



PUBLIC POLICIES IN THE PRISON SYSTEM - PRISONER REINSERTION

Public Policies in the Prison System – Prisoner Reintegration

Deise Dugatto¹

Carlos Henrique Brites Rodrigues²

SUMMARY

The article presented here deals with the reintegration of prisoners, together with the role strategic role that public policies play in the global scenario, since every person has the right to life, liberty and personal security. The importance of talking about public policies is related to many topics and areas, because through them it is possible to plan actions and implement programs in the prison system, in order to prevent prisoners from reoffending, that is, to avoid recidivism. The methodology used in this article is bibliographic research, where the need for programs and investments within prisons will be addressed. Its objective will be to present the importance of projects and investments that can be enjoyed by prisoners, in order to reduce the rate of return and crime. These are: social policies aimed at education and programs for the development of educational work.

Keywords: Public Policies. Education. Reinsertion. Programs.

1 INTRODUCTION

Prison overcrowding is not just a problem in Rio Grande do Sul; it is a topic that is being discussed throughout Brazil and the world. Brazil has the third largest prison population in the world, with around 832,200 inmates. The United States leads the ranking, followed by China. The growth in the prison population and crime rate is a revealing factor that simply opening new spaces is not the best strategy to solve the problem (DW website, 2025).

The work of civil servants, such as Prison Officers, Administrative Prison Officers, Senior Prison Technicians, responsible for bureaucratic work,

1

¹Graduated in Pedagogy and Postgraduate in Public Security Management

²Graduated in Law and Postgraduate in Public Management and Human Resources



The directors of the Prisons are not limited to the safety of the inmate, but also have the mission of contributing significantly to the reintegration of the inmate. There is a need for updated training for these professionals, with a human sense of their practice, awareness of the results of their work and with a critical eye, not only reproducing common sense prejudices that do not add to their function.

According to Souza (2003), public policy is the sum of government activities, which act directly or by delegation, and which influence the lives of citizens. The importance of adopting public policies in the prison system for the reintegration of those serving sentences is clear. Law No. 7,210 of July 11, 1984, the Penal Enforcement Law, in its art. 1, states that it aims to implement the provisions of a criminal sentence or decision and provide conditions for the harmonious social integration of the convicted and the interned.

For this article, we decided to conduct a bibliographic and documentary research on the facts that have been happening in the prison system. The following topics will be addressed: overcrowding in prisons, functions of the prison officer, public policies aimed at education, projects that are carried out within prisons, and electronic monitoring systems. The data collection sources used will be: the Penal Police website, visits to some penitentiaries in RS, bibliographic research, and facts experienced in the prison system.

2 PRISON SYSTEM

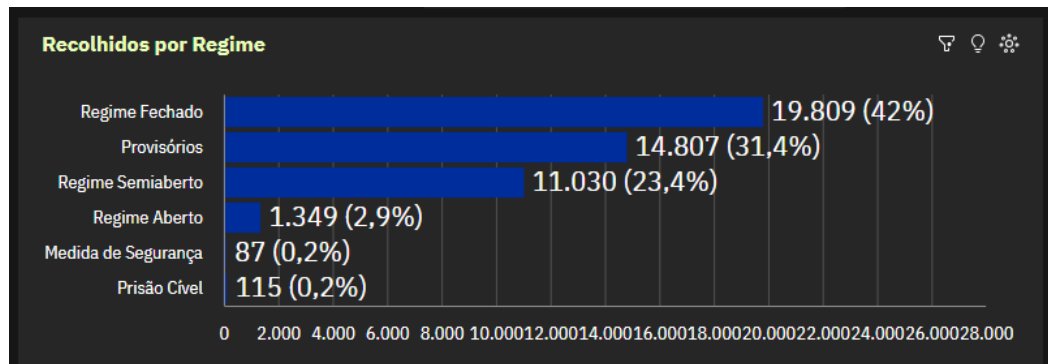
Currently, penitentiaries in Rio Grande do Sul are overcrowded, with a total prison population of 47,197, and 26,942 vacancies in the State. (Penal Police Website, 2025).

The prison system regimes are divided as follows, according to the LEP (Law of Criminal Enforcement, 2025):

Closed:The penitentiary is intended for those sentenced to imprisonment. The inmate remains locked up all day. He or she goes out to sunbathe and do internal work (when applicable).

Semi-Open:The Agricultural, Industrial or Similar Colony is intended for serving the sentence. Work during the day, whether in penal colonies or other locations, and return to confinement at night.

Open:The Casa do Albergado is intended for serving custodial sentences, in an open regime, and the penalty of weekend limitation. He works during the day and goes to a shelter at night or to his own residence (house arrest) and his activities are monitored.

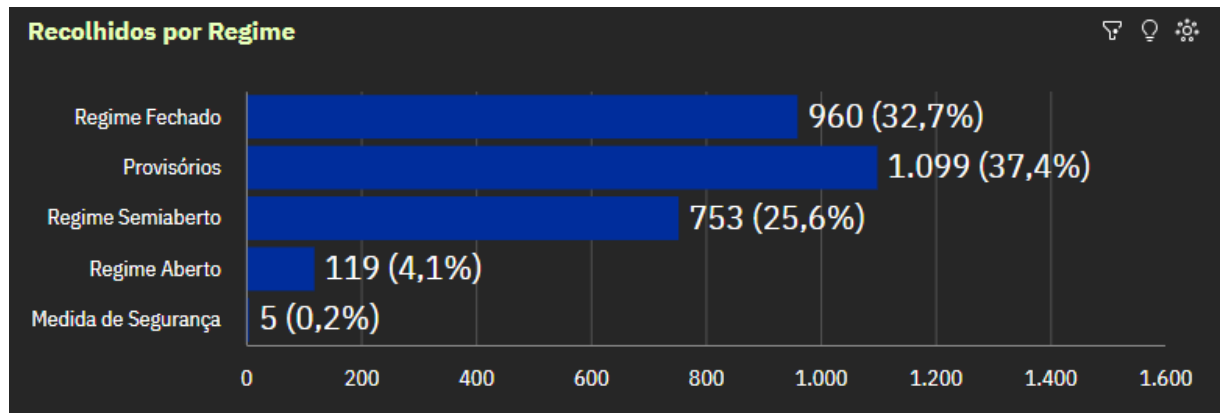


Source: Penal Police Website www.policiapenal.rs.gov.br Accessed 13/01/25

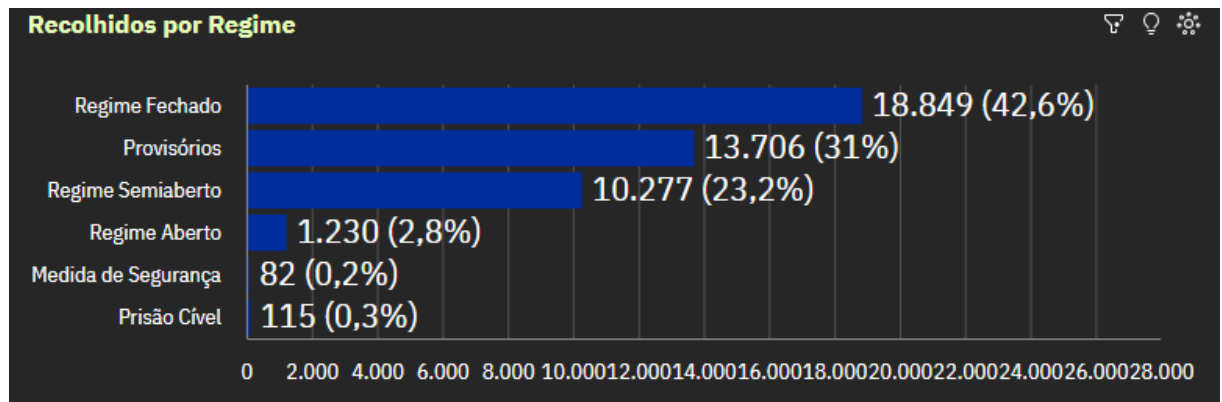
It is known that the deprivation of liberty alone and exclusively does not favor resocialization of prisoners. If the State wants to implement resocialization policies within prisons, there must be a policy of changing the living conditions of prisoners, as well as their families and all citizens, so that the crime rate decreases.

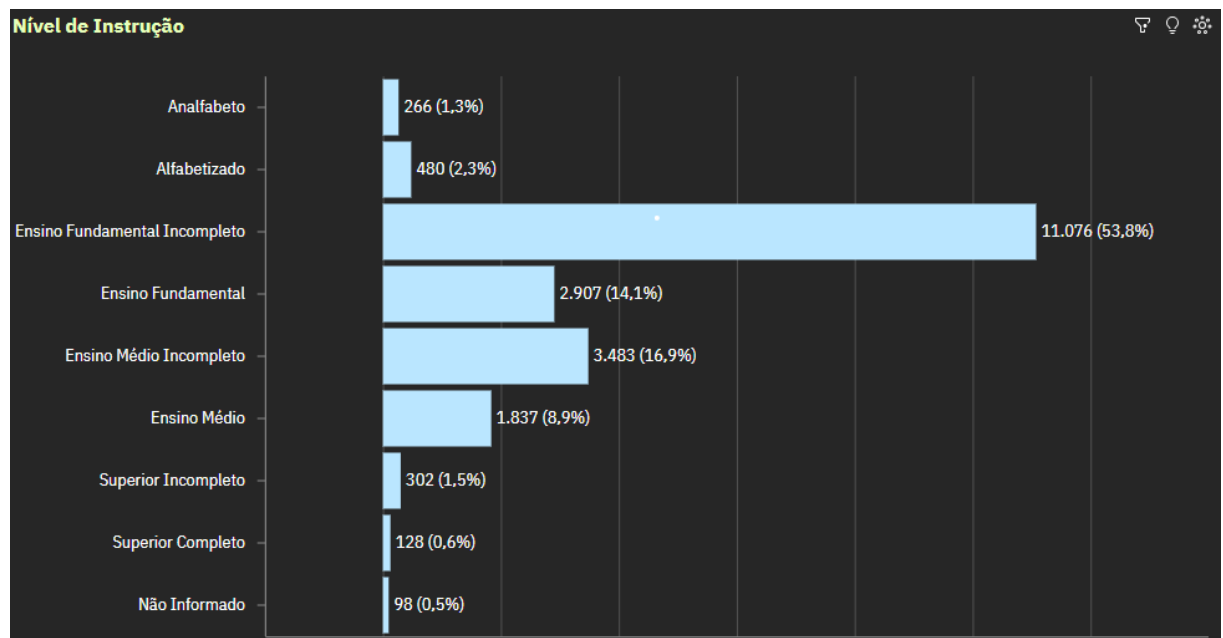
Below are tables that show some statistical data on prisoners in Rio Grande do Sul:

Feminine:



Masculine:





Source: Penal Police Website www.policia penal.rs.gov.br Accessed 13/01/25 10:45.

Statistics reveal that the majority of the prison population is made up of men, repeat offenders, and with incomplete elementary education, which is linked to the lack of basic education, lack of family values, and ultimately the lack of opportunities found in life.

2.1 THE CRIMINAL POLICE OFFICER

In addition to providing custody and security for prisoners, the Prison Officer is responsible for implementing programs and actions to support the prison treatment process for the socialization of prisoners, providing guidance to former prisoners upon their return to society. This is not a profession with a single function. Nor should it be confused with the ancient profession of prison guard, which has medieval roots. It is a profession that currently involves a variety of functions. In short, and taking into account the characteristics of each system (for example, the level of automation of the prison unit), we can say that prison officers have many functions, which will be applied and developed according to each individual's skills.

In addition to ensuring the security of the penal unit by maintaining discipline, the Penal Police Officer, has the duties of participating in proposals to define the individualization of the sentence and treatment aiming at the adaptation of the prisoner and social reintegration; acting as an agent guaranteeing the individual rights of the prisoner in his/her actions; receiving and guiding prisoners regarding disciplinary norms, disseminating rights, duties and obligations according to legal regulations; monitoring, supervising,

inspect, search and monitor prisoners, ensuring their order and safety as well as that of the penal unit; among other activities (Resolution 3027/04-SEAP).

Police officers, educators, managers and technicians working in penal establishments must have access to initial and continuing training programs that take into account the specificities of the penal execution policy.

And it is with this legitimate objective that we seek to know and value this professional who shares his life with the inmates, and thus acquire a status of politically and ideologically oriented professionals, both to resocialize and to guarantee the rights and security of the inmates.

3 PUBLIC POLICIES

Public policies are sets of actions and programs carried out, developed and maintained directly or indirectly by the State, with the participation of public or private entities; ensuring one or some citizenship rights, broadly or specifically targeted, for a certain social, cultural, ethnic or economic segment. In its dynamics, politics is a process of dialogue. Through successive ethical treatments in search of the common good, the actions and processes that will improve life in society are chosen, guaranteeing a constitutionally recognized right (AMARAL, 2014).

The purpose of public policy is to improve the lives of society as a whole. A public policy must not be counterproductive, that is, it cannot have more negative results than positive ones, and these must far outweigh the number of negative results (AMARAL, 2014).

As for state public policy, it is necessary for the government to understand that in order to reduce the prison problem, it must invest in public policies aimed not only at criminal enforcement, but also in the areas of education, health, security, housing and job creation as a way of reducing social inequalities in society, so that everyone has more opportunities and so that at the end of serving their sentence, the prisoner finds the necessary support to rebuild his life with dignity (KUHENE, 2013).

In this sense, the topic of public policies aimed at work and education will be addressed, which consist of improving the quality and quantity of people's acquisition of knowledge for life in society through formal, informal and professional education. If this does not occur, that is, if the education system produces people without sufficient and appropriate knowledge, it will be counterproductive.

3.1 EDUCATION AND FAMILY AS A REINSERTION TOOL

Education for prisoners is as important as prison work. It is an important resource for the resocialization of people deprived of liberty in the same way as work.

There are three types of education: formal, informal and vocational. Education Informal education is that which represents the process of constructing ethical, moral and behavioral knowledge through social, family, community, religious contacts, etc., and which allows the exchange of communications between participants about the values for healthy coexistence in society. Informal education is capable of developing habits, ways of thinking and acting in society in the face of life's obstacles. In the prison system, informal education can occur through the practice of projects to encourage reading and cultural and sports activities, and through visits that prisoners receive from the community, religious leaders, family members and friends (AMARAL, 2014).

Formal education is that which takes place at school or educational institutions. formally constituted through the teacher's actions and have as objectives the teaching and learning of content historically systematized and regulated by laws. In formal education there is content whose learning is presented by the teacher to the students so that they understand, reason and develop their own conclusions about this information (AMARAL, 2014)

Vocational education, in turn, is a type of education that prepares people to practice a profession. It has a practical objective, consisting of rapid employability after completing a given course. Courses of this type of education are aimed at access to the job market (AMARAL, 2014).

It is known that social inequalities are reflected in the conditions of access to school, including also the extension of schooling, that is, its continuity. Children and young people from low-income families need to work from an early age to support themselves or contribute to the family income, which makes it difficult, if not impossible, for them to access, remain in and progress in school. Although there are social programs, such as Bolsa Família, that create conditions for keeping children in school, extremely high levels of poverty are observed and this can be reflected in the way these children are inserted into society (Sítio da Polícia Penal, 2025).

As far as the prison system is concerned, the result of the aforementioned reality is concentrated there, that is, people with a low level of education, even below the national average.

Therefore, it is possible to conjecture a causal relationship between the lack of access to basic assistance provided for in current legislation and the commission of illegal acts.

In general, these are people who did not have access to education at an appropriate age and who had no prospects in life, in some cases living with the bare minimum. It can be inferred that, at some point in their lives, there were failures and absences of shared origin, both from the State and from family, society, religion, etc.

Therefore, it is necessary to address various themes and concepts that are fundamental to the development of any human being, such as life, faith, citizenship, love, family, dignity, freedom, etc. Many prisoners do not even have a notion of what family, home, affection, or respect are. These issues must be addressed in a way that awakens the emotional side of each person and makes them reflect on the acts committed and their gravity, as well as the suffering caused to the families of the victims and their own.

Reintegration programs emphasize the importance of education and professional training in developing a new individual. The socialization process should begin with the family, continue through school, and continue throughout the individual's social life and role. For socialization to be truly effective, the inmate must want to change. Their participation must be voluntary so that the expected changes can occur and they can return to society. The solution to ending crime and violence in this country lies in education and also in investing in the foundations of family and early childhood (Sítio Âmbito Jurídico, 2025).

3.2 RE-SOCIALIZATION AS AN OVERLAY PENITENTIARY POLICY

This is the purpose of the execution of the sentence: the resocialization of the convicted person, achieved in a non-imposing manner. The entire system and all penitentiary policies must be geared towards this end: reintegrating the convicted person so that they return to society in a position to live without committing new crimes. Therefore, resocialization is a penitentiary policy that guides all other prison policies (AMARAL, 2014).

Socialization, therefore, has the purpose of inserting the individual into a society, through internalization of norms, values, attitudes and roles. It means learning or education, in the broadest sense of the word, learning that begins in early childhood and ends with the death of the person. As socialization takes place, the domination of certain undesirable impulses and a series of adjustments to certain cultural patterns take place (Sítio Polícia Penal, 2025).

The most important thing is that the time of deprivation of liberty be used to establish a functional dialogue with the prisoner, whether he is convicted or provisional. In the case of the former, this functionality lies in attempts to convince him not to act against law and order. As a provisional prisoner, this dialogue should encourage him not to allow himself to be contaminated by the environment of deprivation of liberty, continuing all activities that were not objectively limited by the court decision that reduced his freedom (AMARAL, 2014).

The process of persuasion is not necessarily carried out verbally. That is, it is not just a conversation between a psychologist or pedagogue and the prisoner, in which the former tries to convince the latter. This is a narrow-minded view of resocialization.

Work, without a doubt, in addition to many other factors, presents an instrument of relevant importance for the greater objective of the Penal Execution Law, which is to return to Society a person in a position to be useful. It is regrettable to see and know that we are in the eminently pragmatic field, given that the federation units have not taken advantage of the potential of the workforce that prisons make available (KUHENE, 2013).

The logic of convincing resocialization is carried out through the most varied means forms; for example, through social and health assistance, through leisure, contact with family, the implementation of social projects, edifying work, professional education, etc. All these resources end up “dialoguing” with the prisoner and are always capable of demonstrating to him how healthy sociability is and how it can be well carried out.

It is also necessary for the State to adopt public policies, creating preventive programs, supporting children and adolescents, providing quality education and contributing to their subsequent insertion into the job market. Since one of the factors that influences the initiation of criminal activity is the lack of resources to guarantee the family's subsistence.

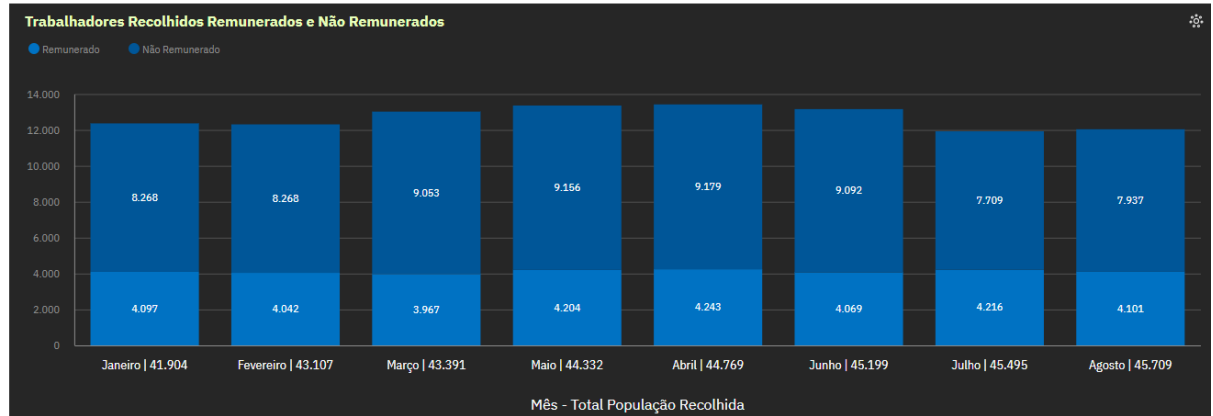
4 PROJECTS FOR REINSERTION IN PRISONS IN RIO GRANDE DO SUL

8

Currently, projects, lectures and work are developed in prisons for the resocialization of the prisoner, and for the remission of the sentence. In the state of Rio Grande do Sul, there is the Cooperation Agreement, which is the instrument that allows private and public entities to offer paid work to prisoners, managed by the State/Penal Police. In the year 2024, the RS Penal Police had 13,873 prisoners working. The objective is to promote conditions

real goals of making inmates better and encouraging their return to social life with a defined profession (Penal Police Website, 2025).

Work year 2024:



Dezembro 46.698	
Remunerado:	4.910
Não Remunerado:	8.963
Total População Recolhida:	46.698
Total População Trabalhado:	13.873
Porcentagem População PPL Trabalhando:	29,71%
Porcentagem Remunerado:	10,51%
Porcentagem Não Remunerado:	19,19%

Source: Penal Police Website www.policia penal.rs.gov.br Accessed 13/01/25 10:45.

Inside prisons, inmates also do manual work, such as crafts, and manual labor, such as cleaning, cooking and maintenance. Education is also a part of the process, with training courses offered inside prisons. Work and education provide remission for prisoners (closed or semi-open regimes), which works as follows, according to the Penal Execution Law:

9

- 1 (one) day of penalty for every 12 (twelve) hours of school attendance – activity elementary, secondary, including vocational, or higher education, or even professional requalification – divided into at least 3 (three) days.
- 1 (one) day of penalty for every 3 (three) days worked.

The redemption will be declared by the execution judge, after hearing the Public Prosecutor's Office and the defense.

The Superior Court of Justice (STJ) has long understood the possibility of remission of sentence through study, even before Law 12,433/11 – which amended the Penal Enforcement Law and began to expressly provide for remission through study. Summary 341 states that since one of the objectives of the law, when establishing remission, is to encourage good behavior of the convict and his readaptation to social life, an extensive interpretation is required, if we consider that formal education is the most effective way of integrating the individual into society (STJ Website, 2016).

The concept of work in the Penal Enforcement Act should not be so restricted only to those activities that demand physical effort, but should be extended to those that demand intellectual effort, such as the study developed in a literacy course. Intellectual activity, as part of the concept of work brought by Law 7,210/84 (Penal Execution Law), conforms perfectly with the institute of remission (STJ Website, 2016).

The Penal Police has programs aimed at reintegrating prisoners into society, qualify it, developing educational and preventive work.

The National Policy for the Care of Ex-Prisoners (PNAPE), established by Decree No. 11.843/2023, aims to promote the social and productive reintegration of people released from the prison system and their families. It integrates actions in the areas of employment, citizenship, health and education, seeking to reduce the cycle of recidivism and guarantee the fundamental rights of this population (Government Website, 2025).

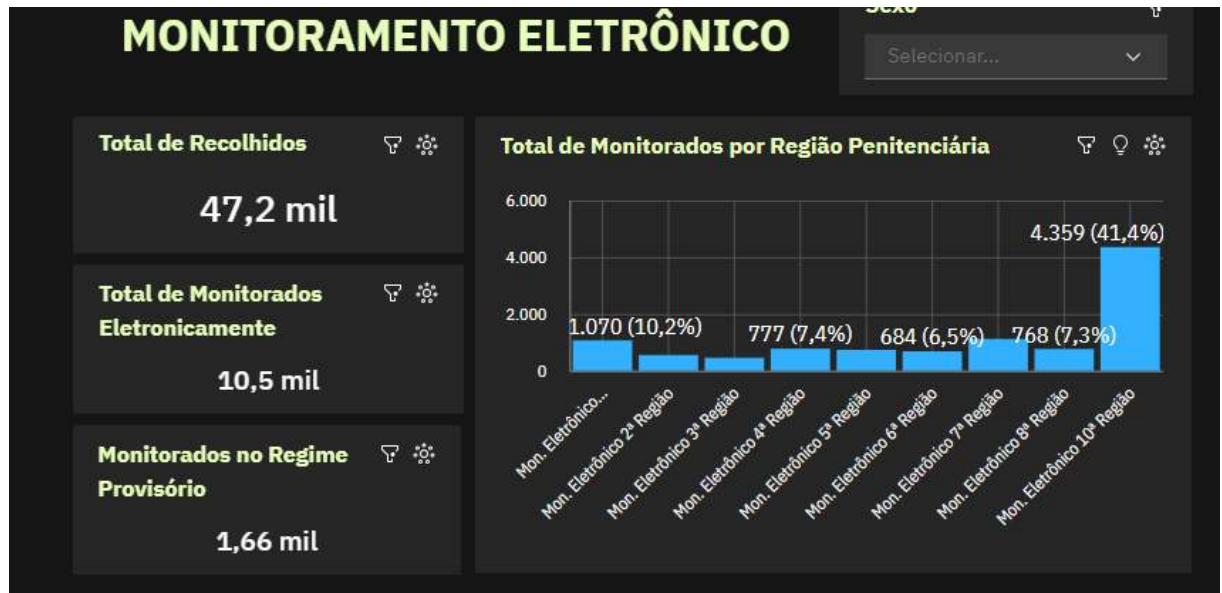
Some actions and programs: entering into partnerships with private companies; reserving job vacancies in contracts and public works aimed at people deprived of liberty; and generating job opportunities by the public administration, through the production of goods and products used by the prison system and by the public administration in general.

The plans indicate the essential need to strengthen the education policy for the prison system, as well as the importance of investing in actions to promote education, seeking the efficient and effective reintegration of the person who is deprived of freedom, since pedagogical, cognitive and citizenship process gains (structure of educational processes), combined or not with other processes, are proven to be essential for the formation and guidance of any human being (Government Website, 2025).

In addition to the existing programs, the Electronic Monitoring system for prisoners was implemented in Rio Grande do Sul in mid-2013, which is a partnership between the Penitentiary Police, the Court of Justice of Rio Grande do Sul and the Public Security Department. It is yet another

penal execution system that benefits from technology to reduce overcrowding, promote population safety and prisoner reintegration (Penal Police Website, 2025).

Below are statistical data regarding electronic monitoring, totaling 10.5 thousand prisoners (1,200 women and 9,300 men, who wear ankle bracelets:



Source: Penal Police Website www.policia penal.rs.gov.br Accessed 13/01/25

With the ankle bracelet, the monitored person will not take up space in the prison system, since they will sleep at home. The program is personalized for each person and will define the route and the time needed to travel it, determining times to arrive and leave work and home. If there is an attempt to break the equipment or escape from the route, for example, an alert will be triggered at the Penal Police Monitoring Center, via the internet.

Those sentenced must meet criteria such as voluntary adherence, being working, having a fixed residence and good discipline. After the prisoner signs the document agreeing, the authorization depends on the approval of the Criminal Enforcement Court.

The advantages of this program are: 24-hour monitoring of the inmate, reduction of harm to the inmate: return to social and family life, distancing themselves from the prison environment, reduction of overcrowding in the establishments.

6 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Thus, we see the importance of continuing to implement social policies, both from an ethical point of view and from the perspective of development needs, leading to the creation of social programs focused on education, encouraging children, young people and adults to study, and then outline

and achieve goals. For life to have meaning, it is important to fight for ideals, seek growth in personal and professional life, form a family, and teach the importance of learning and human values.

Simple access to education and, consequently, to the job market is, without a doubt, the lifeline for a large part of Brazil's crime problems.

However, the tempting allure of crime can only be combated by a tool capable of giving individuals the ability to understand the world they live in, broaden their expectations and foster their personal and professional development: education.

REFERENCES

AMARAL, Claudio do Prado. **Public Policies in the Prison System**. Minas Gerais. CAED-UFMG, 2014.

LEGAL SCOPE. **Prisoner resocialization in the Brazilian reality: perspectives for public policies**. Available at: <http://www.ambitojuridico.com.br/site/index.php?n_link=revista_artigos_leitura&artigo_id=6301> Accessed on: 01/09/25.

PENAL EXECUTION DEPARTMENT. **Prison Officer's Handbook**. Available at: <http://www.depen.pr.gov.br/arquivos/File/manual_agente_pen.pdf> Accessed on: 09/01/25.

KUHENE, Maurício. Annotated Penal Enforcement Law. 11th ed. rev. and updated. Curitiba: Juruá, 2013.

LAW No. 7,210, OF JULY 11, 1984. **Criminal Enforcement Act**. Available at: <http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/leis/l7210.htm> Accessed on: 02/01/25.

SUSEPE MAGAZINE. Susepe website. **Balance 12/13**. Available in: <http://www.susepe.rs.gov.br/conteudo.php?cod_menu=244> Accessed on: 10/01/25.

SOUZA, Céline. **Public Policies: thematic and research issues**. CRH Notebook, Salvador, n. 39, p. 11-24, Jul./Dec. 2003.

CRIMINAL POLICE OF RIO GRANDE DOS SUL. Penal Police website. Available at: <<https://policiapenal.rs.gov.br/>> Accessed on: 10/01/25.

CRIMINAL POLICE OF RIO GRANDE DOS SUL. Penal Police website. **Highlights, Prison System Data**. Available at: <<https://policiapenal.rs.gov.br/inicial>> Accessed on: 10/01/25.

CRIMINAL POLICE OF RIO GRANDE DOS SUL. Penal Police website. **Electronic ankle bracelets now monitor some of the inmates in semi-open prisons in RS**. Available at: <<https://policiapenal.rs.gov.br/tornozeleiras-eletronicas-passam-a-monitorar-parte-dos-apenados-do-semiaberto-do-rs-1>> Accessed on: 10/01/25.

SUPERIOR COURT OF JUSTICE. STJ website. **Annotated Summaries**. Available at: <<http://www.stj.jus.br/SCON/sumanot/toc.jsp#TIT1TEMA0>> Accessed on: 13/01/25.



DW.Prison X-ray: overcrowding, illegal imprisonment and slowness. Available at
<<https://www.dw.com/pt-br/raio-x-carcer%C3%A1rio-superlota%C3%A7%C3%A3opris%C3%A3o-ilegal-e-moroso>> Accessed on: 13/01/2025.

MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SECURITY. Government website.
Available in: <<https://www.gov.br/senappen/pt-br/aceso-a-informacao/acoes-e-programs/national-penitentiary-policies/national-policy-of-care-for-ex-prisoners>> Accessed on: 13/01/2025.