

The Role of Prisons in Providing Skills to Prisoners as an Effort to Prevent Repetition of Criminal Offenses

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Abstract. Vocational skills in correctional institutions (Lapas) are a crucial instrument in the Indonesian correctional system, as mandated by Law No. 22 of 2022 concerning Corrections which replaces Law No. 12 of 1995. This program is designed to equip correctional inmates (WBP), especially prisoners, with practical skills in engineering, handicrafts, and laundry, in order to facilitate social reintegration, economic independence, and prevention of recidivism through holistic rehabilitation. The complex background of prison dynamics including overcapacity in Tebing Tinggi Class IIB Prison, psychological pressure, and negative labeling of the community is exacerbated by the sharp difference between life inside and outside prison, thus threatening the goal of correctional based on the principles of protection, humanity, and mutual cooperation.

Keywords: Correctional Institution; Inmates; Skills, Tebing Tinggi.

1. Introduction

Vocational skills in prisons are education or training provided to inmates to develop specific practical skills and knowledge aimed at helping them enter the workforce after release, increasing their independence, and reducing the risk of reoffending. Furthermore, vocational education in prisons also serves as a social rehabilitation effort, facilitating the reintegration of inmates into society by providing skills relevant to job market needs, enabling them to build productive lives and avoid the cycle of crime. These vocational programs are typically tailored to the interests and potential of inmates and focus on economic sectors with good job opportunities, such as engineering, handicrafts, culinary arts, or office administration (Lollong Manting, 2022).

Correctional Institutions (Lapas) are legal entities that serve as a means of accommodating development activities under state supervision. These institutions also provide spiritual guidance to enable inmates to integrate and adapt effectively within society. Based on Article 1 paragraph 3 of Law No. 12 of 1995, Lapas is a form of correctional institution that emphasizes the guidance of inmates and correctional students. Guidance in Lapas is carried out through approaches of treatment, service, education, and respect for human dignity. In practice, the only restriction imposed is the loss of liberty, while the right of convicts to communicate with family and certain parties remains protected (Maya Shafira, 2022).

Correctional law is part of the criminal justice system that manages the handling of detainees, children in conflict with the law, and correctional inmates—such as prisoners, correctional students, and correctional clients at all stages of law enforcement, from pre-adjudication, adjudication, to post-adjudication. In Indonesia, the main legal basis is Law No. 22 of 2022 concerning Corrections, which replaces Law No. 12 of 1995 and its amendments through Government Regulation Number 99 of 2012. This law expressly states the purpose of correctional in Article 2 paragraph (1): "providing guidance to correctional inmates so that they realize their mistakes, improve themselves, and do not repeat criminal acts," with the principles of protection, non-discrimination, humanity, and mutual cooperation (Article 4). Its implementation involves collaboration between inmates, correctional officers, law enforcement officers, the government, and the community, to protect the community and maintain security and order (Imam Sujoko, 2021).

The central role of Correctional Institutions (Lapas) in realizing these goals is realized through vocational education, as mandated by Article 28 paragraph (1) letter c: "Lapas are required to provide formal, non-formal, and informal education, including job skills training" for inmates. This program is designed to develop practical skills and relevant knowledge, tailored to the interests and potential of inmates, as well as job market needs in sectors such as engineering, handicrafts, culinary arts, or office administration. Thus, vocational skills not only facilitate social reintegration and economic independence, but also directly prevent the repetition of criminal acts (recidivism), as Article 34 paragraph (1) requires Lapas to provide "skills training to improve the abilities of inmates in facing community life" (Abdulah Safe'i, 2021). Inmates, as legal subjects who have the right to holistic rehabilitation even though their right to freedom of movement is revoked based on a court decision, are focused on eradicating factors that cause violations of law, morality, religion, or social norms, while building awareness, remorse, and moral values for a safe and peaceful society.

Correctional Institutions (Lapas) function as a place of rehabilitative development that follows the correctional system, with the goal of realizing integrative

punishment. This effort is carried out through the development of inmates so that they can reintegrate into society in a harmonious, positive, and beneficial manner. Specifically, the goals of Lapas include rehabilitation, reduction, and resocialization. Furthermore, these institutions are responsible for providing maximum protection for both inmates and the community within the correctional system (Maya Shafira, 2022).

Guidance is defined as the process of treating inmates, aimed at developing their potential so they can rise above the competition and become better individuals. In this context, guidance emphasizes the development of personality and character, fostering self-esteem for oneself and others, and fostering a sense of responsibility in adapting to the environment. The primary goal is to shape individuals into people of noble character and high morals (Useem and Piehl, 2008, p. 84). Therefore, at its core, correctional institutions strive to educate, foster, and guide inmates, particularly in improving the mindset, behavior, and mental state of each individual serving a sentence (Kasmanto Rinaldi, 2021).

Prisoners are not merely objects, but subjects equal to other human beings, who at any time have the potential to commit errors or mistakes that can be punished. Therefore, what needs to be eliminated is not the prisoners themselves, but rather the factors that trigger their actions that violate the law, morality, religion, or other social obligations that can be punished. Punishment serves as a tool to raise awareness and remorse in prisoners for their actions, and to rehabilitate them as good citizens, law-abiding, and respectful of moral, social, and religious values, in order to create a safe, orderly, and peaceful community life (Made Adi Darmayatra, 2024).

However, prison life creates complex dynamics, including character diversity due to rapid adaptation to an environment that demands "survival." The interdependent relationship between prison and inmate often gives rise to negative labels from society such as "problematic," "convicted," or "evil," which exacerbate psychological distress such as depression, anxiety, loneliness, boredom, and a loss of meaning in life. The stark contrast between life inside and outside prison further deepens this void, threatening the law's rehabilitation goals. This is where Viktor E. Frankl's concept of the meaning of life becomes relevant: even in extreme suffering such as in Nazi concentration camps, Nazi concentration camps were a prison system developed and operated by Nazi Germany to imprison, exploit, and kill political opponents, minority groups, and civilian populations during World War II and the Holocaust. His experience living in a Nazi concentration camp as a young man led him to believe that even in the worst conditions, full of pressure and suffering, a person can still find meaning in life. Humans are able to find meaning through "the will to meaning," which produces happiness as a fundamental human right. Frankl, supported by Cynthia (2007), emphasized that unavoidable stress can be transformed into wisdom

("meaning in suffering") (Amrul Aysar Ahsan, 2020) if individuals change their perception from emptiness to meaningful principles that align with the spirit of the Correctional Law to revitalize the personality of prisoners towards a productive life after release. Inmates are experiencing severe overcapacity at the Class IIB Tebing Tinggi Prison.

The following is a table of data for the last five (5) years on inmates who participated in the Skills program at Tebing Tinggi Class IIB Prison.

Year	Amount
2021	30 People
2022	30 People
2023	30 People
2024	50 People
2025	60 People
2026	60 People

Based on the explanation above, the author will conduct a study entitled "Analysis of the Role of Prisons in Providing Skills to Inmates as an Effort to Prevent Repetition of Criminal Acts." The problems that will be discussed in this study include two things, namely: how is the role of Class IIB Tebing Tinggi Prison in providing Vocational skills for Inmates as an Effort to prevent repetition of Criminal Acts, and what obstacles are faced by Class IIB Tebing Tinggi Prison in implementing the provision of vocational skills to inmates.

2. Research Methods

This research uses empirical methods that include a study of laws and regulations related to Corrections and primary data collection through interviews, observations, and questionnaires at the Class IIB Tebing Tinggi Prison. The data used consists of two types: primary data sources, namely data directly from respondents, informants, and sources. In empirical legal research, primary data sources are obtained from field data, in the form of information from respondents, informants, and experts as sources (Wiwik Sri Widiarty, 2024). Secondary data sources, namely data collected through the collection and documentation of books, journals, scientific papers, dictionaries, encyclopedias, and documents related to the research problem sourced from library materials.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Prison efforts to provide vocational skills for inmates at Class IIB Tebing Tinggi Prison

Indonesia is a country based on law as stipulated in the 1945 Constitution, Chapter I concerning Form and Sovereignty, Article 1 paragraph (3), which stipulates that every member of society has equal rights and obligations before the law. From a human rights perspective, the opportunity for prisoners to develop themselves is a concrete form of implementation of this right, considering that every Correctional Institution (WBP) who experiences restrictions on their right to freedom still has the right to life, personal development, and rights that cannot be taken away and must be fulfilled by the state. As citizens, prisoners have the right to receive guidance and training appropriate to their abilities, in addition to other rights regulated in applicable laws and regulations; therefore, they have the right to receive special attention from the government in order to develop quality human resources with good character. In essence, prisoners are individuals just like society in general and are not free from the need to fulfill their life and livelihood needs, so that training in Correctional Institutions (Lapas) is very important to explore and develop potential and skills that they can utilize after leaving Lapas. The implementation of life skills training as an effort to provide knowledge and skills aims to guide them to become useful, active and productive members of society, while also making them members of society who no longer violate the law (Directorate General of Corrections, 2026).

Based on the provisions of Article 34 paragraph (1) which requires Prisons to provide "skills training to improve the abilities of inmates in facing community life." Therefore, Class IIB Tebing Tinggi Prison provides skills training to inmates, namely welding, handicrafts, laundry, barbering, raising free-range chickens and catfish, farming vegetables, and making furniture. Training is provided once a week. Selection of participants for the skills training program at the Correctional Institution (Lapas) is carried out through a strict selection process, where prospective participants must first meet the requirements to attend the Correctional Observation Team (TPP) hearing. The main requirements that must be met by inmates include two crucial aspects, namely having served at least one-third of the sentence imposed and demonstrating a good track record of behavior during their detention period. After inmates are declared to have passed the TPP hearing, the next process is placement in skills activities that are specifically tailored to the interests and talents of each individual. This adjustment aims to optimize the potential of inmates and increase the effectiveness of the development process. During the implementation phase, all skills activities are always accompanied, supervised, and guided directly by prison officers. This assistance and supervision are carried out to ensure that all development activities run according to the plan, standard operating procedures, and the development program framework that has been determined by the agency, in order to achieve optimal correctional goals (Ahmad Masrury Siregar, 2026).

The Correctional Institution (Lapas) has also established a strategic partnership with the Tebing Tinggi City Food Security Agency, Trade Agency, Cooperatives,

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Agency, and the Mentari Cooperative Training and Development Institute (LPKP) to organize an entrepreneurship training program for inmates. This collaboration is designed with a focus on developing small-scale businesses specifically tailored to the potential of food available in the prison environment and the skills already possessed and mastered by each inmate, thereby minimizing the gap between the training material and the practical realities faced by participants. Through this relevant and targeted approach, it is hoped that the program will not only improve the competence and economic independence of inmates, but also equip them with applicable skills to build independent businesses after release, while strengthening their integration with the local economic ecosystem in Tebing Tinggi City. In addition, synergy between agencies and institutions also plays an important role in creating a comprehensive support ecosystem, where marketing aspects, access to capital, and ongoing development can be integrated into the program, thereby increasing the probability of success of inmates' businesses in the future and contributing to efforts to reduce recidivism rates through sustainable economic empowerment (Jamin Mandela Nainggolan, 2026).

3.2. What Obstacles Does Tebing Tinggi Class IIB Prison Face in Implementing Vocational Skills Training for Inmates?

In the context of implementing a vocational skills training program for inmates, the Class II Tebing Tinggi Penitentiary (Lapas) is faced with a number of significant inhibiting factors that impact the smooth operation of the program. One of the main challenges that arises stems from the behavior of individual inmates, where violations of the rules and order in the prison environment, which in certain cases continue to the trial process before the Correctional Observation Team (TPP), can cause substantial disruptions to the continuity and consistency of their participation in training activities (Trason Putra Barus, 2026). In addition, limitations in terms of the availability of human and financial resources, as well as the condition of facilities and infrastructure that are inadequate in quantity and quality, also become real operational obstacles. This is specifically reflected in the lack of availability of suitable and adequate land to support the implementation of practical activities in the fields of agriculture and animal husbandry, which should be an integral component of vocational learning. Nevertheless, amidst various limitations and challenges, efforts to develop and transfer knowledge and skills can still be implemented with maximum effort from the management. Inmates can still participate in and take advantage of training sessions organized by prison staff, by optimally utilizing all available internal capabilities and facilities, so that the goal of providing competency can still be achieved even within existing limitations (Ahmad Masrury Siregar, 2026).

The limited variety and innovation in current coaching and skills development programs also poses a challenge that requires attention. The monotony of training

programs offered or the limited scope of specific areas potentially hinders efforts to broaden the scope of knowledge and competencies accessible to inmates. Consequently, inmates' opportunities to learn diverse skills relevant to job market dynamics are suboptimal, thus under-exploring their potential for self-development. Diversity in coaching programs is crucial for accommodating the diverse interests and talents of inmates and providing them with a broader portfolio of skills to enhance their competitiveness and opportunities for economic independence after release. Therefore, the development and diversification of coaching programs are crucial to ensure that inmates are not limited to just one or two skills but have access to a more varied and comprehensive range of knowledge (Febi S Lesmana, 2026).

The limited capital allocated by the government to correctional institutions (Lapas) for the implementation of vocational training and skills programs for inmates is also a significant inhibiting factor. This condition has a direct impact on efforts to improve the quality and effectiveness of the learning process, where limited funds hinder the prison's ability to update practical equipment, provide adequate raw materials, and develop a curriculum that is more relevant to job market demands. Furthermore, the lack of capital also limits opportunities to recruit teachers or instructors with specific and experienced competencies, and hinders the implementation of other supporting activities necessary to maximize the absorption of material by inmates. As a result, the potential for vocational competency development that should be optimized is hampered, thus achieving the program's goal of equipping inmates with adequate skills for economic independence after release is less than optimal (Freddy Rinadi Siregar, 2026).

4. Conclusion

Based on the discussion outlined, the implementation of the vocational skills development program at Tebing Tinggi Class II Penitentiary faces a number of comprehensive, interrelated challenges. These obstacles stem not only from internal aspects such as inmates' behavior that violates order, resulting in TPP court proceedings, but also from significant external and operational limitations, including a lack of government funding, limited facilities and infrastructure (such as land for agriculture and livestock), and limited variety of development programs that tend to be monotonous. The cumulative impact of these conditions is clearly felt on the program's effectiveness, where the continuity of participant participation is disrupted, the quality of practical learning is suboptimal, and the potential for developing inmates' competencies is not fully explored. Nevertheless, development efforts are still carried out to the fullest extent possible by the prison, demonstrating a commitment to carrying out its main duties despite these limitations. From a legal and regulatory perspective, the development and provision of skills to inmates has a solid foundation. This is in line with Law No. 22 of 2022 concerning Corrections, specifically Article 5

paragraph (1) which states the purpose of corrections is to shape prisoners and correctional students so that they can improve themselves, reintegrate into society, and play a role as responsible members of society; and Article 68 which requires the development of independence through education and skills training as a provision for life in society. In addition, this provision is also strengthened by Law No. 22 of 2022 concerning Corrections, which replaces Law No. 12 of 1995 and its amendments through Government Regulation Number 99 of 2012. The law expressly states the purpose of corrections in Article 2 paragraph (1): "providing guidance to correctional inmates so that they realize their mistakes, improve themselves, and do not repeat criminal acts," with the principles of protection, non-discrimination, humanity, and mutual cooperation (Article 4). The article also emphasizes that inmates have the right to receive skills development and business opportunities. These provisions demonstrate that providing vocational skills is not merely a supplementary program, but rather a fundamental right of inmates and a state obligation that correctional institutions must fulfill. Although Tebing Tinggi Class II Prison has attempted to fulfill the mandate of the law by continuing to provide training despite limitations, its substantive implementation has not been fully optimal and in accordance with the standards expected in the regulation. Limited capital, infrastructure, and program variations indicate that the fulfillment of inmates' rights to quality and diverse skills development has not yet been optimally realized. This indicates that although the formal aspects of program implementation have been implemented, the infrastructure and resource support that are prerequisites for program success are still inadequate. Therefore, strategic efforts are needed in the form of increasing budget allocations, strengthening external partnerships, and diversifying development programs so that the implementation of skills development in prisons can truly align with the spirit and objectives set out in the Corrections Law and its implementing regulations, thereby achieving the goals of social reintegration and economic independence for inmates.

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