

## Effectiveness of post-penitentiary support provided by the Pro Domo Integration Center in the opinion of inmates. Reference to the results of own research

Skuteczność form wsparcia postpenitencjarnego realizowanego przez Centrum Integracji Pro Domo

w opinii osadzonych – odniesienie do wyników badań własnych

**Słowa kluczowe:** pomoc postpenitencjarna, dom postpenitencjarny, wsparcie społeczne, osadzeni, reintegracja

**Streszczenie:** Pomoc postpenitencjarna to forma wsparcia socjalnego dla osób opuszczających jednostki penitencjarne. Wsparcie to umożliwia adaptację do warunków wolnościowych i pozwala na zaspokojenie podstawowych potrzeb do momentu pełnego usamodzielnienia. Istnieje wiele instytucji, które wspierają byłych osadzonych i ich rodziny w środowisku wolnościowym po odbyciu kary. Na szczególną uwagę zasługują domy pomocy postpenitencjarnej, które oferują miejsce bezpiecznego pobytu dla osób bezdomnych opuszczających więzienie. Celem niniejszego artykułu jest omówienie specyfiki funkcjonowania Centrum Integracji Pro Domo, które jest jedynym w Małopolsce domem pomocy postpenitencjarnej dla osób opuszczających jednostki penitencjarne. Dodatkowo w artykule odniosę się do wyników z badań własnych dotyczących skuteczności oddziaływań postpenitencjarnych świadczonych przez Centrum Integracji Pro Domo w odniesieniu do opinii mieszkańców domu.

**Key words:** post-penitentiary assistance, post-penitentiary home, social support, prisoners, reintegration.

**Abstract:** Post-penitentiary assistance is a form of social support for persons leaving penal institutions. Such support enables adaptation to the non-detention conditions and allows satisfying basic needs until gaining full independence. There is a number of institutions that support former prisoners and their families in a non-prison environment after serving their sentence. Special attention should be paid to post-penitentiary care homes, which offer a safe place to stay for homeless persons leaving prison. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the specifics of the Pro Domo Integration Centre, which is the only post-penitentiary house in Małopolska for people leaving penitentiary institutions. In addition, in this paper I will refer to the results of my own study on the effectiveness of post-penitentiary interactions rendered by Pro Domo Integration Centre in relation to the opinions of the house's inhabitants.

Persons leaving penal institutions have to face a new social reality which significantly differs from the one in prisoners' imagination and expectations. The world of freedom is a dream on one hand, and an unknown that causes a significant sense of anxiety on the other. Therefore, in order to minimize the fears, a system of penitentiary support has been introduced which aims to prepare prisoners for release.

Post-penitentiary assistance, according to Polish law, should primarily involve preparation to the social readaptation process. Art. 41 of the Executive Penal Code expressly states that in order to prevent the return to crime, convicts and their families should obtain the necessary assistance, especially material and medical one with accommodation and legal counselling. Theoretically, pursuant to § 2 of the regulation, the funds can be used to cover the costs of temporary accommodation in a homeless centre, to organize and finance vocational training courses, cover costs related to specialised treatment, aid in-kind such as food, clothing, etc., finance transport by means of public transport, and to cover costs related to obtaining an identity card. In practice, if one mentions material aid, a convict who leaves the prison and asks for help usually receives a one-time benefit in the form of clothing and cash benefits for the so-called home return<sup>1</sup>.

One of the post-penitentiary support activities is directing persons to 24-hour support institutions, i.e. post-penitentiary care homes. There is only one such centre in Małopolska region: post-penitentiary care home Pro Domo Integration Centre. It is a place where eight persons can stay until they become independent, find a job, for a maximum period of six months. In exceptional cases that require an individual approach, the time of stay may be prolonged.

The objective of the care home is to counteract social exclusion, which is a fundamental issue because one of the basic barriers that can directly affect the process of social exclusion of the detainees is social stigmatization, which is based on the "theory of social stigmatization". According to K. Krajewski, "The concept of social stigmatization is definitely a dynamic one. It emphasizes that deviant behaviours can only be understood in terms of constantly changing states reflecting complex interaction processes. Therefore, it is misleading to treat deviation as a static phenomenon"<sup>2</sup>.

Social exclusion from functioning in the specific social groups is indirectly related with exclusion from the labour market, which is particularly acute, especially for those who leave penitentiary units. Exclusion from the labour market is an important problem that convicts face. Not being able find employment, as Zygmunt Bauman writes, "means that one is potentially or maybe even actually rejected and

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<sup>1</sup> K. Gucwa-Porębska, *Dysfunctionality of the family environment as one of the reason for recidivism*, Acta Universitatis Lodzianis. Folia Sociologica. – 2019, Vol. 71, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> K. Krajewski, *Podstawowe tezy teorii naznaczania społecznego*, „Ruch prawniczy, ekonomiczny i socjologiczny”, p. 223, cited: E.M. Schur, *Reactions to Deviance A Critical Assessment*, "American Journal of Sociology", no. 75, p. 309.

is finally and irrevocably considered as a waste of economic progress – the change which ultimately is brought down to performing the same work and achieving the same economic results, but with fewer employees and reduced labour costs<sup>3</sup>. Robert J. Sampson and John H. Laub emphasize that by means of good work, the perpetrators can transform their behaviours to more prosocial ones and stabilize their life situation by, for instance, the possibility of gaining legal income<sup>4</sup>.

Therefore, special attention should be paid to a number of activities carried out in Pro Domo, which aim to overcome difficult life situations and to prepare professionally for social readaptation process. W. Ambrozik defines social readaptation as "readaptation of an individual to an active and independent life, expressed in playing social roles related with the basic areas and levels of human existence"<sup>5</sup>.

In Pro Domo Integration Centre interdisciplinary forms of support for prisoners and their families are systematically implemented, which include, among others, legal, informational, psychological and professional counselling support. These are truly essential activities, which contribute significantly to gaining the full independence by the home's residents, as "social and professional activation are determinants that significantly affect effectiveness of reintegration activities in the environment of freedom"<sup>6</sup>.

In order to achieve consistently the above objectives (both professional and social ones), it is necessary to take actions that aim to rebuild relations and indicate the correct patterns. It is essential to intensify the various forms of support for individual family members based on their age and reported problems.

Another important issue is education on proper intra-family communication and rebuilding relationships between individual family members.

Below I have presented fragments of the results of my own study conducted in Pro Domo Integration Centre on the population of 22 persons.

The aim of the research was to learn about the effectiveness of the support provided by the Centre, as well as plans for the further life of ex-prisoners.

<sup>3</sup> Z. Bauman, *Europa niedokończona przygoda*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 2010.

<sup>4</sup> A. Barczykowska, *Zastosowanie modelu RNR w diagnozie resocjalizacyjnej dorosłych sprawców przestępstw – rozwiązania angielskie*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 2015, p. 251.

<sup>5</sup> W. Ambrozik, *Proces readaptacji społecznej i jego istota*, [w:] *Resocjalizacja. Teoria i praktyka pedagogiczna*, B. Urban, J. M. Stanik (ed.), Wydawnictwo Pedagogium, Warszawa 2007, p.182.

<sup>6</sup> K. Gucwa-Porębska, *Aktywizacja społeczna i zawodowa osadzonych jako istota oddziaływań probacyjnych w środowisku wolnościowym*, „Zeszyty Pracy Socjalnej”, Kraków 2017, 22, booklet. 4, p. 311.

**Table 1. What are your plans after you stop receiving assistance from Pro Domo? – categorized answers**

<b>ANSWER</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%*</b>
<b>Find a job</b>	10	45.5
<b>Find/ rent a flat</b>	7	31.8
<b>Meeting, contact with family</b>	4	18.2
<b>I don't know</b>	3	13.6
<b>Maintain a job</b>	3	13.6
<b>Start it all again</b>	2	9.1
<b>Become independent</b>	2	9.1
<b>Benefit from social assistance</b>	1	4.5

\* Due to the possibility of multiple answers, the percentages do not sum up to 100.

Source: Own study.

All of the answers (except the "I don't know") indicate that the beneficiaries of the programme want to attempt to function normally in society. Their plans are mainly: to find or maintain a job, to rent an apartment and become independent. For 4 persons it is also important to establish contact with their families.

The presented plans indicate that the respondents' attitude is very optimistic. The answers neither indicate that they do not want to commit criminal activities, nor that they want to return to crime. In this context, the most negative are the "I don't know" answers, which may suggest a feeling of being lost in life and a lack of concrete plans to live in the society.

The observed optimism is confirmed by the answers on the question "How do you imagine your life in 5 years' time?". Only one person has not provided an answer – this person also did not point out to any plans in the answers to the question discussed above.

Plans oriented towards a normal life: work, stability are reflected in the vision of their own future in 5 years' time.

## **Effectiveness of the readaptation process based on Pro Domo activity in the opinion of convicts**

Pro Domo assistance is evaluated by its recipients, and during the research they were asked to answer the questions about attitudes, values and plans that result from their current lives. The vision of respondents' future life is also an element that allows to verify the effectiveness of the programme.

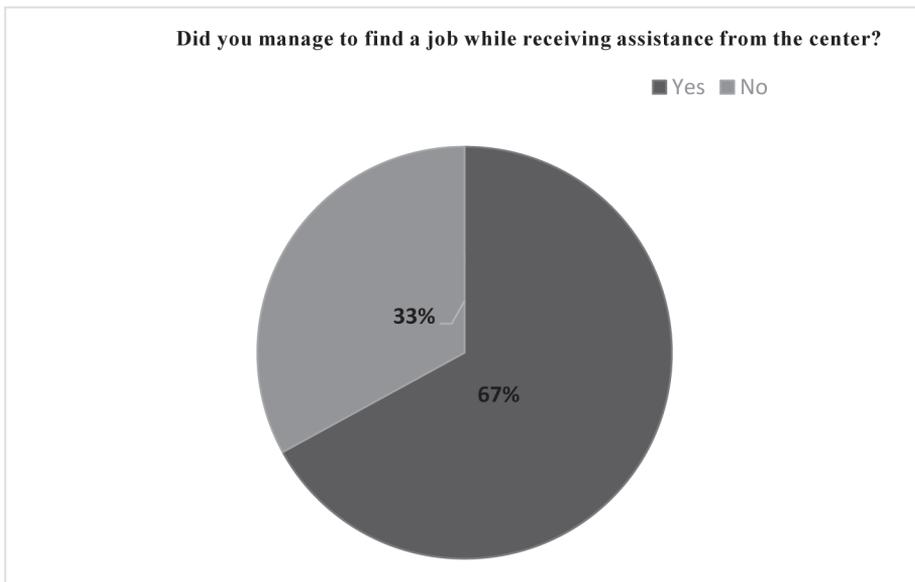
One may also evaluate facts about the current life of the beneficiaries of the program, which are the result of the program. The most important thing here is gainful work.

The respondents learned about the possibility of obtaining Pro Domo assistance mainly from their probation officer (54.5%) or a friend (22.6%). The exact responses are presented in the table below.

**Table 2. How did you learn about Pro Domo?**

SOURCE	n	%
<b>Probation officer</b>	10	45.5
<b>Probation officer, Local Social Welfare Centre</b>	1	4.5
<b>Probation officer, acquaintances</b>	1	4.5
<b>Local Social Welfare Centre</b>	1	4.5
<b>Acquaintance</b>	4	18.1
<b>Nobody</b>	1	4.5
<b>Tutor</b>	3	13.6
<b>Book</b>	1	4.5
<b>Total</b>	22	100.0

Finding employment while staying in the Centre is quite common. However, it does not refer to 1/3 of the respondents. It is presented in the chart below.



**Chart 1. Finding employment**

Source: Own study.

More than a half of those who confirmed their stay at Pro Domo admitted that it was no longer than 120 days. There was also a case of a year-long stay. It can be assumed that a shorter stay, and so a quicker return to society, means better effectiveness of the program towards the recipient.

**Table 3. Duration of your stay in Pro Domo?**

<b>DURATION OF STAY</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Still on a stay</b>	1	4.5
<b>Did not stay</b>	2	9.1
<b>30 days</b>	4	18.2
<b>60 days</b>	2	9.1
<b>90 days</b>	3	13.6
<b>120 days</b>	1	4.5
<b>150 days</b>	1	4.5
<b>190 days</b>	2	9.1
<b>300 days</b>	1	4.5
<b>365 days</b>	1	4.5
<b>Lack of data</b>	4	18.2
<b>Total</b>	22	100.0

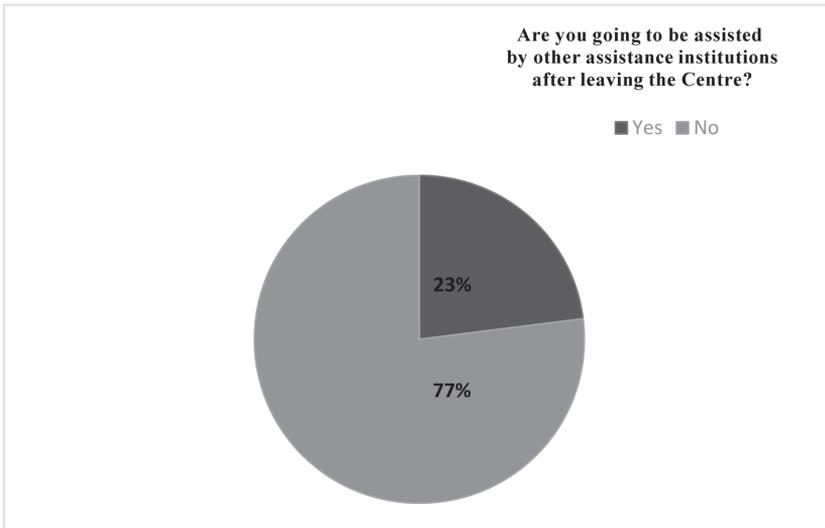
Source: Own study.

About a quarter of the respondents is going to continue receiving help from other social care institutions. This may indicate problems with becoming economically independent.

Those who responded positively, pointed to the Local Social Welfare Centre, and additionally one person to the Nursing Home and Alcoholics Anonymous. One person did not point at any institution.

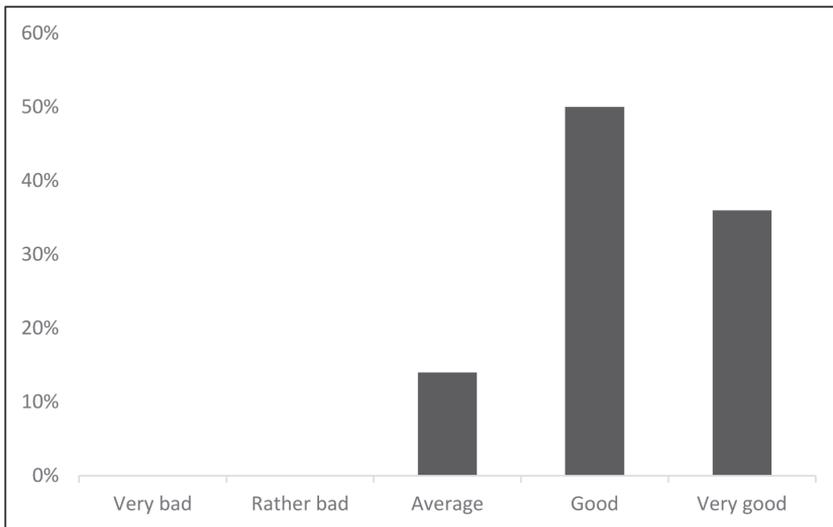
The Local Social Welfare Centre is also mentioned by two persons who do not plan to be assisted (adding them to the list of those who do, we obtain 32% of the respondents).

The assistance provided by Pro Domo is rated highly. None of the respondents have expressed a negative opinion. This means that they see the impact of received help on their lives.



**Chart 2. Intention to look for further assistance in other institutions**

Source: Own study.



**Chart 3. Evaluation of assistance obtained from Pro Domo**

Source: Own study.

With regard to evaluation of effectiveness of the Centre's assistance, all respondents considered it to be effective for them (question: "Is the assistance from the Centre effective for you?"). Work of the Centre is therefore perceived positively by everyone.

## Factors underlying effectiveness of Pro Domo assistance

In order to derive synthetic research conclusions, we will attempt to create **a scale of assistance effectiveness**. The scale will be defined by summing the answers to the questions concerning objective and subjective evaluation of Pro Domo's impact on its beneficiaries. For this purpose, the answers will be assigned points according to the scheme below:

**Question 1:** "Very good" (4 pts) , "Good" (3 pts) , "Medium" (2 pts), "Rather bad" (1 pt) , "Very bad" (0 pts) ,

**Question 2:** "Yes" (2 pts) , "No" (0 pts),

**Question 3:** "Yes" (2 pts) , "No" (0 pts), lack of data is scored as 0 pts,

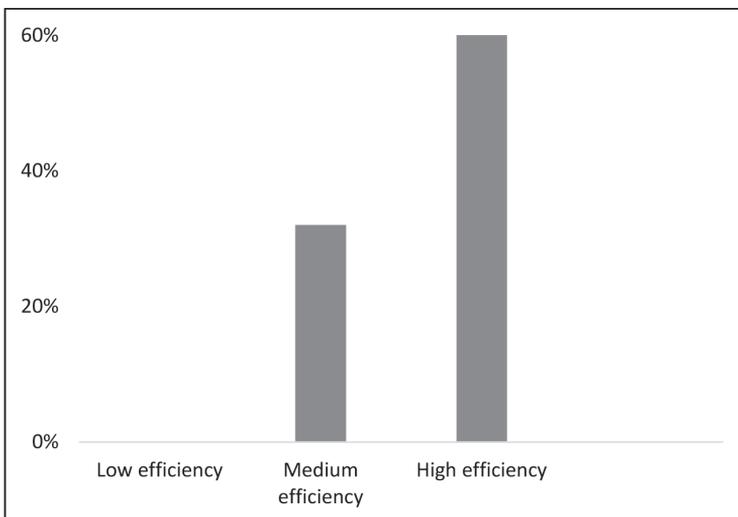
**Question 4:** 0 pts for the answers "I do not know" and "Benefiting from social welfare" ; 2 pts for others,

**Question 5:** "Yes" (2 pts) , "No" (0 pts),

**Question 6:** 0 pts for the answers "I do not know" and "without any changes", 2 pts for others,

Therefore, the scale can range from 0 to 14 points, which means that we have a 15-point scale which we can categorize as follows:

- 0–4 pts: Low efficiency;
- 5–9 pts: Medium efficiency;
- 10–14 pts: High efficiency.



**Chart 4. Categorised Pro Domo's assistance efficiency scale**

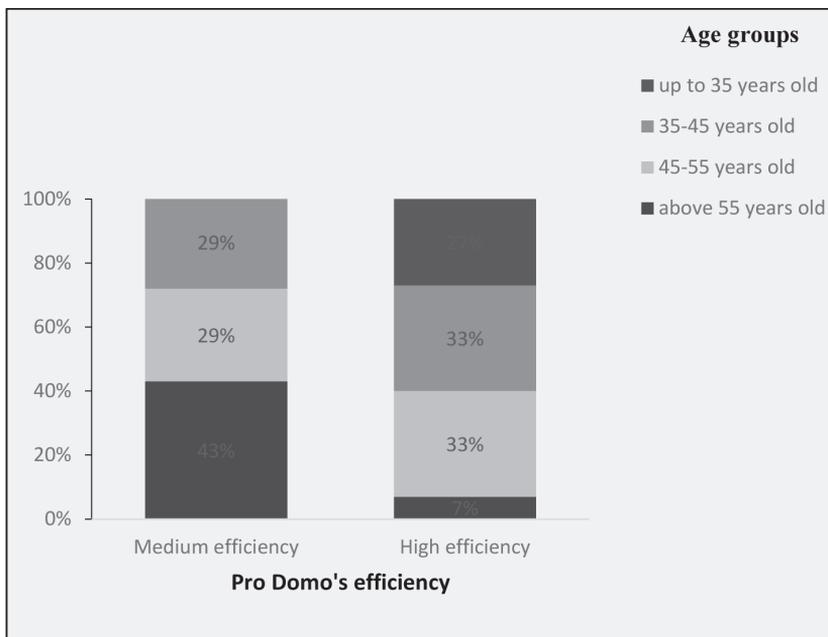
Source: Own study.

Distribution of the particular categories is shown in the chart below. It turns out that the lowest recorded effectiveness is in the second category. None of the respondents provided answers to which a lower category could be assigned.

Assuming that the scale presented above is a measure of effectiveness of Pro Domo's impact, it should be considered as generally positive. What is interesting in this scheme, is the "medium efficiency" category. It seems that persons in this category may have the biggest problems with adapting to life in a normal society.

### Scale of effectiveness in relation to socio-demographic characteristics

The level of effectiveness is strongly related with age. Lower scores on the scale were given mainly by persons over 55 years old – more than 40% of the category. However, the highest effectiveness is observed among the youngest persons and only 1 person from the oldest age category. Age probably influences perception of reality and opportunities for change in life. This is shown in the chart below.



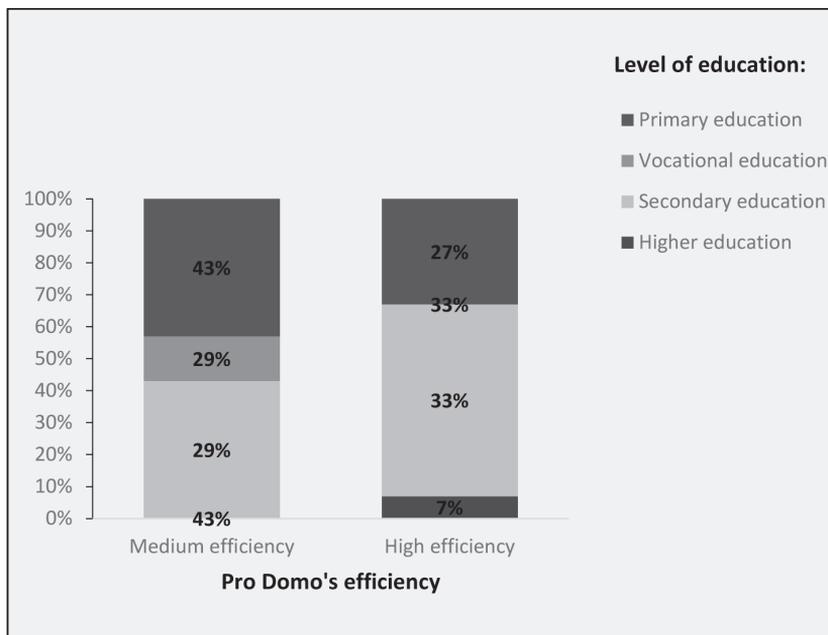
**Chart 5. Categorized Pro Domo's assistance efficiency scale divided by age<sup>7</sup>**

Source: Own study.

<sup>7</sup> The individual categories have been calibrated to 100%, so their level does not equal the number in particular categories.

The categories of the effectiveness scale also very depending on education background.

In the "Medium" category, there is a higher percentage of primary and vocational education. In the second category, secondary and higher education is predominant.



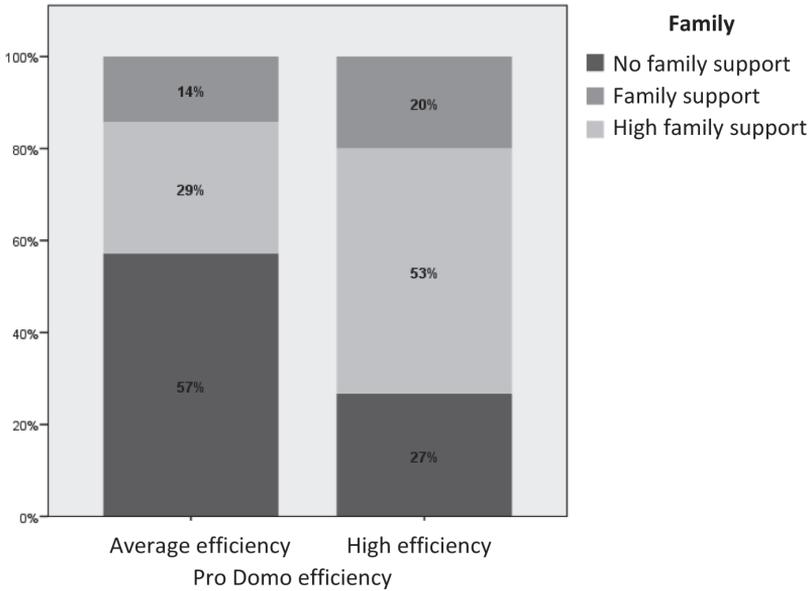
**Chart 6:** Categorized scale of efficiency of Pro Domo's assistance, divided by education background<sup>8</sup>

Source: Own study.

### Scale of effectiveness in relation to family support

Support received from the family is a significant factor that differentiates the scale of Pro Domo effectiveness. 57% of persons who claim that effectiveness of Pro Domo's assistance is "medium" do not receive any support from their families. Regarding persons who claim that the effectiveness is high, only 27% of them do not receive any support. This is shown in the chart below.

<sup>8</sup> The individual categories have been calibrated to 100%, so their level does not equal the number in particular categories.



**Chart 7. Categorised scale of the effectiveness of Pro Domo assistance divided by family support<sup>9</sup>**

Source: Own study.

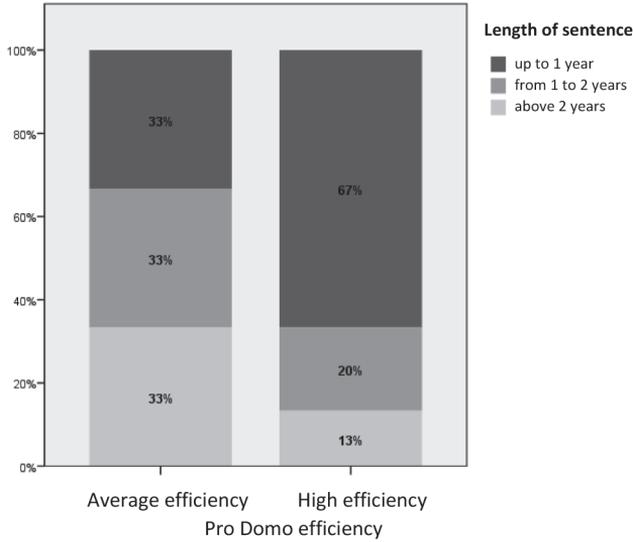
### Efficiency scale and the existing life experience

Human life experience undoubtedly has impact on the current state. Certainly, it may also affect the Pro Domo project success.

First, one can see that the length of sentence differentiates the categories of efficiency scale. Definitely, a short time spent in prison has influence on high level of efficiency. A sentence no longer than one year refers to as much as 67 % of this category. In the case of average efficiency, the share of all categories of sentence length is similar.

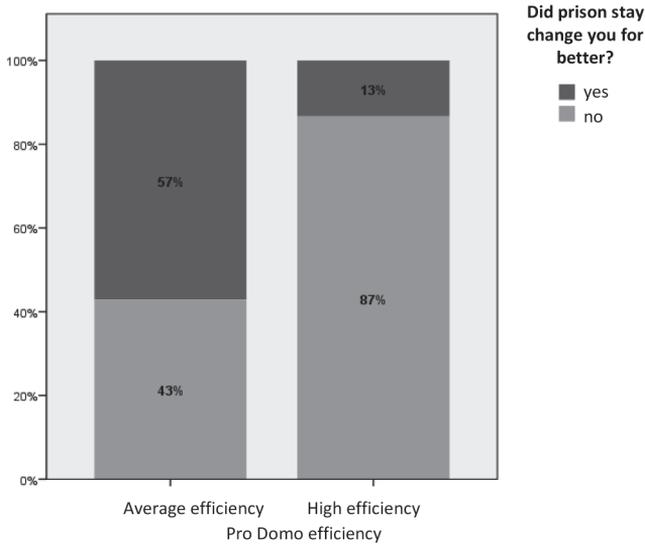
The efficiency scale is significantly determined by the opinion about the scope of impact of the prison on the change for better. Persons who considered that prison had not changed them are predominant in the category "Average", while they are practically non-existent in the category "High". This is illustrated by the diagram below.

<sup>9</sup> The individual categories have been calibrated to 100%, so their level does not equal the number in particular categories.



**Chart 8. Categorişed scale of efficiency of Pro Domo assistance divided into categories of sentence length<sup>10</sup>**

Source: Own study.



**Chart 9. Categorişed scale of efficiency of Pro Domo assistance divided into the impact of prison<sup>11</sup>**

Source: Own study.

<sup>10</sup> Specific categories have been scaled to 100%, therefore their value does not correspond to the quantities in specific categories.

<sup>11</sup> Op. cit.

To sum up the research outcomes, we may assume that generally, Pro Domo program objectives will be achieved. The program supports ensuring basic living needs and has impact on generating and maintaining attitudes and values shared by the society. However, a detailed analysis allows to ascertain that the efficiency levels vary for specific persons. Some persons demonstrate certain features of feeling lost. They do not have any plans for the future, nor can they find employment. They also are not optimistic or willing to change their lives.

Based on the obtained data, one may develop basic profiles of the both groups. The groups defined according to the scale based on questions regarding the efficiency of evaluation (see pt. 5) were called: *Average efficiency* and *High efficiency*.

Persons in the group *Average* are usually elderly and have poorer education background. They have spent more time in prison (2 years and more), and they do not have the family support; they believe that the prison stay did not change them for better.

Pro Domo objectives are easier to achieve with reference to younger persons who have spent a short time in prison, with at least secondary education level, who have the family support, whose reflections after spending time in prison is that they are willing to change for better.

This knowledge may in future help to develop two different patterns of actions regarding the above groups. The group with average result on the efficiency scale requires support in building attitudes, optimistic will to change their lives, find employment and draw positive conclusions, the will to become independent and live in the society<sup>12</sup>.

To summarise, post-penitentiary support implemented by PRO DOMO Integration Centre was evaluated very highly. The home's residents emphasised many times how important for them is the support they had received in the centre, which significantly contributed to becoming independent in the non-detention environment. In order for such interdisciplinary actions to be successful, one should draw attention to the role played by the local surroundings and communities in the return to non-detention life. A lot is written on that matter by professor Bałandynowicz in his multi-faceted concept of social rehabilitation with the participation of the society, where he emphasises that for social rehabilitation to bring the desired effects, it should be of bipolar nature: "it should be based on improving the relations between the convict and the society in the process of social reintegration an improvement/change of the convict in the scope of specific social roles."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> More in: K. Gucwa-Porębska, *Formy wsparcia dla osób osadzonych przedterminowo opuszczających zakłady karne*, Impuls, Kraków 2015.

<sup>13</sup> A. Kieszowska, *Inkluzyjno-katalektyczny model reintegracji społecznej skazanych. Konteksty resocjalizacyjne*, Wydawnictwo Impuls, Kraków 2012.

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