

PSCE Pilot Project Report - San Juan County, Utah Jail/Prison

By Dr. Sam Arungwa, January 2023 DrSam@PreventionSc.Org

Editor's Note: The following is a summary of a Pilot Project organized and overseen by Dr. Sam Arungwa. Dr. Arungwa (also known as Dr. Sam) is Assistant Professor & Extension Specialist in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Utah State University. He is the founder and Director of Utah Prevention Science (UPSc) Institute.

Dr. Sam is a crime prevention scientist passionate about finding ways to offer no cost college education to incarcerated people in Utah. He has a creative vision of ways to cut through the red tape that delays higher education in prisons and jails due to the need for funding for textbooks, supplies, and teachers. This pilot project is demonstrating it can be achieved in the reality of Utah's jails. The following is his summary of the Postsecondary Correctional Education (PSCE) pilot project in San Juan County, Utah Jail.

Since this report was written, Dr. Sam has met with the Utah Sheriffs Association (USA) and the Utah higher education correctional council (HECC) as a group. He is following up with several Utah jails that are interested in his unique and workable program to provide all inmates a college education, starting this summer 2023. Dr. Sam will be presenting at UPAN's August monthly meeting.

Executive Summary

This PostSecondary Correctional Education (PSCE) pilot project was conducted through Utah State University (USU) Prevention Science Extension. The location was in the San Juan County, Utah Jail/ Prison. The pilot goal was to leverage available non-monetary surplus resources to provide higher education and higher income workforce training to the workers and inmates at the correctional facilities.

This is a response to three decades of lack of public funding for PSCE by policy makers. We conducted a needs assessment, developed a curriculum. We then secured funding, instructors, and developed partnerships with universities. We also obtained necessary resources, established program policies, recruited students, while providing support services. We evaluated program effectiveness, sustainability, ensured compliance with regulations, and established program visibility.

PSCE Pilot Research Questions Considered:

A. Are there "surplus resources" to support PSCE? Yes, a proven reserve of surplus land, labor and capital assets can support PSCE in Utah.

B. Can we measure and mobilize surplus resources? Yes, surplus resources - land, labor, and capital can be easily measured and mobilized in Utah.

C. Do policy makers have the willingness to support (WITS) for PSCE? Yes, most policy makers are very willing to support PSCE in Utah.

Processes Involved:

1. *Conduct a needs assessment:* Conducted a needs assessment to determine the education and training needs of the inmate population in Utah prisons.
2. *Develop a curriculum:* Developed a curriculum that meets the needs of the inmate population and is tailored to the Utah job market. We focused on classes, credit courses, certificates and degrees (C3D4) that already have open education resources (OER) and zero textbook costs (Z-degrees).
3. *Identify funding sources:* Identified and secured funding sources for postsecondary correctional education (PSCE). This includes public/private grants and other surplus resources from the communities and universities (CommUs).
4. *Hired qualified instructors:* Conducted willingness to support (WITS) survey to identify pro-bono professionals/ professors to teach classes.
5. *Develop partnerships:* Developed partnerships with several CommUs. They included San Juan County Sheriff's Department, San Juan Prevention Action Coalition (SJPAC), Department of Workforce, Utah State University, Blanding, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Blanding Stake), San Juan School District, Prevention Science Corporation
6. *Obtain necessary resources:* This includes:
 - a. Conducted a WITS for land, labor, and capital
 - b. Mobilized labor - volunteer professors and professionals (pro-bono profs) and university teaching and research assistants (UTARA)
 - c. Mobilized capital - hardware (laptops, desktops, tablets, smartphones, accessories, replacement batteries, monitors, and parts) and software (Google Neverware and Google Drive, Microsoft productivity suite)
7. *Establish program policies and procedures:* This includes admission criteria, course requirements, grading policies, disciplinary procedures and syllabus.
8. *Recruit and enroll students.* Target 100% of all adult incarcerated students and correctional employees. Leverage empty seat scholarships.
9. *Provide support services.* Provide support services to students, such as tutoring, teaching assistant (TA), research assistant (RA), academic advising, supplemental instruction (SI), counseling, and career services.
10. *Evaluate program effectiveness.* Utilized the comprehensive model that includes registration, engagement, graduation, employment, and retention (REGER).

11. *Develop a sustainability plan:* Develop a sustainability plan to ensure the program can continue to operate over a lifetime, including identifying ongoing funding sources and partnerships.

12. *Ensure compliance with regulations.*

13. *Establish program visibility.* Engage the wider community to promote the value of PSCE..

Why is this PSCE Project Unique?

A. **Surplus Resources:** We relied on “surplus resources” in every community and university (CommU). These surplus resources include land, labor, and capital that can easily be measured and mobilized to support PSCE. Other similar programs rely mostly on tax dollars which are “scarce resources”.

B. **Crime Prevention Science:** This project focused on replicating PSCE which is an evidence-based program (Crime Solutions, 2023). Majority of existing PSCE projects utilize tradition-based programs.

C. **Surplus Seats Scholarships:** We leverage our turn-key system to measure and mobilize “surplus seats” statewide. This allowed us to extend access to PSCE to 100% of both the inmates, correctional employees, and other stakeholders.

D. **Open Education Resources:** Our model prioritized the development of open education resources (OER) which are free and high quality textbooks.

E. **UTARA Jobs:** This pilot prioritized the creation of university teaching and research activity (UTARA). This will guarantee a lifetime gainful employment for all incarcerated people.

Next Steps:

We are sharing this report with every chief elected official and university presidency in Utah. We hope that all of Utah’s 29 counties will adopt this PSCE pilot by summer 2023. Dr. Sam has pledged to provide all the necessary consultation and training needed to facilitate this pilot statewide. This unique “surplus” resource model can solve the “scarce” resource model that has plagued PSCE in Utah for decades. This has implications for statewide PSCE policy.