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ANIMALS AND THE RESOCIALIZATION OF OFFENDERS: FROM IDEAS TO APPLICATION*

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Offenders' rehabilitation programs that are based upon the interaction with animals have increasingly been receiving the attention of the media and experts from various fields of science (including psychology, sociology, andragogy, penology, criminology and criminal law) due to a multitude of benefits they are capable of providing for: inmates, prison staff, broader community and animals. Resocialization of offenders, decrease in the rates of recidivism, additional incomes for the prisons' budgets and saving abandoned animals are only some of them. Having this in mind, the author of this paper studies key moments in the historical development of the application of animal assisted therapies and programs, key benefits of these programs, the most remarkable example of modern use of these programs in the world and the implementation of animal-assisted program in Serbia in Correctional Institution in Sremska Mitrovica. In the concluding remarks, the author highlights the most important potentials of these programs in crime suppression, explains the need for additional research in this area, and suggests further directions for their evaluation and improvement.

KEY WORDS: *prisons / rehabilitation / resocialization / recidivism / animals*

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1. INTRODUCTION - THE SUBJECT, METHOD AND AIM OF THE PAPER

The subject of this paper comprises several areas. A brief overview of the development of the inclusion of animals in the rehabilitation of humans with physical and mental illnesses and impairments is presented. Contemporary findings on the application of therapeutic effects of human-animal interaction are introduced and fundamental terms such as: Animal Assisted Intervention, Animal Assisted Therapy, Animal Assisted Education etc. are defined. Three examples of practical implementation of prison programs based on human-animal interaction for the purpose of offenders' resocialization are analysed: American, Scottish and Serbian. Suggestions are made to improve further research and evaluation of these programs so that they could become more compatible with the needs of community as well as those of the inmates and animals who participate in them.

Historical method has been used to explore the development of the use of animals as a means to help people with physical, mental and behavioural issues. Content analysis has been applied to provide a comprehensive insight in currently running prison programs based on the use of human-animal interaction for the resocialization of offenders in foreign legal systems, including the examples from the USA and Scotland. Finally, for the purpose of explaining the prison program that is being applied in Serbia, the following methods have been used: observation and semi-structured interviews. The methods have been applied during a field-research conducted by the author of this paper in Correctional Institution in Sremska Mitrovica between February and June 2018. The observation (combined with documentary photography) has been applied to provide information about the exact content of the program, the actual ways in which it is implemented, the circumstances under which the program activities are conducted etc. The semi-structured interviews have been conducted with: the members of prison staff who are involved with the program: (the director of the Correctional Institution, his deputy, prison psychologist, two prison counsellors and two prison dogs trainers) and with the prisoners who have been participating in the program in the period during which the research was conducted (altogether 14 prisoners were interviewed). It should be noted that, apart from obtaining the information about the program, the interviews with the prisoners also had the purpose of exploring the personal impressions of the involved prisoners about the program and its effects on them. At this place, it is important to emphasize that the number of the interviewed prisoners objectively could not be larger because these are the only prisoners that have ever participated in the analysed program in Serbia, since the program itself has been applied since October, 2017. In that sense, the research represents a pilot-research and its results are only of qualitative significance. In accordance with that, it should be seen as an initial research, intended to present first insights in the application of such programs in Serbia and set directions for future research of this subject.

The aim of this paper is to provide a critical analysis of prisoners' resocialization programs that are based on the benefits of human-animal interaction, through the

exploration of the examples of good practice, to highlight their positive effects as well as to tackle the issues of their potential limitations. Besides, this paper is also aimed to lay down foundations and guidelines for further research of this topic, with particular focus on program's evaluation and its harmonization with the needs of community, prisoners and animals.

2. HOW ANIMALS HAVE BEEN ALLEVIATING HUMAN SUFFERING THROUGH HISTORY

Animals have been playing a variety of important roles in the history of human ideas concerning the origins and treatment of illness and disease (Serpell, 2006: 3) and diverse positive effects of animal-human interaction have been well known from the antique times (Czerw, 2017: 149). The idea that nurturing relationships with animals could serve a socializing function, particularly for children, emerged at the end of the 17th century, at the beginning of the so-called period of enlightenment (McCloud, 2015: 22). For example, John Locke believed that giving children dogs, squirrels, birds or other similar animals to look after should be used as a means of encouraging them to develop tender feelings and a sense of responsibility for others (Serpell, 2006: 12). The idea of animal-facilitated interventions in institutions is also not new (Bachi, 2014: 1). The theories pertaining to the socializing influence of animal companionship began to be applied to the treatment of the mentally ill persons at the end of 18th century. The earliest well-documented experiment in this area was performed in England at York Retreat where the patients were permitted to walk freely around the retreat's courtyards and gardens stocked with various small domestic animals such as rabbits, seagulls, hawks, and poultry (Serpell, 2006: 12). The presence of pet animals in mental institutions in England was increasingly encouraged throughout the 19th century (Toy, 2017). The presence of animals was believed to help awaken "the social and benevolent feelings" (Tuke, 1813: 96 in Charland, 2007: 66). When a journalist George Augustus Sala visited Bethlem Royal Hospital in 1860, he documented the presence of animals on both women's and men's ward, emphasizing their ability to uplift the patients and soothe their minds. He particularly mentioned the presence of dogs and birds and the use of bird song to "transport patients' minds to green fields... and sparkling streams" (Toy, 2017).

The healing effect of animals on humans was also promoted by Florence Nightingale, the pioneer of nursing and the reformer of hospitals (Cohen, 1984: 1), who claimed that "a small pet animal is often an excellent companion for the sick, for chronic cases especially", stating that "a pet bird in a cage is sometimes the only pleasure of an invalid confined for years to the same room" (Nightingale, 1869: 89). In the USA, the presence of dogs in an institution where individuals were confined was first described in 1919 correspondence between the Secretary of Interior and Superintendent at Government Hospital for the Insane (renamed St. Elizabeth Hospital) in Washington, DC (Strimple, 2003: 71). Even before that, the use of animals for the resocialization of offenders was established in 1885 as a livestock care or farm model in Wisconsin (Bachi, 2014: 7). Despite the evident success of these experiments in animal-assisted care in various institutions, the arrival of

scientific medicine mainly eliminated animals from hospital settings by the early decades of the 20th century (Serpell, 2006: 12). However, the use of animals in various therapeutic programs, including those applied in correctional facilities, has been regaining its popularity in the past decades.

The first successful modern animal therapy program in a USA prison occurred at the Oakwood Forensic Centre (formerly the Lima State Hospital for the Criminally Insane), Lima, Ohio in 1975, when David Lee, a psychiatric social worker, initiated a therapy after noticing the improvement in some inmates who took care of an injured bird. After a year-long comparison study between two identical wards, one of which had pets and the other did not, it was confirmed that the ward with the pets required half the amount of medication, had reduced violence, and registered no suicide attempts (Strimple, 2003: 72). The first program using horses for the resocialization of inmates was initiated by Dr. Ron Zaidlicz and his non profit foundation, the National Organization for Wild American Horses (NOWAH), in the late 1970s (Strimple, 2003: 73). Another important program was implemented in 1982 at the Central Facility of the DC Department of Corrections in Lorton, Virginia that cooperated with the local humane society to care for injured cats that colonized at Lorton (Strimple, 2003: 73).

3. THE TYPES OF INTERVENTIONS BASED ON HUMAN-ANIMAL INTERACTION

Various interventions based on the relationship between humans and animals fall under the scope of the term Animal Assisted Interventions (AAI). AAI represents the umbrella term for various modalities such as: 1) Animal Assisted Therapy, 2) Animal Assisted Activities, and 3) Animal Assisted Education.

Animal Assisted Therapy is a goal-directed intervention is designed to promote improvement in physical, social, emotional and/or cognitive functioning of the person(s) involved and in which a specially trained animal-handler team is an integral part (Johnson, Bruneau, 2016: 118). AAT is considered a therapeutic modality, the goals of which are consistent with all of the basic counselling theoretical orientations. It is considered an addition to therapy that encourages and facilitates client's motivation and participation, improves the client–therapist relationship, stimulates client's focus and attention to the task, and reinforces the positive change of the client. It can be applied within any style of counselling practice (directive or nondirective) and in individual, group, or family therapy formats (Chandler, 2012: 166). In that cases, the pets (most commonly dogs) are interacting with people with affective, emotional and cognitive needs, or those who are socially deprived (Vallejo, Santos-Fita, González, 2017: 2.). The presence of a pet significantly contributes to an atmosphere of cosy comfort and minimizes the negative influence of the unfamiliar environment on the client. The animals make clients feel safer, more secure, more willing to warm up to the therapist faster and they also tend to become more expressive in therapy and introspect more as they search for personal insights when a therapy animal is present (Chandler, 2012: 166).

Nowadays, the most commonly applied animal-assisted therapeutic interventions comprise: 1) dog-assisted therapy; 2) hippo-therapy, with therapeutic effects achieved by the use of horses; 3) feline-therapy, which uses cats, and 4) dolphin-assisted therapy (Czerw, 2017: 150). Animal assisted therapies (AAT) have positive therapeutic effects on various types of patients, including those with physical ailments, such as cardiovascular disease, as well as those with mental disorders such as dementia or depression (Pedersen *et al.*, 2011: 493-500) and schizophrenia (Barak *et al.*, 2001: 439).

AAA refers to the activities with animals that provide opportunities for motivational, educational, recreational, and/or therapeutic benefits without the presence of specified treatment goals or objectives. It does not have to be implemented by trained personnel, and session content is spontaneous (Delta Society, 2003; O'Haire *et al.*, 2014: 163). For example, an AAA dog is brought to a nursing home in order to cheer up patients. However, a licensed therapist is not required to supervise the interactions and a staff member or the animal's handler can conduct the visit and be responsible for the animal's care and well-being.¹ Animal-Assisted Education (AAE) is a planned and structured intervention directed and/or delivered by educational and related service professional with specific academic or educational goals². AAE is formally goal-directed and designed to promote improvement in cognitive functioning of the person(s) involved and in which a specially trained animal-handler team is an integral part of the educational process (Davinson, 2015: 8).

Prison-based Animal Programs (PAPs) incorporate animals into correctional facility programming and their most common type is associated with community service whereby participants train and care for animals that are placed for adoption (Bachi, 2014: 1). These programs are applied and operated in different ways and have different specific program goals (Loe, 2015: 2). PAPs are applied in several forms including the following: 1) visitation programs - companion animals are brought to the facility by a humane society or a non-profit organization at specified times; 2) wildlife rehabilitation programs - participants care for injured wildlife, which are then released; 3) livestock care programs - farm animal care including milking and calf raising as well as fish breeding; 4) pet adoption programs - animals are adopted and cared for by individual inmates; 5) service animal socialization programs - assistance/work puppies or dogs are raised and taught basic commands or involved with a specialized training (to serve as, for example dogs for people with visual impairments(Cooke, 2014: 2)); 6) vocational programs - participants are trained/certified in animal grooming, handling and care; 7) community service programs - participants train and care for animals (including dogs and wild horses), which are then adopted out to the community and 8) multimodal programs - usually

¹ 1 Fur 1 Foundation, The Difference between Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) and Activities (AAA): Part 2 of 2 <https://www.1fur1.org/difference-animal-assisted-therapy-aat-activities-aaa-part-2-2/>, accessed 30.01.2019.

² For further reference see: AVMA (American Veterinary Medical Association), Animal-Assisted Interventions: Guidelines, <https://www.avma.org/KB/Policies/Pages/Animal-Assisted-Interventions-Guidelines.aspx>, accessed 30.01.2019.

contain a vocational program component and a community service program component (Bachi, 2014: 8; Furst, 2006: 413).

Dog training programs (DTPs) seem to be the most popular form of AAI in custodial contexts, since they tend to facilitate a diverse range of positive outcomes, including improvements in well-being and behaviour of inmates and meet their various needs (Leonardi *et.al.*, 2017). The difference between DTPs and the AAIs with other populations is based upon the fact that, in the case of DTPs, the human-animal interaction is not enhanced solely for the therapeutic benefit of the prisoner, or used in combination with clinical therapy methods (Furst, 2006, Leonardi *et.al.*, 2017). Additionally, the interaction usually also includes providing care and training for the dogs, whereas numerous programs also include vocational or educational components to enhance the employability of the prisoners (Leonardi *et.al.*, 2017). Although not as widely used in prisons as dogs, horses are becoming increasingly popular in prison programs as well (Strimple, 2003: 73). For example, in the USA, dogs are most commonly involved with PAPs (66.2%), whereas the next most frequently used animals are horses (12.7%) and cattle/cows (12.7%) (Bachi, 2014: 7).

4. THE EXAMPLES OF RE-SOCIALISATION PROGRAMS BASED ON HUMAN-ANIMAL INTERACTION

Although PAPs have been used for several years, they have recently started gaining more popularity, primarily due to the attention of the media (Loe, 2015: 2). Nowadays, PAPs are implemented in the United States, Canada, England, Scotland, Australia, South Africa, Austria, Switzerland (Bachi, 2014: 7), Japan (Koda *et al.*, 2015: 193-208), Italy (Cooke, 2014: 2, Simonato *et al.*, 2018: 3) and other countries, including Serbia as well.

4.1. Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation's (TRF)³ Second Chances Program, USA

The Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation's (TRF) Second Chances Program, established in 1984, gives inmates the opportunity to participate in a comprehensive and detailed professional training and obtain both - theoretical knowledge as well as practical skills in the field of horse care and management. It is implemented in correctional facilities for male, female and juvenile offenders in 10 states in the USA (New York, Kentucky, South Carolina, Wyoming, Maryland, Massachusetts, Indiana, Illinois and California) (Bachi, 2014: 8). The TRF aims to rescue, retire, and rehabilitate thoroughbred racehorses that are not able to compete on the track in order to increase their chances of being adopted as well as to protect them from being neglected, abused or slaughtered⁴.

³ Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation (TRF) <https://www.trfinc.org/>, accessed 31.01.2019.

⁴ *Ibid.*

The first purpose of this program is the professional training of inmates, which increases their employability, i.e. increases their chances of finding a regular job at a farm or racetrack and a legal source of income after serving their sentence. The second purpose is to initiate positive changes in the behaviour and emotion of the inmates. Increased self-confidence and improved self-esteem, (re)gained trust and emotional exchange with other living beings are some of the benefits for the participants of this program (Bachi, 2014: 9).

The selection of the participants is made in accordance with a set of criteria. The precondition is that potential participants have applied for the program. However, only the inmates who have served the majority of their sentence can apply because the aim of the program is to promote and improve their chances of being employed after leaving the institution. Sexual offenders are not allowed to be a part of the program due to security reasons (Bachi, 2014: 55). Applications are commonly accepted when the inmate has shown the ability to work well with others. Nevertheless, in some cases, the inmates can be accepted because they have more of an emotional need than others, and it can be assumed that the program could be particularly helpful for them (Bachi, 2014: 55).

There has been an insufficient amount of empirical research regarding the exact evaluation of the results of the described program and its impact on the reduction of recidivism and decrease in disciplinary misconducts of the inmates. The research conducted in 2014 in correctional institution *Blackburn* in Lexington, Kentucky has confirmed that the odds of having events of recidivism for program participants are only 7% of the odds of the control group participants having recidivism events. These findings suggest that the risk of reoffending drastically decreases after inmates' participation in the program (Bachi, 2014: 83). When it comes to disciplinary misconduct, the initial hypothesis of the research was that the participation in the program would contribute to its reduction. However, it has not been confirmed because the data was not sufficient to evaluate program effectiveness in this area (Bachi, 2014: 86)

It seems that the attachment to horses has led to a series of positive changes regarding the emotion, behaviour and social relations of the participants. One of the most common feelings of the inmates at the beginning of the program, which gradually disappeared in most of the cases, was fear. But, processing feelings of being scared of horses and examining emotions that emerge when being exposed to horses could be very beneficial if used to help participants to reflect on the issues of self-confidence, and find constructive ways of dealing with fear. Furthermore, it has been estimated that being in a position of admitting fear can have restorative impact for some individuals (Bachi, 2014: 97). Numerous inmates have confirmed that for them spending time with and becoming emotionally attached to horses represents a contemporary escape from prison reality, whereas some of them agreed that the relationship with horses has helped them to face and express various feelings. This also raised the issue of their capability and willingness to establish deeper connections with other persons, the exchange of emotion, the compensation of the broken relationships with close persons after confinement etc. (Bachi, 2014: 98-110). The special needs of horses that are involved with the program (the majority of these

horses are old, sick or injured) have triggered and enhanced the development of participants' empathy (Bachi, 2014: 25).

The participation in the program has also had a positive impact on inmates' behaviour, particularly when it comes to the development of their responsibility, commitment, calmness and patience, as well as to the decrease in their inclination to conflicts. The inmates developed a strong feeling of being responsible for horses, which some of them compared to the one that parents have for their children (Bachi, 2014: 118-119). Increased calmness and patience are considered the results of the exposure to the interaction with the horses, which includes constant challenges and frustrations, but, at the same time, awakens the feeling of fulfilment and satisfaction after the goals and tasks have been accomplished (Bachi, 2014: 120). Some of the participants have noticed that the interaction with the horses has helped them to manage their anger and aggression by increasing their level of self-control (Bachi, 2014: 121). When the relationships among the participants are concerned, it has been noticed that some of them have voluntarily isolated themselves, whereas the others have pointed out that the program has helped them to increase tolerance, develop a positive social interaction and a closeness with other persons and overcome loneliness (Bachi, 2014: 127).

4.2. Paws for Progress Intervention in HM YOI Polmont is Scotland's national facility for male young adults

Paws for Progress (hereinafter PFP) Intervention in HM YOI Polmont, Scotland's national facility for male young adults (16 to 21 years) who are either awaiting trial or are convicted young offenders (serving all sentence lengths, the most common of which is between 2 and 4 years) (Leonardi *et al.*, 2017), represents one of examples of good practice of PAs implemented in an institution for juveniles in conflict with the law (O'Hara, Leicester, 2015: 153) numerous benefits of which have been reported (Mercer, Gibson, Clayton, 2015: 43-54). PFP⁵, developed by Rebecca Leonardi in 2009, is the UK's first prison-based dog training program. It is run as a partnership with the Scottish Prison Service (SPS)⁶, the Dogs Trust⁷ and the University of Stirling⁸. The project began with a pilot phase in 2011. In 2012 PFP began to work in partnership with Fife College⁹, giving the participants a wider scope for educational achievements and allowing Paws for progress to pioneer a student led approach to learning, contextualising education within topics that are both relevant and enjoyable to the participants. Also, PFP adopted peer mentoring as part of courses at an early stage, allowing new participants to have additional support and providing opportunities to progress and advance their skills to participants who wish

⁵ Paws for Progress. About us, <https://pawsforprogress.co.uk/about-us/>, accessed 01.02.2019.

⁶ The Scottish Prison Service (SPS), <http://www.sps.gov.uk/Corporate/AboutUs/AboutUs.aspx>, accessed 01.02.2019.

⁷ The Dogs Trust, <https://www.dogstrust.org.uk/>, accessed 01.02.2019.

⁸ University of Stirling, <https://www.stir.ac.uk/>, accessed 01.02.2019.

⁹ Fife College, <https://www.fife.ac.uk/>, accessed 01.02.2019.

to continue to be involved.¹⁰ In 2014, PFP was incorporated as a Community Interest Company and now plays the role of a coordinator of its key partners and other supporting organisations. Its aim remained the same: "to enhance the well-being of people and animals by promoting and supporting, by whatever means, positive and effective interactions between them".¹¹

Rescue dog training program at HMP & YOI Polmont has been running successfully since 2011, and continues to expand to benefit the students and dogs participating. Young men who participate in it are taught how to train and rehabilitate rescue dogs in order to prepare them for re-homing. As they work under the supervision of the PFP training instructor and course instructor, they learn to work as a team and use positive reinforcement methods, such as clicker training, to help the dogs. Key aims for the young men who participate in the program include: improving their behaviour, developing their employability skills, increasing their engagement in education and enhancing their wellbeing. On the other hand, the key aims for the dogs that are taking part in the program include: improving their behaviour, promoting their welfare and increasing their chances of being successfully re-homed. The service is beneficial for both - the participants as well as for the dogs. Young people are given dog care education, which also influences their attitude toward dog ownership in the future, whereas the dogs are prepared to find new homes.¹²

Dogs are brought into HM YOI Polmont from local dog rescue charities three times a week for two-three hour training sessions with. Each student is paired with a dog, and their work is aimed to help the dog be re-homed. It seems that there emerges a great deal of affection between dogs and handlers on the courses. The young men who are taking part are very committed to helping the dogs, whereas the dogs in turn show enthusiasm for attending the training.¹³ The participation in the program is voluntary and the program is advertised across the institution. Candidates' ability to participate in the program is based on their availability and sufficient time to complete course. Prior good behaviour has never been the precondition for participation in the program and the type of criminal offence for which the candidate is sentenced is not relevant for the selection (Leonardi *et al.*, 2017). Students work towards the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT)¹⁴ Good Companion Awards, and the successful re-homing of a dog is considered a great achievement for the handler. After finishing the course, the participants can take the role of mentors and

¹⁰ Paws for Progress. About us, <https://pawsforprogress.co.uk/about-us/>, accessed 01.02.2019.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Paws for Progress. Rescue dog training program, <https://pawsforprogress.co.uk/services/prison-based-services/hmp-yoi-polmont/>, accessed 01.02.2019.

¹³ Paws for Progress. Course Format, <https://pawsforprogress.co.uk/services/prison-based-services/hmp-yoi-polmont/program-format/>, accessed 01.02.2019.

¹⁴ The Association of Pet Dog Trainers is a voluntary organisation established to improve the welfare of dogs and the competence of dog owners through the promotion of training skills and techniques based on up to date, researched, methods that apply the principles of kindness fairness and effectiveness and are in keeping with modern learning theory. For further reference see: <http://www.apdt.co.uk/>, accessed 01.02.2019.

help new students. Moreover, after serving their sentence and returning to the community, they can stay in touch with Paws for Progress team and engage in volunteering and work experience placements.¹⁵

A research (Leonardi *et al.*, 2017) has confirmed that all participants gave positive responses when asked about their enjoyment of the program, experiences with the dogs, and impressions about working in a group. Also, all participants considered the course useful and all except for one of them felt a certain change in themselves. When it comes to the interaction with the dogs, almost all participants described strong positive emotional experience, including increased empathy and the need to treat the dogs with respect. Nearly one half of the participants compared the experiences and changes in themselves with the dogs, and almost all of them attributed positive effects to the program and related these to their own enjoyment, positive changes to the prison environment, the therapeutic nature of the program including bonding with the dogs, and improved mood and wellbeing (See also: Brooke Hill, 2016: 22). The presence of the dogs was also considered as a way to normalize the institutional environment, and provide a feeling of freedom in spite of the custodial security, as well as to create a nicer atmosphere and social connections. The participants emphasized that the chance to learn, make progress and achieve across a range of activities represented a significant difference between this program and other available activities.

4.3. Prisoners working with dogs from dog shelter in Correctional Institution in Sremska Mitrovica, Serbia

The program that is being applied in Correctional Institution in Sremska Mitrovica in Serbia since October 2017, represents a unique program of the re-socialisation of convicted persons and their preparation for social re-integration. The insight in this program has been provided thanks to the field "Research of Program including Prisoners' work with Dogs in Penal Institution Sremska Mitrovica" conducted by the author of this paper between February and June 2018¹⁶. The research method applied included observation, semi-structured with the prison staff members involved with the implementation of the program and the inmates who participate in it.

By applying this program, the Correctional Institution in Sremska Mitrovica aims to contribute to an easier and more adequate inclusion of convicted persons in the community after serving the punishment, which should have a long-term impact on the decrease in the recidivism rate. Another thing that makes this program unique is the fact that a dog shelter for abandoned dogs from the territory of the city of

¹⁵ Paws for Progress. Course Format, <https://pawsforprogress.co.uk/services/prison-based-services/hmp-yoi-polmont/program-format/>, accessed 01.02.2019.

¹⁶ For further reference about convicted persons' work with dogs within the program conducted in Correctional Institution in Sremska Mitrovica http://www.iksi.ac.rs/pdf/tekst_kpzsm_resocijalizacija_en.pdf, 29.01.2019.

Sremska Mitrovica has been established within the Correctional Institution Sremska Mitrovica as the result of shared efforts of the city of Sremska Mitrovica and the Correctional Institution.

Within their daily work with abandoned animals, the convicted persons teach dogs basic skills, they clean them, brush their hair, feed them and take them for a walk in order to prepare them for adoption. Apart from the fact that it produces numerous positive effect on the mood of convicted persons working with the dogs, making them feel better, think in a more positive manner and handle prison deprivations with less stress, this program also contributes to the protection of abandoned animals' welfare and helps local community to resolve the issue of abandoned dogs by keeping them in the shelter and facilitating their adoption. In that sense, it gains three types of benefits at the same time - for the convicted persons, for the abandoned animals and for the broader community. The participation in the program is on a voluntary basis, and only the inmates who are in the semi-open ward and who behave properly have the opportunity to participate in it.

The impressions of the prison staff members about the program suggest that the general atmosphere in the ward has been improved. They particularly emphasized the lack of tension between them and the prisoners who participate in the program, as well as the improvement of the communication between the inmates themselves. According to their words, the mood is better and there are less conflicts since the dogs are present.

All participants have described their impressions about the program as positive. The inmates claim that the interaction with the dogs makes them feel accomplished, that it makes them feel more comfortable, that it helps them to cope with the isolation from the outer world and the fact that they are imprisoned. The majority of interviewed inmates have declared that they would like to continue working with dogs and taking care of them after leaving the Correctional Institution. Some of them see it as an opportunity to find a new job and a new, legal source of income. They also emphasised that they would like to keep the dog they have been working with or to adopt some other dog from the shelter. One of the interviewed inmates had already adopted a shelter dog and at the time when the research was conducted that dog was at his home with his family.

5. CONCLUSION

At a time when prisons are becoming more expensive to operate and the rate of recidivism is high, there is no doubt that a new thought should be given to alternative prison programs (Bachi, 2014: 6). PAPs are beneficial for the inmates since they provide a wide variety of rehabilitative interventions. They can also provide additional incomes for prisons from, for example, the sale of animal products or the initial training of service dogs. Moreover, they contribute to positive community relations among the inmates and they also seem to improve the general prison atmosphere and contribute to the resolving of some broader social issues such as the rescue of abandoned animals and the increase in their chances of being

adopted (Bachi, 2014: 7). Some of the benefits of PAPs' application include: decrease in the recidivism rates, increase in the level of inmates' self-esteem, trust and self-confidence, the alleviation of loneliness and the acquisition of useful marketable skills and education (Bachi, 2014: 2). PAPs have promising effects on the rehabilitation and transformation of inmates who participate in them (Bair, Osborne, 2003; Deaton, 2005; Fournier, Geller, Fortney, 2007; Harkrader, Burke, Owen, 2004; Jasperson, 2010; Kochersperger, Heger, 2010; Strimple, 2003).

But, in spite of the fact that PAPs are now being implemented across the world, especially in the USA, very few empirical studies have been conducted on their effectiveness on the recidivism rates of the inmates who participate in them (Loe, 2015: 3). Moreover, the research that has been conducted until the present moment has predominantly been focused on the impacts of individual programs instead of examining the effect of these programs as a whole (Loe, 2015: 3). Therefore, although first-hand experience suggests that PAPs are beneficial (Strimple, 2003), it seems that more empirical research is necessary in order to provide a foundation of knowledge for these interventions (Bachi, 2014: 6, Cooke, 2014: 2).

The need for a continuous and overwhelming evaluation of PAPs is particularly important from the ethical aspect as well, since these programs are applied on a vulnerable and often marginalised population of citizens - prisoners (who have a very limited choice of rehabilitative programs) and rely on the use of a vulnerable population of animals (that are often abandoned, sick or injured) (Bachi, 2014: 5). For that reason, it is important to give attention to the wellbeing of both - human as well as non-human participants of these programs. It is of particular significance to provide appropriate conditions for the animals that are involved with the program, including appropriate accommodation, adequate and sufficient quantity of food and water, regular medical checks and availability of veterinary medical staff. When it comes to the selection of the inmates who participate in the programs, it is essential to guarantee that, on the one hand, their involvement with the program activities will be volunteer and that, on the other, they will not abuse or neglect the animals they work with.

Further research would be helpful in order to provide a better synchronization of these programs with the needs of the participants. This refers not only to their therapeutic and rehabilitative needs, but also to the demands of the labour market, their capabilities, preferences and possibilities regarding the employment after serving the sentence, their previous experience with this type of work etc. This would contribute to the accomplishment of these programs' ultimate goals, which is the prevention of reoffending and the suppression of crime.

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ŽIVOTINJE I RESOCIJALIZACIJA PRESTUPNIKA: OD IDEJA DO PRIMENE

Programi za rehabilitaciju prestupnika koji su zasnovani na interakciji sa životinjama dobijaju sve više pažnje, kako medija tako i stručnjaka iz različitih naučnih oblasti (uključujući psihologiju, sociologiju, andragogiju, penologiju, kriminologiju i krivično pravo) zahvaljujući mnoštvu koristi koje mogu da obezbede za: osuđenike, zatvorsko osoblje, širu zajednicu i životinje. Resocijalizacija prestupnika, smanjenje stope recidivizma, dodatni prihod za zatvorski budžet i spašavanje napuštenih životinja samo su neke od njih. Imajući to na umu, autor u ovom radu proučava ključne trenutke u istorijskom razvoju primene terapija i programa uz pomoć životinja, najreprezentativnije primere moderne upotrebe ovih programa u svetu, kao i implementaciju programa rada osuđenika sa životinjama u Srbiji, u Kazneno-popravnom zavodu u Sremskoj Mitrovici. U zaključnim razmatranjima, autor naglašava najvažnije mogućnosti ovih programa u borbi protiv kriminaliteta, objašnjava postojanje potrebe za dodatnim istraživanjem u toj oblasti i predlaže dalje smernice za njihovou evaluaciju i poboljšavanje.

*KLJUČNE REČI: zatvori / rehabilitacija / resocijalizacija /
recidivizam / životinje*