outside prison. This project cooperates with community partners in being responsible for prisoner rehabilitation.

With good support from the private sector, many enterprises are cooperating with the Thai Department of Corrections. This helps prisoners rehabilitate their behaviors through the process of working. Prisoners get realized benefits from training on site. Prisoners will learn many skills and benefits as the workers of these enterprises. They receive money from vocational training as they work. This helps them to earn and save their money for the future.

Participants go to work in the daytime and go back to prison afterwards in the evening. This process also provides good opportunities for prisoners to get employed after being released. It is important to note that, many enterprises provide employment to ex-prisoners to work with them after they are released. Currently there are 22 enterprises cooperating with the Thai Department of Corrections. There are more than 10,000 prisoners who participated in this project.

Moreover, prisoners who are released will attend the pre-release programs. This helps them acclimate themselves before returning to society. They are provided with good programs related to people and community/culture in society. This helps them feel familiar and included within society.

Programs within the project are related to vocational training, mental-health programs, and agricultural programs in minimum security. Moreover, prisoners can learn about new technologies, how to create their businesses, and how to build their working skills, including the funding and social welfare for all ex-prisoners.

It is evident through this and other projects that the Thai Department of Corrections works towards helping prisoners improve themselves through the rehabilitation procedure. The aim is to help them change their behaviors during imprisonment, and reintegrate as decent law-abiding citizens and ensure public safety.



*Figure 6 Vocational Training in the Enterprises Project*