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Previously institutionalized youths on the road to adulthood

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It is January 1995 when four young people are discharged from a juvenile justice institution in the eastern part of the Netherlands. James is 18 years old, Ray 17, and Regina and Ellen are aged 16, and at their young age, they have already experienced problems in multiple domains. They all grew up in a problematic family environment, experienced difficulties in school, suffered from psychological and behavioral problems and engaged in delinquent behavior. As the gate behind them closes, they walk to the train station. Then they all go their separate ways. How will each of them fare on the road to adulthood?

In the Netherlands, over 4,000 youths are institutionalized in juvenile justice or youth care institutions every year because there are serious concerns about their behavior and development. However, it is largely unknown how previously institutionalized youths fare on the road to adulthood. To what extent do they engage in criminal behavior in adulthood? Are they able to make a successful transition into one of the most important adult life domains: the labor market? And how many of them end up living conventional lives?

To answer these questions, this publication aims to provide insight into the role of employment and crime in the adult lives of previously institutionalized youths. Using data from the 17Up study, a longitudinal study on 540 previously institutionalized men and women, this publication examines the effect of employment on offending, the effects of conviction and incarceration on employment chances, and the extent to which employment and crime influence adult life adjustment of previously institutionalized youths.

Janna Verbruggen (1985) studied Criminology and Developmental Psychology at VU University in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. She conducted the research for this publication at the Phoolan Devi Institute, a collaboration between VU University and the Netherlands Institute for the Study of Crime and Law Enforcement (NSCR). She currently works as a lecturer and researcher in Criminology at Cardiff University in the United Kingdom.



Previously institutionalized youths on the road to adulthood

Janna Verbruggen



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A longitudinal study on employment and crime

Janna Verbruggen

