REVIEW OF SOUTH AFRICAN INNOVATIONS IN DIVERSION AND REINTEGRATION OF AT-RISK YOUTH

A study commissioned by the Criminal Justice Initiative of the Open Society Foundation for South Africa

Compiled by Francois Steyn
Centre for Health Systems Research & Development
University of the Free State

The review team (University of the Free State):
Francois Steyn (Centre for Health Systems Research & Development)
Herma Foster (Department of Criminology)
Deidre Grieshaber (Centre for Development Support)
Hlengiwe Hlope (Centre for Health Systems Research & Development)
Prof. Lucius Botes (Centre for Development Support)
Prof. Dingie van Rensburg (Centre for Health Systems Research & Development)

OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATION FOR SOUTH AFRICA

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
BBBSSA	Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Africa
CJB	Child Justice Bill
CLC	Community Law Centre
DIME	Diversion into Music Education
DoCS	Department of Correctional Services
DoE	Department of Education
DoH	Department of Health
DoSD/DoSS	Department of Social Development/ Department of Social Services
FGC	Family Group Conference/Conferencing
IMC	Inter-ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk
MES	Metropolitan Evangelical Services/Middestad Evangeliese Sorg
NAG	Network Action Group
NCPS	National Crime Prevention Strategy
NICRO	National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders
NPAT	National Peace Accord Trust
NYCDP	Noupoort Youth and Community Development Project
OBT-SA	Outward Bound Trust of South Africa
OSF-SA	Open Society Foundation for South Africa
PTCS	Pre-trial Community Service
RAPCAN	Resources Aimed at the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect
RAU	Rand Afrikaans University (now University of Johannesburg)
READY	Reintegration and Diversion for Youth
RJC	Restorative Justice Centre
SALRC	South African Law Reform Commission (known previously as the South African Law Commission – SALC)
SANCA	South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence
SAPS	South African Police Services
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SAYStOP	South African Young Sex Offenders Project
SDU/SPU	Self-defence Unit/Self-protection Unit
TEP	Tough Enough Programme
TJA	Tswane Justice Alliance
TPA	The President's Award for Youth Empowerment
UCT	University of Cape Town
UFS	University of the Free State
UNISA	University of South Africa
UWC	University of the Western Cape
VOC	Victim–Offender Conference
YDO	Youth Development Outreach
YES	Youth Empowerment Scheme

1

INTRODUCTION

Context of the review

South Africa has one of the highest recorded crime rates in the world. Although these rates in general appear to be decreasing, crime in this country nevertheless continues to threaten the personal safety, socio-emotional health and economic upliftment of its citizens, particularly those living in poor and criminogenic environments (environments conducive to crime).

Children and youth are recognised as being a particularly vulnerable group, both as victims and perpetrators of crime. In South Africa, it is estimated that 3 593 children under the age of 18 were in prison as at 31 May 2004, while 1 868 were awaiting trial and 1 725 were serving sentences (Sloth-Nielsen 2004:3). The Child Justice Bill, first tabled in Parliament in August 2002, is aimed at protecting the rights of children accused of committing crimes and managing their progress through the criminal justice system. (At the time of writing this legislation had not been passed.)

Diversion is a very important part of this proposed new legislation. Diversion is the process of referring children under the age of 18 who have committed offences, and where there is enough evidence to prosecute, away from formal criminal justice proceedings (Sloth-Nielsen and Gallinetti 2004:32). It is important to note here that many of the programmes in this review cater for children deemed to be at risk who may not have been arrested for committing an offence or referred to the programmes through the formal criminal justice system. Also, while the Child Justice Bill defines a child as being under the age of 18, some programmes accommodate young people over the age of 18 where this is deemed appropriate.

Although there is as yet no legal framework, it is estimated that currently some 18 000 children are nevertheless being diverted away from the criminal justice system annually and that this number will increase dramatically once the Bill is enacted (Muntingh 2004). The number of diversion services has increased significantly over the past few years but there are still not enough of them to cope with the load.

Since 1999, the Open Society Foundation for South Africa (OSF-SA), through its Criminal Justice Initiative (CJI), has focused on promoting sound legislation and human rights in the context of the criminal justice system and crime prevention (OSF-SA 2004). In its work with children in the criminal justice system it has sought to

institutionalise legal and policy frameworks that will protect their rights. To this end, OSF-SA has provided funds to various initiatives that develop and pilot diversion and reintegration programmes for at-risk youth. These initiatives vary as to when and where they intervene, what strategies they use, and how they interpret the concepts of restorative justice and diversion.

In 2003, OSF-SA asked the Centre for Health Systems Research & Development, in collaboration with the Centre for Development Support and the Department of Criminology (University of the Free State) to review the programmes of twelve selected initiatives that provide youth diversion and reintegration services in South Africa. The purpose of the review was to look at the various innovations these programmes had introduced, profile each model, study how it affected its intended beneficiaries, and provide an easy reference to a range of programmes for those working with youth at risk.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims of this review were as follows:

- To describe the approach, strategies, activities and tools used by each programme.

- To identify what was unique about these programmes so as to be able to replicate them.

- To compare the programmes' theoretical perspectives and the ways these were put into practice.

- To identify key themes and good practices in working with youth at risk.

- To assess the monitoring systems of each programme and record significant findings.

- To undertake a costing exercise for each programme.

- To reflect on existing South African policy for youth at risk and the international instruments that South Africa has ratified and examine how the various programmes align with these.

TARGETED INITIATIVES

The following table sets out the initiatives that were chosen for the review.

Organisation	Programme
National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO)	Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES) Journey Pre-trial Community Service (PTCS) Tough Enough Programme (TEP)
Educo Africa	Siyavuka
Noupoort Youth and Community Development Project (NYCDP)	Life skills training Diversion programme

Organisation	Programme
Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Africa (BBBSSA)	Mentoring programme
Diversion into Music Education (DIME)	Diversion and mentoring programme
President's Award for Youth Empowerment (TPA)	Reintegration and Diversion for Youth (READY)
Outward Bound Trust of South Africa (OBT)	Nature-based diversion
Restorative Justice Centre (RJC)	Drama therapy Family Group Conference/ Conferencing (FGC)
Othandweni Street Youth Programme	Guardianship for diversion
Ekupholeni Mental Health Centre	Life skills training Research and intervention
National Peace Accord Trust (NPAT)	Ecotherapy diversion
South African Young Sex Offenders Programme (SAYStOP)	Life skills training
Khulisa Child Nurturing Services	New Directions Discovery and Destinations

REVIEW STRATEGY AND METHODOLOGY

The reviewers used a combination of explorative, descriptive and analytical approaches and techniques (Babbie & Mouton 2001:79–81). They collected primary data from a variety of sources, including executive officers, managers, service providers and volunteers from the selected organisations, as well as at-risk youth, referral officers, donors and other stakeholders. Most interviews took place during site visits to each of the organisations under review.

Secondary data in the form of annual, progress and status reports, funding proposals, correspondence between partner organisations, internal circulars, newsletters and routinely collected statistics was also used. In addition, the reviewers accessed a number of external and internal evaluation reports so as to highlight significant research outcomes. Further secondary sources included articles in popular and accredited journals, newspapers and magazines, official legislation, policies and draft legislation.

The reviewers developed a framework for assessing the cost of the diversion and offender reintegration programmes under discussion. Costing of each project was done through analysis of budgets and expenditure statements. Some organisations made their recent costing figures available for the review.

Although some initiatives had unique lessons to offer, generally the reviewers' analysis was based on the following considerations:

- The risk factors involved in youth offending.

- The assessment of referred children before intervening.

- The activities that realise the aims of the programme.

- Complementary or multi-modal programming.

- The way rights-based and restorative justice approaches are translated into practice.

- The system that is used to monitor the programme

- The service providers' skills and their ability to effectively implement the programme.

    (Van der Merwe & Dawes 2004:34–35)

In addition, reviewers considered how the programmes could be replicated. The discussion and analysis sections of this review offer lessons for good practice and service delivery.

LIMITATIONS

The reviewers acknowledge that this review has some limitations as follows:

- It is not a formal audit of diversion and reintegration initiatives in South Africa. Rather, it is an attempt to give the reader some idea of how initiatives approach at-risk and offending behaviour among children in this country.

- Where programme organisers did not use manuals or documentation could not be accessed, the reviewers could not give an in-depth description but only a broad overview of programme content.

- The review does not fully describe the work of multi-programme organisations. In these cases it focuses only on the diversion and reintegration activities which some organisations undertake in conjunction with other services.

- Some youth-at-risk services depend on participants being referred from other organisations. In these cases the reviewers have only briefly outlined the aim and main work of the referring organisation. There is substantial networking and partnering between the organisations described in this review.

- Data gathering for the review was conducted between June and October 2003. Organisations may have amended their programmes since then.

- Throughout the report the reviewers have quoted sources so as to substantiate opinions, observations or programme practices. They have done their best to convey the speakers' meaning accurately but some subtleties may nevertheless have been lost in the translation of idiomatic expressions and vernaculars.

- The costs per programme presented in this report were calculated according to 2001, 2002 and 2003 organisational budgets and expenditure statements. These figures should be seen as guidelines only, since adjustments may have been made since then.

LAYOUT AND PRESENTATION

The review begins with a description of the prevalence of youth offending in South Africa and explores the policies that guide intervention. The chapters about the reviewed programmes contain the following information:

- The organisation
  - Background (origin and establishment)
  - Aims/objectives/mission/vision/values
  - Structure and resources
- The programme
  - Rationale and aim
  - Entry criteria and profile of participants
  - Programme content and implementation
    - Staff/volunteers/training
    - Partnerships
    - Costs
  - Monitoring and evaluation (including outputs and noteworthy research findings)
  - Key lessons and views (as mentioned by stakeholders, service providers and beneficiaries)
- Discussion and analysis.

Each chapter has a list of references, should the reader wish to obtain more information about the reviewed organisations and programmes.

The review is divided into six parts:

- Part 1: Community, family and victim-focused programmes
- Part 2: Life skills training programmes
- Part 3: Expressive programmes
- Part 4: Outdoor experiential programmes
- Part 5: Mentoring programmes
- Part 6: Reintegration programmes.

The reviewed programmes have been organised into these categories so as to highlight particular approaches that are employed for diversion and reintegration programming, but it is important to note that in most cases there is an intersection between the methods and approaches used.

Some of the organisations that participated in the review offered more than one diversion or reintegration service. To avoid duplication in presenting the programmes' aims, structures and resources, and monitoring and evaluation profiles, these details are provided in the first description of a programme and then cross-referenced in subsequent chapters. This applies to the following chapters:

■ NICRO. Chapter 4 (Pre-trial Community Service) provides the background to Chapter 6 (Youth Empowerment Scheme), Chapter 16 (Journey) and Chapter 18 (Tough Enough Programme).

■ The Restorative Justice Centre. Chapter 2 (FGC) provides the background to Chapter 11 (Drama therapy).

■ Khulisa Child Nurturing Services. Chapter 5 (New Directions) provides the background to Chapter 20 (Discovery and Destinations).

■ Ekupholeni Mental Health Services. Chapter 8 (Izingwe Kubumbano) provides the background to Chapter 12 (Zimiseleni/Ghetto Boyz Research and Intervention).

The concluding chapter discusses the findings of the review.

TRENDS AND POLICIES

The past decade has seen major reforms in all spheres of social, economic and political life in South Africa. Among these, the country's legal and criminal justice system is being transformed to ensure the humane and appropriate management of children in conflict with the law. The proposed new legislation, in the form of the Child Justice Bill (CJB), aims to protect the rights of children in the criminal justice system while at the same time providing a legal framework for appropriate programmes to help reintegrate them into society and prevent them from relapsing into crime.

1. YOUTH OFFENDING – PREVALENCE AND TRENDS IN SOUTH AFRICA

It is estimated that roughly 15% of all criminal offences in South Africa are committed by children under the age of 18 (Pereira 2000:9). Youth offending in this country appears to be on the increase (Odongo 2003:3) – the following table shows that there were approximately 55 000 more child arrests in 2002 than there were in 1999.[1] This escalation could however be attributed to more police stations being linked to databases (Muntingh 2003:29) and the increased reporting of crime.

TABLE 1.1: CHILDREN ARRESTED PER YEAR FOR 1999, 2000, 2001 AND 2002[2]

Province	1999	2000	2001	2002
Eastern Cape	10 291	11 285	12 270	14 994
Free State	8 214	8 635	9 259	10 598
Gauteng	19 886	23 213	31 017	38 622
KwaZulu-Natal	21 647	24 235	27 275	32 144

Province	1999	2000	2001	2002
Limpopo	3 277	4 495	5 864	7 832
Mpumalanga	4 550	5 370	6 606	8 050
Northern Cape	6 551	7 092	7 153	8 020
North West	3 592	4 211	5 460	8 152
Western Cape	36 765	31 109	32 954	41 812
Total	114 773	119 645	137 858	170 224

Source: SAPS Crime Information and Analysis Centre (in Muntingh 2003:28).

Besides the increase in the number of arrests, it also appears that the perpetrators are becoming younger. In January 2000, the *Daily News* reported that roughly 45% of the South African population consisted of youths under the age of 19. A total of 2 283 per 100 000 men between the ages of 18 and 20 were convicted, compared with 1 484 per 100 000 men aged 21 and older. It is estimated that by 2008 six out of every ten prisoners will be aged 25 or younger (Radebe 2000:3), which will place significant demands on rehabilitation and reintegration services.

Despite the efforts of various organisations to save children from being imprisoned, seven minors per month were still being sentenced to prison between 1999 and 2001. In January 1995 there were around 675 youths in South African prisons. During September 2002, the number rose to 1 897 – an increase of 178% (Kollapen 2002). Between July 1999 and June 2002, a total of 6 365 minors were awaiting trial in prisons (Muntingh 2003:89). Mid-2002 saw 3 960 sentenced and awaiting trial youths under the age of 18 in prisons (Louw 2002:2), and the figure increased to 4 158 in early 2004 (Michaels 2004:1).

The incidence of serious and violent crime among young people also shows an increase. In September 2003 a total of 1 664 youths were imprisoned for serious offences and 489 for sex offences. By January 2004 these figures had increased to 1 680 serious and 511 sex offence convictions (Van Dyk 2004:8). About 40% of youths under the age of 17 in South African prisons are serving sentences for violent crimes (Bolowana 2004:2).

2. DEVELOPMENTAL PATHWAYS TO YOUTH OFFENDING[3]

The development of effective interventions to address social problems such as child and youth offending depends on a sound understanding of the nature of the problem (Louw 2000). Research has highlighted several risk factors and developmental pathways toward problem behaviour among at-risk and offending youth. These findings provide programme developers with information on specific predisposing factors, the timing of the onset of the problem, and the different manifestations of the problem(s) at different points in development.

International research has shown that the causes of antisocial behaviour are complex (Rutter et al. 1998). Most accounts of antisocial behaviour, including youth offending, focus on the interaction between risk factors occurring at three levels: the individual, the family and the community levels (e.g. Loeber & Dishion 1983; Rutter et al. 1998;

Patterson et al. 1997; Moffitt 1993). The following discussion explores these three levels in an ecological framework, looking at individuals in their family and community settings. The community level includes the socio-economic dynamics, and factors such as peer influences in the neighbourhood. Interaction between the three levels contributes to the multi-dimensional phenomenon of youth offending.

2.1 Community factors and poverty

The extent of poverty in many South African communities means that a significant number of children and youth are placed at risk (Cassiem et al. 2000). A recent survey of South African youth between the ages of 16 and 35 has found that this age group comprises 70% of the unemployed, and that in the African community in particular the majority have never been employed (Emmett et al. 2004). In addition, it is estimated that the HIV/AIDS pandemic will result in about 1.5 million orphans in the country by 2010 (Avert 2005). The combination of poverty and the escalating number of AIDS orphans could force a large number of vulnerable children and youth to live on the street. These children are at risk of being coerced into criminal activities and prostitution merely to survive (Oelofse 2001; Ladikos 1997).

The nature of the surrounding community is a critical factor in creating or reducing the child's opportunities for engaging in crime. To understand the way growing up in a poor community affects children, it helps to look at social disorganisation theory. Some indicators of social disorganisation are low household income, sparse social networks, family disruption, a shifting population, numerous unsupervised adolescent peer groups and low organisational participation by community members (Sampson & Groves 1989; Sampson & Morenoff 1997). Loitering and gang activity, associated with the presence of deviant or delinquent peer groups, are further indicators (Brooks-Gunn et al. 1997).

One of the biggest contributors to antisocial behaviour is involvement in deviant peer groups, particularly during adolescence (Rutter et al. 1998). Young people of course need social contact with their peers (Prinsloo & Geldenhuys 1991), but unfortunately some identify themselves with antisocial groups in order to feel accepted. The criteria for entry to such groups often include experimenting with illegal substances and criminal activity. In urban communities, poverty, broken homes and drugs can lead to the gang becoming a substitute home for at-risk youth (Farren 2001). Lack of pro-social ties and commitment to deviant peer groups has repeatedly been associated with failure at school, which increases the likelihood of future unemployment and continued involvement in antisocial activities (Loeber et al. 1999; Rutter et al. 1998).

Continuous exposure to adverse social conditions affects children in a variety of ways. They suffer as a result of ineffective parenting practices and families struggling with frequent and severe stress; their access to mainstream opportunities is restricted; and they are exposed to antisocial role models, which normalises and reinforces deviant or delinquent behaviour. Adverse social conditions and community violence go together – this has been well documented in international literature (e.g. Garbarino 1992; Garret et al. 1994; Pollitt 1994). Recent South African research suggests that chronic exposure to these conditions produces antisocial tendencies in children and adolescents, including significant increases in defiant and aggressive behaviour (Van der Merwe & Dawes 1999).

2.2 Family influences

Coercive and hostile parenting styles, punitive and inconsistent parental discipline, and poor supervision of children's activities can be the cause of bad behaviour in early childhood. This, in turn can lead to the child being rejected by normal peers, followed by academic failure during middle childhood (Patterson et al. 1997; Van Dyk 2004) and membership of a deviant peer group and delinquency in adolescence. Bad parenting practice of this kind has been identified as one of the most critical determinants of antisocial behaviour (Loeber & Dishion 1983; Patterson et al. 1997; Rutter et al. 1998).

Other factors that have been identified as causing antisocial behaviour, at all stages of a child's development, are antisocial parents and grandparents, family discord and violence, socioeconomic disadvantage (Patterson et al. 1997) and the breakdown of traditional values and deteriorating moral environments (Bolowana 2004; IMC 1996). Low family socioeconomic status, antisocial parents and substance abuse (primarily tobacco and alcohol) have all been identified as particularly strong predictors of future antisocial behaviour in six- to eleven-year-olds (Loeber et al. 1999). A large family, an adolescent parent, a broken home, abuse and neglect are additional risk factors for developing antisocial behaviour, but this is largely because they are associated with family discord and violence (Rutter et al. 1998). Similarly, the effects of poverty and social disadvantage are worsened by negative socialising experiences, such as lack of maternal warmth, peer group instability, lack of cognitive stimulation, family stressors, and by family conflict, parental depression, and ineffective family management practices (Dodge et al. 1994; Patterson et al. 1997; Rutter et al. 1998).

2.3 Individual factors

Recent international literature has highlighted the different kinds of antisocial youths and the different developmental pathways to youth offending. For intervention to be successful, these differences must be taken into account (Rutter et al. 1998). One way to distinguish between types of antisocial behaviour in individual cases is to look for signs of hyperactivity and early-onset antisocial behaviour. Two qualitatively different categories of antisocial behaviour have been noted: life-course-persistent antisocial behaviour and adolescence-limited antisocial behaviour (Moffitt 1993).

Life-course-persistent antisocial behaviour, which accounts for a minority of cases, is a maladaptive, inflexible behavioural pattern that is evident across a range of contexts, such as the home and the school. This pattern is particularly associated with individual characteristics and biological factors are also thought to play an important role (Rutter et al. 1998). For example, hyperactivity appears to be genetically determined, but is linked with antisocial behaviour through its association with impaired social functioning. Features typically found in individuals who display the more persistent forms of antisocial behaviour are cognitive and neurological impairments, impulsivity, sensation seeking, lack of control, aggression, and a distorted style of information processing (mistakenly perceiving hostile or aggression intentions in others).

Neuropsychological and cognitive deficits or impairments affect the child's behaviour both directly and indirectly. Direct effects of these include problems with receptive listening, reading, problem solving, planning, expressive speech, writing and memory. On top of these problems, the child's temperamental difficulties make child rearing

very challenging. One indirect effect, therefore, is that parent–child interactions are likely to be dysfunctional. Interestingly, children with these kinds of deficits or impairments are seldom born in supportive environments. This is at least partly because parents and children resemble each other in temperament and cognitive ability, as a result of genetic factors and social learning. A cycle can develop in which parent–child interactions become increasingly problematic and the child begins to behave antisocially (Moffitt 1993).

Life-course-persistent antisocial behaviour is maintained not only by its association with other psychiatric disorders but also by these individuals' restricted behavioural repertoires, which cumulatively diminish their opportunities for successful engagement in conventional, pro-social activities, and limit the likelihood of having non-deviant acquaintances and life partners (Moffitt 1993). In this variety of antisocial behaviour the offender has a history of offending. This has been identified as one of the strongest predictors of continued or future engagement in antisocial or offending behaviour (Loeber et al. 1999; Kurtz 2002).

By contrast, the second type, adolescence-limited antisocial behaviour is unrelated to temperamental and neurological deficits. The vast majority of antisocial behaviour in adolescents is triggered by particular situations (for example, peer pressure) and is considered an adaptive response to the way our world has changed, in our health and in our work practices, so that adolescence has been prolonged. Adolescence-limited delinquents mimic those peers who exhibit enduring antisocial behaviour. They do this as a means of disassociating from childhood and proving they can act independently to master new challenges. This behaviour is reinforced by negative consequences such as damaging the quality of communication with parents, provoking responses from adults in positions of authority, finding ways to appear older, and tempting fate – all of which represent rewards for the child in the form of successful dissociation (Moffitt 1993).

Adolescence-limited delinquents gradually desist from antisocial behaviour as they grow older and gain legitimate access to adult roles. Their motivation for engaging in antisocial behaviour decreases as the consequences of illegal behaviour begin to look more like punishment than reward – for example, a criminal record will restrict job opportunities, and drug abuse will prevent them from succeeding in their job or bringing up children. The ability to make this change suggests an adaptive behavioural flexibility which the life-course-persistent offender does not have (Moffitt 1993). Researchers in fact say adolescence-limited antisocial behaviour is so common that it should be considered normal rather than abnormal, while life-course-persistent antisocial behaviour, on the other hand, is a relatively rare form of psychopathology that resists modification. Much of what society experiences as 'offending' is a normal stage of adolescent development, such as testing boundaries and rules. In some cases the trespass may not be considered serious, but nevertheless some form of intervention is still needed to make youths take responsibility for their actions.

Antisocial behaviour has a variety of causes and develops in different ways, from childhood through to adolescence (Loeber et al. 1993). In South Africa, poverty is a major cause of antisocial behaviour of all kinds, particularly for offences associated with survival, such as theft. The majority of youth arrests are for property offences that are likely to be associated with poverty.

3. THE NEED FOR APPROPRIATE MANAGEMENT OF YOUNG OFFENDERS

Bearing in mind these developmental pathways, researchers put forward arguments for young offenders – perhaps particularly those whose antisocial behaviour is limited to adolescence – being treated differently from adult offenders. Some of these arguments are as follows:

- Young people are regarded as being less responsible for their actions than adults, although they are expected to become more responsible as they grow older.

- Early prevention, through appropriate corrective action and guidance, could prevent a life of continued crime.

- Children are more amenable to behavioural change than adults.

- Prison and detention damage young people's physical and emotional well-being and development.

- Institutionalisation and formal legal proceedings stigmatise the offender and this could promote further offending because the young person has been labelled a criminal.

- Prisons and detention facilities are often seen as 'schools of crime' where further offending could be learnt from fellow inmates.
  (Riley 1999:17)

4. INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL INSTRUMENTS FOR YOUTH JUSTICE

There are various international and regional instruments which provide directives for interventions with children at risk. Their purpose is largely to put responses to youth offending into a human rights and developmental perspective. Some of them, such as the Beijing Rules, provide specific guidelines for administering youth justice, such as for arrest, detention, decision making, institutionalisation and reintegration practices. The following table provides a brief overview of the main international and regional instruments.

TABLE 1.2: OVERVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL INSTRUMENTS FOR YOUTH JUSTICE

Instrument	Guidelines for the management of young offenders
The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990)	☐ All actions affecting persons under the age of 18 should be undertaken with their best interest in mind. ☐ Accused youth should be treated in a manner that promotes their sense of dignity and worth. ☐ Any action against the child should take into account his or her age and the desirability of promoting his or her reintegration into society. ☐ Measures are to be implemented to deal with young offenders without resorting to formal judicial proceedings.

Instrument	Guidelines for the management of young offenders
The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (Beijing Rules) (1985)	■ Decisions should always take into account the circumstances of both the offender and the offence. ■ Young offenders should have opportunities to develop themselves and to participate meaningfully in community life. ■ Accused youths should be given a fair and just trial (detailed guidelines are given). ■ Non-custodial resources such as the family, volunteers and the community should be mobilised to reduce the need for official intervention. ■ After the youth has been arrested, detention should be the last resort, and then only for the shortest time possible and preferably at places other than police stations or prisons. ■ The background of the accused youth and the circumstances of the offence should be investigated so as to help with decision making. ■ Institutionalisation should be undertaken only after careful consideration and should be for the shortest time possible. ■ Youth justice should form an integral part of national development within a holistic framework of social justice.
The United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (Riyadh Guidelines) (1990)	■ The family and community have a pivotal role to play in addressing youth offending. ■ Governments should enact and enforce laws and encourage procedures to promote and protect young people's rights and well-being.
The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-custodial Measures (Tokyo Rules) (1990)	■ Restricting an individual's liberty is justified only when necessary for public safety and just retribution. ■ Community-based alternatives to imprisonment can benefit both the offender and society. ■ Public participation should prevail in the dispensation of cases so as to access local resources and ensure the public's involvement in crime management.
The United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty (1990)	■ Institution-based activities should aim to strengthen and sustain young offenders' self-respect and sense of responsibility toward society. ■ Youths in detention should have access to schooling and training opportunities, recreational activities, contact with the wider community, and initiatives to promote their successful reintegration into society.

Instrument	Guidelines for the management of young offenders
The African Charter on Human and People's Rights (1986)	☐ Any form of inhumane and degrading treatment or punishment of young offenders is prohibited. ☐ The family – as the primary support structure of children and youth – should be preserved and developed.
The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990)	☐ Decisions about an accused or arrested youth should promote reformation, reintegration and social rehabilitation. ☐ A minimum age is to be set below which children are presumed not to have the capacity to break the law.

The rights-based intention of the above directives is echoed in recent efforts to establish a youth justice system in South Africa. The following section is a brief but necessary reflection on the philosophy of restorative justice, before looking at how it is applied in South Africa, through the Child Justice Bill (CJB).

5. RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Ways of dealing with young offenders should be based on a system of rights and responsibilities rather than retribution and institutionalisation. Restorative justice theory says that when an offence occurs, the balance between rights and responsibilities is upset and methods need to be found to restore the balance (Child Justice Alliance 2004a). The core concepts of restorative justice philosophy are conflict resolution, accountability and the active involvement of relevant stakeholders in the decision making process (IMC 1996:24; Umbreit 1994:2). Restorative justice stems from three beliefs:

■ Crime causes harm to victims, offenders and communities at large.

■ Victims, offenders and communities – not only the government – should have a say in how cases are handled, thereby promoting their ownership of the justice process.

■ While the government should take responsibility for preserving law and order, communities should establish peace.
(South African Law Commission [SALC] 1997a:6)

When addressing the conflicts that arise from offending, restorative justice tries to resolve its underlying causes (SALC 1997a:6). It aims to redefine crime so that it will be seen not as an offence against the state or breaking the law, but as an injury or wrong done to another person and, therefore, the broader community. Restorative justice gives the community an important role in ensuring that offenders accept responsibility for their behaviour and helping to reintegrate them successfully into society. The following table provides an overview of the main differences between retributive justice – which was largely followed before the mid-1990s in South Africa – and the restorative approach to dealing with young offenders.

13

TABLE 1.3: MAIN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RETRIBUTIVE AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Retributive justice	Restorative justice
Offending behaviour is a crime against the state	Offending behaviour is the violation of one person by another
The emphasis is on establishing blame	The emphasis is on problem solving and future obligations
In dealing with crime, relationships and processes are typically adversarial (i.e. 'us against them')	In dealing with crime, relationships and processes are typically interactive and involve negotiation (i.e. 'we are together in this')
Crime prevention takes place through punishment and deterrence	Crime prevention takes place through reconciliation and restoration
One social injury is replaced by another through punishment	Emphasis is on repairing a social injury
The community is represented by the state	The community plays an active role in the restorative process
The victim is largely ignored	The victim's rights and needs are recognised
The offender plays a passive role in the handling of his or her case	The offender is encouraged to take responsibility and make amends
The offence is viewed in legal terms	The offence is viewed in broader terms
The stigma of the offence is largely not removable	The stigma is removable through restorative action
Limited scope exists for repentance and forgiveness	Possibilities exist for repentance and forgiveness
Processes are largely undertaken by legal and social professionals	Community members are involved in the process

Source: Zehr in Umbreit (1994:3–4).

As can be seen in this table, some of the themes of restorative justice take a human rights approach to child justice. The aims of restorative justice and a rights-based approach to young offenders are evident in the CJB, which is described below.

6. YOUTH JUSTICE IN SOUTH AFRICA – THE CHILD JUSTICE BILL

6.1 Development and status

During the 1990s, South Africa experienced major social, economic, and political changes. The country's legal system was in dire need of transformation. In the course of changing the previous system of repressive law, where law and politics were largely undifferentiated, to a system of responsive law, that defines and protects public interest (Van Huyssteen in Howes 1996:33–34), it became evident that a youth justice system was urgently needed to curb the escalating incidence of youth offending (Juvenile Justice for South Africa 1994:2). At that time there were numerous obstacles in the way of appropriate management of youth offending in South Africa; for example:

- Systems were scattered among different ministries, departments and disciplines.

- Systems were pathology-oriented and did not focus on youths' and their families' own strengths and communities played little or no role in decision making.

- Statutory intervention received more attention than prevention or early intervention.

- Services were neglected in rural areas.
  (IMC 1996:13)

Previously, thousands of children awaited trial in abysmal conditions in prison and police cells, where they were often held for months, and received little or no legal representation or guidance. Additionally, parents were not consistently informed about the whereabouts of their children (Juvenile Justice for South Africa 1994:2). Campaigns and initiatives such as Justice for Children: No Child should be Caged, initiated by the Community Law Centre, Lawyers for Human Rights and the National Institution for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO) placed increasing pressure on the government to react to the inhumane management of young offenders.

It was only after a 13-year-old boy was murdered by his cell-mates in a Robertson police cell in October 1992 that the National Working Committee on Children in Detention was formed. The need for a comprehensive and effective youth justice system became imperative. Soon afterwards, NICRO and state diversion programmes were implemented at a number of centres, and seminars and conferences planned future strategies for dealing with children in conflict with the law. The main objective was to intervene at an early stage to save young people from unnecessarily entering the criminal justice system (IMC 1996:13–14).

At this time, no legal framework existed to govern child justice in general and diversion in particular. Those working with at-risk youth were confronted by inadequacies in the existing legislation that did make provisions for young offenders, i.e. the Criminal Procedure Act (51 of 1977), the Child Care Act (74 of 1983) and the Correctional Services Act (8 of 1959). In November 1994, the Juvenile Justice Drafting Consultancy published the first comprehensive response to the management of youth offending in South Africa. The document, entitled Juvenile Justice for South Africa: Proposals for Policy and Legislative Change, can be considered the first step toward the legal introduction of a dedicated child justice system. Seen broadly, the proposals dealt with procedures for the arrest, reception and referral of at-risk youth, and also commented on diversion approaches and the sentencing of young offenders (Juvenile Justice Drafting Consultancy 1994:1).

In May 1995, the Inter-ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk (IMC) was established to manage the process of transforming the child and youth care system (IMC 1996:8). The Committee's interim policy recommendations broadened the work of the Juvenile Justice Drafting Consultancy by, among other things, delineating the roles and responsibilities of various service providers in the youth justice sphere. It also set minimum standards, relating to early intervention and statutory processes, for facilitating transformation in a planned and effective manner (IMC 1998:8).

In 1996, the Departments of Correctional Services, Defence, Intelligence, Justice, Safety and Security, and Welfare launched the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS), which pointed out the absence of diversion and youth sentencing policies and called for the development of approaches to divert minor offenders away from the criminal justice system (1996:61). These sentiments were re-emphasised in the white papers and strategic plans of various government departments. Shortly after the introduction of the NCPS, the South African Law Reform Commission issued two papers that were relevant to youth justice. The first document – Sentencing Restorative Justice (1997b) – dealt with the crime victim's position and role in the justice process. It specifically referred to possibilities such as restitution, compensation, victim–offender mediation and family group conferences, which are today followed in diversion programming. The second – Juvenile Justice (1997) – focused particularly on age and criminal capacity, police powers and duties, pre-trial detention, diversion and sentencing.

In 1997, the Juvenile Justice Project Committee of the SALRC commenced an investigation into youth justice and published a discussion paper and a draft bill on the matter in 1999. The Committee consulted various role players in the criminal justice field, including children, in the drafting process. The final report was submitted to the Minister of Justice in August 2000. November 2001 saw its approval by Cabinet for introduction into Parliament, which took place in August 2002 as Bill number B49 of 2002 (Child Justice Alliance 2004a). The submission of the CJB represented a milestone in the child justice debate (Muntingh 2000:11). At present, the CJB has undergone a second reworking by the Portfolio Committee for Justice and Constitutional Development (Child Justice Alliance 2004a).

The CJB has already received support from major stakeholders and service providers, specifically because it reinforces respect for human rights by holding young offenders accountable for their actions. Moreover, the CJB endeavours to promote co-operation between the agencies that are responsible for implementing an effective child justice system (Pelser & Rauch 2003:24).

6.2 Intention and principles

The CJB will serve as the legislative framework for the management of youth offending in South Africa (Child Justice Alliance 2004b). It will ensure that South Africa adheres to international regulations for youth justice, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Beijing Rules. The system it advocates is not completely new but incorporates and strengthens some sections of existing laws that have, in the past, resulted in fragmented services for young offenders (Child Justice Alliance 2004a).

The broad aim of the CJB (2002) is to implement a criminal justice process that will protect the constitutional rights of minors accused of offending. It aims to promote the spirit of *ubuntu* in the child justice system by strengthening the dignity and worth of offending youth and reinforcing their respect for human rights and the

freedom of others by holding them responsible for their behaviour, thus safeguarding the interests of both the victim and the community. It aims to bring about reconciliation by means of a restorative justice approach that involves parents, families, victims and communities in the process of reintegrating young offenders into the community. Various principles guide the implementation of the CJB (2002), such as the following:

■ Accused children should, as far as possible, have a say in decisions that affect them.

■ Young people should be respected and communicated with in their language of choice.

■ The cultural values and beliefs of accused children are to be respected.

■ All activities undertaken in the administration of child justice should be completed speedily.

■ Young people have the right to assistance from their parents.

■ The outcomes of the offence must be geared to the circumstances of the child, the nature of the offence and the interests of society.

■ If children are without family support, efforts should be made to ensure that they receive the same treatment that children with a family would receive during the administration of justice.

6.3 Diversion

Diversion entails the channelling of *prima facie* cases away from formal prosecution into crime prevention and reintegration programmes (SALC 1997b:18; Child Justice Alliance 2004a). Diversion takes place after arrest and results in the young person participating in a programme that will help him or her to understand why the offence happened and how to repair the damage it caused. A critical outcome of diversion programmes is that the young person learns how to avoid doing the same thing again.

Despite the absence of formal legislation, diversion has been practised in South Africa since the early 1990s. Recently, various pronouncements by the courts have acknowledged its use and value. The NCPS (1996:61) notes that diversion is a viable way of dealing with young offenders because:

■ Justice procedures are costly and do not necessarily address the root causes of offending behaviour.

■ Many arrested children are first-time offenders and do not necessarily pose a threat to society.

■ Often youth offences are of a less serious nature, which does not warrant formal prosecution and/or institutionalisation.

■ Contact with the criminal justice system could harm the young person through, for example, awaiting trial in police custody and subsequent stigmatisation.

(See also section 3 above, on the need for appropriate management of young offenders.)

The argument for diversion is that, through appropriate guidance, at-risk youths can be saved from a life of continued crime. According to the CJB (2002), the purposes of diversion are to:

- Encourage the child to take responsibility for his or her action.

- Address the specific needs of the individual child.

- Promote the reintegration of the child into his or her family and community.

- Encourage the victims of offences to participate in the diversion process.

- Allow for reparation or restitution to the victim.

- Promote reconciliation between the offender and the victim.

- Save the child from being labelled as a result of being subjected to the justice system.

- Save the child from getting a criminal record.

In order to be diverted, the child has to admit to the offence and there has to be sufficient evidence to prosecute him or her. Additionally, the child and his or her parent or guardian have to agree to participate in the intervention. Potential cases have to be assessed to decide whether diversion will be appropriate and effective and to identify a suitable diversion programme (CJB 2002). Diversion options should:

- Promote the dignity and well-being of the youth, develop his or her sense of self-worth and enable him or her to make positive contributions to society.

- Not be exploitative or harmful to the youth's physical or mental health.

- Be imposed according to the age and maturity of the youth.

- Not interfere with attending school.
  (Child Justice Bill 2002)

Diversion programmes should teach the participants useful skills and promote reconciliation and healing with stakeholders. They should promote empathy with the victim or victims and an understanding of the broader effects of the offence (CJB 2002). The CJB allows for various innovative approaches to diversion and sentencing. Each method aims to ensure an individualised response to young offenders (Child Justice Alliance 2004c). The following methods may be employed to divert a young offender away from the formal justice system:

- Orders related to good behaviour, school attendance, spending time with family, reporting regularly to a specified person or association with peers that can contribute to the youth's positive behaviour.

- An oral or written apology to the victim or victims of the offence.

- Formal cautioning with or without conditions.

- Compulsory attendance at a school or vocational skills training facility.

- Referral to counselling or therapy services.

- Restitution symbolically, financially or by replacing the item or items lost or damaged.

- Community service without remuneration.

In addition to the above-mentioned options, the CJB (2002) emphasises the value of family group conferencing (FGC) and mediation between offender and victim as mechanisms for promoting restorative justice. Both approaches to diversion should result in a detailed plan of action for the young person to take responsibility for his or her actions and amend the wrongdoing.

6.4 Sentencing and reintegration

According to the CJB (2002), the purpose of sentencing is to encourage the young person to understand the impact of the offence and be accountable for the harm it caused. Sentencing must always be individually decided, that is, it must be appropriate to the young person's circumstances and in proportion to the extent of the offence. Supervision, guidance and treatment must help the reintegration process. In general, sentences could entail or include the following (Child Justice Alliance 2004c):

■ Community-based sentences, such as vocational skills training, community service and reparation to the victim.

■ Family group conferences, with the outcome plan being endorsed or altered by the court.

■ Correctional supervision for children older than 14 years.

■ Referral to a residential facility other than the child's home.

■ Referral to prison for children older than 14 years.

■ Postponed and suspended sentences, with or without conditions.

■ Penalties in lieu of a fine or imprisonment, such as monetary compensation or symbolic restitution.
   (Child Justice Alliance 2004c)

6.5 Implications for diversion and reintegration services

The above shows that the CJB sets out to safeguard and promote the rights of offending youth as enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa and relevant international and regional policies. It advocates that any action or decision affecting young offenders should acknowledge and value their individual backgrounds and dignity. Some further requirements for diversion and reintegration services are:

■ Programmes must focus on development, to strengthen the self-worth and responsibility of at-risk youth. They should promote insight and understanding so as to prevent further offending behaviour.

■ As far as possible, a variety of programmes must be available to best meet the needs of individual children.

■ Because referral decisions must take into consideration the circumstances of the offence and the individual's needs and background, they must be based on proper assessment and the suitability of the programme's focus and content for the individual case must be considered.

■ Service providers must have the right skills for running the programmes.

■ As far as possible, the programmes must promote reconciliation with stakeholders and involve the community, the family and the victim in righting the wrong that was done.

Although norms and standards for diversion programmes in South Africa are currently being developed, the extent to which the intentions of the CJB are realised by these programmes varies. This variation is explored in the chapters that follow.

7. CONCLUSION

The reality of youth offending in South Africa poses a number of challenges to legal, social and educational systems. The government cannot face these challenges alone but relies on the innovation and commitment of civil society organisations. When the CJB is enacted it should help standardise alternatives to institutionalising youth offenders and promote the use of these alternatives.

Endnotes

1   Efforts were made to obtain more recent statistics of child and youth offending from the police services, but these were unsuccessful owing to the moratorium on crime statistics.

2   The figures for 2002 are projected, based on the year's number of arrests during the first semester.

3   This discussion stems from work undertaken by Van der Merwe and Dawes (2004). Sincere gratitude is extended for their permission to use the information.

References

African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. Doc. CAB/LEG/67/3 rev. 5, 21 I.L.M. 58 (1982). Organisation of African Unity.

African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Doc. CAB/LEG/24.9/49 (1990). Organisation of African Unity.

Avert. 2005. HIV/AIDS orphans statistics. http://www.avert.org/aidsorphans.htm (Accessed 12 January 2005).

Babbie E & Mounton J. 2001. *The practice of social research – South African edition*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Bolowana A. 2004. Aggressive crimes on the increase among youth. *The Star*. 26 July 2004. p. 2.

Brooks-Gunn J, Duncan GJ, Leventhal T & Aber LJ (eds). 1997. *Neighbourhood poverty: policy implications in studying neighbourhoods*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. 1–23.

CJB (Child Justice Bill) 2002. B49–2002. Republic of South Africa.

Cassiem S, Perry H, Sadan M & Streak J. 2000. *Are poor children being put first? Child poverty and the budget*. Cape Town: IDASA.

Child Justice Alliance. 2004a. The Child Justice Bill – Synopsis 2003. http://www.childjustice.org.za (Accessed 18 August 2004).

Child Justice Alliance. 2004b. Why do we need the Child Justice Bill? http://www.childjustice.org.za (Accessed 4 February 2004).

Child Justice Alliance. 2004c. What are the different types of sentence envisaged by the Child Justice Bill? http://www.childjustice.org.za (Accessed 4 February 2004).

Dodge KA, Pettit GS & Bates JE. 1994. Socialisation mediators of the relation between socioeconomic status and child conduct problems. *Child development*. 65:649–655.

Donald D, Dawes A & Louw J (eds). 2000. *Addressing childhood adversity*. Cape Town: David Philip.

Emmett AB et al. 2004. The status of the youth. A report for the Umsobomvu Youth Fund. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.

Farren T. 2001. Diversion projects critical for rehabilitating young offenders. *Mail and Guardian*. 5 July 2001. p. 10.

Garbarino J. 1992. The meaning of poverty in the world of children. *American Behavioural Scientist*. 35:220–237.

Garrett P, Nq'andu N & Ferron J. 1994. Poverty experience of young children and the quality of their home environment. *Child Development*. 65:331–345.

Gauvain M & Cole M (eds). 1997. *Readings on the development of children*. New York: WH Freeman.

Howes F. 1996. The contribution of social work in solving the crime problem. *Acta Criminologica*. 9(1):33–39.

IMC (Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk). 1996. *Interim policy recommendations*. Pretoria: Department of Social Development.

IMC (Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk). 1998. *Minimum standards for the child and youth care system*. Pretoria: Department of Social Development.

Juvenile Justice Drafting Consultancy. 1994. *Juvenile justice for South Africa: proposals for policy and legislative change*. Cape Town: Juvenile Justice Drafting Consultancy.

Kollapen J. 2002. Prisons crisis cannot be ignored. *The Star*. 25 September 2002.

Kurtz A. 2002. What works for delinquency? The effectiveness for teenage offending behaviour. *Journal of Forensic Psychiatry*. 13(3):671–692.

Ladikos A. 1997. The experiential world of youthful victims: an appeal to restorative justice in the new South Africa. *Acta Criminologica*. 10(2):38–46.

Loeber R & Dishion T. 1983. Early predictors of male delinquency: a review. *Psychological Bulletin*. 94:68–99.

Loeber R & Farrington DP (eds). 1998. *Serious and violent juvenile offenders: risk factors and successful interventions*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Loeber R, Farrington DP & Waschbusch DA. 1998. Serious and violent juvenile offenders. In Loeber R & Farrington DP (eds). *Serious and violent juvenile offenders: risk factors and successful interventions*. Thousand Oaks: Sage. 13–29.

Loeber R, Wung P, Keenan K, Giroux B, Stouthamer-Loeber M & Van Kammen B. 1993. Developmental pathways in disruptive child behaviour. *Development and Psychopathology*. 5:101–131.

Louw I. 2002. Embarrassing plight of children in detention. *Business Day*. 16 September 2002. p. 2.

Louw J. 2000. Improving practice through evaluation. In Donald D, Dawes A & Louw J (eds). *Addressing childhood adversity*. Cape Town: David Philip. 60–74.

Moffitt TE. 1993. Adolescence-limited and life-course-persistent antisocial behaviour: a developmental taxonomy. *Psychological Review*. 100:674–701.

Muntingh LM. 2003. *Children in conflict with the law: a compendium of child justice statistics: 1995–2001*. Cape Town: National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders.

Muntingh L. 2004. Personal correspondence between Louise Ehlers (OSF-SA) and Lukas Muntingh (NICRO).

NCPS (National Crime Prevention Strategy). 1996. Pretoria: Departments of Correctional Services, Defence, Intelligence, Justice, Safety and Security and Welfare.

Oelofse L. 2001. More city children go for crime. *Pretoria News*. 11 June 2001. p. 3.

Odongo G. 2003. Public hearings by the justice and constitutional development portfolio committee on the Child Justice Bill. *Article 40*. 5(1):1–2.

OSF-SA (Open Society Foundation for South Africa). 2004. Criminal Justice Initiative. http://www.osf.org.za/CJI/cji_detail.asp?ID=92 (Accessed 14 May 2004).

Patterson GR, DeBaryshe B & Ramsey E. 1997. A developmental perspective on antisocial behaviour. In Gauvain M & Cole M (eds). *Readings on the development of children*. New York: WH Freeman. 263–272.

Pelser E & Rauch J. 2001. South Africa's Criminal Justice System: Policy and Priorities. http://www.csvr.org.za/papers/papep&jr.htm (Accessed 12 November 2003).

Pereira P. 2000. Wette se koste bereken. *Finansies en Tegniek*. 52(11):9.

Pollitt E. 1994. Poverty and child development: relevance of research in developing countries to the United States. *Child Development*. 65:283–295.

Prinsloo JH & Geldenhuys SF. 1991. 'n Spesefieke verklaringsperspektief met betrekking tot jeugmisdaad (proto-teoriese model). *Acta Criminologica*. 4(1):30–35.

Radebe H. 2000. Concern over ever younger prison inmates. *The Star*. 30 May 2000. p. 3.

Riley V. 1999. Our youth is our future. *Nexus*. June 1999. p. 17.

Rutter M, Giller H & Hagell A. 1998. *Antisocial behaviour by young people*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

SALC (South African Law Commission). 1997a. Sentencing restorative justice. *Issue paper 7, Project 82*. Pretoria: SALC.

SALC (South African Law Commission). 1997a. Juvenile Justice. *Issue paper 9, Project 106*. Pretoria: SALC.

Sampson RJ & Groves BG. 1989. Community structure and crime: testing social disorganisation theory. *American Journal of Sociology*. 94(4):774–802.

Sampson RJ & Morenoff JD. 1997. Ecological perspectives on the neighbourhood contexts of poverty: past and present. In Brooks-Gunn J, Duncan GJ, Leventhal T & Aber LJ (eds). *Neighbourhood poverty: policy implications in studying neighbourhoods*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. 1–23.

Sloth-Nielsen J. 2004. What does the new Correctional Services Act say about children in prison? *Article 40*. 6(3):3.

Sloth-Nielsen J & Gallinetti J. 2004. *Child justice in Africa, a guide to good practice in Africa*. Cape Town: University of the Western Cape (Community Law Centre).

Michaels J. 2004. 73 000 youngsters in SA jails. *Cape Argus*. 16 June 2004. p. 1.

Umbreit MS. 1994. *Victim meets offender: the impact of restorative justice and mediation*. New York: Willow Tree.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989. New York: United Nations.

United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice. Resolution 40/33 of 29 November 1985. New York: United Nations.

United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency. Resolution 45/112 of 14 December 1990. New York: United Nations.

United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-custodial Measures. Resolution 45/110 of 14 December 1990. New York: United Nations.

United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty. Resolution 45/113 of 14 December 1990. New York: United Nations.

Van Dyk C. 2004. Nie net arm kinders raak betrokke by gewelddadige oortredings nie, sê NIMRO. *Burger*. 06 May 2004. p. 8.

Van der Merwe AP & Dawes. 2004. *The development of minimum standards for diversion programmes: a literature review*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council.

Van der Merwe AP & Dawes A. 1999. Prosocial and antisocial tendencies in children exposed to community violence. *Southern African Journal of Child and Adolescent Mental Health*. 12:19–37.

Part 1

COMMUNITY, FAMILY AND VICTIM-FOCUSED PROGRAMMES

OVERVIEW

Traditionally, justice was retributive and caused shame and stigma (Fivaz 2002:6). In contrast, restorative justice insists on responsibility, problem solving, dialogue and negotiation between the offender, his or her family, the victim and the broader community, and repairing the material and psychological damage victims and communities suffer as the result of an offence (Umbreit 1994:2).

In South Africa, family, community and victim-focused diversion programmes largely take the form of family group conferences (FGCs) and community service.

Community service originates from Community Service Orders that were introduced in the early 1980s to deal with offences that did not warrant prosecution (Muntingh 1997:29). The aim of community service is not to punish young people but to allow them to provide a service to the community as compensation for the wrongdoing. Programmes entail a predetermined number of hours that are served at a community-based organisation. A drawback of community service initiatives is that they usually exclude the offender's family and the victim from the restorative process.

In the 1980s, FGCs took shape informally when concerned practitioners mediated cases of children accused of committing offences in the rural Western Cape. They wanted to find alternatives to corporal punishment – a form of punishment that, at the time, disturbed both justice officials and community members (Farren 2002:30). Today, family group conferencing is practised by an array of diversion service providers throughout the country. In general, the aim of FGCs is to provide a platform for the victim and the offender to discuss the events surrounding the offence, and its consequences, so as to develop a mutually beneficial strategy to remedy it (Kuloane 2002:6; South African Law Commission [SALC] 1997:12). The main aim of the FGC approach is to transform fear and anger into forgiveness and remorse (Farren 2002:30). The FGC works as follows:

- The young person acknowledges the offence and is referred to the programme by the court.

- Information is gathered about the offence from all stakeholders – the offender, his or her family, and the victim.

- Assessments are made to decide whether an FGC will benefit the child and relevant stakeholders.

- All parties concerned are prepared for the FGC by having the procedures explained to them.

- The FGC is undertaken. First, the facts and feelings related to the offence are discussed and then a realistic plan for restitution is drafted and signed.

- Follow-up procedures are put in place to ensure that the youth carries out the planned restitution. If the youth does not do this, he or she is referred back to court for alternative measures to be initiated.
  (Carrillo & Carter 2001:5; Kuloane 2002:6; Umbreit 1994:7–9)

FGCs demand effective listening and communication skills from implementers, since they have to liaise with both the offender and the victim, build a rapport with them, and gain their trust (Umbreit 1994:8). It is of the utmost importance that both the offender and the victim voluntarily agree to the intervention. If victims are coerced to participate they could be re-victimised by the experience (Umbreit 1994:8). Additionally, some situations do not warrant an FGC. It may happen that the victim does not wish to interact with the perpetrator owing to fears of

re-victimisation, threat and intimidation. Others may question whether the offender sincerely wishes to make amends for the wrongdoing. Also, the victim may be angry and retaliate against the youth too strongly during the conference, thereby derailing prospects of finding an amicable solution (Carrillo & Carter 2001:7–8; Umbreit 1994:58).

Besides the offender and the victim, persons entitled to attend FGCs include the youth's parents or guardian, the arresting officer and a suitable number of family and friends of both the victim and offender (Muntingh & Monaheng 1998:14; The Juvenile Justice Drafting Consultancy 1994:45).

PROGRAMME ASSUMPTIONS

Family, community and victim-focused diversion programmes are based on the restorative justice philosophy. In the past, state-sanctioned punishment focused on the actions of the offender, denied victim participation and required only the passive involvement of the offender (Pule 2002:9; Umbreit 1994:2). This kind of punishment had little value for victims other than knowing that the perpetrator had got what he deserved and was safely incarcerated. Seen within a broader African context, victims could be considered the unheard voice in the judicial system (Cachalia 1998:11). As Muntingh and Monaheng (1998:13) rightfully note:

> Victims often take a back seat or become witnesses; their needs and feelings are not substantively addressed… There is little opportunity for healing the wounds caused by the crime committed, largely because victim and offender don't speak to each other.

The offender's family also has a stake in remedying the wrongdoing, particularly given their responsibility for the young person's upbringing. When a crime has been committed, the entire family is affected. By participating in the restorative justice process they realign their responsibilities toward the child (Muntingh & Monaheng 1998:14). In the spirit of *ubuntu*, the community is also tasked with participating in children's development (Fivaz 2002:7), especially when they are at risk. The SALC (1997:31) notes that crime affects the community and emphasises its role in managing it:

> Crime is best controlled when members of the community are the primary controllers through active participation in persuading offenders to accept responsibility for their actions, and, having done so, through concerted efforts of participation, reintegrate the offender back into the community of law abiding citizens.

VALUE

Family, community and victim-focused programmes have the following benefits:

- Programmes are highly flexible, to respond to the needs of individual at-risk children.
- Opportunities are created for offenders to take responsibility and make amends.
- The offender is confronted with the impact of his or her offence.
- The victim and the community are involved in the justice process, thereby humanising the administration of justice.

- The quality of justice, as experienced by offenders and victims, is improved.

- FGCs promote empathy for victim and empower the victim.

- FGCs make it easier to learn ways of addressing conflict.

- FGCs result in concrete plans to remedy the wrongdoing instead of repaying a debt to society in an abstract way.

- The personal contact between the victim and the offender during the FGC may strengthen restitution activities.

- FGCs provide an opportunity for the victim to achieve closure and healing.

- FGCs work to restore relationships and preserve the family.
  (Pule 2002:9; Carrillo & Carter 2001:12; Muntingh & Monaheng 1998:14; Umbreit 1994:2–5)

Nevertheless, Van der Merwe and Dawes (2004:20), in their review of the outcomes of various diversion programmes, say research provides mixed findings about how effective restoration-based programmes are in reducing the chances of re-offending. An evaluation of the Canberra Reintegrative Shaming Experiments in Australia noted a decrease in offending rates by violent offenders, but the intervention failed to significantly reduce repeat offending by young property offenders and shoplifters (Sherman, Strang & Woods in Van der Merwe & Dawes 2004:22). They note that:

> These findings… have implications for diversionary conferencing in South Africa, where the majority of juvenile offenders are apprehended for this type of offence.

Furthermore, a research follow-up study found that, after six years, three-fifths of young offenders in the sample re-offended, and it noted that re-offenders were more likely to report having:

- No people who cared about them and to whom they were close in their lives, or very few.

- Experienced low levels of parental monitoring, ineffective parental discipline and unrewarding relationships with their parents.

- Engaged early in life in antisocial behaviour (including offending).

- Achieved poorly at school.

- Little involvement in community life, such as sports clubs.

- Failure to achieve occupational success, i.e. training and employment.
  (Maxwell & Morris in Van der Merwe & Dawes 2004:22)

CHALLENGES AND SHORTFALLS

Community service as a stand-alone intervention fails to instil in young offenders a feeling of empathy for the victims or to concretely compensate victims for their loss. Besides this, if the reasons for community service are not properly explained to them, young people may view it as punishment. FGCs, on the other hand, face the following challenges:

- The possibility of secondary victimisation cannot be ruled out. Facilitators should ensure that victims are properly informed and prepared for the conference with the accused youth.

■ If not well prepared, programmes could result in physical fights and emotional attacks.

■ There should be sufficient follow-up to ensure that the planned restitution is adequately carried out.

■ Uncooperative attitudes from either party could derail the entire endeavour.

■ An FGC could fail to meet the expectations of the victim, thereby undermining the empowering process.

■ To prevent a return to retributive justice, FGCs aim to achieve a balance between the rights of victims and the principles of restorative justice, but they may struggle to achieve this goal.
(Pule 2002:9; Carrillo & Carter 2001:3; Umbreit 1994:97–102; 154–155)

References

Cachalia A. 1998. Sound practices to survive crime and violence. In Camerer L & Kotze S (eds). *Special report on victim empowerment in South Africa*. Halfway House: Institute for Security Studies. 11–24.

Camerer L & Kotze S (eds). 1998. *Special report on victim empowerment in South Africa*. Halfway House: Institute for Security Studies.

Carrillo R & Carter J. 2001. *Guidelines for conducting family team conferences*. San Francisco: Family Violence Prevention Fund.

Farren T. 2002. Justice without jail. *Mail and Guardian*. 18 July 2002. p. 30.

Fivaz L. 2002. Changing the mind-set. *Article 40*. 4(4):6–7.

Juvenile Justice Drafting Consultancy. 1994. *Juvenile justice for South Africa – proposals for policy and legislative change*. Cape Town: Allies.

Kuloane T. 2002. Victim–offender mediations rule the day. *Article 40*. 4(2):6–7.

Muntingh L & Monaheng A. 1998. Family matters. How young offenders' families engage in restorative justice. *Track Two*. October 1998:13–14.

Muntingh LM & Shapiro R (eds). 1997. *NICRO diversion options* (3rd edn). Cape Town: National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders.

Muntingh LM. 1997. Pre-trial Community Service. In Muntingh LM & Shapiro R (eds). *NICRO diversion options* (3rd edn). Cape Town: National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders.

Pule B. 2002. An experience with a family group conference. *Article 40*. 4(2):9.

SALC (South African Law Commission). 1997. Sentencing restorative justice (compensation for victims of crime and victim empowerment). *Issue paper 7, Project 82*.

Umbreit MS. 1994. *Victim meets offender – the impact of restorative justice and mediation*. New York: Willow Tree.

Van der Merwe AP & Dawes. 2004. *The development of minimum standards for diversion programmes: a literature review*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council.

2

FAMILY GROUP CONFERENCING

The Restorative Justice Centre[1]

The Restorative Justice Centre (RJC) promotes the principles of restorative justice through delivering offender-focused programmes. It works to reintegrate youth offenders by means of victim–offender mediation and drama therapy. This chapter explores the RJC's approach to family group conferencing (FGC) as a means of addressing youth offending.

1. THE ORGANISATION

1.1 Background

During the mid-1990s, the Inter-ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk (IMC) explored the feasibility of FGCs as a means of managing youth offending in South Africa. Two social workers joined an IMC task team to learn more about FGCs through interacting with New Zealand justice officials (RJC 2001a:2). This collaboration sparked the establishment of the RJC in 1999. RJC services include FGCs, victim–offender mediation, and drama therapy as well as rural diversion services in Mpumalanga.

1.2 Vision and aims

The RJC aims to communicate and demonstrate the restorative justice philosophy wherever possible (RJC 2003a:1):

> We want to see victims healed. We want to see offenders take responsibility and put the wrong right. Once this has happened, we want them accepted and reintegrated in the community. We want Restorative Justice values to be reflected in every area of society.

It supports the principles of restorative justice by challenging society's attitude to punishment (RJC 2003a:2), and it values:

■ Justice, social justice, reconciliation and healing.

■ Equity before the law, human dignity and freedom of expression.

■ The strengthening of the justice system and local communities.

(2003b:1)

In promoting restorative justice, the RJC pursues the following objectives:

■ Providing education and training to practitioners in the child justice field.

■ Rendering direct services to young offenders.

■ Capacitating other organisations to initiate restorative justice programmes.

■ Sourcing funding for other organisations.

■ Engaging in advocacy.

■ Constantly seeking to better understand the meaning of justice, reconciliation and healing in South African contexts.

(2001b:1)

1.3 Organisational structure and resources

A board of trustees takes decisions with regards to the RJC's strategies and activities. All RJC staff members are accountable to this board through the organisation's executive director. RJC also has a reference board made up of legal practitioners, social workers, probation officers and criminologists that advises them about policies and services, and contributes to the organisation's credibility and focus. In terms of sustainability, FGCs require extensive communication, human and transport resources and the RJC depends on donor and government funding to ensure that it delivers quality services. In order to ensure the ongoing viability of the organisation, the RJC needs to constantly ensure that its programmes complement official directives, particularly the policies of the Department of Social Services (DoSS).

2. THE FAMILY GROUP CONFERENCING PROGRAMME

Seen broadly, the RJC provides diversion and probation services and also advocacy and training for justice, safety and social service officials. The year 2001/2002 saw more than 230 persons receiving training in restorative justice. Between April 2001 and March 2002, approximately 1 100 people benefited from the RJC's awareness and advocacy activities (RJC 2002a:3). In collaboration with the Tshwane Justice Alliance (TJA), the RJC was recently contracted to provide adult probation services in the greater Pretoria area on behalf of the DoSS. The following discussion focuses on the FGC services.

2.1 Rationale and aim

The FGC concept recognises that offending behaviour does not only affect the victim. Because it is embedded in the restorative justice philosophy it gives the offender, the victim and the community a say in the outcomes of a case. Conventional victim–offender mediation excludes the community from the restorative process, but FGCs provide an opportunity for all parties involved in and affected by the offence to discuss it and find a way forward, including a plan for redressing the offence. As part of the broader victim–offender mediation framework, an FGC has the following benefits (RJC n.d.):

For the offender it:

- Provides an opportunity to confront the reality and impact of his or her behaviour.

- Helps the offender to accept responsibility for the offence.

- Allows an opportunity to apologise.

- Explores the offender's situation and needs.

- Allows alternative ways of putting the wrong right.

For the victim it:

- Creates an opportunity to have questions answered.

- Provides an empowering experience.

- Gives a say in righting the wrong.

- Provides the possibility of restitution.

For the community it:

- Allows for participation in dealing with offending.

- Provides a chance to voice their concerns.

- Creates alternative options within existing sentencing frameworks.

- Promotes the credibility of the justice system at community level.

- Provides a meaningful experience of dealing with crime.

2.2 Entry criteria and profile of participants

The following criteria are used to refer offending youths to the RJC's FGC programme:

- The young person has to admit to the offence and agree to participate in diversion.

- The offence has to be the first that he or she has committed.

- The offence has to be of a minor nature.

Most crimes, except rape, murder and attempted murder, can be considered suitable for FGCs. In general, probation officers and prosecutors use FGCs in cases where the offence occurred in a family or friendship setting, mainly to preserve relationships. Referral officers usually contact the RJC to discuss the appropriateness of a case before a young person is referred for FGC support.

Shortly after the arrest a probation officer assesses the young person, collecting background information, contact particulars of the child's parents or guardian, details of the crime and a date for appearance in court. When the case is referred to the RJC, a date is stipulated for feedback to the court about the intervention, and RJC facilitators are usually asked to contact the children and their parents to arrange the FGC intervention.

FGCs mostly involve offenders of between 12 and 19 years, usually children who attend school but whose home environments are abusive and dysfunctional. More boys than girls are referred for diversion intervention. The boys referred to the programme have usually been charged with housebreaking, theft and assault, while girls are mainly referred on charges of shoplifting. Cases of arson and domestic violence have also been recorded. Nearly all participants are from suburbs in and around Pretoria, mostly from poor socioeconomic backgrounds. In RJC's experience, the victim and the offender are most often known to each other.

2.3 Programme content and implementation

FGCs require a number of meetings to ensure that they are effective and lead to decisions being implemented. They can be undertaken in cases that involve more than one offender or victim – the programme usually accommodates between 6 and 15 people. The intervention has three phases (RJC 2003c):

Phase 1: Preparation

Once a referral is received from court, the facilitator meets with the young person and his or her family. This first meeting is to determine their perception of what happened and to find out whether the child will take responsibility for the offence. The FGC process is explained and the offender and his or her parents are given the choice of participating in it. If they agree, the facilitator attempts to identify perceptions of the offence that the offender and the family members' have in common. This shared reality is then communicated to the victim at a similar meeting

Whenever possible, help is obtained from external resource persons. For example, a fireman can be helpful when dealing with an arson case. These people can explain, from a professional point of view, the impact of the crime on the community and the environment.

The preparatory phase can take up to ten hours to complete and involves numerous phone calls and visits to stakeholders.

Phase 2: The conference

Once the voluntary participation of both groups is secured (an equal number of representatives from both groups must attend, to ensure the proceedings are fair), a time and place for the FGC is arranged. FGCs are mostly

conducted in the community to ensure that they are accessible to all participants. Venues are usually hired from schools and churches at a nominal fee.

To start the proceedings, the facilitator welcomes all parties and acknowledges their relationship to the offender and the victim, following which the process for discussing the offence, its impact and possible plans for redress is outlined. The offender is then given an opportunity to describe the offence, including the thought processes that preceded and accompanied the crime, and his or her understanding of its effects. Next, the victim relates his or her experience of the crime. The victim's supporters, usually friends and family members, are then given a chance to report their perception of the offence and its effect on the victim. The offender's supporters are also allowed to express their thoughts and feelings about the incident. This includes their thoughts on what may have caused the child in question to offend. Finally, the offender is given an opportunity to respond to what has been said by the other participants.

During the conference, the facilitator's job is to:

- Record the proceedings and the participants' main views.

- Steer discussions back to the issue at hand whenever appropriate.

- Clarify statements through rephrasing should a participant find them difficult to understand.

- Equalise participation by guarding against domineering participants.

- Pace the meeting by avoiding lengthy and detailed descriptions.

- Identify interpersonal and communication problems.

- Manage potential conflict.

Once all parties have related their experiences, views and feelings about the offence, a strategy to amend the wrongdoing is devised. The victim outlines what he or she expects in this regard, followed by the young offender responding to all the suggestions that are made. The facilitator must ensure that that all parties agree before writing up the agreement. The conference usually takes two and a half hours. During this process it is the responsibility of the facilitator to ensure that the possibility of secondary victimisation is minimised.

The agreement should strike a balance between the seriousness of the offence and the acts that are to remedy it. Various options exist, such as a written or spoken apology, performing duties for the victim or at a community-based structure, and attending life skills and specialised programmes, such as drug rehabilitation. Since children under the age of 15 are not allowed to undertake activities classified as labour, reparation tasks must be part of their regular functioning, such as daily chores, and they must always allow for positive experiences rather than a sense of being punished.

Phase 3: Reporting and follow-up

The final agreement is forwarded to the court for consideration. Once the charges against the child are withdrawn, the facilitator must ensure that he or she honours the agreement. Any deviation on the part of the young person means he or she will be referred back to the court and the case will be reopened.

A successful FGC demands substantial work and can be emotionally draining. In total, the first and second phases take between 16 and 20 hours to complete. Unwilling stakeholders often delay logistical arrangements. Each FGC is unique and presents its own challenges to facilitators.

An FGC has an enormous effect on a young person. He or she is vulnerable during the final meeting and exposed to various views and comments, and as a result needs constant support throughout the process.

Staff and volunteers

A diversion manager oversees the work of the FGC manager. A large resource pool of facilitators is required to cope with increases in the demand for FGCs. The FGC programme is implemented by ten facilitators, all with either a social work, criminology or psychology background. Besides their formal training, the RJC trains them in restorative justice in general and the processes related to FGCs in particular. Training usually takes four days. It incorporates the topic of sentencing options and their relevance to FGCs, and focuses on communication and facilitation skills.

The RJC regards a professional qualification as necessary for doing diversion work because specific skills are often needed to help the participants work through the trauma caused by the offence. A social work background is also considered appropriate, because to intervene in dysfunctional environments requires an understanding of personal and family dynamics, and social work training also equips the programme facilitator with the skills to do assessments of referred youth and to appear in court to communicate the outcomes of a case.

RJC facilitators must have excellent communication skills and be able to show compassion, empathy and the commitment to support people involved in or influenced by crime. Good listening and facilitation skills are more important than a particular gender or age profile, although most FGC facilitators are in their late twenties or early thirties, an age range which makes them approachable for all parties involved in the intervention.

Partnerships

The RJC has a close working relationship with the DoSS to ensure ongoing referral of diverted children to its FGC programme and other services. It also collaborates with other NGOs working in the youth justice and restorative justice field. In addition to a partnership with the National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO)[2], the RJC works with the Youth Development Outreach (YDO) in Eersterus, Pretoria. YDO's diversion services focus largely on the acquisition of life skills, followed by mentoring support over a six-month period.

The need to co-ordinate youth diversion services in the Tshwane area resulted in NICRO, YDO and the RJC establishing the above mentioned Tshwane Justice Alliance, better known as the TJA. The three organisations share the same vision, but follow different approaches to achieve a common goal. This network benefits the delivery of diversion services in Tshwane – it makes the organisations aware of each other's programmes, which facilitates teamwork in dealing with youth offending in the area, creating opportunities for sharing information and training and for inter-organisation referrals.[3] Sharing programme information avoids an overlap in service delivery.

The TJA is also valuable for the three partners in that it serves as a platform to communicate with government departments and assists in standardising monitoring and evaluation systems across different organisations. Working in partnership also means that larger projects can be taken on. For example, by combining their strengths, the organisations in the partnership won a tender to provide adult probation services in the Pretoria area.

Costs

For the period 2003/2004, the RJC put R160 847 towards its diversion programming. The FGC intervention costs R1 675 per participant if overheads are taken into account and R1 385 if they are not.

2.4 Monitoring and evaluation

The RJC submits a welfare programme to the DoSS on an annual basis. This forms the basis for decision making in respect of ongoing funding of their diversion services. Departmental officials provide input on this annual plan and make recommendations with regard to how the RJC service can best be aligned with government planning. In terms of the funding agreement between the DoSS and the RJC, quarterly reports are submitted that reflect the number of children who have participated in the FGC programme. The RJC provides the court with individual reports on the outcome of each intervention.

Follow-up takes the form of RJC officials contacting ex-participants and their parents to determine any changes in attitude and behaviour. Feedback is, from time to time, received in writing from the parents of diverted youth. RJC officials often interact with the Department of Education when a participant has been expelled from school. Re-admission is facilitated on the basis of the child's participation in a diversion programme. Part of the RJC's aftercare service entails helping participants' families deal with other problems. This includes conducting additional interviews with family members and referring them to appropriate resources, such as SANCA and professional counsellors (RJC 2003b:2).

During 2001/2002, the RJC managed 15 FGC and victim–offender mediation cases (RJC 2002a:2). The following year there was a 40% increase in the number of mediation referrals (RJC 2003b:1). On average, between two and three FGCs are undertaken per month. RJC officials noted that most children complete diversion interventions. The reasons for defaulting are usually illness or relocation. No formal evaluation of the RJC's FGC programme was available at the time of writing.

2.5 Key lessons and views

The following are some opinions offered by people involved it the programme.

■ Diversion programmes need to be sufficiently funded to ensure a comprehensive service.

Diversion programmes are not adequately funded, but its success is determined in terms of the charges being withdrawn. This is only half of the process, as the real challenges kick in when the child is back in the community and confronted by the same issues. (Stakeholder)

■ Aftercare is as important as the intervention itself.

> I believe that the diversion component must be as strong as the aftercare. But what usually happens is that aftercare is an afterthought. (Stakeholder)

■ A quality diversion service is required to secure referrals and good working relationships with stakeholders.

> They put in a lot of effort. The RJC does diversion the right way. (Referral officer)

■ The assessment of referred youth must be comprehensive in order to inform programme content and intervention strategies.

> If it so happens that a pre-interview is not conducted, we always run into trouble because we lose out on important information that could help us assess the needs of the child. (RJC official)

3. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Preparation can be seen as one of the most critical elements in the successful implementation of an FGC. This includes a careful assessment of the individual who has been referred as well as clear communication with other interested parties. It was noted earlier in the chapter that in the case of the RJC, court officials contact the FGC manager to discuss the suitability of individual cases for FGC intervention before a referral is made. This can be regarded as good practice given the importance of proper assessment and the referral of children to appropriate programmes based on their individual circumstances. The RJC model also highlights the importance of assessing the needs of all other participants in the FGC process given that the success of the intervention will depend on the co-operation of everyone who was affected by or had a stake in the offence.

In terms of programme implementation, the RJC initiative appears to follow a standardised approach in respect of the Family Group Conferencing process itself. The programme's objectives and activities are firmly rooted in the restorative justice paradigm and the principles of reparation and reconciliation. However, despite this solid foundation in restorative justice philosophy, the RJC has yet to show empirical evidence of the impact of its FGC programme, particularly regarding recidivism and claims about the strengthening of family and interpersonal relationships. As with many diversion interventions, FGCs are relatively new in South Africa and very little longitudinal information is available with regard to their impact.

It has been mentioned previously in this review that children can often benefit from a multi-faceted approach to intervention. While the FGC programme definitely shows potential for addressing the causes of family-based crime and conflict, this intervention may be strengthened by additional support in the form of more standardised aftercare and follow-up activities. Training in conflict resolution, communication, decision making and understanding of the consequences of crime could also help to prevent further offending behaviour. In light of this it can be said that scope exists for FGCs to form part of multi-modal interventions in youth offending.

The value of an advisory structure, such as the RJC's reference board, deserves mention here. Regular interaction with this multi-disciplinary structure allows the RJC to remain informed about broader policy and service delivery matters and provides networking and marketing opportunities. Similarly, the establishment of platforms such as

the TJA promotes the sharing of knowledge, avoids duplication of services, allows for inter-organisational referral, and strengthens common marketing strategies. Such structures have the potential to create a strong, unified voice in matters related to diversion and youth offending.

As previously noted, FGCs are considered to be particularly valuable for realising restorative justice in South Africa. Through constructive dialogue and negotiation, they endeavour to promote accountability, solve problems and repair the damage caused by offending. At the same time, they provide an opportunity for the victims of crime and the parents of young offenders to participate in addressing the consequences (and to some extent the causes) of youth offending. Moreover, evidence suggests that FGCs are particularly valuable for promoting accountability because they directly confront offending youth about their behaviour and ensure their active participation in decisions that affect them.

Owing to its apparent restorative value, it is concluded that FGCs can be implemented in a variety of settings where interpersonal relationships have been damaged by the offence and where scope exists for the young person to make amends for his or her wrongdoing. Key aspects for replication include close scrutiny of the suitability of individual cases for FGC intervention; proper understanding of the purpose, process and desired outputs of the initiative on the part of referral agents, the young person and his or her family, and the victim of the offence; and adequately trained implementers with appropriate communication and facilitation skills.

References

RJC (Restorative Justice Centre). n.d. Victim Offender Conferencing (VOC) (information brochure). Pretoria: Restorative Justice Centre.

RJC (Restorative Justice Centre). 2003a. Restorative Justice Centre (background information document). http://www.rjc.co.za (Accessed 27 October 2003).

RJC (Restorative Justice Centre). 2003b. *AGM Report 2002/2003*. Pretoria: Restorative Justice Centre.

RJC (Restorative Justice Centre). 2003c. *Implementation of child justice in rural areas*. Pretoria: Restorative Justice Centre.

RJC (Restorative Justice Centre). 2002a. *Annual report April 2001 – March 2002*. Pretoria: Restorative Justice Centre.

RJC (Restorative Justice Centre). 2001a. *Annual financial statements for the 10 months ended 31 March 2001*. Pretoria: Restorative Justice Centre.

RJC (Restorative Justice Centre). 2001b. *Constitution of the Restorative Justice Centre*. Pretoria: Restorative Justice Centre.

3

GUARDIANSHIP AND FAMILY GROUP CONFERENCING

Othandweni

Othandweni ('place of love') is based in Hillbrow, Johannesburg. This multi-purpose organisation renders a service combining basic care, human rights, sport, recreation and vocational skills training to vulnerable youth who live on the streets, addressing their needs at all levels of development (Othandweni 2003a:3). Part of its mandate for improving the lives of these young people is diversion intervention, which it realises through its guardianship and family group conferencing (FGC) programme.

1. THE ORGANISATION

1.1 Background

In 1994, a group of concerned persons started a feeding scheme for street children in Johannesburg (Sewell 2002:8). In the early 1990s, services for street children focused largely on those under the age of 16 (Othandweni 2001:3). It soon became clear that older street youth were equally in need of health and support interventions. Othandweni responded by expanding to become a community development organisation rendering a comprehensive service to street youth and children (Othandweni 2003a:3). In 1995, the initiative was formalised as an independent welfare organisation with its own fund-raising number and management board. In 1999, it registered as a non-profit organisation.

Since its inception, Othandweni has functioned under the auspices of the Middestad Evangeliese Sorg/Metropolitan Evangelical Services (MES). This interdenominational Christian organisation, which was established in the early 1980s, provides outreach programmes to homeless and destitute people living in inner city Johannesburg (MES 2003a; Sewell 2002:8). MES serves as an umbrella structure that co-ordinates various services to meet the needs of inner city dwellers.

1.2 Mission and objectives

Othandweni's mission is to render comprehensive services to street children in the Johannesburg area and to empower them to become independent citizens (Othandweni 2003a:3). It aims to:

■ Act as their guardian so as to put into practice the principles of the Children's Rights Charter and the South African Constitution.

■ Decrease institutionalisation through alternative methods of intervention.

■ Promote healthy lifestyles through health care, education and counselling services.

■ Provide sport and recreation programmes so as to decrease their involvement in antisocial activities.

■ Capacitate them through training and job placement programmes.

    (Othandweni 2000:1)

1.3 Organisational structure and resources

Othandweni's management falls under the direction of MES, whose board of directors guides its policies, monitors its activities and oversees its financial management. (MES 2003a; MES 2003b:5). Othandweni has a management council appointed by the MES directorate and relevant managers (Othandweni 2000). In addition to managerial support from MES, Othandweni has its own annually elected advisory board, made up of people who can make positive contributions to the organisation's activities. The Othandweni manager reports directly to the MES project co-ordinator.

MES is housed in eight different buildings in Hillbrow and the surrounding areas. Othandweni's management and administrative staff share office space with other MES programmes in the former German consulate in Hillbrow. The basic care centre, with accommodation for male students, is nearby, and the accommodation for female students and the classrooms are in Braamfontein. MES owns all the buildings where the programmes are conducted. For its diversion activities, Othandweni uses lecture rooms and training facilities, such as a bakery, and equipment such as computers. FGCs are held at venues that are convenient for all parties.

MES does not directly fund Othandweni, but charges a general management fee for administrative and co-ordinating functions. Othandweni targets a broad spectrum of sources to promote sustainability. The 2002/2003 financial statements indicate that slightly more than half of Othandweni's income came from government departments, about a third from corporate donations and a tenth from foreign donors. Some comes from interest, private individuals and churches. The Gauteng Department of Social Services (DoSS) has been funding Othandweni's services since 2001, although it does not cover the full cost of training, accommodation, diversion, outreach and feeding activities. The organisation aims to avoid dependency on one source of income only, and it values in-kind donations in the form of food, clothing, blankets and sport equipment.

2. THE GUARDIANSHIP AND DIVERSION PROGRAMME

Othandweni's programmes stem from a Christian desire to reach out to street children with love, support and development (Sewell 2002:8). Its services aim to strengthen the self-esteem and abilities of at-risk and vulnerable youth so they can become responsible, economically active adults. It follows a three-pronged approach in addressing their needs:

■ Prevention of victimisation and offending by minimising the number of children and youths living on the streets through awareness campaigns, and decreasing the number of children and youths being infected with HIV and TB through preventative health care.

■ Early intervention through outreach activities and developmental and recreational programmes.

■ Ensuring a continuum of care by providing transitional housing for vulnerable youth while they participate in developmental and intervention programmes

(2001:4)

FIGURE 3.1 INTERRELATIONSHIP OF OTHANDWENI'S PROGRAMMES
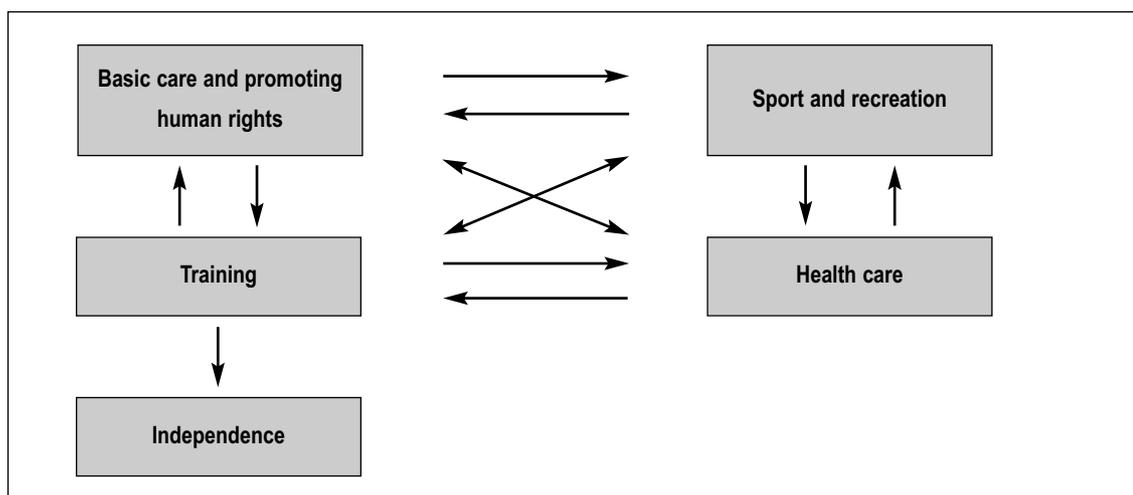
Source: Othandweni 2003a:3.

Othandweni has four distinct programmes that interact closely to achieve the organisation's mission. These are basic care and promoting human rights, sport and recreation, training, and health care. All four programmes collaborate to promote independence (Othandweni 2003a:3). The following discussion provides an overview of the four programmes (Othandweni 2003a:6–9; 2003b).

Basic care and promotion of human rights

This component focuses on children and youths who are living on the streets of Hillbrow, and outreach takes place to identify newcomers, identify their needs, build relationships and provide them with the necessary clothing and toiletries. Youths are informed about Othandweni, where they can use the shower facilities and attend literacy,

numeracy and art classes on a voluntary basis. Meals are provided daily and a support group is available. During outreach, as part of the family preservation programme, youths' details are collected and recorded with the aim of reuniting them with their families. Steps are taken to obtain birth certificates or identity documents and youths progressively participate in sport, recreational and entrepreneurial training. Human rights camps, one for girls and another for boys, focus on crime prevention and inform youths of their rights. The following figures highlight the outputs of the basic care and promotion of human rights programme for one year, 2003:

- 16 555 meals were served.

- 207 outreaches were undertaken.

- Toiletries were distributed to 1 345 children and youths.

- Nine youths were reunited with their families.

- Approximately 43 youths attended literacy, numeracy and art classes.

   (Othandweni 2003a:6)

Sport and recreation

Recreational and sporting activities are used to instil life skills – such as setting of goals, discipline and conflict resolution – through physical activities. At the same time, this provides an alternative to playing on the streets, thus minimising involvement in criminal activities. The Pirates Cricket Club and RAU (Rand Afrikaans University) teach cricket and soccer respectively. To ensure discipline and commitment, players sign a contract that binds them to a code of conduct, to help instil positive behaviour on and off the field. The boys' team has participated in the Johannesburg Alliance for Street Children's Sports Day, the Masakhane Games and the Rhema Sports Day and won several silver and gold medals. Other recreational activities include monthly Youth Nights that provide an opportunity for street children to play indoor games and enjoy music and talent competitions over a weekend. During 2003, the Sport and Recreation Project achieved the following:

- The soccer development programme reached 30 youths.

- 22 soccer league matches were played.

- Youth Nights were attended by an average of 80 children and youths.

- Approximately 60 children participated in the cricket development programme.

   (Othandweni 2003a:7)

Training

Skills training is a one-year programme in which participants are taken from the street and educated in a residential setting. Twenty male and fifteen female participants are taken in each year and provided with full accommodation and meals. They work at their own pace through a self-study approach to accommodate different levels of education. The training consists mainly of business ethics, financial management, a secretarial and

leadership course, how to buy and manage stock, marketing, computer skills, and creative work such as silk-screening, beadwork, pottery, baking and leatherwork. Students' literacy levels are assessed and they are assigned to appropriate ABET (Adult Basic Education and Training) courses. The one-year training programme includes an outdoor adventure course provided by the Outward Bound Trust.

Drug counselling and rehabilitation are also provided given that many of the participants struggle with substance abuse problems. A strict code of conduct is maintained during the training programme and students can forfeit their training if they do not adhere to this code. Work placements follow successful completion of the training programme. Job interviews are arranged and internship training facilitated. Participants are supported to establish their own micro-enterprises. A total of 22 students from the 2001/2002 intake graduated successfully from the programme. More young men (81%) than young women (67%) were successfully placed in jobs. A total of 34 students enrolled for the 2002/2003 training programme (Othandweni 2003a:9).

Health care

Although Othandweni's health services programme recently became independent from its youth-focused one, health care services are still delivered to street children, including health education, primary health care, nutrition and drug abuse campaigns. The following figures for a period of one year, 2003, highlight the magnitude of the health care project (Othandweni 2003a:8):

- The sickbay treated 4 773 patients.

- The mobile clinic treated 2 710 patients.

- Home-based care workers made 305 home visits and assisted 1 353 persons.

- Eleven health-related workshops were held and five campaigns organised.

- The health education programme reached 12 643 people.

Othandweni's diversion programme is primarily based within its basic care and promotion of human rights project, which interacts with the other three programmes. This interaction between programmes provides the basis for follow-up and aftercare services.

> Depending on the child's needs and background, a diverted youth can be slotted in with any of our developmental programmes. (Othandweni official)

2.1 Rationale and aim

The city of Johannesburg is South Africa's largest metropolitan area, with around 3.5 million inhabitants. Many people flock there in search of fame, fortune or mere survival (Sewell 2002:6). In 2002, the Gauteng Street Children Alliance estimated that around 2 000 children and young people between the ages of 14 and 24 were living on the streets, about 300 of them in Hillbrow alone (Othandweni 2001:5). Although most of them are young boys, girls are increasingly becoming street dwellers too. Street children face many challenges, ranging from issues of safety,

exploitation and abuse, to malnutrition, poor health and education, and limited opportunity to free themselves from their circumstances.

In 1999, Othandweni started a programme for intervening on behalf of street children who had offended, to ensure that their rights were upheld. At the time it was found that when arrested they could remain in secure care or awaiting trial facilities for long periods of time, even in cases of petty crimes. Diversion requires the young offender to be released into the care of his or her parents or guardians, so it is simply not an option for youths who have no concerned and caring adult to assume guardianship. Othandweni identified this need and introduced the guardianship concept to justice officials at the Johannesburg Magistrate's Court.

FIGURE 3.2: DIAGRAMMATIC REPRESENTATION OF OTHANDWENI'S GUARDIAN CONCEPT
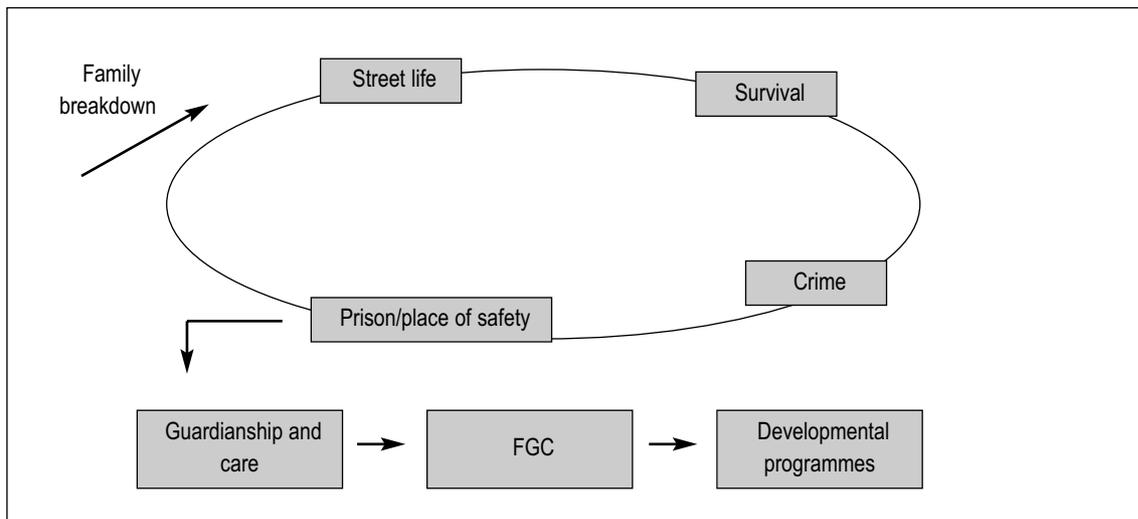
Source: Othandweni 2001.

The programme is based on the following concept (Othandweni 2001: Addendum D). Family disintegration or breakdown forces some children and youths to live on the streets, where they have to fend for themselves and life largely entails mere survival. The challenges of surviving on the streets can lead children and youths to engage in criminal activities. Arrested street children are detained in places of safety, as they have no fixed residential address and no traceable parent or guardian. Othandweni then intervenes by acting as their guardian. FGCs are implemented to divert offending street children away from the justice system. Throughout the process, the child or youth remains in the care of Othandweni.

The guardianship programme's underlying principles include trust, respect, commitment, accountability, empowerment, integration and restoration. Street children are often suspicious of adults and it takes time to establish trust. They must be treated with dignity and in a non-judgemental way (Othandweni 2001:8). Seen broadly, the programme aims to:

- Help street children make amends for their wrongdoings.

- Stop them re-offending.

■ Help them develop into independent, employable individuals.

■ Wherever possible, reunite them with their families.

2.2 Entry criteria and profile of participants

To enter Othandweni's diversion programme the child or youth must have committed only a minor or first-time offence, and admitted to it, and be living on the street or at risk of living there. In some cases young people are referred because their parents are unable to take care of them, while others are brought to Othandweni's attention through outreach activities. The Reception, Assessment and Referral Centre (RAR), based at the Johannesburg Magistrate's Court, provides Othandweni with an assessment, although Othandweni gathers additional information to identify the particular support and intervention needs of the young people who have been referred.

Diversion candidates are mostly boys between the ages of 16 and 18, and the majority are from Hillbrow. Some youths are from other provinces and are newcomers to Hillbrow's streets. They are often there because their families sent them to relatives in Johannesburg who were not able to provide for them.

> Often young boys are abandoned by their families. For example, one boy was brought to Johannesburg from the former Transkei, and they spent the night here in Hillbrow with family, but the father left without coming back the next day and the child ended up with people who couldn't care for him. After a few weeks he was put on the street and stole food because he was hungry. (Othandweni official)[1]

The participants in the programme are frequently from poverty-stricken households or have experienced poverty on the streets for a number of years, and the majority of them are first time offenders who have been arrested for theft or shoplifting.

2.3 Programme content and implementation

Once participants have been referred from the court to the diversion programme and guardianship has been confirmed, they are accommodated at Othandweni. Individual files are opened and the behaviour and commitment of each child is monitored on a daily basis. The court allows three months for completion of the intervention. Upon release into the care of Othandweni, a care worker and the Othandweni house parent discuss expectations and goals with the young person. Throughout the intervention the youth is encouraged to participate in Othandweni's developmental programmes. Some participants are referred to the National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO) for life skills training,[2] while a social worker provides one-on-one counselling. Youths can also attend human rights camps, which have a crime prevention component.

Othandweni opted for FGC as a means of intervening with youth offending because the process is not classroom-based, involves little reading and writing, and reconciles the victim and the offender. It is not about punishment or imprisonment, but about promoting healing for the victim of crime and helping young offenders to take responsibility for their actions (Othandweni n.d.). It is a highly flexible diversionary option and each intervention is planned and implemented according to the severity of the offence and the needs of the offender and the victim.

A successful FGC brings together victims, offenders and support people to discuss the offence and devise a strategy to make amends. The procedure of implementing an FGC is as follows (Othandweni n.d.):

Phase 1: Preparation

The young person is informed about the purpose, value and procedure of the intervention, and told to think about how to compensate the victim, the family and the community and make plans for avoiding further offending. He or she is allowed to invite a number of people to the conference, who will provide support and also hold him or her accountable for putting the final agreement into practice. The victim of the offence is also informed about the FGC process and allowed to ask a suitable number of support people to attend the meeting. Victims should, at all times, experience the FGC as an opportunity for healing.

Phase 2: The conference

The conference gives victims an opportunity to confront the youth. It is important that the offender hears how the offence has affected the victim and others, financially, physically or emotionally. The victim has a say in how the young person should be dealt with and a share in deciding on remedial actions. The conference procedure is as follows:

- The participants are welcomed and the procedure is explained.

- The charges are read by a police officer.

- The young person admits or denies responsibility for the offence.

- The victim relates his or her experience of the offence, followed by a general discussion of the event.

- Supporters from both parties deliberate on how the young offender is to make amends for his or her actions.

- An agreement is drafted, including details of how the youth is to be monitored.

The conference takes two to four hours. Most FGCs are held in the evenings or over weekends, so that all parties concerned can attend. The venue is usually a community hall, a school, a police station or a private residence.

Phase 3: Implementation of the agreement

The young offender is expected to stick to the agreement and do all the activities to right the wrong. The agreement is binding and cannot be altered, except through another FGC. Othandweni officials monitor the youth and record the activities for feedback to the RAR and the court. If the agreement is not honoured the youth is referred back to court for formal proceedings to resume. If the youth completes the programme successfully the charges against him or her are withdrawn.

Note: in cases where Othandweni is not awarded guardianship of arrested youth, its officials continue to render support and counselling services by means of visits to prisons and detention facilities. Childcare workers also attend the trials of homeless young offenders.

Staff and volunteers

Othandweni has had a stable staff component since it started, which has helped build trust between staff members and street children. The permanent staff consists of the manager, two outreach workers, a social worker, a training officer, a job placement facilitator, two nurses and a health educator, four home-based care providers, and about a dozen support members responsible for cooking, cleaning, driving and security. An art teacher currently works on a contract basis (Othandweni 2003a:18). A limited number of volunteers are trained, to ensure the continuity of the organisation should staff members resign (Sewell 2002:21).

Othandweni officials say that to work with street children requires good listening skills, compassion and the ability to enforce discipline. Service providers need to be role models and willing to work irregular hours. A certificate in childcare is a minimum requirement. Three of the staff members responsible for outreach, training and restorative justice processes are qualified in social work, community development and youth development. The service providers who interact directly with the street children are multilingual and articulate, which is necessary for building trust and meaningful relationships with client groups (Sewell 2002:14). Some Othandweni staff members are former participants in its programme, so they are knowledgeable about how street children live and the challenges they face. There are also some social workers who did their student training at Othandweni and now work there full-time.

Working with children without homes and families is emotionally stressful, particularly when dealing with children with AIDS, and staff are often exposed to dangerous situations, since Hillbrow is notorious for its social ills and criminal activities. Support and training of staff is therefore seen as extremely important.

Partnerships

Because of the kind of programmes it runs, Othandweni believes in partnerships and networking. In addition to close collaboration with other MES programmes, it has a good working relationship with the DoSS. Its programmes are aligned with the objectives of this department, which facilitates funding and the referral of at-risk youth to the guardianship programme. At a provincial level, the DoSS interacts with a variety of diversion initiatives, including Othandweni, through the Child Justice Programme Forum. This forum was established to streamline guidelines for diversion, to deliberate about programme strategies, and to provide an opportunity for training and for sharing experiences.

Othandweni's partnerships with corporate structures help it acquire infrastructure and capital investments. For example, the Nedcor Community Development Fund purchased a building for Othandweni that is used as a training centre (Othandweni 2001:9). Partnerships with the private sector are also essential for work placements. Othandweni's collaboration with the Batho Pele Foundation facilitates training in baking skills for the entrepreneurial training programme. There are various partnerships with health care institutions and developmental organisations such as NICRO, the AIDS Consortium, the Hillbrow Partnership in Health Personnel Education, the Rhema Hands of Compassion and the Outward Bound Trust of South Africa[3], to name but a few.

Since 1998, Othandweni has had a formal working relationship with the RAR, which serves as critical link in the referral of arrested street children to Othandweni. The RAR monitors the reception and management of young people throughout the justice system. Othandweni was instrumental in establishing both the Johannesburg and the Gauteng Alliance for Street Children. These alliances facilitate networking and annual meetings of service providers are held to track progress and share experiences and ideas. Othandweni provides health services on behalf of the Johannesburg Alliance and it is represented on the Hillbrow Community Policing Forum. It also has working relationships with the South African Police Services (SAPS) and some police officers attend Othandweni's human rights camps and play a role in FGCs.

Costs

The organisation's 2002/2003 financial statements showed that the sports and recreation project costs R62 per youth per month, which includes all staff, transport and equipment expenses. The total cost of the training programme amounts to an average of R17 500 per youth, or R1 460 per youth per month, which covers all expenses related to infrastructure, personnel, meals, accommodation and equipment. Because the basic care and human rights project carries out a variety of activities, it can only be reported that the programme operates at a monthly cost of around R25 355, of which roughly 40% accounts for food, toiletries, blankets, transport and professional counselling. A financial report for the period November 2001 to April 2002 shows that the three-month FGC intervention, with meals, accommodation and additional training, amounts to around R1 400 per youth (Othandweni 2002:3).

2.4 Monitoring and evaluation

Diversion participants have an opportunity fill in an evaluation and experiences form, to evaluate the programme and say what they have learned from the programme. To ensure that all activities are focused on their objectives, MES and Othandweni use the following monitoring and reporting procedures:

- Othandweni reports monthly on its activities to the MES management.

- Quarterly progress reports on youth development programmes are submitted to the DoSS.

- Weekly personnel meetings serve to document the status of support services.

- Statistics are kept and compared with previous periods of services.

- A database of all children and youths reached through support and intervention programmes is maintained.

- Internal monitoring of Othandweni's services is done twice a year during a bosberaad [annual planning meeting].

With reference to the latter, an external evaluation found that:

> The minutes of planning and review bosberaads during the past two years show frequent evidence of a participative, knowledge-sharing approach with thorough analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; which are then converted to action plans. (Sewell 2002:22)

At first, few diversion cases were referred to Othandweni. Six FGCs were conducted in 1999 and five during 2000. Nine cases were referred during the 2002/2003 period, although only five were successfully undertaken. Two youths absconded and another two dropped out of the programme (Othandweni 2003a:6). Fortunately the flow of referrals improved and, since April 2003, an average of three diversion cases is managed per month. It appears that youth offending occurs more during the winter months as cold and hunger force street children to steal. Between November 2001 and April 2002, a total of 25 cases were supported during court trials and 13 visits were made to prison (Othandweni 2002:2). During 2002/2003, 38 youths were supported during court proceedings owing to the absence of parents, and 17 prison visits took place (Othandweni 2003a:6).

In 2002, Partners in Change undertook an external evaluation to determine whether Othandweni adheres to its mission and objectives. The following results from the evaluation report are highlighted (Sewell 2002:2–4):

■ Othandweni's integrated strategy is credible and relevant to youth development, crime prevention and family preservation efforts in the inner city of Johannesburg.

■ Since its beginning, the organisation's vision and operational model has developed and evolved progressively through experience and opportunities.

■ The initiative is a well-organised, purposeful and people-centred programme that is on track toward its mission within the South African urban context.

■ Othandweni has sound facilities and its competent staff handled diversion speedily and to the standards set out in child care and juvenile justice policies.

■ Good governance is a priority for both MES and Othandweni. Financial controls, community partnerships and personnel policies are closely monitored.

A performance management toolkit was created to empower Othandweni to map, monitor and continually improve its achievements and outcomes (Sewell 2002:5).

2.5 Key lessons and views (offered by Othandweni staff, partners and beneficiaries of the programme)

■ There are very few formal diversion programmes for street children and Othandweni fills a gap in this regard.

> The uniqueness of Othandweni is their guardianship programme. No other NGO wanted to undertake this because of the tremendous responsibility. (DoSS official)

> Othandweni has worked miracles during the past year. Although referrals appear low, youths with special needs are sent there because of the aftercare support they receive. (Referral officer)

■ Skills training should form an integral part of specialised intervention services.

> ... often these children have low educational levels ... Handwork is essential. They need the development of a skill so that they can work somewhere, because that is why they become involved in crime. (Referral officer)

> Without seeing to it that they have the skills to secure basic requirements, diversion will fail. (MES official)

■ Street children value the support that Othandweni provides to them.

> They helped me so much. They gave me shelter and food for my baby. I learnt that it is not good to steal. However bad your situation is, there is always someone to ask for help. Without Othandweni I would have been in jail by now. (Participant)

3. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Hillbrow is in an area characterised by urban decay, poverty and crime. In implementing their services, Othandweni has ensured that it has a good understanding of the difficult socioeconomic conditions in the inner city and that the organisation has credibility with residents and existing social structures. Its guardianship and diversion programme is based on a clear understanding of the ways that the environment lends itself to involvement in crime. Besides the many opportunities for offending and the risk of being coerced into criminal activities, street children are confronted with a daily struggle for survival. Life on the streets is characterised by continuous poverty, little or no formal education, abuse, and exposure to numerous social ills such as drug and alcohol abuse. In light of this, Othandweni recognises that responses to youth offending must holistically address the devastating realities that street children face.

Against this background, Othandweni's integrated approach to youth development, in general, and diversion, in particular, aims to counteract the risk factors involved in living on the street. As with the RJC programme discussed in Chapter 2 the programme takes the individual needs of referred youth into account in planning and implementing its interventions. Programmes are based on a thorough assessment of the participants. These assessments are valuable in showing where additional intervention or support, such as life skills training, is needed to strengthen developmental efforts. The Othandweni programme has been structured as a holistic intervention with services ranging from the provision of basic care to job placement. This model of service delivery definitely holds promise for improving the lives of offending and at-risk street children given that it attempts to deal with a range of the risk elements associated with offending behaviour.

Othandweni makes use of FGC as the point of departure for the development of a programme plan for children. There are many reasons why they opted for this approach. Evidence suggests that it is exactly the flexible nature of FGCs that makes them suitable for meeting the needs of street children. For example, FGCs involve little reading and writing, and street children mostly have low literacy levels. FGCs are not classroom-based, so they avoid possible frustrations related to resentment of discipline and resistance to authority. At the same time, they allow the young person to have a say in the decisions that affect him or her. Another advantage of FGCs is that, because they are not stand-alone interventions, they aim to link the young person with other developmental initiatives.

Besides the restorative focus of the FGC programme, it is worth mentioning the value of the Othandweni programme in realising children's rights in South Africa. Assuming guardianship of street children is a major responsibility and Othandweni's commitment to promoting children's rights is truly commendable. Their programme, in addition to diverting children away from the criminal justice system, provides for their basic rights in the form of food, shelter and health care.

As can be seen from the discussion above, the Othandweni model offers extremely useful information with regard to diversion services to street children. However, a discussion of this nature would not be complete without an acknowledgement of the many difficulties involved in work of this nature. What became evident through this review was that despite the programme's value and potential, the challenge lies in keeping the participants motivated and involved in the programme once the court mandated period has been completed. Many of the children see themselves as trapped in lifestyles that are characterised by crime and drugs and are at risk of reverting to their old lifestyle as a means of survival in the absence of any concrete alternatives. While children that return to the streets often continue to access food and health care from Othandweni, the organisation has very little leverage to ensure that they continue to participate in their more structured programmes once the legal requirements of diversion have been met. This problem is not unique to Othandweni. The extent of follow-up, mentoring and ongoing support to youth at risk has been shown to be one of the critical indicators for success in terms of shifting offending behaviour and provides a challenge to all organisations running or planning to run programmes for this target group.

Another challenge in respect of working with street children is the high demands that it places on service providers. The context in which they work is characterised by extreme poverty and violence. Street children are not used to routine and discipline ands are often unpredictable. Othandweni is not a secure care facility (i.e. children on the programme are not locked up) and assuming guardianship and ensuring that children adhere to court orders can prove challenging. Service providers therefore need professional and extended in-service training and ongoing support in order to work with this target group.

In terms of replication, the Othandweni model is complex and consists of a range of interlinked programmes that rely on extensive infrastructure and resources. Instituting a similar model in another site would therefore be difficult unless an existing, broad-based developmental initiative or service network is targeted as the implementing organisation. This is sad, given indications that South Africa will, as a result of HIV/AIDS, soon be faced with a large number of homeless and vulnerable children. Another critical factor in replicating the programme is the need for buy-in from the courts and their willingness to allow a community-based organisation to assume guardianship of offending youth.

Monitoring and evaluation continues to be a challenge for South African NGO's. In particular there is a lack of longitudinal information in respect of the long term impact of interventions. Although Othandweni has monitoring and reporting systems in place, little evidence (other than output figures for specific activities) could be found regarding the impact of the initiative on the long term functioning of the participants. As with the RJC initiative discussed in Chapter 2, hard evidence is still required to indicate how effective FGCs are in the South African context. In the case of the guardianship initiative, it would be interesting to see to what extent the objective of strengthening the abilities of participants to become responsible citizens has been achieved.

In conclusion, special mention must be made of Othandweni's success in collaborating with private sector organisations and its networking with likeminded organisations in the child development sphere. In light of its work and achievements, it comes as no surprise that Othandweni was one of the Making a Difference Projects selected by the Inter-ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk, and the 2000 recipient of the Impumelelo Award for its contribution toward development and poverty alleviation in South Africa.

Endnotes

1   This particular boy was arrested and diverted to Othandweni's FGC programme. Part of the outcome agreement was that he should perform security duties in the store where he stole food. During this time, he caught twelve youths shoplifting. He participated in Othandweni's training programme and is currently working at a local bakery.

2   Street children often lack self-respect and skills related to communication, and conflict and anger management. NICRO's life skills training deals with this before Othandweni embarks on basic education and vocational skills training. The reader is referred to Chapter 6 for more information about NICRO's life skills training initiative.

3   The reader is referred to Chapter 15 for more information about the youth-at-risk programme of the Outward Bound Trust of South Africa.

References

MES (Middestad Evangeliese Sorg/Metropolitan Evangelical Services). 2003a. The MES organisation. http://www.mes.org.za/projekte/the%20organisation.htm (Accessed 22 October 2003).

MES (Middestad Evangeliese Sorg/Metropolitan Evangelical Services). 2003b. *Annual report 2003*. Johannesburg: Middestad Evangeliese Sorg/Metropolitan Evangelical Services.

Othandweni. 2003. *Family Group Conference – Information for the Victim (brochure)*. Johannesburg: Othandweni.

Othandweni. 2003a. *Annual report 2003*. Johannesburg: Othandweni.

Othandweni. 2003b. Othandweni. http://www.mes.org.za/projekte/othandweni.htm (Accessed 22 October 2003).

Othandweni. 2002. *Feedback report to the Open Society Foundation of South Africa*. Johannesburg: Othandweni.

Othandweni. 2001. *'Guardianship' for the diversion of street children – funding application to the Open Society Foundation for South Africa*. Johannesburg: Othandweni.

Othandweni. 2000. *Constitution of Othandweni*. Johannesburg: Othandweni.

Sewell B. 2002. *Othandweni: place of love. External evaluation report*. Pretoria: Partners in Change.

4

PRE-TRIAL COMMUNITY SERVICE

National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders[1]

The National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO) has, for nearly a century, been instrumental in preventing crime in South Africa. It operates at both policy and service delivery levels in all provinces, and is possibly one of the best-known victim- and offender-focused NGOs in the country. This chapter discusses its implementation of pre-trial community service (PTCS) as a diversionary option. The information in this chapter can for the most part be applied nationally but the NICRO branch in Bloemfontein was specifically targeted for the purposes of gathering data for this review. It is therefore important to note that the programme may differ slightly from province to province.

1. THE ORGANISATION

1.1 Background

NICRO was established in September 1910 as the South African Prisoners' Aid Association (NICRO 2003a). It was established primarily to fill a gap in the reintegration of offenders. In 1970, the organisation expanded and changed its name to the National Institute for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation of Offenders. In 1997 the word 'rehabilitation' was replaced with 'reintegration' to define the organisation's endeavours more clearly.

NICRO is currently the only national civic response to crime prevention in South Africa, with more than 800 staff, including volunteers, involved in crime-related services (NICRO 2003b). In a nutshell, its projects encourage offenders to take responsibility for their actions, provide support to victims of crime, help with the development of small enterprises, and promote constructive instead of destructive lifestyles. These are the four pillars of NICRO's work:

■ **Offender reintegration** that focuses on prisoners' personal development and facilitates their release back into society, often in conjunction with their families.

■ **Community victim support** initiatives aimed at helping victims of crime and abuse to regain control of their lives.

■ **Diversion and youth development** that channels young people away from the criminal justice system into programmes for enhancing constructive lifestyles.

■ **Economic opportunities** where individuals and communities are given financial support and guidance so as to alleviate poverty .

NICRO also provides training to people and organisations involved in administering youth justice. Such training is especially needed in rural areas where organisations and officials do not have ready access to information on how to deal properly with young offenders. Training is provided to police and justice officials, social workers and teachers.

1.2 Aims and values

NICRO's service delivery is guided by the principles of restorative justice and people-centred development, with the aim of promoting a safe South Africa where the fear of crime no longer governs (NICRO 2003c). The ethos of providing support to the offender and his or her family and helping them develop continues to form the basis of its work. Its philosophy is that people can change and that personal growth is needed to prevent a youth from offending or continuing to offend. Its programming embraces human rights, while also emphasising the responsibilities those entail. With these principles driving its activities, NICRO participated in the 1992 initiative 'Justice for the children: no child should be caged'. Since then it has provided diversionary services to thousands of young people annually (NICRO 2003a).

1.3 Organisational structure and resources

NICRO's directorate consists of four national directors, one for each of the organisation's main activities. Nine provincial directors oversee the functioning of service sites and branches. All provincial and national directors report to the deputy executive director who in turn, and in collaboration with the finance, administrative and fund-raising directors, reports to the executive director (NICRO 2003d). A national council, with an executive committee, provides overall direction and guidance to the organisation. NICRO currently has a staff component of 240 service providers and approximately 600 volunteers operating from more than 36 service sites throughout South Africa.

The provincial branches have management committees to guide service provision. In the Free State, this committee consists of, among others, officials from local government, academic institutions and the business sector, and social work practitioners and staff members. At the level of service delivery, diversion programmes are steered by monthly meetings between the programme manager, facilitators and volunteers.

Diversion programmes are mostly run at or from NICRO branches, with PTCS being co-ordinated from local offices. The buildings occupied by NICRO Bloemfontein are rented from the Department of Public Works. A vehicle

is available to the diversion team, although it is shared with other NICRO programmes. Very few resources other than communication infrastructure and monitoring forms are required for the PTCS initiative.

NICRO funding is co-ordinated from the national office. From there it is distributed to provincial branches and service sites. About a third of NICRO's funding comes from the South African government (largely the Department of Social Development) and the rest from trusts, philanthropic and corporate organisations, foreign donors and individuals (Shapiro 2001). During the past few years a substantial part of the donor funding has come from the Royal Netherlands Embassy. At national level, financial statements indicate that more than half of NICRO's programme expenditure is appropriated to diversion.

TABLE 4.1: TOTAL EXPENDITURE PER NICRO PROGRAMME, 2000–2002

Programme	Expenditure					
	2000		2001		2002	
	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%
Diversion	2 114 676	59	3 675 856	60	5 998 820	63
Community victim support	464 844	13	715 251	12	1 238 339	13
Economic opportunities	292 538	8	443 477	7	654 200	7
Offender reintegration	731 534	20	1 307 530	21	1 629 341	17
Total expenditure	**3 603 592**	**100**	**6 142 114**	**100**	**9 520 700**	**100**

Source: NICRO (2002a).

NICRO Free State receives subsidies from the provincial Department of Social Development (DoSD) for service delivery as well as for training of social workers from the DoSD. None of the interventions would be sustainable without external funding, as neither participants nor their families pay for intervention and support services.

2. THE COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMME

In the early 1990s the NICRO office in Bloemfontein embarked on activities aimed at ensuring that children were not held in custody or abused during arrest and detention. NICRO officials negotiated on an informal basis with prosecutors not to proceed with formal charges for first-time or petty offenders, but to release these children and refer them to a community service programme. The success of this process depended on the willingness of the prosecutor to collaborate. Around this time, the first of NICRO's diversion programmes was formally established as a mechanism for dealing with the large number of young people in the criminal justice system. Diversion programmes were established with the primary aim of giving children an opportunity to redirect their (offending) behaviours. The objectives were to:

- Develop young people's potential.

- Hold them accountable for their actions.

- Help them remedy the harm their actions may have caused.

- Motivate them to learn alternative, productive lifestyles and contribute to society.

- Support them in planning a productive and healthy life with the help of friends and family.

  (NICRO 2003e)

NICRO's diversion programmes function on the basis of willingness to change. Participation is, therefore, voluntary. Unless the child shows willingness, and admits his or her misconduct, any attempt at instilling a sense of responsibility is bound to fail. Each young person in conflict with the law has his or her own characteristics and has to be diverted in an individualised way.

2.1 Rationale and aim

Community Service Orders have been used as a formal sentencing option since the early 1980s and formed the basis for the PTCS programme. The PTCS programme came into being because senior public prosecutors were being confronted with cases where prosecution was not the best option, but where some form of action was nevertheless required for the offender to be held accountable and made to take responsibility for the transgression (Muntingh 1997:29). PTCS was officially introduced in 1992 (Monaheng 1997:9).

PTCS is a diversion option that obliges the participant to serve a predetermined number of hours at a community-based structure in his or her free time without any form of payment (Muntingh 1997:29; NICRO 2003e). Charges are withdrawn on condition that the service hours are completed within a stipulated time and the individual concerned has adhered to all other conditions stipulated by the court. The programme upholds the restorative justice principle of repairing the damage that was caused by the offence in that it attempts to makes young offenders take responsibility for their actions and gives them an opportunity to make amends through service to the community.

2.2 Entry criteria and profile of participants

Entry criteria include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The offence should be of a minor nature.

- The prosecutor wishes to withdraw the charge but still wants to hold the offender accountable.

- Conviction is not in the best interest of the offender, the victim or society.

- Special circumstances characterise the case.

- The offender shows remorse and accepts responsibility for his/her actions.

■ It is preferable that the person is a first-time offender, although recidivists can also be considered depending on the circumstances of the case.

■ The offender is older than 14 years of age.

■ The offender has skills that can be put to good use in a community setting.

■ The offender has a stable lifestyle.

(Muntingh 1997:29–30)

The prosecutor can consider additional guidelines for assessing an offender's suitability for PTCS, such as alcohol or drug dependency, poor mental health and patterns of violent behaviour (Muntingh 1997:30). Role players in the assessment and referral process include the South African Police Services, DoSD, DoCS, Justice and NICRO. As can be seen from the following table, referrals for diversion in the Free State originate from a variety of sources, with the majority being from prosecutors and schools. Please note that this tabled is not specific to PTCS but has been included to illustrate the range of referral agents involved in diversion.

TABLE 4.2: ORIGIN AND NUMBER OF DIVERSION CASES IN THE FREE STATE, APRIL 2002–MARCH 2003

Origin	Number	%
Prosecutor	280	47.5
School	119	20.2
Place of safety	55	9.3
Family	40	6.8
Other	38	6.5
Probation officer	34	5.8
Community corrections	12	2.0
Self-referred	9	1.5
Magistrate	2	0.3
Total	**589**	**99.9**

Source: NICRO Bloemfontein, June 2003.

Most of the participants in NICRO's diversion programmes are between the ages of 15 and 18 and most of them are boys. Young people of 20 and 21 are also considered for participation, depending on their circumstances. Participants are mostly from the lower socioeconomic strata, presumably because of their greater vulnerability to risk and crime. Nevertheless, children from higher socio-economic groups are also referred to NICRO's diversion

programmes. An analysis of NICRO Free State's diversion statistics for the one-year period April 2002 to March 2003, consisting of 589 cases, revealed the following:

■ Nearly three-quarters of the participants were male (73.5%) and just over a quarter female (26.5%).

■ The majority of participants were still attending school at the time of diversion (81.3%).

■ Roughly a quarter of the cases (27.5%) involved substance abuse.

■ Property crimes accounted for 38.9% of cases, followed by offences against the person (16.6%) and victimless crimes (2.2%). The rest of the cases (41.9%) stemmed from community referrals without a particular offence being recorded.

Of all cases diverted in the Free State over the one-year period, the vast majority of participants had no previous convictions (94.6%), while 4.6% had one previous conviction and less than 1% had two previous convictions. A mere 3.6% of referrals had participated in previous diversion programmes.

2.3 Content and implementation

Upon referral to PTCS, a probation officer or NICRO worker assesses the child to determine the number of hours that are to be served and the placement site. A contract is drafted that binds the participant to complete the programme. Breach of this contract could result in immediate referral back to the court for formal prosecution (Muntingh 1997:30). The participant, the site supervisor and the NICRO worker responsible for the case each sign a copy of the contract. Site supervisors draw up time sheets that serve as valid records of the number of hours that were successfully completed. These are submitted to the prosecutor when the participant completes the programme. NICRO officials and the site supervisor, monitor the participant's performance.

No strict rules exist for the number of hours that are to be served in the community (Muntingh 1997:32), because the PTCS programme is geared to the individual and can be directly or indirectly related to the offence that was committed (Moolman 2002:3). On average, participants are required to perform between 40 and 60 hours of community service, although for serious offences 120 hours could be considered. In special circumstances young offenders are required to perform 20 hours of community service. The following are some averages for various kinds of offences.

TABLE 4.3: AVERAGE NUMBER OF PTCS HOURS FOR PARTICULAR OFFENCES

Type of offence	Number of hours
Minor property related, i.e. shoplifting	± 40
Driving under the influence of alcohol	Minimum 100
Malicious damage to property	60–75
Possession of dagga	30–50

Source: Muntingh (1997:32).

Participants are most often placed at non-profit organisations or agencies that deliver a service to the community, such as libraries, police stations, old age homes, children's homes, and hospitals. They usually have a say in deciding on a placement site. A Bloemfontein police station that serves as a PTCS site sees an average of two to three participants per week. Most participants do their community service over weekends or during school holidays because they are still attending school. Some of the placement agencies where community service is done provide the participants with additional support in the form of informal talks to motivate them not to re-offend.

> We help them and tell them that this is a second chance. You have to give some guidance, otherwise nothing is taken seriously. I tell them that they are not written off, not a criminal. Things happen and you got a second chance. (PTCS-site supervisor)

The success of PTCS depends to a large extent on the placement site being suitable, so the characteristics of the participant, the nature of the offence, and the accessibility of the service site influence placement decisions. If the participant has a particular skill, this is taken into account too. For example, some are involved in computer work and filing, so as to upgrade their skill. A few participants continue to offer their services voluntarily at particular sites long after successful completion of the PTCS programme. It is important, however, that participants are not used as free labour. Community service should not be used to serve individual needs, except those of the victim (Muntingh 1997:32).

By enabling young offenders to make amends to the community through performing appropriate services, the PTCS programme aims to instil a sense of responsibility and commitment to the community. A central theme in PTCS is that participants should see community service not as a form of punishment, but as actions aimed at repairing the damage that was caused by the offence, even if in a symbolic way.

> They bring something back to the community because they did wrong. (PTCS site supervisor)

Staff and volunteers

NICRO is of the view that while it would be ideal is to have social workers facilitating all the diversion programmes, this is not feasible and they therefore make extensive use of volunteers in this regard. Experience has shown that suitable individuals can be trained in the running of diversion through proper in-service training and ongoing support. However, social work skills are required when compiling assessments and reporting to court.

In terms of training, programme staff and volunteers are required to do in-service training to ensure that they are competent to implement diversion programmes. Direct facilitation of programmes is preceded by a two-week formal training course conducted at the NICRO office. It can take three to four years of practical experience for a volunteer to become an expert facilitator. PTCS requires less intensive training.

In terms of selection of volunteers, facilitators must be perceived as approachable by the participants – casual dress, positive body language and the ability to communicate in the language and language style of the participants are all part important attributes of a successful facilitator. The following remarks give an idea of the ideal diversion practitioner, in terms of age and gender:

> The male or female issue we've sorted out. Gender does not have an influence on the impact of services. With the Journey, we try and ensure that one male and one female facilitator accompany the group. Gender does not play a role as some female participants simply connect better with a male facilitator. As to age, I think it is simply incidental that we have a relatively young group of facilitators, but I cannot say whether a fifty-year-old will not have the same results, same as the fact that not all young adults can relate with troubled children. (NICRO official)

> Gender does not play a role. Age should also not be a problem, but generation gaps can create problems. (NICRO official)

Partnerships

As with any development organisation, collaborative relationships and networking are crucial to ensure effective service delivery. Formal working agreements exist between NICRO and the Departments of Safety and Security, Justice, Correctional Services and Social Development, as these form part of the referral and reporting chain. Partnerships with community-level structures are also essential for implementing the PTCS programme.

Partnerships have also been established where there is a need for specialised knowledge. For example, at one time NICRO Bloemfontein was faced with a number of diversion cases where it appeared that participants were involved in occult practices. To deal with this phenomenon effectively, NICRO called on the specialised services of the SAPS to familiarise programme facilitators with the problem and provide guidelines.

Costs

At the time that the data was collected NICRO's service sites and branches relied predominantly on outcomes-based funding that was channelled via the national office. This entailed the receipt of a fixed amount per child who had participated in a diversion programme. The amount differed depending on the type of programme involved. This unit cost represented all expenses, i.e. personnel, material, transport, overheads, and so on. In 2003, R150 was allocated per participant for the PTCS. NICRO has subsequently changed it financial systems and costs for PTCS are covered by a global provincial budget.

2.4 Monitoring and evaluation

Participants in diversion programmes are asked to evaluate the programmes and the facilitators. This serves two purposes: it indicates the extent to which they have internalised the intervention, and it helps NICRO to adapt the content and approach of individual programmes if necessary. The evaluation is done through questionnaires. The questions focus on the way the programme was run, whether participants will be able to put into practice what they have learnt, and whether they need any additional support.

All NICRO branches keep records of the number of children participating in their programmes and routinely collect data relating to intakes, type of offences, biographical information and outcomes. From time to time, NICRO's national office initiates and conducts research at service sites to evaluate the performance of provinces and branches.

At the national level, 2001–2002 statistics indicate a significant increase in the number of diversion referrals to NICRO, with direct services having been rendered to 17 370 children – an increase of 26% when compared with the 2000/2001 intake of 13 785 (NICRO 2002a; Muntingh 2001:8). The period 2002/2003 saw a further increase with 18 874 children having been referred to diversion programmes, of whom 16 692 underwent either the Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), PTCS or Journey programmes.

FIGURE 4.1: NATIONAL INTAKE PER YES, PTCS AND JOURNEY PROGRAMMES, 2002/2003
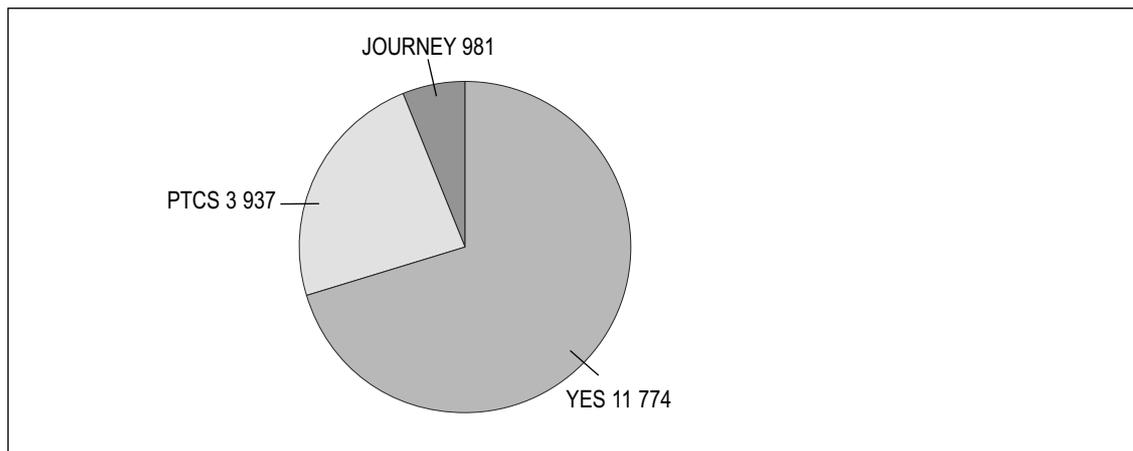
Source: NICRO, October 2003.

The following table indicates that the YES and PTCS programmes are more frequently undertaken as diversion options in the Free State than the FGC and Journey programmes. A few diversion cases involved individual counselling, follow-up services and services to the young person's family.

TABLE 4.4: FREE STATE CASE LOAD PER DIVERSION PROGRAMME, APRIL 2002 – MARCH 2003

Origin	Number	%
YES and PTCS	237	40.9
YES	162	28.0
Journey	128	22.1
Family Group Conferences	52	9.0
Total	**579**	**100.0**

Source: NICRO Bloemfontein, June 2003.

In this chapter, the frequent references to NICRO documentation and statistics testify to the organisation's commitment to monitoring and evaluation. In fact, NICRO dedicates resources specifically to research and information systems. The past three years have seen a programme expenditure of between 2.8% and 3.6 % on research and information (calculations according to NICRO 2002a).

Perhaps the most influential research thus far undertaken on the effectiveness of diversion programmes in South Africa was done by NICRO in 2001. This study aimed to provide accurate information on young offenders who participated in NICRO's diversion programmes so as to identify trends in re-offending after the completion of particular interventions. At the same time, the project gathered information about the impact of the interventions. The following are the main findings of this research:

■ Only 6.7% of participants re-offended in the first 12 months after completing a diversion programme.

■ In the case of those who did re-offend, the average time between programme completion and re-offending was 7.2 months.

■ The majority of respondents said they experienced a positive personal change after the intervention and were in a better position to make responsible choices.

■ The single most important factor motivating them to comply with diversion prescriptions was avoiding re-arrest and conviction.

■ Feedback on the content of diversion programmes was extremely positive and the interventions themselves were viewed largely as memorable experiences.

(Muntingh 2001:49–50)

A follow-up study found that, within a three-year period following the successful completion of NICRO's diversion programmes, less than 16% of participants re-offended (NICRO 2002b).

A 2001 review of diversion statistics undertaken by NICRO revealed that in 86.1% of cases children successfully completed the YES prgramme, and 90.7% successfully completed the Journey (Muntingh sa:6). During the mid-1990s, approximately 95% of the cases that were referred nationally to PTCS successfully completed the programme (Muntingh 1997:32). These high compliance rates are attributed to the personal attention that each participant receives, the fairly low number of hours of service they are required to do, and the way their skills and preferences are accommodated so as to increase their motivation and the impact of the programme.

2.5 Key lessons and views (offered by NICRO staff, partners and beneficiaries of the programme)

■ Diversion programmes have to be flexible to accommodate the needs of individuals and groups.

> ... not one group of youths, and individuals for that matter, is the same. Facilitators must know what they do and have to be able to adapt the programme's content accordingly. (NICRO official)

■ NICRO's programmes are valued by referral agencies.

> They know what they are doing. They know a lot about the youth ... They really do a lot. (Legal official)

■ There is a need to ensure that children are referred to an appropriate organisation if community service is to achieve its desired goals. A detailed background inquiry is often needed, as initial assessments frequently lack detail.

> The screening creates a picture, but doesn't give detail. (NICRO official)

■ Young participants value the second chance afforded them.

> The programme focused on what I can do to be a better person and not on what I did. (Diversion participant)

3. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

From the information provided above, it is clear that PTCS provides an opportunity for participants to make amends for their wrongdoings and holds them accountable for their actions in a generalised way. However, if one hopes to address the causes of crime and affect real change in offending behaviour one needs to carefully consider the value of this intervention as a stand alone programme. Community service lacks any element of confrontation either with the victim or with family members (which is more likely in Family Group Conferencing)) and thus does not require the child to account for his/her actions or make reparation in any direct way. Also, when discussing the causes of offending at the beginning of the review, the family was identified as an important factor in the development and functioning of young people. Community service in itself requires very little family involvement unlike in the case of FGC's or the NICRO YES programme where the parents are required to become actively involved in the diversion process. A further drawback is the difficulty of ensuring that the offender understands the purpose of community service, as it can be perceived (and experienced) as punishment. In light of the above, the NICRO PTCS programme is often used in conjunction with other diversion services. It may form part of an agreement negotiated at an FGC or may be recommended in conjunction with a life skills programme in order to ensure that it has optimal impact.

One of the criticisms levelled at community service by children's rights activists is the potential for a blurring of the lines between exploitative child labour practices and constructive service to the community. Indications are that, as practised by NICRO, community service initiatives take children's rights into account during both the planning and implementation processes. Children under the age of 14 are not permitted on the programme. Children have a say in the service site and the type of work that they would like to undertake. Decisions about the duration of the intervention take into account the nature of offence and the age and physical abilities of the child concerned. Placement is based on a thorough assessment of the young person and the circumstances of the offence.

In contrast to the rights based concerns outlined above, there are those who believe that community service is a 'soft option'. To put this into context, it is important to understand that children complete between 40 and 60 hours of work. This is equivalent to at least one typical working week, i.e. five days. In addition, school-going children do most of their community service over weekends, thereby forfeiting their free time for approximately three weeks. It is also important to understand that in the absence of these so called 'soft options' the majority of these children would either have had the case against them withdrawn or would have received a suspended sentence given that a sentence of imprisonment is highly unlikely for the kinds of crimes for which they are referred. Both of these scenarios would have required no work or effort on their part.

Replication of the PTCS model should not present any serious challenges. Organisations wishing to run a community service programme can access various structures and community-based services, even in rural areas, to replicate the PTCS initiative. Community service demands little in the way of resources, though officials at service sites do need to understand its purpose, how it works and what its intended outcomes are. Formal agreements may be required, and service networks need to be revisited from time to time to discuss any issues and concerns that they may have. In general, community service can be considered a complementary restorative activity or a stand alone intervention in cases where more personalised reparation in the form of family group conferencing may not be necessary or appropriate.

Endnotes

1   The organisational and background information (i.e. aims and values, staff, monitoring and evaluation, etc.) presented in this chapter also serves as background for Chapter 6: The Youth Empowerment Scheme; Chapter 16: The Journey; and Chapter 18: The Tough Enough Programme.

References

Monaheng A. 1997. Overview of the diversion programmes within NICRO. In Muntingh LM & Shapiro R (eds). *NICRO Diversion Options (3rd edn)*. Cape Town: National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders.

Moolman A. 2002. *Diversion training*. Bloemfontein: National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders.

Muntingh LM. 2001. *The effectiveness of diversion programmes – a longitudinal evaluation of cases*. Cape Town: National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders.

Muntingh LM. 1998. *Prosecutorial attitudes towards diversion*. Cape Town: National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders.

Muntingh LM. s.a. *The effectiveness of diversion programmes – a longitudinal evaluation of cases*. Cape Town: National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders.

Muntingh LM. 1997. Pre-trial Community Service. In Muntingh LM & Shapiro R (eds). *NICRO Diversion Options (3rd edn)*. Cape Town: National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders.

NICRO (National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders). 2003a. History of NICRO. http://www.nicro.org.za/about-history.asp (Accessed 22 October 2003).

NICRO (National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders). 2003b. NICRO Projects. http://www.nicro.org.za/projects.asp (Accessed 9 June 2003).

NICRO (National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders). 2003c. About Us. http://www.nicro.org.za/about.asp (Accessed 9 June 2003).

NICRO (National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders). 2003d. Organisation. http://www.nicro.org.za/about-organisation.asp (Accessed 22 October 2003).

NICRO (National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders). 2003e. Developing Young People's Potential. http://www.nicro.org.za/projects-youth.asp (Accessed 9 June 2003).

NICRO (National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders). 2002a. NICRO Annual Report 2001–2002. http://www.nicro.org.za/articles-annrep02 (Accessed 9 June 2003).

NICRO (National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders). 2002b. NICRO News–July 2002 (Issue 92). http://www.nigro.org.za/articles-nn0207.asp (Accessed 22 October 2003).

NICRO (National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders). 2000. *Mapping the future – empowering the youth*. Cape Town: Juta.

Shapiro R. 2001. Diversion programmes for young people. *Cape Times*, 2 March. http://www.nicro.org.za/articles-articlesdetail.asp?ID=15 (Accessed 9 June 2003).

Part 2

LIFE SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAMMES

OVERVIEW

The previous political dispensation did not promote positive self-value among certain communities (Rooth 1995:1). Jansen (2002:ix) notes that the prevalence of crime and violence in post-apartheid society can in part be traced to the failure of education institutions to equip learners with the much-needed skills to function in a society traumatised by its collective past and challenged by its collective future. Changing circumstances lead people to question their identity. Adolescence is a difficult time for young people, because priorities begin to change (Pickworth 1990:77). To remedy the situation, life skills training was introduced by a number of organisations and institutions to help young people learn to function effectively in the modern world. Life skills are practical skills in the art of living (Lindhard & Dlamini 1990:19). They encompass knowledge about life's challenges and the practical ability to deal with them (Van der Watt 2001:112). According to the World Health Organisation, life skills training:

> ...is designed to facilitate the practice and reinforcement of psycho-social skills in a culturally and developmentally appropriate way. It contributes to the promotion of personal and social development, the prevention of health and social problems, and the protection of human rights. (Muthukrishna 2002)

Self-knowledge and self-understanding form the basis of life skills training. They are fundamental to maturity, a healthy self-esteem and self-reliance, and play a pivotal role in decision making, assertiveness and relationships (Lindhard & Dlamini 1990:39). Moreover, a positive self-concept improves confidence. It influences one's decisions in life and understanding of what constitutes (or does not constitute) socially acceptable behaviour (Ebersöhn 2002:36). Learning life skills involves taking responsibility for one's own well-being. Life skills training sets out to:

- Develop self-knowledge as a basis for confidence and decision making.

- Develop positive attitudes about the self and the ability to influence events. Self-reliance and responsibility are key concepts.

- Instil abilities to communicate with others, maintain healthy personal relationships and manage conflict in a constructive manner.

  (Lindhard & Dlamini 1990:19)

To achieve these goals, life skills training should value the experiences and backgrounds of participants, be centred on specific aims, and take place in a safe and friendly environment. Additionally, group interaction and dynamics play a critical role:

> People can learn more about who they are through relating to others in a small group. They can learn first hand that others share their problems. They can learn to relate to real people, not stereotypes. They can learn how others really do see them. (Lewis in Howes 1993:374)

Life skills training generally focuses on attitudes (which involves being motivated to take responsibility), knowledge regarding appropriate choices, and the ability to apply both knowledge and attitudes to practices (Nelson-Jones in Muthukrishna 2002:83). In general, the components of a life skills training programme consists of basic, cognitive, personal and interpersonal skills (Janse van Rensburg 1998:47). Life skills can be classified in terms of the following four areas:

69

■ Skills of learning (literacy, numeracy, information seeking, learning from experience and study skills).

■ Skills of relating (maintaining relationships, communication, assertiveness, functioning in a group, conflict management and influencing).

■ Skills of working and playing (career and time management, recreation, seeking work, setting of objectives and action planning).

■ Skills of developing self and others (positive self-concept, problem solving, decision making, stress management, managing transition and sexuality, proactivity, helping others and developing the political self).

(Hopson & Scally in Pickworth 1990:79)

Within this broad classification of life skills focuses, interventions programmes can be planned, implemented and adapted to suit the needs of particular groups of children and youth.

PROGRAMME ASSUMPTIONS

The argument for life skills training as an intervention in child offending is the need for strategies that will enable at-risk youth to succeed in the many roles they have to fulfil in a diverse society (Muthukrishna 2002:82). Seen broadly, the foundations of life skills training are rooted in learning theory, particularly the interface between experiential and social learning. While the former entails learning from experience and reflecting on what has been learned (Rooth 1995:3), the latter assumes that behaviour is not only learned, but that cognitive processes can influence actions (Howes 1993:373). Reciprocity between the two assumptions is critical for life skills training to be a success. Experiential learning necessitates active participation in a group setting where each participant has something to teach and something to learn. However, information alone does not guarantee a life skill. Emphasis is placed on individuals' existing strengths and life experiences. Through the process of life skills training, participants construct their own learning, on the understanding that prescribed learning has less of an impact than self-generated knowledge. As Rooth (1995:4) notes:

All experiences are regarded as learning experiences and accordingly participants are allowed to make mistakes and are given the opportunity to learn from these mistakes.

With this in mind, social learning strengthens life skills training by focusing on perception and reality analyses, with the ultimate aim of instilling responsibility (Howes 1993:374). Important elements of this process are simulation exercises, discussion and reflection, and feedback. The meaning of an experience may not be immediately obvious, and participants have to be afforded time to observe, recapture and re-evaluate their experiences (Rooth 1995:4). Throughout the process of life skills training, the task of the facilitator is to stimulate learning by focusing on the real-life situations that young people face.

VALUE

Although life skills training can have a variety of applications, it is particularly valuable for at-risk children because it promotes:

◼ The use of appropriate communication strategies for specific purposes and situations.

◼ A realisation of a just, democratic and equitable society.

◼ Acceptance of the self as unique and worthy.

◼ Attitudes and values that improve interpersonal relationships.

◼ Respect for others, their beliefs and values, and human rights in general.

◼ Effective decision making abilities.

◼ The setting of goals according to inner potential and talents.

◼ A healthy and balanced lifestyle.

(Lazenby et al. 1997: iv–v)

In their review of the literature on outcomes of diversion programming, Van der Merwe and Dawes (2004:27) noted that life skills training programmes can entail different features to target specific aspects of behaviour. They found that multi-modal programmes that mostly have a life skills or psycho-social basis resulted in significant reductions in recidivism. These programmes included combinations of behavioural modification elements, planned group activities, classes aimed at instilling a sense of community responsibility, vocational training, individual counselling and group therapeutic work. It can be assumed that life skills training has significant value when undertaken in conjunction with other developmental endeavours.

CHALLENGES AND SHORTFALLS

One criticism of life skills training is that programming is predominantly classroom-based and assumes the participants can read and write. But at-risk and disadvantaged children most often have poor levels of education, so creative alternatives to reading and writing exercises are needed when dealing with them, and when evaluating them. Besides this, some young people have limited language abilities and cannot effectively articulate their emotions and views (Goleman in Van der Watt 2001:110). From a restorative justice point of view, life skills training on its own lacks a restoration or compensation component, which is probably why this kind of intervention is frequently undertaken in conjunction with family group conferencing or community service. The literature notes that the following factors are universal pitfalls for programmes based on life skills training:

◼ Poorly conceptualised goals.

◼ Insufficient focus on both intervention and development.

◼ Failure to modify the programme approach or content according to the needs of groups.

◼ Not incorporating a variety of methods of learning, particularly those that have a creative component.

◼ Emphasis on end results rather than the developmental process.

◼ Insufficiently involving participants in group interaction, thus missing the learning that comes from interaction and the sharing of ideas.

71

■ Excessive interpretation and explanations on the part of the facilitator.

■ One-way communication from the facilitator instead of interactive methods of learning.

■ Inadequate linking of symbolism and abstract ideas to real-life situations.

■ Ignoring group dynamics.

■ Too short a duration, which creates awareness, but not long-term behaviour change.

■ Insufficient process evaluation, during and after the intervention.

■ An ad hoc approach since 'anything is better than nothing'.

(Hopson & Scally; Uys; Carkhuff; in Janse van Rensburg 1998:57–59; Howes 1993:373; Rooth 1995:22–31)

References

Ebersöhn L. 2002. A theoretical framework for life skills in guidance and counselling. In Maree K & Ebersöhn L (eds). *Lifeskills and career counselling*. Sandown: Heinemann.

Howes MF. 1993. Sosiale vaardigheidskoling as strafoptsie vir jeugoortreders: die Skiereilandse Jeugstrafprojek. *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*. 29(4):371–378.

Janse van Rensburg L. 1998. Die ontwikkeling van 'n program vir interpersoonlike vaardighede. Unpublished doctoral thesis. Bloemfontein: University of the Free State.

Lazenby B, Mmakola N, Molopo R & Duff J. 1997. *Firm Foundations 1 – learning programme for lifeskills*. Pretoria: Kagiso.

Lindhard N & Dlamini N. 1990. *Lifeskills in the classroom*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.

Maree K & Ebersöhn L (eds). 2002. *Lifeskills and career counselling*. Sandown: Heinemann.

Muthukrishna N. 2002. Lifeskills in a multicultural society. In Maree K & Ebersöhn L (eds). *Lifeskills and career counselling*. Sandown: Heinemann.

Pickworth GE. 1990. Lifeskills training: educating youth for life. *Pedagogiekjoernaal/Journal of pedagogics*. 11(1):77–89.

Rooth E. 1995. *Lifeskills – a resource book for facilitators*. Manzini: Macmillan Boleswa.

Van der Watt HP. 2001. Die ontwikkeling en evaluering van 'n lewensvaardigheidsprogram vir die puberteitsjare. Unpublished doctoral thesis. Bloemfontein: University of the Free State.

5

NEW DIRECTIONS

Khulisa Child Nurturing Organisation[1]

Khulisa is a Gauteng-based organisation that has been operating in the field of crime prevention in South Africa for almost ten years. In addition to its work in prisons, Khulisa is also involved in diversion and the setting up of structures for reintegration and mentoring of children in trouble with the law.

1. THE ORGANISATION

1.1 Background

Khulisa means 'let the young child grow' in isiZulu. In 1997, the founder and managing director of Khulisa introduced storytelling as a method for strengthening self-respect among prisoners. The programme, in partnership with the Department of Social Services (DoSS) was piloted at the Soweto-based Walter Sisulu Child and Youth Care Centre. The programme had a significant impact and was subsequently rolled out to Leeuwkop Medium B Juvenile Prison near Johannesburg, where it proved its true worth among detained youths. During the following two years 280 workshops were conducted in several prisons. This experience developed Khulisa into a personal transformation programme based on the principles of self-renewal (Tintinger 1999:5). In addition to its work with imprisoned youth, Khulisa embarked on a diversion intervention in 2002 with the aim of preventing children from becoming involved in a life of crime that could result in imprisonment. Khulisa currently operates in Gauteng, the North West, Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal provinces and further replication of its intervention and developmental services is planned for the near future.

1.2 Aims and mission

Khulisa's programmes are based on the principles of restorative justice. It aims to manage offending through mediation and to address the underlying causes of offending behaviour. Khulisa believes that recidivism can be reduced by getting offenders to take responsibility for their actions. Its governing assumption is that to change a youth's behaviour it is necessary to identify the precipitating and sustaining factors within the offender and his or her family and community. It aims to address offending behaviour by helping participants in its programmes to develop resilience and acquire much-needed life skills and to make all-round behavioural and attitude changes.

All Khulisa's programmes were developed, and are continually strengthened, through consultation with clients, penologists (experts on imprisonment), psychologists, social workers and education specialists. Khulisa is currently in the process of having its programmes accredited with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA).

1.3 Organisational structure and resources

Khulisa's services are guided by a board of directors. Additional advice is obtained from resource persons such as academics at the Department of Criminology (UNISA). The managing director and programme managers deal with the day-to-day management of the organisation.

Khulisa has a wide range of funding sources, including development trusts, government departments, international governments and embassies, and corporate structures. External funding is needed, as the DoSS does not provide full funding for all the organisation's diversion and reintegration activities. Foreign donor funding in particular has been instrumental in the piloting of intervention and reintegration programmes.

2. THE NEW DIRECTIONS DIVERSION PROGRAMME

New Directions is a community-based non-custodial intervention for youths diverted from formal legal proceedings or referred by schools, the police or parents (Roper 2003:1). The programme was initiated in March 2002 and its pilot phase came to a close in July 2003.

2.1 Rationale and aim

New Directions follows a humanistic approach to the management of young offenders. The programme is based on the belief that all people have potential and that young people have a primary need to belong to caring individuals and organisations. In particular,

> We need to divert at-risk youth from crime, help them build their character, boost their self-esteem and, most importantly, keep them out of the justice system. (Khulisa official)

The principles of *ubuntu* are the driving force behind the New Directions programme, so it teaches the following rights and responsibilities:

■ Youth have the right to be cared for. In turn, they have the responsibility to participate actively in the programme and adhere to its requirements.

■ Youth have the right to opportunities for growth and development. In turn, they have the responsibility to apply new skills to benefit others.

■ Participants in the programme have the right to be treated with respect, and in turn they are expected to honour the dignity of fellow participants.

New Directions aims to:

- Create an opportunity for young offenders to take responsibility for their behaviour and to become accountable for their actions.

- Allow for reparation to take place.

- Identify factors that could lead to crime.

- Prevent perpetrators of first-time and minor offences from receiving a criminal record.

- Decrease the case burden of the formal justice system.

- Reduce recidivism.

    (Roper 2003:1)

The primary purpose of the diversion programme is to equip participants with life skills and protect them from negative labelling, criminal records and imprisonment. At the heart of the programme is the need to address crime caused indirectly by dysfunctional communities and a lack of parental support. Four main outcomes guide the implementation of New Directions, namely learning; personal and systematic change and development; behavioural change; and the application of knowledge to real life.

2.2 Entry criteria and profile of participants

The criteria for being diverted to Khulisa's New Directions programme is that the child is a first-time and minor offender and is under the age of 18. Additional considerations are that children should be able to access the programme with relative ease and that their parents or guardians should attend the relevant sessions (Roper 2003:2). However, referral officers take the emotional stability, household dynamics and needs of the young people into account when referring them to Khulisa. According to one probation officer Khulisa's diversion programme is more than mere life skills training, it also provides support to children from dysfunctional family backgrounds where intervention with the family is needed.

In addition to the preliminary assessment that probation officers undertake, New Directions facilitators do a more detailed assessment of referred children. They attempt to identify the underlying causes of the offence and they gather information from the participants' parents. This pre-programme assessment informs facilitators about each child's specific needs. The assessment gathers information about:

- Behaviour (nature of the offence, opinions of friends and family members, and indications of alcohol or substance abuse).

- Family dynamics (composition of the household and nature of relationships).

- Education (school attendance and performance).

- Interpersonal relationships (peer-groups and communication).

- Interests and motivation (career aspirations and potential).

Young people from the ages of seven are referred to Khulisa's New Directions programme. Both boys and girls attend the programme. The majority of the participants come from poor socioeconomic environments, although New Directions also receives young people from more affluent households. Most of the diverted children are still attending school and the majority are first-time offenders.

2.3 Programme content and implementation

The New Directions programme consists of workshops and group discussions, and individual and group activities. It is implemented with the aid of a manual, although its application is flexible and can be adapted according to the needs of the group and the initiative of the facilitator. The manual was constructed with the input of probation officers. The programme has the following modules:

- *Introduction*, to strengthen relationships and create a collaborative spirit within the group.

- *Society, community and culture*, based on *ubuntu*. This module addresses rights, rules and laws, and responsibility. Life skills training introduces democratic citizenship and awareness of the self in society and culture.

- *The self*, which focuses on being a person in terms of emotions, behaviour, spiritual awareness, intellect and attitude. This module includes coping mechanisms, resilience, self-awareness and self-management.

- *Interpersonal and social abilities*, which situates the self within broader structures and relationships. Topics dealt with are positive and negative social influences, peer pressure and communication, and themes of forgiveness; empathy and restorative justice are included. Interpersonal skills are strengthened through appropriate life skills training.

- *Future orientation* during which participants plan the way forward. Discussions and activities focus on goal setting, future aspirations and mentoring. Future plans are drafted in terms of the personal strengths, needs, goals and interests of individual participants.

The modules all draw on a combination of the following approaches and activities (Khulisa n.d.:5).

Life skills training

Life skills training serves primarily to develop abilities that form the basis of constructive behaviour. Adequate life skills help a young person to function effectively in terms of the self, the group, family, peers and the community. Core themes are self-awareness and self-management. Life skills training involves activities such as group discussions, workshops and homework. Homework activities involve case studies with questions to which participants have to respond. This written exercise helps assess the level of new knowledge they have acquired.

Excursions, such as prison and court visits, obstacle courses and treasure hunts, serve to reinforce particular themes of the programme. Activities transfer educational messages by means of stories with a moral focus, visual arts, drama, dance and music. Drumming was introduced to convey the theme 'We have offended with our hands; our hands can do creative work'. Creative writing allows the participants to develop their emotions and discover themselves, and written tasks strengthen their creative skills.

Community service

Voluntary community service is designed to teach care for the environment and for others. Participants are encouraged to embark on proactive social endeavours to make positive contributions to their communities. The main thrust of community service is to highlight the belief that people control their lives and can become constructive members of society. During each intake, the abilities of the group are assessed and possible channels explored for them to do community service.

Mentoring support

Participants from Khulisa's Make-It-Better (MIB) programme[2] act as mentors to diverted youth, serving as friends and role models so as to strengthen learning within supportive and constructive relationships. They are also in a position to report serious risks or criminal tendencies to the programme facilitator. They attend some of the diversion sessions and track the participants' commitment and progress, undertake home visits and help participants with decision making and problem solving, and even help with homework. To make mentoring relationships more effective, mentors receive training about roles and responsibilities, insight into the issues participants may raise, the code of conduct, the ethics and boundaries of mentorship, relationship building, and reporting and evaluation.

Recreation

New Directions ensures that participants are exposed to culture, sport and recreational activities to encourage them to participate in positive and socially acceptable actions.

Parenting support

Success in reintegrating offending youth back into their home environments depends on the parents' understanding and participation. A healthy family system promotes reintegration. This component aims to empower parents to deal with the challenges of child rearing and provides a context of support and accountability. The youths' parents attend a restorative justice workshop and are coached on empathy and forgiveness. Facilitators try to ensure that parents attend relevant parts by visiting them at home or arranging sessions at suitable dates and times for them to be present.

Post-programme support

New Directions ensures young participants receive continued support through lifetime membership of the Khulisa Fellowship. In addition, biannual reunions create a platform where ex-participants can discuss matters of shared importance, report back on interventions and decide on future collective action. Parents are also asked to take part in follow-up activities, for example, through attending sports days and youth gatherings.

Restorative justice

Discussions about the restorative justice philosophy highlight the reciprocal relationship between rights and responsibilities and foster empathy for the victim of an offence. This component sets the stage for participants to acknowledge the harm their offences caused and apologise to the victims. The focus on restorative justice aims to strengthen relationships within the community or family system so as to facilitate reintegration and reparation.

The New Directions programme is implemented in a workshop format over a 13- or 15-week period with 15 to 20 participants at a time.

Staff

At present, Khulisa employs more than 30 persons, many of whom are former offenders and graduates from its intervention strategies. These facilitators ensure a positive influence on new participants. A large contingent of Khulisa's senior personnel has professional qualifications in social work, psychology and education. The ideal youth worker is described by Khulisa as a caring individual with a keen understanding of the challenges that at-risk youth face. It is also noted that key programme facilitators are female, as many participants have never experienced the value of a devoted mother or equivalent female figure in their lives.

> Definitely a maternal figure, because we have younger people working as mentors where a different kind of relationship is established. But generally the kids respond very well to a mother figure. (Khulisa official)

> For the mentors it must be young people, peers. For the diversion, one needs older and more experienced people. (Khulisa official)

Partnerships

Because of the kind of programmes it runs, Khulisa fosters close working relationships with the Departments of Justice, Correctional Services and Social Services. Collaborative relationships are necessary to ensure the easy flow of diversion referrals and facilitate communication about progress.

Costs

At the time that the data was collected, costs for Khulisa's diversion programme were estimated at between R2 000 and R2 500 per child, which included parenting skills, training, community service, mentoring support and continued post-programme involvement (Roper 2003:28–29; Khulisa 2002:i).

2.4 Monitoring and evaluation

Khulisa monitors its activities through a data system that manages statistical information and analyses trends for all its programmes. Beneficiaries evaluate all activities and regular pre-test and post-test evaluations provide information about the appropriateness and implementation of programmes. During Khulisa's diversion programme, participants complete an outcomes-based assessment after completing of each of the programme's

modules. On completion of the programme, key persons and officials are provided with monitoring forms to track the behavioural progress of participants. These include:

■ The Behaviour Incident Rating Record Sheet that is usually completed by teachers and parents. This records data about the nature and possible causes of offending behaviour, the setting in which it took place and its outcomes.

■ The Family Observation Sheet and Commentary that serves to record behaviour and emotional functioning at home.

■ The Divertee Observation Sheet and Commentary that gathers information about the participant's appearance, habits and relationships. This also focuses on feelings and emotions and the child's perception of and interaction with family members. This information is usually compiled by Khulisa appointed mentors.

Khulisa submits a status report to the DoSS for every child who successfully completes the programme. Poor attendance and defaulting are reported to referral officers for legal follow-up. Probation officers provide Khulisa with a monthly referral report to ensure that no participant gets lost in the system. Khulisa is in the process of implementing quantitative systems to undertake the longer-term assessment of programme participants, which will further assist in calculating recidivism rates.

During the programme's pilot phase, i.e. 2002/2003, a total of 248 youths were referred to the New Directions programme, of which:

■ 38% came from court.

■ 23% were referred by police officials.

■ 16% were referred by schools.

■ 22% came from parents, friends and probation officers.

■ 20% were awaiting trial at the Johannesburg Prison.

(Roper 2003:11)

Up to mid-August 2003, only 3% of 236 young participants had engaged in re-offending (Schmidt 2003:7). An independent evaluation of four of Khulisa's New Directions diversion programmes in Alexandra with 119 youths revealed that:

In general, research into the impact of the programme found positive changes in:

■ Behaviour, interaction, competence at school and the way free time was spent.

■ Self-awareness and confidence.

■ Ability to deal with emotions.

■ Attitudes, accountability and responsibility.

■ Self-management, thinking styles and ability to make choices.

■ Interpersonal relationships and communication.

(Roper 2003:23–25)

The researcher concluded that:

> These changes indicate the range of 'facets' of youth development that the programme impacts on. These include life skills such as self-awareness, self-management, interpersonal relationships, and democratic citizenship (through the community service component) ... these outcomes indicate the depth of change and value that New Directions provides beyond offering a diversion programme that meets the Child Justice Bill requirements. (Roper 2003:26)

2.5 Key lessons and views

■ Diversion programmes should involve the broader milieu in which at-risk youth function.

> One cannot focus only on the child, but have to involve the family as well. Parents specifically need to be empowered to support their children. (Khulisa official)

> The strength of the programme lies with the fact that it does not only work with individuals in isolation. (Stakeholder)

■ Organisations running diversion programmes need to establish credibility with the courts and other referral agencies.

> Khulisa is successful otherwise this court would not have used its services. There are other diversion services available in our district, but Khulisa's quality is exceptionally high. (Referral officer)

■ Significant effort needs to be made to raise awareness with regard to diversion services with court personnel and other referral agencies in order to ensure that children are referred to the programme.

> Our problem is an old one of convincing other people that the programme has real merit ... We had to spend a lot of time with magistrates and probation officers explaining what we are trying to achieve and to get them involved and interested. (Khulisa official)

■ The programme in its current form has had an impact in terms of changing behaviour and promoting positive self-value.

> The change of the divertees after completing the programme is enormous. They are changed, have more respect for themselves and other people and a better self-concept is seen in them. (Khulisa official)

> New Directions showed me that it is the little things that make or break you. (New Directions participant)

3. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

New Directions draws on multiple methods of intervention with youth at risk. The programme creates the opportunity for young offenders to take responsibility for their actions through a range of individual, group, family and community interventions. While reparation to victims is less evident than it would be in, for example, a Family Group Conference this should be weighed against the high level of reconciliation and reintegration work at the family level which is absent in many other intervention processes. Because New Directions aims primarily to identify the factors that can lead to crime, and interprets offending behaviour in terms of family and personal ability factors, it focuses on strengthening participants' interpersonal and social skills. At-risk children do not function in isolation and it is therefore critical that diversion programmes focus on parents both as contributors to and inhibitors of offending behaviour. Strengthening the ties between child and parent plays a pivotal role in reducing antisocial behaviour. The concrete efforts New Directions makes to meaningfully involve the parents in reintegration and prevention activities are commendable and serve as an example for similar endeavours.

It is interesting to note that the community service component of the New Directions programme differs strategically from the NICRO model discussed in the previous chapter in that it does not focus so much on making amends as on creating awareness about pro-social personal abilities. Both approaches can be viewed as valid and add to the current debate with regard to the impact and value of community service.

The literature on diversion programming indicates that longer-term intervention is more desirable and more likely to have a positive impact on offending behaviour. The longer-term nature of New Directions allows more time and opportunity to strengthen pro-social behaviour. However, this in itself creates a challenge, as referral officers are unable to refer new cases for intervention once the programme has begun, and courts do not favour prolonged postponement before intervention can take place. Nevertheless, some referral officers attempt to withhold cases so that children in the system can benefit from the New Directions programme.

In terms of monitoring and evaluation, Khulisa has created various mechanisms for assessing the participants' progress. It sets itself apart from most other diversion interventions by involving broader agents in monitoring and follow-up activities. It also clearly shows commitment to assessing its outcomes and follows various channels toward this end, among others pre- and post-intervention measurements. This makes it one of the few diversion interventions that can demonstrate evidence of 'what works', particularly regarding multi-pronged approaches to diversion intervention.

Lastly, it should be noted that the initiative is multi-modal in nature (offering life skills training, community service, mentoring and parenting support), and this has resource, infrastructure, staff and service network implications for replication.

Endnotes

1   The organisational overview of Khulisa that is sketched in this chapter also serves as background information for Chapter 20: Discovery and Destinations.

2   MIB is described by Khulisa as a community-based leadership programme for youth. In this model the participants who emerge from the programme as leaders act as mentors and diversion service providers for other youth at risk.

References

Khulisa. n.d. Introduction (Unpublished information document). Johannesburg: Khulisa.

Khulisa. 2002. *Proposal to the Open Society Foundation for the funding of diversion programmes*. Johannesburg: Khulisa.

Roper M. 2003. *Evaluation report – New Directions Diversion Programme*. Johannesburg: Khulisa.

Schmidt M. 2003. Project gives juvenile offenders a second chance. *Sunday Times*. 24 August 2003. p. 7.

Tintinger LA. 1999. *Genesis of Khulisa. Cries without tears*. Johannesburg: Sizwe Publishing & Corrective Action Holdings. 1–5.

6

THE YOUTH EMPOWERMENT SCHEME (YES)

National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO)

The Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES) is one of a range of diversion programmes offered by NICRO. The programme aims to guide at-risk children to take control of their future by helping them develop a realistic life plan.

As NICRO has been described previously in this review, the reader is referred to Chapter 4 for more detail about the organisation's background, aims and values, organisational structure and resources, general profile of participants, staff and volunteers, partnerships, and monitoring and evaluation activities.

1. RATIONALE AND AIM OF THE YES PROGRAMME

Young people's everyday lives are characterised by rules at school, at home and on the street, and sometimes they break these rules. Because they are young, their transgressions can be treated differently from adult ones and turned into a learning experience (NICRO 2000:6). YES addresses the life skills needs of young people as they often lack the skills to understand the consequences of their actions. With the overall goal of preventing a life of re-offending, whether at school, at home or in the community, YES aims to help young people take control of their future. Of central importance is that they understand the consequences of their behaviour and, when in trouble, take responsibility for their actions. YES aims to achieve this by:

- Equipping young people with the tools to understand themselves, to be responsible and to relate to others.

- Allowing them to express their ideas, views and feelings in a constructive way.

- Providing them with the skills to deal with the challenges of their environment.

- Promoting communication between them and their parents or guardians.

■ Enhancing self-respect and worth, as well as respect for others.

■ Promoting and nurturing parental responsibility.

(NICRO 2000:6–7)

Emphasis is not placed on the young person as an offender, but on his or her total functioning and the circumstances that caused the offending behaviour. Parents also need to understand the origin of their children's behaviour and are taught skills for supporting their children and dealing with problems (Khumalo 2001). YES is undertaken in an interactive and participatory way where, in a challenging but non-threatening environment, children and their parents are free to talk about the offence, its causes, how reparation can be made and how repeat offending can be avoided (NICRO 2000:7).

2. CONTENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

YES has been in operation at NICRO since 1993 (NICRO 2000:5). The programme is used as a pre-trial diversion option, or as part of a sentence. It teaches the young person to behave within broadly acceptable social norms in an effort to prevent re-offending (Van der Sandt & Wessels 1997:15). The programme was initially implemented in the Western Cape, and then rolled out to all NICRO service points throughout South Africa.

YES involves a series of life skills training sessions and helps young people to take stock of their lives (NICRO 2003e). Parents or guardians are expected to attend the first and last sessions. In a safe environment, the programme facilitates communication about the offence and co-operative planning for a constructive future (NICRO 2000:6). Regular icebreakers and games stimulate discussion and communication. The intervention accommodates between ten and twenty participants at a time. YES consists of the following eight sessions, as outlined in the manual *Mapping the Future* (NICRO 2000:21–96). The manual is intended as a guide and can be adapted to suit the needs of individual groups.

Session 1: Who am I?

The first session is for participants to start developing a self-concept and an understanding that they are responsible for their choices and actions. They are introduced to one another and told the content and purpose of the programme, and group expectations and rules are clarified. To promote openness and active participation, attendees are asked to voice their feelings and concerns about the programme. This is often done by means of a 'mood chart' that visually depicts various emotional states. An effort is made to get every participant to acknowledge that he or she is fully responsible for learning during the intervention. It is most important that participants should realise the value of the programme.

The session aims to make participants aware that their actions have consequences and affect other people. They are also made aware of the effect a criminal record would have on their own future: reduced employment opportunities and automatic exclusion from certain professions. The session also aims to enhance parent–child relationships. Communication is promoted through role playing, in which an offence scenario stimulates discussion, with youths taking turns to act out the roles of parents.

Session 2: I am ...

The central theme of the second session is to enhance each participant's self-concept, to help him or her to discard negative stereotyping, and to create the space where the participant can begin to believe in him/herself. Participants are helped to affirm who they are and are taught to understand that they hold the power that is required to bring about change. During the session, the concept of self-esteem is clarified in order to create an awareness of how one relates to others in terms of behaviour, values and attitudes.

Through a process of association, participants relate what they think of themselves and what they perceive their good qualities to be. The premise is that it is of central importance that participants understand themselves before they can understand others. Awareness raising in this regard is undertaken through activities that focus on labelling and the effects of negative labelling on a person's self-concept, i.e. one can internalise a negative label one is given and behave accordingly. The session also helps participants find ways in which they can take charge of their own lives and not behave in accordance with the labels others have given them. Part of this consciousness is created by participants completing a 'personal value shield' that indicates their greatest achievements, qualities they like about themselves, words they would like to hear people say about them, achievement needs for future goals, and individual mottoes.

In essence, the session aims to instil the belief that each person is a unique, positive being; that society's negative labels can destroy this positivity and uniqueness; and that each person has the strength to live according to the image that they set for themselves.

Session 3: I respect you and I can say my say

The goal of this session is to develop conflict resolution and assertiveness skills, and, more specifically, to create an understanding that conflict is normal and can be dealt with in appropriate ways, of which communication forms an essential part. Participants are, therefore, taught what effective communication entails and how skills can be applied to deal with conflict in a constructive way.

The session is practical in that it deals with recent individual conflict situations. Responses to the incidents are analysed to determine if and how the conflict was resolved, as well as the end result thereof (i.e. was everyone satisfied, or only some were). Facilitators explain to participants the differences between passive, assertive and aggressive behaviour, and the apparent goals, feelings and payoffs of each style. Communication exercises further aim to stimulate the expression of feelings, especially anger, in a positive, non-aggressive way.

Session 4: I have choices

The fourth session is about learning to make responsible decisions and explores the factors that influence the process. It focuses on developing skills for good decision making, and helps participants to understand the relationship between decisions and the achievement of personal goals. Central to this is making the link between offending behaviour and the thought processes involved in decision making. This is achieved by providing by participants with a series of predicaments or problems for which they have to generate the best solution. Thereafter,

discussions centre on the factors one considers before making a final decision, and what the consequences of the decision would be.

The session also entails future planning in that participants are expected to describe what they want to achieve in life, in terms of personal and career aspirations. These descriptions are then discussed to decide how realistic and achievable they are. Participants are also asked to think about what decisions they would need to take in order to achieve these goals. The session concludes with discussions about responsibility, risk taking and crime.

Session 5: I have rights and responsibilities

The focus of this session is on the link between rights and responsibilities. It aims to inform participants about their rights and how these rights go hand in hand with certain responsibilities. Asserting rights and respecting those of others are also addressed. Additionally, guidelines are provided on what to do when rights are violated; what resources exist to deal with these violations; and how to go about asserting one's rights in a non-aggressive way.

Emphasis during this session is placed on the rights of victims in order to make participants understand that, through the unacceptable actions on their part, the rights of others have been violated. This process aims to instil empathy for the victim in that participants are asked to put themselves in the position of others and analyse how they would feel.

Session 6: I am part of ...

This session deals with the need for laws and norms in society. An understanding of the importance of legislation, as well as respect for laws, is promoted and the issue is raised of the purpose of sanctions when people disobey certain laws or choose not to adhere to the norms set by society. The session aims to create and establish positive attitudes among participants toward the law and respect for society's norms.

Participants are guided to achieve insight into how they became involved in offending – a process which often involved conscious decisions on their part. They construct their individual 'crime lines' that depict all the events that led to them offending. Once they have achieved a realisation of this process, and the decisions involved, they are guided to understand that they can decide to choose a different future for themselves. Participants are sensitised about how circumstances can make some people more vulnerable to crime. With this insight they can then decide whether they consider themselves at higher or lower risk of offending, in order to take extra care not to become victims of their circumstances.

Secondary to the session's goal, therefore, is to assist participants in devising concrete plans and decisions on how to change their lives. This goal is pursued by individuals compiling 'My Action Plan', which will give direction away from a life of re-offending, and 'My New Life', indicating their greatest ambition and steps toward realising it.

Session 7: I respect ...

The goal of this session is for participants to explore and understand the concept of respect. This focus is based on the fact that law and order is based on respect for oneself and respect for others. The session aims to enhance respect and gender equality, and to deal with the misconceptions around gender socialisation.

Through visual stimulation and group work, participants are guided to understand the process of socialisation, especially in respect of gender, and how self-perception and worth are influenced by the media. Participants are encouraged to challenge their own opinions about gender-related issues and understand how these fuel stereotypes, thereby creating awareness about respect and the equality of all individuals.

Session 8: I commit

With session eight being the last in the programme, it is necessary to place the young person on a secure path into the future. The session aims to help participants to plot the way forward and get them to commit to becoming responsible citizens. It is important that parents or guardians attend the last session to promote parent–child reconciliation and to rebuild trust. At the end, youths are asked to publicly commit themselves to change their attitudes and behaviour. This is done by means of a pledge to achieve something concrete and specific in relation to their goals for the future.

The 'Mapping the Future' activity primarily aims to help participants take control of their lives and map their future by encouraging them to start their lives afresh. Youths and their parents or guardians are requested to write letters to one another explaining how they would like to relate in future, and also asking forgiveness. Peace offerings, often in the form of services and duties outside normal daily routine, can be exchanged. The 'way forward' provides participants and their parents or guardians with a list of relevant resources should further assistance be required.

Efforts are made to accommodate young persons with special needs such as learning, reading or writing disabilities. Programme facilitators and volunteers pay special attention to these children during group sessions, or undertake parts of the programme on a one-on-one basis. However, young people with severe learning disabilities are referred to the DoSD where diversion services are provided to persons 14 years and younger. These diversion services follow a more specialised approach in order to accommodate varying levels of personal and cognitive development.

Costs

At the time that the data was collected, NICRO's service sites and branches relied on outcomes-based funding channelled via the national office. This entailed a fixed amount paid for each child that participated in the YES programme. The unit cost per child represented all costs, i.e. personnel, material, transport, overheads, etc. In 2003 R350 was paid to the provincial office for each YES participant. This system is no longer used and diversion services form part of a global provincial budget.

3. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The majority of the children referred to NICRO for diversion attend the YES programme. The programme aims to strengthen participants' self-knowledge, to help them understand how their choices and thinking affect the way they react to challenges, and to promote communication and discussion about the offence. It takes a developmental approach to understanding and intervening in youth offending, and values the individual's potential to react in a pro-social manner when confronted with crime-conducive situations. As most participants still attend school and the majority of offences are minor and first-time ones, it acknowledges the link between developmental age and offending misbehaviour and the need to encourage positive decision making abilities as a means of preventing offending.

To achieve this, life skills training activities are designed to strengthen participants' self-respect and self-worth, as it is considered that a healthy self-concept improves behaviour and increases respect for others. The theory is that the psycho-social life skills participants learn will be good for their general functioning. The programme focuses both on concrete action to avoid re-offending and on reflection. Reflecting on the offence helps participants understand the causes of their behaviour (experiential learning) and thus to avoid doing it again (social learning). It is critical when using this approach in a group setting to ensure that proper follow-up support is provided so that strategies are put into practice and adhered to, otherwise the intervention risks falling into the trap of merely creating awareness rather than changing behaviour.

As discussed earlier in this review, service providers need to guard against using a single method approach in attempting to influence offending behaviour. There are a range of possible causes of offending and programmes need to address these issues as holistically as possible. To this end, YES is frequently used to complements other diversion initiatives. Life skills training is thought to have broader value for other diversion activities, and in particular those with a strong restorative justice focus, for example community service and family group conferencing. On its own, YES takes a largely rights-based approach to diversion, with restorative endeavours aimed mostly at strengthening responsibility, accountability and reconciliation between the young offender and his or her parents. However, it is noteworthy that the programme does include a component on promoting empathy for the victim.

Like other predominantly life skills-based interventions, YES assessments inform the focus and content of interventions. However, the extent to which structured, module-based programmes can be altered is limited. Also, structured interventions often struggle to meet individual participants' unique needs, as activities are largely undertaken in groups. In the case of NICRO (unlike other stand-alone life skills programmes) the assessment process is used to develop an individualised intervention strategy for each child.

As previously discussed, NICRO is committed to monitoring its diversion activities effectively. However, to reflect on the impact of the YES programme specifically, one would need to disaggregated outcome data specific to the YES programme. This would be difficult to do given that many of the children participate in a range of different activities as part of the diversion process (e.g. they may attend a wilderness programme, vocational training or participate in a mentoring programme) and it would be impossible to attribute changes in behaviour to one specific

aspect of the intervention. Having said this, evidence suggests that NICRO's multi-modal diversion programming is having a positive impact.

In terms of broader application, indications are that the YES initiative can benefit young offenders who display adolescence-limited antisocial behaviour (see Chapter 1). However, it can be argued that life skills training may have limited impact in cases where offending stems from dire economic need and therefore needs to be applied in conjunction with other poverty alleviation efforts. The life skills training programme can be replicated with relative ease. However, it is important to note that YES benefits from a broader programme network and is thus able to be utilised as part of a holistic service to children and families.

References

Khumalo B. 2001. NICRO programme to help child offenders change their ways. *The Star*, 10 April. http://www.nicro.org.za/articles-articlesdetail.asp?ID=39 (Accessed 22 October 2003).

NICRO (National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders). 2003. Developing Young People's Potential. http://www.nicro.org.za/projects-youth.asp (Accessed 9 June 2003).

NICRO (National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders). 2000. *Mapping the future – empowering the youth*. Cape Town: Juta.

Van der Sandt T & Wessels N. 1997. Youth Empowerment Scheme. In Muntingh LM & Shapiro R (eds). *NICRO Diversion Options (3rd edn)*. Cape Town: National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders.

THE NOUPOORT YOUTH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (NYCDP)

The Noupoort Youth and Community Development Project (NYCDP) is a non-government organisation based in the small town of Noupoort in the Northern Cape. The aim of the project is to provide community-based services to children and their families with a view to reducing levels of youth offending and create opportunities for young people in the town to reach their full potential. This chapter focuses specifically on the organisation's work with at-risk youth and young offenders.

1. THE ORGANISATION

1.1 Background

Towards the end of 1999, the local magistrate in Noupoort identified the need to develop a strategy for dealing with the increasing number of children coming through the court system. At the time diversion was being piloted by organisations like NICRO but no services of this nature existed in Noupoort. In February 2000, the Noupoort Child Justice Committee was established, with representation from the provincial departments of Justice, Education, Health and Social Services, as well as religious and civic organisations in the community. Technical input was also obtained from the Stepping Stones youth initiative (Port Elizabeth) and the Community Law Centre (University of the Western Cape). This Committee recruited ten locally based volunteers and what was then known as the Juvenile Justice Project was formed. Initially, services consisted mainly of school-based crime prevention activities but the project was later expanded to include diversion. Staff from NICRO and the Department of Social Services and Population Development in De Aar trained the volunteers on a broad range of themes related to offending and diversion.

1.2 Aims

The NYCDP (2000:1) aims to achieve the following goals:

■ Decrease youth offending in Noupoort.

■ To reduce the levels of victimisation of children.

- To create opportunities for children and families in Noupoort to improve their quality of life.

- Help young people to become responsible community members by instilling positive norms and values.

- To develop a 'best practice' model in relation to rural development and rural diversion and crime prevention.

1.3 Organisational structure and resources

A steering committee consisting of senior members of the community, guides the overall direction of the NYCDP. The steering committee's role includes monitoring programme facilitators, acting as legal guardians of the NYCDP, overseeing the financial management of the project and acting as a link between the organisation, the community and local schools (NYCDP 2003:1). There are currently eight volunteers who jointly manage the day-to-day running of the organisation and the delivery of services. NYCDP staff meet once a week to discuss progress in relation to the programme and to plan forthcoming activities.

The NYCDP currently rents office and facilitation space in the Noupoort town centre. The organisation does not own vehicles; transport is hired from a local taxi organisation when required. The NYCDP is currently jointly funded by a donor organisation and the Department of Social Services and Population Development in the Northern Cape. Although a small entry fee is sometimes charged during special events, no other source of income exists at present.

2. THE LIFE SKILLS AND DIVERSION PROGRAMMES

The NYCDP currently provides a range of services aimed at children and families. These include diversion and life skills training, workshops on pertinent issues, a home visiting project aimed at reducing truanting and special events designed to create community cohesion and strengthen the crime prevention message. Diversion and life skills training focus specifically on young offenders and at-risk youth, and awareness workshops and special events are aimed at broadening young people's knowledge and helping them lead constructive and healthy lifestyles.

2.1 The life skills programme

Rationale and aims

The life skills programme was introduced in July 2001 to assist children deemed to be at risk of offending, i.e. those displaying behavioural problems or living in environments characterised by poor family ties, child neglect and alcohol abuse. While the focus of the life skills programme is not specifically on offending, it does address some issues related to offending behaviour, e.g. the consequences of a criminal conviction. The primary aim of the programme is to provide children who may be at risk of offending with appropriate life skills training to empower them to lead healthy, positive and crime-free lifestyles. The overall goals of the programme are to:

- Help young people learn more about themselves and strengthen positive self-concepts, attitudes and characters.

- Help them acquire communication skills, to enhance family and community relationships.

■ Transfer knowledge and skills about decision making, to enable them to deal with peer group pressure.

■ Inform them about the consequences of decisions, to strengthen their sense of responsibility.

(NYCDP 2001:2)

The programme aims to teach children to think and act in an autonomous and responsible way. It provides them with the much-needed coping and decision making mechanisms to face the challenges of adolescence.

> We had the need for someone to help give the children guidance on how they should behave and to change negative behaviours, to keep them from crime and teach them values to become good citizens. (Local educator)

The life skills programme was developed locally by consulting an array of documents.

> We took the core ideas of life skills training and made it home grown to meet our needs ... We looked at what works elsewhere and took the best of these to suit local demands and resources. (Legal officer)

The life skills programme was not tested before it was implemented, so changes had to be made as service delivery proceeded. NYCDP staff, all from Noupoort, helped compile the programme. Their input was considered crucial, since they are relatively young and familiar with the needs of young people living in the area and the challenges they face.

Entry criteria and profile of participants

The life skills programme does not have strict entry criteria. It accommodates any young person who exhibits problem behaviour, ranging from alcohol and drug use to interpersonal violence and disrespect for others. The majority of children are referred by educators, although some parents and guardians contact the NYCDP directly to enrol their children. Each local school has at least one educator who is responsible for referring children to the programme. A referral can take place only if the child and his or her parents voluntarily agree to participate.

The needs of children in the programme are assessed in collaboration with educators, as they are in a position to observe learners' behaviour in the classroom. The assessment focuses on the need for the referral, the youth's behaviour at school, academic performance, school attendance, extramural activities and interaction with friends and peers. Assessments also include the views of the parent or guardian.

Although the life skills programme is classroom-based, the assessment process allows the facilitators to identify the particular needs of the participants and to tailor the programme accordingly. Close attention is paid to children with learning disabilities and facilitators help these participants with their reading and writing. The programme deals with youths from both primary and secondary schools.

Programme content and implementation

The life skills programme includes a range of developmental themes, including communication, conflict management, getting to know oneself better, respect and decision making, all specifically aimed at encouraging

responsible lifestyles. The icebreakers and games that characterise the programme help to keep participants focused and they provide opportunity for self-expression and getting to know others.

Young people and their parents are informed about the aim, content and approach of the life skills programme upon their first contact with the NYCDP. It is important that the young person sees himself or herself not as a bad individual because he or she has been referred to the programme, but as someone in need of assistance and guidance to lead a constructive life. The maximum intake for the life skills programme is 15 participants, although mostly between eight and twelve take part at a time. The programme is run over a six-week period with each of its themes taking one to two days. The following discussion provides an overview of the programme's content (NYCDP 2001).

Session 1: Introduction and self-concept

The life skills programme starts off with a thorough explanation of what the training is about and there are icebreakers to allow participants to get to know each other. Housekeeping and logistical arrangements are explained, followed by the group developing rules and norms for the duration of the programme.

To learn about themselves and their environments, participants are asked to draw a diagram that depicts their relationships with family members and friends and show how each of these contributes to their well-being. Negative relationships are discussed and ways sought to improve them. The impact of negative comments on a person's self-concept is also explored through an interactive process which helps participants think about whether they are in fact responsible for the negative comments they receive from others.

Session 2: Self-concept and self-awareness

The second session builds on the written assignments from the first session. It explores the participants' self-concept: discussing whether the goals they have set are of high or low value and whether they are realistic and achievable, analysing negative comments for their validity, and examining ways they can change the negative perceptions others have of them. Participants are also asked to individually draft five questions they can use in future to reflect on their own behaviour. The aim of these exercises is to nurture positive self-images that will ultimately assist in changing behaviour.

Session 3: Communication

Here participants learn the value of good communication skills by bringing an object that means something to them to the session. It should represent an important emotion or emotional event in the participant's life and he or she is asked to share its significance with the others. The group may ask questions to promote communication and interaction, and this is followed by discussions about the difficulty of expressing one's emotions, and ways in which this skill can be improved.

Session 4: Communication and assertive behaviour

The aim of this session is to examine ways in which people act and communicate to obtain what they want, and how successful and mutually satisfactory different approaches are. For example, communicating in an aggressive way may provoke feelings of anger and the other person might react aggressively. Using a less aggressive communication style might work better for both parties. As a homework exercise, participants are asked to document a conflict situation at home and relate how they responded to it. These notes are shared with the class during the following session.

Session 5: Risk taking and decision making

The fifth session focuses on the ways people, and the participants in particular, make decisions. Participants are confronted with a variety of situations, such as climbing onto the roof of a two-storey building or getting into a car with intoxicated people, to which participants are required to justify their reactions and decisions. Would they climb on the roof? Why would they not get in the car? The aim is to become aware of how decisions are made, and how certain factors or people can influence the decision making process.

Session 6: Parents and children

The final session of the life skills programme focuses on the way forward and participants are helped to develop plans and strategies for avoiding misconduct and offending behaviour. Parents are also asked to attend this session to promote parent–child reconciliation and rebuild trust.

There is scope for adapting the content of both the life skills and the diversion programmes to suit the needs of particular individuals or groups.

> In the beginning we followed the manual, but now we make it more interesting and sometimes introduce topics that the children need. (NYCDP official)

Facilitators pay close attention to personal problems that are unique to individual participants, and guidance is provided as far as possible. Programmes are planned according to the needs of particular groups. While some groups mostly need to acquire communication skills, others might focus on conflict resolution.

2.2 The diversion programme

Rationale and aim

As described earlier in the chapter, the need for a formal diversion programme was identified in 1999 as a result of the increasing number of children entering the criminal justice system and the lack of adequate resources to deal effectively with those who had committed minor offences. In addition, with prison sentences being inappropriate for first-time offences, particularly petty ones, prosecutors often withdrew cases as the option to divert a case was not available.

> Young people are only worse off in prison. Mostly they only become worse. The diversion programme tries to give them a second chance to right mistakes. We don't want our children to have criminal records, and we want to see them finalising school and find work without a criminal record. (NYCDP official)

The aim of the diversion programme is to:

■ Prevent young offenders from entering formal justice procedures and getting a criminal record.

■ Give young offenders a second chance.

■ Promote reconciliation between the victim and the young offender.

■ Promote restorative justice in the local community.

(NYCDP 2003:1–2)

Entry criteria and profile of participants

The criteria for being admitted to the diversion programme are an age limit of 14–18 years (although young people of up to 21 years have been accepted when deemed appropriate), voluntary participation, taking responsibility for having committed the offence, and the offence being of a minor nature. Young offenders are assessed by the local probation officer, and information is compiled about their background, family composition, behavioural history (including criminal tendencies), education, interpersonal relationships, living environment and the current offence. Once a detailed assessment has been compiled, a recommendation about whether the case is suitable for diversion is made to the prosecutor, who can then refer the young person to the NYCDP.

Once the NYCDP receives a referral from the court, another assessment is done to determine what kind of intervention would be most suitable for the young person concerned. More detailed information is gathered about his or her family, communication structures, community perceptions, discipline, extramural activities, and peer groups and friends. Specific attention is paid to the type, nature and impact of the offence. All this information is used to decide which components of the diversion programme should be included and focused on to best meet the young person's needs.

The profile of diversion participants shows that:

■ More boys than girls enter the programmes, with an estimated ratio of 3:1.

■ The majority of participants are from lower socioeconomic environments.

■ The diversion programme deals largely with young people between the ages of 14 and 18 (older youth are sometimes accepted into the programme).

Diversion participants are mostly first-time offenders (although on occasion children who have previous convictions for minor crimes are accepted). Most referrals are the result of theft and housebreaking.[1]

Programme content and implementation

The diversion programme consists of the following eight sessions and follows the guidelines provided in the manual Mapping the Future (NICRO 2000:21–96). Combinations of sessions can be selected to suit the needs of individuals or groups. (The NYCDP's diversion intervention is based on NICRO's YES programme although the sessions have been adapted to suit local needs. The following is a brief description of the YES programme. A more detailed description was provided in Chapter 6 when the NICRO programme was discussed.)

Session 1: Who am I?

The aim of this session is to help participants to start developing self-concept and to understand their responsibility for their choices and actions. They are told of the content and purpose of the programme, they are introduced to one another and group expectations and rules are made clear. They are made aware that their actions have consequences and affect others, and can lead to a criminal record. The session aims to strengthen parent–child relationships and communication. It does this through role playing in which an offence scenario stimulates discussion, with youths taking turns to act out the roles of parents.

Session 2: I am …

The central theme of the second session is to enhance participants' self-concept. The aim is to help them understand themselves and to encourage them to discard negative stereotyping and believe in themselves. They are helped to affirm who they are and are taught to understand that they hold the power that is required to bring about change. During the session, the self-concept is clarified to create an awareness of how they relate to others in terms of behaviour, values and attitudes.

Session 3: I respect you and I can say my say

The goal of this session is to develop conflict resolution and assertiveness skills, and, more specifically, to help participants understand that conflict is normal and can be dealt with in appropriate ways, of which communication forms an essential part. Participants are, therefore, taught what effective communication entails and how skills can be applied to deal with conflict in a constructive way. Communication exercises aim to stimulate the expression of feelings, especially anger, in a positive, non-aggressive way.

Session 4: I have choices

The fourth session is about learning how to make responsible decisions, and about the thought processes involved in this skill and how it can help participants achieve personal goals. Central to this is becoming conscious of what constitutes offending behaviour. The session is also about planning futures. Participants are expected to describe what they want to achieve in life, in terms of personal and career aspirations, and to discuss whether these are realistic and achievable. The session ends with discussions about responsibility, risk taking and crime.

Session 5: I have rights and responsibilities

This session is about the link between rights and responsibilities. Young people often use their rights as an excuse for inappropriate behaviour, but rights entail responsibilities, so they need to learn how to balance the two. Through group work, participants are guided to understand that dishonouring responsibilities means losing rights. The session is also about asserting rights and respecting those of others. Emphasis is placed on the rights of victims, to make offenders understand that their unacceptable actions have violated others' rights, and to teach them empathy – putting themselves in the other person's shoes before they act.

Session 6: I am part of …

Session six deals with why society needs laws and why we must all respect them. Participants need to understand the purpose of sanctions when people disobey laws. In this session they learn positive attitudes toward the law and respect for society's norms. They are guided to achieve insight into how they became involved in offending, a process which often involved conscious decisions on their part. They construct their individual 'crime lines' that depict all the events that led to them offending. Once they have understood the process, and the decisions that were involved, they are guided to understand that they can decide to choose a different future for themselves. They are helped to take decisions on how to change their lives and to make plans for doing so. They do this by compiling 'My Action Plan', which gives them direction away from a life of re-offending, and 'My New Life', which indicates their greatest ambition and steps toward realising it.

Session 7: I respect …

In this session participants explore the concept of respect, because law and order is based on respect for oneself and others. The aim of the session is to enhance respect and gender equality and to understand how socialisation can lead to misconceptions. Through visual aids and group work, participants are guided to understand the misconceptions around gender socialisation, and how the media influences one's perception of one's own worth. They must challenge their own opinions about gender and understand how these fuel stereotypes, and become aware of the importance of respect and the equality of all individuals.

Session 8: I commit

In this final session in the series, the participants are set on a secure path into the future. The session deliberates the way forward and gets participants to commit to becoming responsible citizens. It is important that parents or guardians attend the last session to promote parent–child reconciliation and rebuild trust. Youths and their parents or guardians are asked to write letters to one another explaining how they would like to relate to each other in future, and also asking forgiveness. Peace offerings, often in the form of services and duties outside normal daily routine, can also be exchanged.

Staff and volunteers

Three NYCDP staff members are responsible for providing diversion services, while all staff, including two volunteers, are involved in life skills training. The facilitators' duties include:

■ Implementing programmes (including running workshops and visiting schools).

■ Attending court hearings where children are involved.

■ Assessing arrested children.

■ Keeping records, drawing up budgets and reporting to the steering committee.

■ Attending staff development programmes.

■ Acting as role models for Noupoort's young population.

■ Planning activities in collaboration with the steering committee.

(NYCDP 2003:1)

Although service providers receive relatively small remuneration packages, they are highly motivated to provide youth development and intervention services.

I like working with children and it is nice to be able to help them. (NYCDP facilitator)

We all are motivated and we motivate each other. We enjoy our work. (NYCDP facilitator)

Partnerships

The NYCDP has a good working relationship with the local schools, which play a vital role in referring children to the life skills programme. For the NYCDP's diversion services, there is official collaboration with the Departments of Justice and Social Services. The NYCDP also maintains links with NICRO Bloemfontein, specifically for skills training purposes and works closely with LoveLife on joint community events .

Costs

The cost of the intervention depends on intake figures and the allocation of personnel to particular programmes. A costing exercise, incorporating organisational and service expenses incurred during 2002, revealed that running the diversion programme cost R530 per child. However, because enrolment figures for 2002 were relatively low compared with those for 2001, and taking into account the anticipated increase during 2003, it can be assumed that the cost per child is in fact lower than this.

2.4   Monitoring and evaluation

At the end of each session participants are asked to evaluate the programme by answering a range of questions relating to both the quality of the facilitator and the content of the session. Participants also comment on any issues they think need to be brought to the attention of the facilitators.

Statistics are compiled annually and reflect intake figures per programme and are used to track trends of the number of programme admissions. At present no evaluation system exists to track the long-term impact of the diversion and life skills training programmes. The NYCDP's performance is informally discussed during steering committee meetings.

> On an informal basis we see that the children associate with different groups after the programme. They might not go with the old friends any longer. Still, we do not know what happens in the long run, whether it [the interventions] made a real change in their lives. (NYCDP official)

However, programme facilitators do not link the success of their programmes to completion rates, but rather to good school attendance and positive attitudes. They provide feedback on the life skills programme participants to school authorities and educators, and the educators themselves are also involved in monitoring the participants. Schools are provided with forms for commenting on whether the intervention had any impact on the behaviour of participants, and these are completed and submitted to the NYCDP.

Programme facilitators pay follow-up visits to schools and homes to see whether the participants have put into practice what they learned from the programme. They also gather information from the participants' friends, family members and neighbours and record these on a form, indicating adjustment within the family (relationships, behaviour at home, acceptance of responsibility and skills) and community (school work, church and leisure activities, substance abuse and community complaints.)

FIGURE 7.1: NYCDP INTAKES FOR LIFESKILLS TRAINING, DIVERSION AND RE-ADMISSIONS, 2001–JUNE 2003
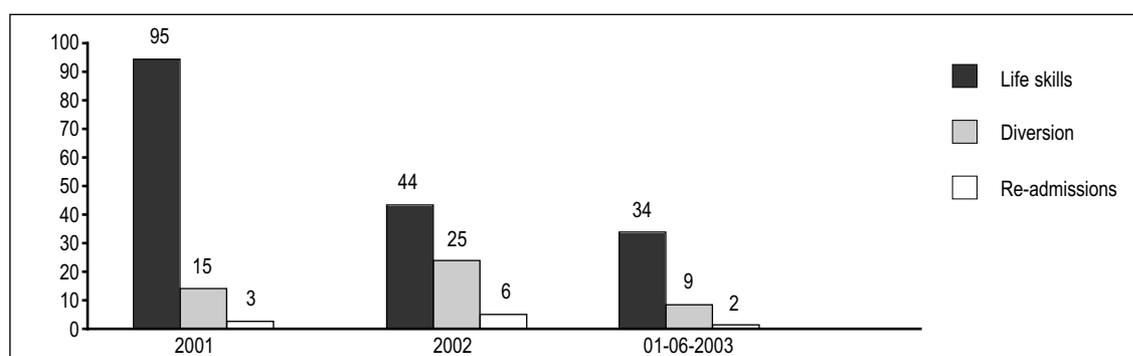
Source: NYCDP, June 2003.

Although data is not available, NYCDP officials estimate that more than 90% of participants successfully complete the intervention programmes. Children who do not complete the diversion programme are referred back to the state prosecutor and following a warning almost all have returned to complete the programme.

2.5   Key lessons and views

■ Intervention by means of life skills training should be adaptable to address problems as they arise.

> Sometimes the facilitator will identify a problem and then explore it in-depth. Such flexibility is needed to deal with the individual problems and needs of participants. (NYCDP official)

■ Effective follow-up forms an integral part of intervention among at-risk youth.

> We cannot consider a case as a success story if he completed the programme and we are not aware of what happened to him two years down the line. That is why we should strive to provide effective follow-up. (NYCDP official)

■ Service providers should have counselling skills.

> Our greatest shortcoming is at a personnel level, specifically counselling. I cannot deal with problems such as domestic violence. I struggle to help the child in totality. Our counselling knowledge and skills need attention. (NYCDP official)

■ The staff of intervention programmes should be perceived as approachable by young participants and their parents or guardians.

> Some parents complain that the facilitators are too young and inexperienced to talk to them about their relationships with their children ... some facilitators should be older to also reach the parents. (Stakeholder)

■ The diversion programme eases the burden of the legal system.

> The success of the programme is phenomenal as the only crimes that go through court are serious ones. (Legal practitioner)

■ Crime prevention and management officials welcome the initiative.

> The diversion programme really helps in the sense that many children who have completed the programme don't re-offend. (Police official)

■ It appears that young participants benefit from the intervention.

> The programme taught me how to handle things that I couldn't handle before. (Diversion participant)

> The programme taught me what crime can do to one's life. (Diversion participant)

3. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The establishment of the NYCDP indicates that diversion programmes can be implemented in small-town and rural areas without needing substantial resources. Nevertheless, some of the challenges the NYCDP faces and limitations of its programmes could serve as useful lessons for similar endeavours.

At the implementation level, it is evident that the objectives of both the diversion and life skills training programmes are broadly linked to generic life skills training activities (e.g. communication, decision making and conflict resolution). The evidence would suggest that value could be added to the project were more emphasis placed on strategies that address the offending behaviour specifically. In the case of the NYCDP, this would require at least some degree of focus on the causes of the offences committed by young people, and attention to the manner in which they can be helped to avoid this behaviour in future. It is noteworthy that (individual) assessment information is used to structure the intervention plan for each group. However, owing to the group work and group interaction approach that is followed, it may not always be possible to meet the specific needs of each individual participant.

A challenge to the NYCDP's work, which is common to many programmes working with youth at risk, is whether it can intervene effectively in the participants' domestic environments. Although the programmes endeavour to involve the children's parents, efforts to do this are often unsuccessful. Strengthening of family relationships has been identified as a critical element of successful intervention. As the literature suggests, strengthening the bonds between the child and his or her family and reducing family dysfunction are important catalysts in the reduction of antisocial behaviour and offending. Without support and co-operation from family members participants may find it difficult to implement what they have learnt in the programme. Moreover, the socioeconomic realities of poverty and unemployment in the Noupoort area remain a major challenge to participants in spite of the gains that they may make in the intervention programmes. This problem may well be addressed by the NYCDP expanding its developmental mandate, in particular by providing young people and their families with opportunities to improve their lives.

The NYCDP is not the only South African diversion initiative that is attempting to address youth offending through a single methodology, i.e. life skills training. While they have had some success in this regard, evidence in the literature is clear that diversion needs are best met through multi-modal interventions. In the light of the relatively low number of diversion referrals to the NYCDP, the organisation should consider individual and multi-modal approaches to diversion, such as family group conferences and community service programmes that are combined with life skills training.

The NYCDP has identified restorative justice as one of the founding principles upon which its work is based. However, as with other stand-alone life skills-based programmes, the NYCDP response to youth offending does not encompass all elements of this approach given that it does not get the community and the victim of the offence involved. Noupoort is a small town and it would be particularly useful to add a restorative dimension to the programme so that diverted children can return with more confidence to a small community that has been able to come to terms with their behaviour.

In terms of monitoring and evaluation, systems are in place to track the participants' attendance and commitment to the interventions (and the findings appear to be fed back into implementation activities). However, the NYCDP needs a mechanism for measuring the outcomes of its programming. A way to do this would be to standardise aftercare and follow-up efforts, as these have the potential to assist in monitoring and evaluation activities. Ideally, information gathered during follow-up activities should also take the form of a post-intervention assessment.

Given the general nature of life skills training, interventions like the NYCDP can be replicated with relative ease in both urban and rural areas. Although a generic intervention such as YES is useful for conceptualising a life skills-based intervention, care has to be taken to understand the nature of youth offending at local levels. Elements that are important for replicating the NYCDP model of intervention among at-risk and offending youth include:

- Support from local prosecutors and the magistrate.
- Support from the local community regarding the purpose and work of the initiative.
- Professional assistance with the drafting of intervention programmes.
- Training in child, youth, family and community development.
- Networking and collaboration with stakeholders in the referral chain.

Endnotes

1 The causes of youth offending in the Noupoort area, when seen in their socioeconomic context, pose major challenges for crime prevention in general. Recreational facilities and opportunities are extremely limited and poverty rates are estimated at 56.2% (Statistics South Africa 1996). Unemployment rates are exceptionally high and many households rely on state subsidies to survive. Alcohol abuse is one of the main social ills and many children are exposed to its aftermath, including domestic and interpersonal violence.

References

NICRO (National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders). 2000. *Mapping the future – empowering the youth*. Cape Town: Juta.

NYCDP (Noupoort Youth and Community Development Project). 2003. *Strategic plan for 2003*. Noupoort: Noupoort Youth and Community Development Project.

NYCDP (Noupoort Youth and Community Development Project). 2001. *Noupoort Youth and Community Development Project – Youth At-Risk Programme*. Noupoort: Noupoort Youth and Community Development Project.

NYCDP (Noupoort Youth and Community Development Project). 2000. *Constitution of the Noupoort Youth and Community Development Project*. Noupoort: Noupoort Youth and Community Development Project.

8

IZINGWE KUBUMBANO ('THE GATHERING OF THE LEOPARDS')

Ekupholeni Mental Health Centre[1]

The Ekupholeni Mental Health Centre is based in Katlehong on Gauteng's East Rand and targets individuals, families, groups and communities in distress to engage them in a comprehensive process of healing, recovery and empowerment (Ekupholeni 2001a:1). Ekupholeni provides a range of mental health services, including support for those infected or affected by HIV/AIDS and for victims of violence and abuse, and bereavement counselling. This chapter discusses Ekupholeni's programme for at-risk youth, Izingwe Kubumbano, in particular its life skills training component.

1. THE ORGANISATION

1.1 Background

During the early 1990s, the areas of Katlehong, Vosloorus and Thokoza, (jointly known as Kathorus), experienced high levels of political violence that caused the death of hundreds of people and displaced numerous others. Physical injuries were common, but the aftermath of 'the war', as some community members refer to the period of violence, resulted in communities and individuals being severely traumatised (Ekupholeni 2000a:4). In addition to the devastating effects that the violence had on the community, many social ills, ranging from severe poverty and unemployment to sexual abuse and crime, now further contribute to the levels of poor mental health in the area.

In 1993, psychiatric staff in the employ of the Germiston Local Authority lobbied for the establishment of mental health services in Kathorus. At first, a psychiatrist and psychologist from the Department of Health (DoH) rendered support services at the North Clinic in Katlehong. However, the services had to move to the Natalspruit Hospital because of safety concerns. With violence in the area escalating rapidly at that time, the psychologist increasingly spent time rendering mental health services to traumatised individuals. Soon, support groups were started for traumatised children and women (Ekupholeni 2000a:6).

In 1995, the magnitude of trauma owing to violence necessitated the establishment of a permanent mental health service for the inhabitants of Kathorus. The Natalspruit Hospital made two trailers available to accommodate the service. However, the demand for intervention was tremendous and called for the training of volunteers to assist with counselling and support activities. The National Peace Accord Trust (NPAT) trained community activists in a wide range of counselling techniques. NPAT funded the salaries of support workers and service delivery benefited from the added capacity of lay counsellors. In time, a large number of persons started accessing mental health services through word-of-mouth referrals. In 1996, the service became known as Ekupholeni ('place of healing'). In 1997, Ekupholeni became affiliated to the Witwatersrand Mental Health Society, which resulted in the initiative being registered as a non-governmental organisation (Ekupholeni 2000a:6).

1.2 Aims and values

Ekupholeni aims to provide mental health care that is particular to communities, groups and individuals. It implements programmes that seek to heal emotional ills through local models of intervention and support. A central component of Ekupholeni's approach is showing how people can heal themselves, because broader healing commences at an individual level. Ekupholeni sets itself apart from conventional mental health service in the following ways:

- The organisation does not follow a fixed ideology or approach. It seeks to find creative ways of support that are relevant to individuals, families and groups within historically bound communities.

- Its clientele consists of the most disadvantaged and those who do not have access to specialised mental health services.

- Ekupholeni works with people rather than patients. Service recipients are not defined in terms of pre-established notions of pathology, but as people seeking assistance in dealing with unmanageable social, economic and psychological demands.

- The larger part of the Ekupholeni team consists of lay people who have received extensive training and exposure to counselling and mental health care. This ensures a particular sensitivity toward and appreciation of the challenges that clients face.

- Ekupholeni's programmes ensure reciprocal relationships aimed at strengthening the mental health of broader structures and the community. Each client is seen as a potential resource for reaching others.

- The organisation's personnel show a level of commitment beyond what is expected of them, including working long hours, being available in times of crisis, and being able to function under adverse conditions.

    (Ekupholeni 2000a:5)

Ekupholeni's work reaches individuals, families and communities through education and mutual processes of recovery, healing and empowerment. The organisation renders mental health care on three levels:

■ Individual one-on-one counselling is provided on a daily basis to people visiting the fixed and mobile service sites. Community care workers and professional staff generally deal with problems to do with domestic violence, sexual abuse, rape, distress resulting from extreme poverty, depression as a result of illness, and children's behavioural problems.

■ Group counselling is available for people who have similar problems. Support groups are valuable for making people feel they are not alone in facing their challenges. There are groups for, among others, mothers of children who have been sexually abused, parents who lost their children during the violence, young people with learning problems and victims of violence.

■ Community mental health development projects aim to address the mental health needs of groups within the community. Initiatives include a project for the families of missing children and interventions among at-risk and offending youth.

(Ekupholeni 2000a:7)

Providing services at these three levels allows for comprehensive coverage, particularly as clients can access or be referred to more than one level of intervention.

1.3 Organisational structure and resources

Ekupholeni is steered by a management committee. Some committee members are actively involved in Ekupholeni's work, including marketing, fund raising and liaison. The centre manager and an organisational consultant undertake the day-to-day management of the initiative. Ekupholeni is housed in three trailers and two permanent structures that serve as office space and programme venues. Two vehicles are used to transport staff to six satellite sites in Kathorus. Basic stationery is used for art activities. Resources are used to provide food for a number of participants.

Ekupholeni's sustainability is promoted through strong relationships with stakeholders, particularly the DoH and DoSS. The latter department provides substantial funding for Ekupholeni's activities, although it does not fund them in full. Additional funding is secured by means of donor assistance.

2. THE IZINGWE KUBUMBANO PROGRAMME

2.1 Rationale and aim

Ekupholeni's work with at-risk and traumatised youth began in 1996 when a group of former militants participated in NPAT's ecotherapy[2] programmes. These youths, often termed ex-combatants, were responsible for protecting members of their political parties and were engaged in violence against members of opposing parties. After democracy was realised in South Africa, their role as protectors became redundant, which led to confusion, resentment, poor self-esteem and psychological distress. These youths increasingly became at risk of continued violence, aggression and crime.

After the ecotherapy intervention, some participants formed a support group. Ekupholeni officials identified the need for an external focus to help the group gain deeper insight into their lives and emotional state and to instil responsible behaviour in future. This need resulted in the Izingwe Kubumbano – 'the gathering of the leopards' – programme, which also welcomes any youth in need of guidance, particularly those who are affected by violence, poverty and poor education. As the Izingwe Kubumbano programme proceeded, younger clients, some of whom had been exposed to political violence, accessed Ekupholeni's services. A decision was taken to link young newcomers to the Izingwe Kubumbano programme, where older youths could act as mentors.

The Izingwe Kubumbano project aims to offer comprehensive mental health and social welfare support to general and at-risk youth in Kathorus. A broad range of life skills serves to assist youths to move toward autonomy, school attendance and achievement (Ekupholeni 2000a:10). The programme seeks to train young people to act as role models and mentors to younger community members as a continued and long-term way of strengthening society's mental health.

2.2 Entry criteria and profile of participants

None of the referrals to the Izingwe Kubumbano programme are formal in nature (i.e. referrals do not come directly from the courts). The project's point of departure is that structures, communities and individuals need to decide for themselves when intervention is required. Most referrals to the project come from schools, parents, family members and peers, although a number of youths present themselves for intervention support. If a person cannot immediately be accommodated in the group, individual counselling is provided. Potential participants are screened to identify immediate and longer-term needs.

The young clients' ages range from six years to the early twenties. The Izingwe Kubumbano programme distinguishes between younger participants between the ages of six and 14, and older participants between the ages of 15 and 25. Both boys and girls participate in the programme. Their backgrounds vary and may include dysfunctional family systems, deprivation, abuse and abandonment. Behavioural problems often include truancy, substance abuse, petty theft and poor scholastic performance. Many young participants have reading, writing and/or learning disabilities, which are taken into account during the implementation of a programme. Facilitators try not to draw attention to these challenges during activities in order to avoid stigmatising individuals. Additionally, programmes involve very little reading and writing. Participants mostly express themselves through drawing and art.

2.3 Programme content and implementation

At Ekupholeni, the duration of a specific programme is not predetermined. Ekupholeni staff learned that the premature closure of a support group could cause feelings of abandonment and neglect. Participants from one particular group engaged in crime shortly after termination of the programme, so the group was re-established. Follow-up and aftercare activities focus largely on defaulting youth and those in need of continued attention. No follow-up is undertaken with participants who, after a number of years, feel that they do not need Ekupholeni's intervention any longer. Some participants do, however, visit Ekupholeni from time to time to inquire about the

well-being of other participants and programme facilitators. The Izingwe Kubumbano programme focuses primarily on three areas:

■ Leadership, life skills and mentoring training is provided to participants who would otherwise be considered as at risk. They are assisted with life skills, leadership skills, career choices and support to empower them to deal with the challenges they face. Groups meet once or twice a week. Some participants help with the adventure therapy camps and therapy groups.

■ Adventure therapy camps target at-risk youth, with the aim of developing their self-esteem, social skills and personal coping mechanisms. These three- to five-day camps serve to strengthen self-concepts, encourage the expression of emotions and create solidarity among participants. They are required to establish a support system for participants once they return to their home environments.

■ Weekly 'buddy' programmes are based on the support structures developed during adventure camps. Support systems act as a link to Ekupholeni's more formal services and serves as referral point for other at-risk and troubled youths. Younger participants are allocated to older ones to ensure that they have someone to confide in. When serious problems arise, mentors refer young participants to Ekupholeni for further intervention.

(Ekupholeni 2000a:9)

The Izingwe Kubumbano programme's life skills component is implemented with the aid of a manual, although processes are flexible to address the demands of individual participants and groups. The following themes are addressed (Amoore et al. n.d.):

Theme 1: Trust

Youth are asked to write down the names of people they trust and to explain why a trust relationship exists with this person. Common characteristics among existing trust relationships are explored and participants construct a definition of a trusting relationship. The value and meaning of trust are further explored through group discussion.

Theme 2: Different kinds of love

Participants are asked to contemplate the meaning of love in their relationships with other people. The value of and differences between self-love, friendship love, secure love, romantic love, sexual love and unconditional love are explored. Youths are tasked to revisit their existing relationships and categorise these in terms of the different types of love that were discussed.

Theme 3: Relationships with family and friends

The value, function and structure of the family as the primary group in society is discussed and participants are asked to draw their individual family structures. They also comment on the nature of their relationship with siblings. Through role play, they further explore communication dynamics within the family structures. The nature and meaning of different types of friendships are discussed and each participant writes a letter to his or her best friend to tell him or her how special the friendship relationship is.

Theme 4: Intimate relationships

Participants first explore the physical and emotional changes that they went through during puberty, as well as the impact of peer pressure during this developmental phase. Specific attention is paid to peer pressure and sexual activity. The group then discusses the health and emotional risks of casual sexual relationships. The core ingredients of relationships, namely trust, love and commitment, serve as starting points for participants to contemplate the nature and value of intimate relationships.

Theme 5: Self-concept

Participants are asked to individually write down their rights, what they perform well in, what their friends like about them, the music that they like, favourite food and how they wish people would treat them. This activity serves to highlight the fact that each human being is unique. Through association, participants describe their personalities and those of people around them. Association games serve to instil a sense of identity among participants, and to show them that other people's perceptions can influence one's self-concept. Additional activities revolve around negative perceptions and labels, and how to deal with them.

Theme 6: Rejection

The theme of rejection primarily aims to equip youths with the tools to manage feelings of isolation, being disrespected and unsupported. During one activity, each participant is asked to relate how he or she would comfort a friend or family member who has been rejected. The participant then applies the comforting phrases to him or herself, as a way of addressing feelings of rejection.

Theme 7: Conflict management

Participants are asked to write about conflict situations they have experienced and the way in which they dealt with the situation. The methods they employed are contrasted with assertive, aggressive and passive behaviour styles. Through role play, participants explore the process and value of mediation.

Theme 8: Leadership skills

Participants compile a list of people they admire and consider to be leaders. Characteristics that are common to all the leaders are documented as qualities to motivate and encourage others. Attention is called to the qualities of communication, positive attitudes, personal growth and learning from failures and decision making.

Theme 9: Teamwork

Experiences from the group's camping excursion are used to instil an understanding of the need for teamwork to achieve goals in life. Participants are asked to draw on experiences from the conflict theme to describe how disagreement within a team can be managed, and they act out certain scenarios with the aim of further strengthening teamwork and conflict management abilities.

Theme 10: Basic counselling skills

Basic counselling skills, such as empathy, listening, respect, confidentiality and unconditional positive regard, are instilled through group activities. One activity involves youths putting on each other's shoes and walking around in them for a while. This provides the literal experience of 'walking in someone else's shoes' and serves to demonstrate that each person and situation is unique and that appreciation of this is required in order to listen to and understand another person's problems. A model of listening, exploration of options and planning is provided in order to assist participants in counselling their peers.

The Izingwe Kubumbano programme was extended to other structures to reach an increasing number of young people in the East Rand region (Ekupholeni 2000a:11). Among others, a group of youths formed a support group at the Eden Park High School, known as PALS – Peers Action Listening Support. Ekupholeni trained a number of teachers from this school to empower them with facilitation and youth development skills.

Izingwe Kubumbano participants engage in a range of mini-projects in their communities and three-monthly prizes are awarded to the best project. The aim is to have them apply their skills and commitment to the benefit of the community. Participants form small groups, approach existing services, identify scope for support and implement support strategies. Mini-projects include volunteering at schools and crèches, collecting clothing for neglected children, visiting children in hospital, gardening and a car wash to assist in establishing a transport fund (Ekupholeni 2000b:22). In part, mini-projects help participants discover their abilities and create possible ways of earning an income.

Staff and volunteers

During 2003, a total of 24 persons were involved in delivering Ekupholeni's services. All staff members are involved in the reception of at-risk youth and they refer clients to the appropriate programmes and facilitators. Workloads are high, with an average of 40 clients being assisted daily in addition to between three and five support groups being facilitated. Despite support work often being emotionally draining, Ekupholeni has a relatively low staff turnover. The long-term nature of the organisation's programmes, as well as the impact of support, requires that facilitators remain involved with their support groups over long periods of time. Staff members are supported in their tasks by weekly burnout discussions (Ekupholeni 2001a:38).

Most service providers are fairly young, but there are some who are older. More mature facilitators are needed since life experience is required to give guidance to troubled youth, and young participants often come from dysfunctional backgrounds where they never had a positive parent figure or a role model. Service providers are expected to have a clear understanding and appreciation of the community, so that local inhabitants will be more receptive to the programmes. Ekupholeni staff believe that services are more easily implemented, and with more success, if the support services are provided by locals. Volunteers are empowered through in-service training and guidance, and two volunteers have obtained diplomas in child care and youth work from Technikon SA. During 2000, six service providers completed a one-year course in community development at UNISA (Ekupholeni 2001a:37).

Partnerships

Ekupholeni enjoys a close working relationship with the DoSS in Gauteng, particularly since its services are in line with the Department's focus on HIV/AIDS, youth, women and the elderly. In the larger Germiston area, Ekupholeni is the only initiative that provides mental health services, and collaboration with the DoSS and DoH is imperative to its overall success. It has needs-based partnerships with educational institutions. Among others, children with severe learning disabilities are sent to the Orhovelani Education Centre for specialised support. A partnership with St. Anthony's College ensures that some participants receive vocational skills training. There are also collaborative relationships with drug rehabilitation services.

Costs

A review of Ekupholeni budgets and expenditures provides an estimate of an average cost of R3 500 per youth, which includes an adventure camp, art therapy equipment and stationery, refreshments during meetings, transport and staff expenses (Ekupholeni 2001b:13).

2.4 Monitoring and evaluation

Quarterly progress reports are submitted to the DoSS. The Department also undertakes site visits to Ekupholeni to monitor service delivery, through such means as interviews with clients. Internally, Ekupholeni staff report on the status and progress of support groups during personnel and project meetings. At a service level, monthly reports about individual participants are compiled. The management committee also receives monthly status reports about support groups' progress. Research and evaluation activities are mostly undertaken by internal service providers or by persons linked to Ekupholeni.

Intakes to Ekupholeni youth-at-risk programmes are regulated to ensure that intervention activities achieve a level of impact before new members are allowed to join the support group. For the 18-month period from January 1998 to June 1999, the Izingwe Kubumbano programme held 160 group meetings, with between 20 and 25 participants each. In addition to this there were ten adventure camps. Approximately 260 group meetings and eight adventure camps, attended by between 30 and 35 youths per camp, were held during the following twelve months (July 1999 to June 2000). For the period January 2001 to February 2002, the programme had about 60 young and 40 older participants (Ekupholeni 2002a:1). Owing to the large number of younger participants, two groups were established to ease facilitation.

In 2001, a qualitative interim evaluation of the Izingwe Kubumbano project found the following:

■ Youth attend the programme because of Ekupholeni's friendly environment and enjoyable activities.

■ The acquisition of skills, such as conflict management and teamwork, was seen as a motivational factor to attend group sessions.

■ Participants receive the unconditional acceptance of programme facilitators.

■ The programme helped to change negative attitudes and promote personal growth.

- Group support made it easier to cope with personal problems.

- The programme is process-oriented and runs according to monthly plans, but is still flexible enough to deal with participants' needs.

  (Clacherty & Brown 2001:5–22)

The evaluators noted that:

> Almost all the Leopards [participants] were extremely positive about the group, and all of them had something good to say about it. The group clearly provides things that they don't consistently receive at home: support, encouragement, contact with friendly non-judgemental adults, a sense of control, space to air their views and to discuss their problems, and to simply have fun. (Clacherty & Brown 2001:24)

Toward the end of 2002, research was undertaken to determine the impact of the Izingwe Kubumbano and Research and Intervention programmes on participants. The evaluation managed to trace 19 of the 26 participants who had regularly attended the Izingwe Kubumbano programme in 2000. Amongst others, it was found that:

- Fourteen respondents (74%) were employed, while another two were studying full-time.

- Sixteen ex-participants (84%) had engaged in formal study since leaving the programme.

- Nine respondents (47%) were continuing their involvement in community-related voluntary activities.

  (Donald & Clacherty 2003:8)

When contrasted against a control group, ex-participants were found to be more likely to be members of pro-social community groups, suggesting that the programme contributed toward increased social confidence and the ability to sustain relationships. In addition, ex-participants were better adjusted than the control group. They also demonstrated a greater ability to reflect on themselves and their goal setting was more realistic in terms of careers and future relationships (Donald & Clacherty 2003:27).

2.5 Key lessons and views

- Youth need to play a pivotal role in the processes of intervention planning and implementation.

  > Structuring a programme without the involvement of young people can be a major challenge to overcome during implementation. (Ekupholeni official)

- Ekupholeni fills a gap in the delivery of mental health services to disadvantaged and marginalised communities.

  > Ekupholeni is doing a wonderful job. We would like to see them mentoring other organisations on community-level support and intervention. (DoSS official)

- Intervention programmes should be flexible, to accommodate the unique characteristics of individual participants.

> The implementation of our programmes depends on the mental abilities of the children, how they'll grasp the programme. We have to accommodate all types of clients. If they struggle with learning disabilities, we do play therapy. (Ekupholeni official)

3. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Considering the history of Ekupholeni's establishment, and particularly the history of Kathorus, it is clear that mental health programmes like Izingwe Kubumbano's need to be based on an understanding of the factors that lead to vulnerability and at-risk behaviour among children and young people in a particular community. This programme acknowledges the devastating aftermath and longer-term psycho-social consequences of political violence in communities already characterised by neglect and poverty. Its purpose and activities show that it tries to counteract emotional burdens and their subsequent manifestations among at-risk youth. Its point of departure is the view that emotional health, especially a healthy self-concept – which many of the young people Kathorus lack because of their adverse social environment – is essential for promoting pro-social behaviour.

As a response to the harsh reality of life in Kathorus, Izingwe Kubumbano's aims of transferring and strengthening pro-social abilities through interactive and reflective activities help young people move toward autonomy and achievement. Compared with other more focused life skills-based initiatives, Izingwe Kubumbano sets out to instil broader life skills among participants. It does this through its themes of intimate relationships, leadership and teamwork, and, most importantly through its emphasis on the individual's ability to respond appropriately to life's challenges. In keeping with the organisation's aims, the methods of transferral are geared to the target clientele and entail little reading and writing skills. Attempts are made to clearly link activities with real experiences thus strengthening life skills messages. This is a useful lesson for those organisations intending to implement life skills training given evidence in the literature that participants in life skills training, especially the younger ones, may find it difficult to link symbolism and abstract ideas to real life situations.

Izingwe Kubumbano is a multi-modal initiative that draws on a combination of life skills, mentoring, group work and ecotherapy methodologies to strengthen the emotional health and social skills of its clients. Professional counselling is also available to intervene at the individual level and this adds tremendous value to the initiative as it provides the opportunity for specific and targeted assistance to young people that would not be possible in a group setting. This type of service is often absent in youth-at-risk programming. Given the wide range of services that Ekupholeni offers and the need to address the specific needs of each client, detailed assessments of participants are undertaken to identify their individual needs.

Izingwe Kubumbano is designed as a long-term intervention which allows participants to access services for as long as is necessary to effect change. One of the challenges faced by Ekupholeni and indeed by many organisations in this regard is that participants may become reliant on the emotional bonds that develop between them and their service providers. Clear, time-bound and disclosed exit strategies could help overcome this problem.

In terms of replicability, staff at Ekupholeni require an array of counselling and intervention skills in order to provide quality services in all their programme areas. This would have implications for service providers wishing to establish a similar programme given that extensive training of staff would be required. Ekupholeni recognises

the stressful nature of the work and has a strong culture of support and mentoring, providing regular debriefing and personal development opportunities for staff. This would be an important consideration for others when embarking on a project of this nature.

Given their challenging circumstances, one may ask whether Izingwe Kubumbano on its own is sufficient to propel at-risk youth toward pro-social behaviour. Ekupholeni provides evidence that this initiative is indeed bearing fruit. Research suggests that the combination of adventure, mentoring, life skills training and community service programming promotes a sense of direction, purpose, responsibility and collectiveness. Attempts to determine the longer-term impact of the programme are based on more rigorous evaluation designs than those conventionally used, and the monthly status reports on individual participants deserve mentioning, as they have the potential to track and comment on the participants' progress. Indications are that the organisation has a strong commitment to evaluation and that information is used to streamline services.

Endnotes

1   The organisational and background information (i.e. aims and values, staff, monitoring and evaluation, etc.) presented in this chapter also serve as background for Chapter 12: Zimiseleni/Ghetto Boyz Research & Intervention.

2   The reader is referred to Chapter 13 for more detail about this initiative.

References

Amoore N, Frade N, Keynhans A & Meth A. n.d. *Izingwe Kubumbano – a manual for Leopards*. Katlehong: Ekupholeni Mental Health Centre.

Clacherty G & Brown K. 2001. *Reflections on Isingwe Khubumbano*. Auckland Park: Clacherty and Associates.

Clacherty G & Kistner J. 2001. *Guns, power and identity. A research project of the Zimiseleni researchers*. Auckland Park: Clacherty and Associates.

Donald D & Clacherty G. 2001. *Evaluation: Leopards and Zimiseleni/Ghetto Boys Youth Programmes*. Johannesburg: Clacherty and Associates.

Ekupholeni Mental Health Centre. 2002a. *Final report for the period January 2001 to February 2002*. Katlehong: Ekupholeni Mental Health Centre.

Ekupholeni Mental Health Centre. 2002b. *Report to the Open Society Foundation for the period July 2001 to February 2002*. Katlehong: Ekupholeni Mental Health Centre.

Ekupholeni Mental Health Centre. 2001a. *Report to the Open Society Foundation for the period January to June 2001*. Katlehong: Ekupholeni Mental Health Centre.

Ekupholeni Mental Health Centre. 2001b. *Funding proposal for the Open Society Foundation – September 2001*. Katlehong: Ekupholeni Mental Health Centre.

Ekupholeni Mental Health Centre. 2000a. *Funding proposal for the Open Society Foundation – June 2000*. Katlehong: Ekupholeni Mental Health Centre.

Ekupholeni Mental Health Centre. 2000b. *Report to the Open Society Foundation for the period April to September 2000*. Katlehong: Ekupholeni Mental Health Centre.

9

SOUTH AFRICAN YOUNG SEX OFFENDERS PROGRAMME

SAYStOP

South African Young Sex Offenders Programme (SAYStOP) is a consortium of four non-government organisations comprising NICRO, RAPCAN, Community Law Centre at the University of the Western Cape and the Institute of Criminology at the University of Cape Town. The Consortium seeks to develop and implement innovative and effective interventions to address the problem of youth sex offending in South Africa. The SAYStOP diversion programme is a psycho-social life skills intervention for sex offenders under the age of 18 (Wood & Ehlers 2001:3).

Please note: the data for this chapter was collected in 2003. Since then much of the work of the Consortium has been handed over to the Provincial Department of Social Services in the Western and Eastern Cape, and Consortium members are called on to give training and mentoring support in their individual capacity as and when needed.

1. THE ORGANISATION

1.1 Background

During the 1990s South African government departments and non-governmental organisations began to recognise the reality that children below the age of 18 were committing sexual offences. At that time, Childline in Durban was the only organisation responding to youth sex offending in the country. In the absence of any alternative sanction many of these cases, especially those involving very young offenders were being withdrawn, thereby drastically decreasing any possibilities of early intervention.

The SAYStOP consortium was formed in 1998 with the purpose of developing, piloting and evaluating possible strategies to intervene with children accused of having committed sex offences. A diversion programme was developed with one of its main aims being the prevention of re-offending through early intervention. The piloting process began in the Western Cape in 1999 and in the Eastern Cape in 2001.

114

1.2 Aim and objectives

The primary aim of the SAYStOP diversion programme is to encourage young sex offenders to be accountable for their actions and to develop insight and empathy toward the victim of the offence. It also seeks to instil skills to prevent similar offences from reoccurring. SAYStOP draws on elements of psycho-social and life skills development in implementing a series of intervention and knowledge-building sessions. The programme aims to have the parents or guardians of referred children present during some of the session, specifically to strengthen their involvement in relapse prevention (Eliasov 2003b:3). Seen broadly, SAYStOP's objectives are to:

- Inform referred youth about the nature of offending and the consequences that it has for oneself, others and the community.

- Promote self-knowledge and a healthy self-concept.

- Strengthen knowledge about the human body, sexuality and adolescence.

- Create awareness about appropriate sexual behaviour toward others.

- Clarify myths about sex and sexual stereotypes.

- Explore the relationship between power and control and sexual offences.

- Instil an understanding of the impact of sexual offences on victims.

- Encourage participants to take responsibility for their actions.

- Enhance participants' ability to prevent further sexual offending by early identification of factors that could cause a sexual offence.

- Encourage communication between participants and their parents.

    (Ehlers & Van der Sandt 2001:3–5)

1.3 Structure and resources

SAYStOP is made up of a consortium of organisations, all with a youth development and/or crime prevention and management focus (see above). The consortium collectively undertakes training and support services to state employed probation officers and social workers who are responsible for the direct facilitation of the programme.

SAYStOP is overseen by a steering committee consisting of representatives from the four organisations in the consortium and officials from the Department of Social Services (DoSS).

The infrastructure and resources required to implement SAYStOP vary between service sites. In urban areas, venues for the programme are more readily available than in rural areas, where office space and transport are frequently a problem. Sessions are undertaken at the offices of probation officers, at schools or at places of safety. Implementers need basic writing material for participants' written exercises, and access to copying services since a large number of questionnaires and exercises needs to be copied for use during the sessions.

The management, material development, training, mentoring and evaluation of the project is done by the Consortium and is contingent upon donor funding. The direct service delivery i.e. facilitation of the diversion programme is done by state employed social workers.

2. THE PROGRAMME

2.1 Rationale and aim

The levels and magnitude of sexual offending by children and young people has only recently been recognised as problematic in South Africa (Wood & Ehlers 2001:2). In 2001, the Department of Correctional Services indicated that the number of children arrested for sexual offences was on the increase. More than a third of all child sexual abuse incidents reported to Childline are committed by youths between the ages of 15 and 20 (Eliasov 2003a:2). It has been found that around half of all adult sex offenders committed their first sexual offence during their adolescent years. It is, therefore, argued that sexual offending at a young age may be conducive to a pattern of sexual offences during adult life. Early intervention, through proper identification, assessment and referral, should therefore help prevent further sexual transgressions and victimisation.

2.2 Entry criteria and profile of participants

SAYStOP is appropriate for young people who have committed a sexual offence for the first time and where there are no aggravating circumstances (Wood 2002:28). Assessors consider the following factors when recommending diversion to SAYStOP:

■ Youths between the ages of 12 and 16 are considered to be most suitable for the intervention, as younger candidates often find it difficult to understand some of the abstract concepts used during the programme and seem unable to concentrate sufficiently for the full duration of sessions.

■ The young person needs to acknowledge his or her sex offending behaviour.

■ To ensure a level of control over the participant's whereabouts during the programme, it is necessary for him or her to have a fixed address, which includes a place of safety or children's home, and an appropriate adult who can take co-responsibility for his or her participation in the programme.

(Ehlers & Van der Sandt 2001:6)

To some extent, entry criteria are flexible, as each case is assessed individually. Although serious offences such as rape are not generally deemed to be appropriate for diversion, in some exceptional cases children accused of committing these offences may be considered for the programme, should contributing and background factors indicate that this would be the most appropriate intervention. An in-depth assessment precedes admission to the SAYStOP programme. The probation officer does an initial interview and then arranges for an assessment of the child and his family to be done by a trained SAYStOP facilitator. The assessment process gathers information about the following:

■ Biographical information.

■ Personal information including school functioning, history of substance abuse, previous criminal activity or behavioural problems, peer and family relationships, recreational activities and self-perception.

■ Psychosexual history in terms of previous intimate relationships, sources of learning about sex and age at first sexual experience.

■ Sexual offence information, i.e. place where it happened, relationship to the victim, levels of sexual coercion, reaction of the victim and the family, engaging with the police and effects of the offence on personal life.

(Ehlers & Van der Sandt 2001:77–85)

The assessor then undertakes an evaluation of the information obtained, specifically in terms of interpersonal abilities, level of responsibility, indicators of possible repeat offending and signs of depression or anxiety. If the young person is found to be a suitable candidate he or she and his or her parents sign affidavits agreeing to participate in the SAYStOP diversion programme. Participation in the programme is voluntary. Referral to the programme can be done via three channels (Ehlers 2000:11):

■ **Formal diversion**. The child is referred by the court based on a recommendation by the probation officer and the prosecutor. Upon successful completion of the programme criminal charges are withdrawn. However, should the child not complete the programme or participate in a satisfactory manner, the case is referred back to court for review.

■ **As part of a sentence** in cases where the court proceeds with prosecution and finds the accused guilty. In these cases the SAYStOP programme serves as a condition of a suspended or postponed sentence. As with diversion, the child needs to successfully complete the programme to avoid the case being referred back to court.

■ **Referrals from non-criminal justice structures**. Community-based and public structures, such as schools, clinics and children's homes may refer children to SAYStOP. In these instances, victims or their families may have decided not to institute charges, but still feel that the young person could benefit from the programme. It is, however, recommended that there should be some consequence, for example school suspension or possible prosecution, should the child not complete the programme.

Children who commit sexual offences are not a homogenous group and one cannot create a single profile for this type of offender. However it is interesting to note the SAYStOP research findings that indicate that young offenders are more likely to:

■ Be male.

■ Live in overcrowded environments characterised by alcohol abuse and domestic violence.

■ Live in violent communities.

■ Be victims of sexual or physical abuse.

■ Have engaged in consensual intercourse prior to the offence.

■ Choose someone who is younger than themselves, and possibly familiar to them.

■ Offend with one or more co-offenders.

■ Have committed other non-sex-related offences.

■ Perform poorly at school.

■ Be easily angered and have lower than normal levels of impulse control.

■ Have witnessed other people engaging in sexual intercourse.

(Wood et al. 2000)

2.3 Programme content and implementation

SAYStOP has a psycho-social life skills development and educational focus. The programme's content was designed with the imperatives of restorative justice in mind and incorporates the following principles:

■ The child should be held accountable for his or her behaviour.

■ The interests of the victim should be safeguarded.

■ Reintegration should contribute toward safer communities.

(Ehlers 2000:9)

The SAYStOP diversion programme is loosely based on NICRO's Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), which is a life skills programme implemented for first time and minor young offenders (see Chapter 6). YES consists of eight sessions, of which the first and last are attended by the young person's parents or caretakers. The content of YES was adapted by SAYStOP to specifically address youth sexual offending. The programme was initially designed to have eight structured modules but has subsequently been extended to include additional sessions covering issues such as sex education, empathy for the victim, relapse prevention and anger management.

The SAYStOP diversion programme is designed to prevent re-offending through responsible decision making, anger management and setting of goals. Each of the ten sessions has specific objectives that are achieved through group and individual exercises. The first session deals with the broader aspects of offending, whereafter the modules focus specifically on sex offending. The following (Wood 2002:6–7; Ehlers & Van der Sandt 2001:13–75) is an overview of the sessions:

Session 1: Crime awareness

The objectives of the session are to:

■ Inform young participants and their parents about the contents of the programme.

■ Create awareness about the consequences of a criminal record.

- Break the silence about the offences committed.

- Inform participants about the effects of crime.

Session 2: Self-esteem

The second session aims to:

- Expand the participants' self-knowledge.

- Create an understanding of the factors that influence self-concept.

- Have participants reflect on the influence of their offences on their self-concepts.

- Strengthen their self-acceptance and instil positive attitudes.

Session 3: Understanding my body

This session provides an opportunity for participants to examine the changes that occur during puberty, and attempts to instil an understanding that changing emotions during this phase are a normal part of growing up. By means of a chart of the male and female bodies, participants learn about the position and function of the main organs, including the sex and reproductive organs. Through discussion, participants become comfortable with words for talking about the body. This is followed by group discussions regarding sex and its consequences.

Sessions 4 and 5: Sexuality, socialisation and myths

The fourth and fifth sessions aim to create awareness about the socialisation of boys and girls, and the effects it has on behaviour toward members of the opposite sex. Gender stereotypes are discussed in small groups and the validity of each stereotype debated.

Date rape is explored by means of a case scenario and a set of questions that participants have to discuss and debate. A worksheet depicting myths about rape serves to clarify misconceptions about rape.

Sessions 6 and 7: Victim empathy

The sixth and seventh sessions aim to:

- Develop insight into what others are thinking and feeling in a given situation.

- Begin to understand powerlessness and how it relates to abuse.

- Encourage thinking about the feelings and thoughts of victims of sexual abuse.

- Commence the process of relapse prevention by instilling an understanding of the possible feelings of victims.

- Encourage children to start taking responsibility for their actions.

Sessions 8 and 9: Relapse prevention

The eighth and ninth sessions aim to:

- Help participants identify anger triggers.

- Explore responses to anger.

- Instil an understanding of acceptable and unacceptable responses to anger.

- Start exploring alternative ways of responding unacceptably to anger.

- Promote critical thinking before responding to situations.

- Transfer decision making skills.

Session 10: The way forward

The last session aims to encourage communication between parents and their children. The activities aim to make parents part of their children's future plans. Role play is used to promote communication between parents and participants, and the importance of listening is emphasised. Participants are asked to write a positive personal message in a letter addressed to each of the other participants. Parents discuss in groups their feelings about the offence and the programme. The facilitator stresses the value of positive feedback by parents to their children.

SAYStOP facilitators can adapt the programme to suit a particular group of participants. With younger groups, for example, the programme can be redesigned to eliminate some of the reading and writing and some of the more difficult concepts can be simplified.

Implementation:
Groups of between five and twelve youths participate in a SAYStOP programme at one time. Probation officers seldom take more than ten participants at a time.

> A smaller group works much better, because there are less disruptions and more co-operation. (Probation officer)

> I've noticed that the impact of information and the exercises of the session were more powerful with small groups. They were less playful, disruptive, and group trust, cohesion and openness increased. (Farmer 2003:6)

Given that the number of child sex offenders is relatively low in comparison to, for instances, children referred for property offences, some facilitators wait until a suitable number of children have been referred before implementing the programme. Others inform the court about the scheduled dates for programmes so that prosecutors can plan the postponement of individual cases accordingly. To counteract long periods of postponement, young sex offenders can also be referred to other service sites to participate in the programme. The programme can be offered over a 10-week period once a week, a five-week period with two sessions per week or in a residential setting over a five-day period with two sessions per day.

It would be optimal to have two facilitators running the programme. However workloads and staff shortages mean that the programme is sometimes implemented by only one person. It is envisaged that as more probation officers are trained this situation will improve.

Staff, volunteers and training

The Consortium is responsible for training and mentoring state employed probation officers who then implement the diversion intervention. As mentioned earlier in the chapter the provincial Departments of Social Services in Western and Eastern Cape are increasingly taking on responsibility for the management and running of the diversion programme. However, members of the consortium continue to train probation officers at the request of the relevant government departments.

The aim of the training is to equip facilitators with the necessary skills and knowledge to set up and implement the SAYStOP diversion programme. The first phase of the training spans four days and covers the content of the SAYStOP diversion manual. Additional themes include:

- Facilitation skills and practicalities related to implementation.

- The sexual and psychological development of young people.

- Assessment procedures regarding young sex offenders.

- Monitoring and data collection.

- Law reform and legal perspectives regarding youth offending in South Africa.

    (SAYStOP 2003a:3)

Following the completion of phase one of the training, probation officers are expected to set up and run at least one SAYStOP diversion programme. They are assisted in this regard by a mentor from one of the consortium member organisations. Mentoring comprises telephonic engagement as well as site visits by the mentor. Indications from the review of the project indicate that the mentoring component is very valuable.

> When the mentor phones me, I can discuss my cases with her. If I struggle to implement the programme, she is always there to help me ... As problems occur, the SAYStOP team try to sort them out as soon as they can. (Probation officer)

Six months after the initial training, probation officers are expected to attend a two-day follow-up workshop to review progress and address any problems they may have had in setting up and running the programme. Additionally, facilitators receive a quarterly newsletter that provides information updates and activities of the programme (Eliasov 2003a:1). The newsletter also serves as a platform for probation officers to share their experiences of running the intervention (SAYStOP 2003b:5).

Costs

In 2003, programmes that were implemented at the facilitator's office and with no transport expenses involved cost SAYStOP between R2 000 and R2 300 for personnel, stationery and printing expenses. This meant a cost of around R200 per participant, depending on the number of participants in the group. If the intervention was implemented in a residential setting, i.e. during a three-day camp, costs could escalate to R8 200 per programme, i.e. around R680 per participant.

2.4 Monitoring and evaluation

One of the key elements of the SAYStOP model is the research and evaluation process, which was designed to be an integral part of programme implementation. The programme's research component consists of:

■ Evaluation of training.

■ Analysis of assessment information from individual interviews in order to identify trends that will assist in programme design and development.

■ Evaluation of the programme's implementation.

■ Follow-up with participants and their parents and caregivers to measure the longer-term impact of the programme.

In order to gather the above information, the implementation of the SAYStOP diversion programme is accompanied by a series of monitoring and process-recording activities. Besides a detailed assessment, a pre-test questionnaire is completed with the referred children without their parent or guardian being present. The aim is to record data to determine, at a later stage, whether they display any changes in knowledge, behaviour and attitudes. The questionnaire captures the following information:

■ Knowledge about the consequences of a criminal record.

■ The impact of the alleged offence on the child's life and that of others.

■ Self-concept and self-perception.

■ Knowledge about physical gender differences, sex and pregnancy.

■ Gender stereotypes and gender roles.

■ Impressions of power and control.

■ Methods of dealing with and expressing anger.

   (Ehlers & Van der Sandt 2001:86–88)

Participants have the opportunity to evaluate each session of the programme by answering questions related to what they would have liked done differently, how the session was presented, and comments on activities and possible use of what they have learned. SAYStOP facilitators undertake individual post-completion assessments. This evaluation questionnaire gathers the following information:

Offence history and general data

- Offence history (nature of offence and relationship to the victim).

- Feelings before and after completing the programme.

- Knowledge acquired through the programme.

- Main impressions and helpfulness of the programme.

- Most memorable activities.

- Perception of programme facilitators.

- Change in thinking about the offence.

- Value of the programme in helping to improve behaviour.

Programme-specific data

- Impact of the programme on self-esteem and self-perception.

- Possible labelling as result of referral to the programme.

- Knowledge about sex, pregnancy and physical gender differences.

- Attitudes toward gender stereotypes and roles.

- Perceptions regarding power and control.

- Empathy for the victim of the offence.

- Ability to identify triggers of anger and ways of dealing with it.

- Any re-offending which may have occurred, although this relies on self-reporting and is therefore not necessarily viewed as an accurate indicator of change.

The parents and guardians of young participants also have an opportunity to evaluate the programme. They comment on their reactions to the offences and the impact that it had on their relationship with their child. The impact on their children and current behaviour at home and school are recorded.

Significant research findings

There have been various assessments and training appraisals since 1998 using the information gathered through the systems described above.

As with most youth-at-risk programmes in South Africa there is very little longitudinal information with regard to the impact of the SAYStOP intervention. However the SAYStOP consortium undertook two follow-up studies between 1999 and 2002 in an attempt to document information in this regard. The findings from the first study, while providing interesting information are not generalisable given the small sample – only six of the original participants could be traced. The 2002 study included 28 children who has participated in the programme and concluded:

> The results suggest that SAYStOP has developed an intervention useful for holding such children accountable and for teaching them to take responsibility for their abusive behaviour ... this study provides support for the continued use of the SAYStOP diversion programme as a first-line intervention for dealing with certain types of children accused of committing sexual offences. (Wood 2002:iv–v)

In terms of the numbers, a review of intake figures for the period 2000–2002 indicates that about 469 children participated in the programme (SAYStOP 2003c:7). During 2000–2003, a total of 507 youths were reached.

In a strategic review of the project undertaken in 2003, the researcher noted that while many respondents viewed the programme positively there were concerns regarding the short duration of the diversion programme and the need to address serious offences through other, longer-term programmatic interventions. The point was made that SAYStOP was originally conceptualised as a management system for young sex offenders which would offer a range of different services (both long- and short-term) in order to ensure appropriate intervention. However, the project has not evolved in this way and SAYStOP is widely viewed as being synonymous with the 10-week diversion programme. There needs to be a re-conceptualisation in this regard. (Eliasov 2003a: 8 13)

2.5   Key lessons and views

■ Effective intervention among young sex offenders is urgently required throughout South Africa.

> Every single province wants it [SAYStOP], simply because there is nothing else. They don't know whether it is good or bad, but they want it. (Stakeholder)

> Some say give them [young sex offenders] some intervention rather than no intervention. My view is that you cannot expand until you get it right. (Stakeholder)

■ Sexual offending is a sensitive and controversial issue and there is bound to be opposition to the diversion of young sex offenders from some court officials.

> Not all prosecutors are in favour of the programme. Many feel that SAYStOP is a soft punishment for serious sexual crimes. SAYStOP is often referred to as 'STAYSOFT'. (Probation officer)

> Ten sessions are not enough to get anywhere with sex offenders. There are many youths for whom this programme is not effective, and they need in-depth follow-up. (Stakeholder)

■ Continued research and evaluation is needed to promote the use of the programme.

> We need to be convinced that SAYStOP works and that it is effective and not simply another life skills programme, that it has something more. (Stakeholder)

3. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

As the literature notes, life skills training can be adapted to address specific behavioural problems. SAYStOP uses life skills to promote accountability and victim empathy with the specific aim of preventing sexual offending. Many

of its activities are aimed at helping young people acquire knowledge (i.e. regarding the human body, sexuality, myths and adolescence) so that they can make appropriate decisions. SAYStOP believes that child sex offending results largely from inadequate knowledge-bases about sex and sexual behaviour. At the same time, it acknowledges broader causes such as socialisation and adverse social conditions, hence its psycho-social approach to intervention. The programme's individual and group activities have the potential to promote respect for others, particularly the sessions on victim empathy. SAYStOP follows a developmental approach to promote increased levels of responsibility.

SAYStOP's content is highly educational (which has great potential for primary prevention programming), while also endeavouring to strengthen an understanding of the causes and impact of sexual offending. The initiative is not prescriptive and it allows participants to identify and create their own strategies for avoiding re-offending. The programme's content has been broadened to include themes that have potential for targeting the specific characteristics of participants that could lead to relapse.

On a practical level, the number of children diverted for sexual offences is relatively low compared to, for example, children who have been referred for property offences. As a result, facilitators, particularly in rural areas often find themselves in a situation where they are asked to provide services to a single child. In these situations some have attempted to adapt the material in the manual for use with one person. While this is commendable in the absence of any alternative, it is debatable whether interventions of this nature can work in a one-on-one setting. There is evidence that life skills training is more effective when activities are undertaken in a group. Most of the activities indicated by the SAYStOP manual rely on group interaction and sharing experiences and views to stimulate experiential and social learning. This again highlights the need for a range of intervention options for dealing with young sex offenders and indeed with any young offenders given that each individual and each case is different.

SAYStOP offers some valuable lessons for other service providers in terms of replication and the need for proper capacity building. The specialised nature of work, and the skills demanded of service providers, has particular implications for the replication of the programme. Formal training, follow-up and continued mentoring have been identified as critical to the success of the programme and would need to form part of any replication effort.

SAYStOP has made considerable efforts to ensure the implementation of sound monitoring and evaluation systems from the outset. Process data is available thanks to a broad-based and detailed service monitoring and reporting system. Monitoring data is used to streamline implementation processes and to adapt the programme when necessary. The wide range of sources involved in monitoring activities is noteworthy, as is the practice of allowing participants and their parents to evaluate the initiative themselves. SAYStOP is one of the few interventions that follow a pre-/post-intervention methodology to gauge their impact on participants. However, as with all the other initiatives discussed thus far, the real impact of the programme and the extent to which it prevents re-offending will only become evident through long-term monitoring and evaluation.

References

Ehlers L & Van der Sandt T. 2001. *South African young sex offenders manual*. Cape Town: Community Law Centre (UWC), Institute of Criminology (UCT), National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders (Western Cape) & Resources Aimed at Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect.

Ehlers L. 2000. *Funding proposal for the operations of SAYStOP*. Cape Town: Community Law Centre (UWC), Institute of Criminology (UCT), National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders (Western Cape) & Resources Aimed at Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect.

Eliasov N. 2003a. *Follow-up training workshop evaluation report*. Cape Town: Institute of Criminology, UCT.

Eliasov N. 2003b. *SAYStOP strategic review report*. Cape Town: Institute of Criminology, UCT.

Farmer K. 2003. An experience from the Bellville District Office. *SAYStOP Newsletter. 4* (1):6.

SAYStOP. 2003a. SAYStOP expands in the Eastern Cape! *Newsletter. 4* (2):3.

SAYStOP. 2003b. What assessment criteria work for rape referrals? *Newsletter. 4* (2):4.

SAYStOP. 2003c. Progress of SAYStOP Diversion Programme 2000–2002. *Newsletter. 4* (1):7.

SAYStOP. 2003d. Progress of SAYStOP Diversion Programme 2000–2003. *Newsletter. 4* (2):7.

Wood C. 2002. *Evaluating the SAYStOP diversion programme: findings from the second follow-up study*. Cape Town: Institute of Criminology, UCT.

Wood C & Ehlers L. 2001. Towards a viable diversion programme for young sex offenders in South Africa (working paper). Cape Town: Institute of Criminology, UCT.

Wood C, Welman M & Netto L. 2000. A profile of young sex offenders in South Africa. *South African Journal of Child and Adolescent Mental Health*. 12 (1):45–58.

Part 3

EXPRESSIVE PROGRAMMES[1]

OVERVIEW

Music, art and dancing are probably the most ancient forms of human expression and once held significant socio-cultural and psychological value. Unfortunately, the larger part of the 1900s saw indigenous cultural approaches to emotional and community health eroded by the introduction of more clinical methods of practice. Today however, music, art and drama as are increasingly seen as relevant and appropriate methods of intervention and development for reaching vulnerable communities and individuals. Because they have only recently been developed, such alternative approaches to intervention have in general not been widely researched or documented. The result is that the application of the arts in programme planning and implementation is often viewed with some caution (Woodward 1996:v). Hall (1990:157) acknowledges the paradox in *writing* about expressive programmes, as much of their essential healing components lie beyond the use of words.

Expressive programmes differ greatly from conventional medical approaches to psychological and behavioural change in that activities are mostly undertaken in a group as opposed to one-on-one or individual intervention (Killick & Greenwood 1995:104–105). In part, it is exactly this group cohesion, interaction, commitment and co-operation that facilitates changes in mind-sets and behaviour. Additionally, the focus is not particularly on the making of music or art – these methods are seen rather as vehicles for achieving behavioural and emotional change.

Various principles exist to guide the planning and implementation of expressive programmes with offending children. These include the following and are to various extents applicable to the different types of expressive programmes discussed in this review:

- Programmes rely on spontaneity, expression and openness to participation.

- Initiatives are semi-structured to allow high levels of flexibility for meaningful interaction.

- In the light of the above, interventions are preferably not time-bound.

- Communication is to a large extent non-verbal and indirect.

- Cultural appropriateness is paramount to ensure full participation and uninhibited expression.

- Boundaries or ground rules for participation are set to facilitate structure in the programme. Over time, the experience and its related structures are transferred, internalised and applied to daily life.

- Respect features at all times among participants and implementers.

- The implementer facilitates collective learning – he or she is not a lecturer.

- Activities are enjoyable for participants and create avenues for expression.

- Group dynamics are regulated to ensure the meaningful participation of all participants.

- Programmes are non-enforcing and semi- to non-prescriptive to allow scope for creativity and improvisation.

- Programmes promote self-value, pride and a sense of belonging and relating to others.

    (Katz 1996:93; Sodi 1996:48–49; Gilroy 1995:69; Killick & Greenwood 1995:104; Payne 1992:64; Waller 1995:232–233)

PROGRAMME ASSUMPTIONS

The theoretical underpinnings of expressive programming with at-risk and offending children include the following:

■ Because of linguistic and social barriers, at-risk children may experience difficulties in expressing their feelings verbally. They may find it easier to express their emotions and feelings in a non-verbal way.

■ Feelings of frustration, anxiety and built-up anger can be unleashed in a constructive way; similarly, positive feelings can be freely articulated through expression.

■ The bringing together of individuals promotes interaction and the building of relationships around a common goal.

■ Creative activities broaden knowledge of the self and of others.

■ The mastering of a skill, be it acting or making music, fosters commitment and self-value.

■ The programme process is often more important than the end result.

■ Because most young people are interested in the arts, creative and expressive activities can strengthen or complement the value and impact of other forms of intervention.

(Bunt 1994:28; Hoskyns 1995:138–141; Killick & Greenwood 1995:114; Payne 1992:45, 50)

APPROACHES

Music is a social act where people can listen, imitate, adapt and learn from each other (Bunt 1994:27). The use of music intervention among troubled and at-risk children was formalised by the implementation of Diversion Into Music Education (DIME) in 2001 and the establishment of the Drumming Programme at the Bosasa Horizon Child Centre in Eerste River, Cape Town, in 2002 (Viall 2002:5). Music therapy is defined as the use of sounds and music within evolving relationships to support and encourage physical, mental, social and emotional well-being (Bunt 1994:8). It is not only about the strengthening of self-esteem through being able to make music, but also about being part of a team (Viall 2002:5). During group music intervention, each participant has to learn how to co-operate with others in order to make music. Intervention among children through music is particularly valuable because:

■ They identify with music.

■ Music keeps them busy for a good length of time.

■ Music is often used as a 'language' and medium of communication.

■ Musicians are often heroes to young people and so serve as role models.

■ Music offers the opportunity for children to interact on equal terms.

(Bunt 1994:16; Katz 1996:94; Payne 1992:52)

Acting and improvisation provide a platform for greater insight and serve as an outlet for anger and feelings of frustration. Drama intervention with at-risk children is seen as an alternative approach that is action-based and involves verbal or vocal exchange, rather than being dependent on a high level of language skills. Drama programmes use expressive movement as a method of personal integration and growth. Collaboration with fellow participants is essential, as each actor has to perform at an appropriate level for a play to be a success. At the same time, movement allows participants to share their personal symbols or traits, as well as the perceived traits of others (Payne 1992:4). Similarly, role play fosters a deeper understanding of the emotions and experiences of others, which is valuable for promoting empathy for victims. Through role play, the social world of the young person can be explored from a safe distance before broader understandings are internalised (Cattanach in Janse van Rensburg 1998:54–55).

When used as a method of intervention, **visual art** is a means of non-verbal communication for relaying mixed and often poorly understood feelings in an effort to give them clarity and order. Art activity is a conscious process that gives form to (often unconscious) feelings. It provides a way of exploring and expressing parts of ourselves that lie beyond the reach of words. It can create a bridge between inner and outer, to better integrate the two (Hall 1990:157). Visual arts have the advantage of simultaneously allowing the expression of pathologies and potential. These opposites can be reconciled to bring about positive change (Brandt, Wohler & Allanridge in Bunt 1994:169).

Visual art in the form of images often evokes and intensifies emotions while simultaneously providing a concretised structure for their expression. At the same time, the act of constructing images can be playful and enjoyable (Moon 1990:80). This enjoyment stimulates creativity and thinking and ensures interest and active participation. For intervention with at-risk and offending children, the visual arts have the following benefits:

- Images serve as bridges where the subject matter is too personal or embarrassing to talk about, or has negative connotations for the young person.

- The expression of (often negative) emotions and experiences can take place in a safe and acceptable environment.

- Images are used to stimulate discussion and could be used, in retrospect, to track developments.

  (Liebmann in Wakeford 1996:63)

VALUE

Expressive programming is noted to have the following value:

- Expression facilitates learning. At the biological level, physical activity strengthens motor skills. It also involves the application of energy and subsequent relaxation.

- These activities occupy the child's mind and the body while he or she is absorbed in mastering the activity. Participants can explore what they are capable of. The experience of an activity or the expression of an emotion also fosters healthy conflict management.

■ Interpersonal and social skills are developed as the experience or activity often requires the co-operation of and interaction with others.

■ At the social and cultural levels, expressive intervention stimulates an understanding of one's own values and those of others, as well as the norms and expectations of society.

(O'Connor 1991:6–9; Payne 1992:46)

As mentioned earlier, there are very few research findings about the value of expressive programmes. Wherever such data can be found, it is predominantly rooted in qualitative and individual case study designs, or were undertaken as therapeutic interventions with severely mentally handicapped or psychiatrically ill target groups, e.g. with autistic and schizophrenic patients.

CHALLENGES AND SHORTFALLS

A major challenge for expression-oriented approaches is getting them accepted by the criminal justice system (O'Connor 1991:301). An understanding of their processes and value is essential for ensuring their successful implementation (Waller 1995:232). Many justice officials have very little background in child development and so may be sceptical about so-called alternative and 'soft' approaches to intervention with child offenders. These approaches may gain ground if they are combined with more conventional methods of intervention. Research into the effectiveness of expressive programmes for at-risk and offending children in South Africa is urgently needed and appropriate methodologies need to be explored to adequately determine and articulate their outcomes. Challenges to the implementation of art and expression-based initiatives include:

■ Expensive equipment, especially in the case of music intervention.

■ Ensuring that facilitators are skilled in arts-based programming, on the one hand, and working with at-risk and offending children, on the other.

■ Finding and securing a balance between artistic activities and a focus on crime prevention.

■ Ensuring the full participation of all children.

Endnotes

1 The reader should note that the programmes presented in this part are multi-modal in nature, but that they entail a particular – largely creative – method or strategy to intervention that set them aside from conventional diversion programming. The term 'expressive programmes' was opted for, as the initiatives comprise of some activity that assists participants in expressing either themselves, their activities or their environments in a creative manner, i.e. music, drama or art.

References

Bunt L. 1994. *Music therapy: an art beyond words*. London: Routledge.

Dalley T, Case C, Schaverien J, Weir F, Halliday D, Hall PN & Waller D. 1990. *Images of art therapy: new developments in theory and practice*. London: Routledge.

Gilroy A. 1995. Changes in art therapy groups. In Gilroy A & Lee C (eds). *Art and music therapy and research*. London: Routledge. 66–81.

Gilroy A & Lee C (eds). 1995. *Art and music therapy and research*. London: Routledge.

Hall PN. 1990. Art therapy: a way of healing the split. In Dalley T, Case C, Schaverien J, Weir F, Halliday D, Hall PN & Waller D. *Images of art therapy*. London: Routledge. 157–187.

Hoskyns S. 1995. Observing offenders: the use of simple rating scales to assess changes in activity during group music therapy. In Gilroy A & Lee C (eds). *Art and music therapy and research*. London: Routledge. 138–151.

Janse van Rensburg L. 1998. Die ontwikkeling van 'n program vir interpersoonlike vaardighede. Unpublished doctoral thesis. Bloemfontein: University of the Free State.

Katz S. 1996. Music therapy for a changing South Africa. In Woodward SC (ed). *Music in medicine – health and harmony*. Linden: The Music Therapy Society of Southern Africa. 93–98.

Killick K & Greenwood H. 1995. Research in art therapy with people who have psychotic illnesses. In Gilroy A & Lee C (eds). *Art and music therapy and research*. London: Routledge. 101–116.

Moon BL. 1990. *Existential art therapy – the canvas mirror*. Springfield: Charles C Thomas.

O'Connor KJ. 1991. *The play therapy primer – an integration of theories and techniques*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Payne H. 1992. Introduction. In Payne H (ed). *Dance movement therapy: theory and practice*. London: Tavistock/Routledge. 1–17.

Payne H. 1992. Shut in, shut out. Dance movement therapy with children and adolescents. In Payne H (ed). *Dance movement therapy: theory and practice*. London: Tavistock/Routledge. 39–80.

Payne H (ed). 1992. *Dance movement therapy: theory and practice*. London: Tavistock/Routledge.

Van der Merwe AP & Dawes A. 2004. *The development of minimum standards for diversion programmes: a literature review*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council.

Viall J. 2002. Troubled child beat to a new drum. *Cape Argus*. 19 September 2002. p. 5.

Wakeford BM. 1996. The development of an expressionistic program in the rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents. Unpublished masters dissertation. Johannesburg: Rand Afrikaans University.

Waller D. 1995. The development of art therapy in Bulgaria: infiltrating the system. In Gilroy A & Lee C (eds). *Art and music therapy and research*. London: Routledge. 223–240.

Woodward SC (ed). 1996. *Music in medicine – health and harmony*. Linden: The Music Therapy Society of Southern Africa.

Woodward SC 1996. Foreword. In Woodward SC (ed). *Music in medicine – health and harmony*. Linden: The Music Therapy Society of Southern Africa. v–vi.

10

DIVERSION INTO MUSIC EDUCATION

DIME

Diversion into Music Education (DIME) is a Cape Town-based child development initiative that provides diversion services to children in trouble with the law. DIME uses group based music education as its primary change mechanism but also provides children with individual mentoring to help them reintegrate into society. Its approach is socially and culturally appropriate and it uses informal methods of interaction.

1. THE ORGANISATION

1.1 Background

DIME is a collaborative project run by a consortium of organisations that include the Community Law Centre (CLC) and the Department of Psychology of the University of the Western Cape (UWC), the National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO) and the University of South Florida in the USA. Its aim is to reintegrate children who are in conflict with the law back into their communities through a programme that teaches them music skills, particularly playing the marimba.[1]

During its establishment, DIME received substantial input from the UWC Music Department and when a key role player from this department moved to the USA, a twin project was established at a juvenile facility in Tampa, Florida (DIME 2002a:1). Although the two settings were completely different – one community-based and the other institution-based – the two projects exchanged valuable ideas and helped each other to improve their services. DIME was officially launched on 9 September 2001. (DIME 2002b:2–3). In his address, the Judge President of the Cape of Good Hope, Judge John Hlope, urged young citizens to pursue their futures with dedication and determination, a philosophy that DIME strongly promotes among its participants.

1.2 Aims and principles

DIME aims to reintegrate young offenders into their communities through participation in a skills-based music education programme in a community setting. It starts by teaching participants how to play culturally relevant instruments and can quickly bring them up to performance standards (DIME 2002c:1). In a strict legal sense, DIME is not a diversion programme but a complementary and secondary initiative. Its purpose is to enrich existing diversion programmes, by making reintegration into the family and the community easier after the first intervention has been successfully completed.

DIME believes young people can learn to collaborate with others in a coherent way. It achieves its desired outcomes mostly through group work and interaction. In essence, the young person learns that being part of a group means you have certain roles and responsibilities and you have to honour these for the group to be a success. Music tuition and group performances are a creative way to instil this understanding. Three principles characterise the DIME initiative:

■ It is **community-based** instead of institution-based. This promotes communication and interaction with peers, family members and the community.

■ The **socio-cultural** approach enhances a sense of family and community. Young participants are from the same backgrounds, and the programme is facilitated in their home language. The traditional African melodies further enhance feelings of belonging and value.

■ Learning takes place in an **informal** way and although it does not focus on wrongdoing it emphasises discipline, listening and positive group cohesion. Because the programme is non-verbal and expressive it is well designed to reach children with low education levels who may struggle with reading and writing.

1.3 Organisational structure and resources

Lecturing and research staff of the Law Faculty and Department of Psychology (UWC) provide overall management and direction of the programme. Financial management, as well as logistical support, is provided by the Community Law Centre (CLC) at UWC. In terms of resources, DIME has four drums and a set of three marimbas. The programme rents a classroom and storage space for equipment at a nominal fee from the Luhlaza Secondary School in Khayelitsha. The safety of the musical instruments is paramount, not only because of their monetary value, but because no music tuition can be undertaken without them. Financial support through its collaboration with the University of South Florida secured DIME's first set of marimbas. A second set of marimbas and drums is to be secured in the near future to enable DIME to enrol new participants, while at the same time accommodating ex-participants who wish to continue their interest in music tuition. In addition to physical resources, the project also employs a qualified music teacher.

DIME makes use of student volunteers for the mentoring component of the work. Mentors receive stipends for their mentoring duties, as well as for transport expenses.

DIME currently relies on donor funding although it is hoped that government financial assistance may be secured in future.

2. THE PROGRAMME

2.1 Rationale and aim

DIME is a response to the need for the development and implementation of local alternative approaches to preventing child offending. The initiative follows a two-pronged approach to diversion and reintegration support, namely music tuition and mentoring.

Music tuition

Music is a social and cultural means of communication that can alter a person's mental state, as it stimulates or relaxes certain emotions. It is widely acknowledged that some melodies provoke feelings of happiness or sadness, while others have a calming effect. It is therefore taken that music, because of its therapeutic effect, can be used as a means of rehabilitation (DIME 2002b:23). DIME aims to instil positive behaviour through active participation in musical activities. It values the traditional link of music to cultural backgrounds that promotes pride and self-worth within a broader societal context. In addition, mastering a musical instrument requires dedication, discipline and practice. To then perform for others, especially parents and community members, contributes to a sense of mastery, achievement, and value.

In addition to being a mental activity, mastering a musical instrument involves physical movement, particularly the upper part of the body. For marimbas and drumming, hand co-ordination particularly stimulates motor skills. Furthermore, emotions are released and expressed by using the body to clap, drum, sing, dance and make music (DIME 2002b:24). Orchestrated music has a social context as it relies on a specific number of people coming together, interacting with one another and co-ordinating their abilities to bring about melodies. DIME bases its programme on the belief that music tuition with at-risk young people can bring about psychological benefits such as:

- Stimulating talent and promoting competence.

- Enhancing self-worth, self-esteem and self-confidence.

- Creating opportunities for positive interaction with peers and adults.

- Channelling conflict through the constructive expression of emotions.

- Creating a sense of belonging and security within a group of people.

  (DIME 2002b:9)

Learning to play a musical instrument occupies the mind (DIME 2002c:27). It alters the thought content since the student displaces or reduces negative concepts. Such changes encourage the cognitive restructuring that can help an individual develop.

Mentoring

DIME acknowledges that mentoring has been an important human concern since antiquity and that it has particular significance in traditional African culture (DIME 2002b:21). The mentoring part of DIME is based on learning theory that considers certain behaviour to be the product of existing external and observed behavioural patterns. In other words, behaviour is modelled on the actions, or reactions, of people one respects and with whom one identifies. The credibility of a mentor can be enhanced by appropriate cultural and gender matching to promote respect for and commonality with the child he or she is going to mentor.

Many DIME participants are from a poor socioeconomic environment, or single parent or sibling-headed households with a high level of absentee fathers. The aim of DIME's mentoring component is to provide positive role models to young people in trouble with the law, who can guide them in making decisions and planning for the future.

2.2 Entry criteria and profile of participants

Entry criteria for participating in DIME include an upper age limit of 18 years, having engaged in offending, and preferably still attending school. Participants are referred from NICRO after having completed the Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), as discussed in Part Two of this review.

DIME participants engage in the music tuition and mentoring programme of their own free will and no previous musical skill is required. DIME can therefore be seen as a voluntary second phase to the diversion and reintegration process. Participants are not assessed for a second time before enrolling in the programme. NICRO officials base their decisions about the appropriateness of a referral to DIME on the initial diversion assessment, the child's progress in the YES programme, and the willingness of the particular child to commit to both the music tuition and mentoring.

> It is voluntary. Therefore, the focus is put on the interest of the child and whether the child needs a structured activity in his or her life. It is not necessarily everyone that can become involved and benefit from DIME. (NICRO official)

The profile of participants indicates that DIME is best suited to younger first-time offenders who have committed minor offences. DIME is based in Khayelitsha in Cape Town and was developed specifically to serve that community. As a result all participants thus far have been from Khayelitsha and, given the demographics of the area, all have been Xhosa-speaking. The offences committed by the participants range from shoplifting and substance abuse to robbery and assault. Analysis of assessments of participants indicates that they tend to submit easily to peer pressure, and that they are prone to maintaining atypical relationships. Performance at school is usually below standard. Many participants are from disrupted families characterised by abuse and neglect, substance dependency and harsh physical punishment (DIME 2002b:13). Although no formal study has been done, it would appear that some participants suffer from depression, anxiety, learning disorders and post-traumatic stress disorders – conditions that fuel substance abuse and dependency (DIME 2002c:24).

Of the first eleven DIME participants, seven cited their mothers as the primary caregivers. Only three came from families that could be considered a nuclear family. Although the fathers of nine participants were still alive, only two said they were involved in their upbringing. Parenting appeared to be inadequate and sometimes lax (DIME 2002c:16, 22). Such realities are disconcerting and could precipitate offending behaviour, hence the need for positive role models in these participants' lives.

2.3 Programme content and implementation

Initially, it was anticipated that a DIME programme would be completed within 16 weeks. However, experience has shown that the programme needs to be flexible to accommodate particular groups and the needs of individual participants and so could take longer. DIME is currently only undertaken during school terms. The following section provides an overview of some of the practicalities and processes involved in implementing DIME's mentoring and music tuition programmes.

Mentoring

Mentors are matched with the children they will mentor (hereafter referred to as 'the child/children') on the basis of gender, as it is considered that mentors should serve as peer group role models. Same-gender matching may also help children with the difficult transition through puberty (DIME 2002b:5). A get-together between student volunteers and children enables the formation of mentoring relationships. Up to now, only one match has had to be rearranged.

One mentor has two to three children to mentor during an intake, which spans approximately three months. Each young person is seen separately for at least one hour per week. The mentor may meet the child for longer periods of time should increased support be required. Mentoring is largely provided at the homes of DIME participants and takes place in the evenings or over weekends. Some mentors take the children to the campus of the University of the Western Cape to show them around. Other than visits to the campus the mentors do not take the children on outings, as this has financial implications. Some mentors interact with family members on an informal basis. Mentors act as friends, and not as parents or supervisors.

Music tuition

Music practice takes place once a week in the afternoon and usually spans two to two-and-a-half hours. Mentors are asked to attend the practice sessions. Each child learns a particular part of a song on one of the marimbas. The music that is taught includes the teacher's own compositions, as well as traditional African melodies. The participants are also taught how to use their bodies to complement the instruments and the music. They learn how to move and to listen so that when they play, they reflect their affection for the instrument and the song.

> The kids play very good and learn fast. If I had only three weeks with them, it seems as if they have been playing for three months. We play African music, and some old songs that we sang as children. So it is very easy to learn. These kids are very good. (Music teacher)

Good working relationships are fostered between the teacher and participants. He is not provided with information on the types of offences that they have committed. Discussions about crime and offending are not undertaken during music tuition and the focus is only on their love of music and their eagerness to learn.

Closure

The programme is concluded with an exit concert at a school or within the community, which family members, friends and mentors attend. From the onset, DIME participants are informed that the mentoring relationship will only last for a period of three to four months. Still, some participants find it traumatic to break the relationship with mentors. Some mentors maintain contact, even if just telephonically.

Continued involvement

Ex-participants are allowed to attend practice sessions. This is deemed necessary to avoid feelings of abandonment and rejection caused by their separation from the project (DIME 2002c:20). And some children see DIME and playing marimbas as a career opportunity. A number of participants from the first intake in 2001 still engage in music tuition and form the permanent base of the public performance group. Unfortunately, with these children still attending tuition, friction developed with new DIME intakes, as the older participants wanted to dominate practice sessions. Some became quite possessive and territorial with the instruments. However, DIME officials managed to get participants from different intakes to collaborate. A positive outcome of this process was that the older participants started coaching the new ones, which added to their own self-value, while also easing the music teacher's burden.

The permanent performance group play the music that they learned through DIME at local restaurants in Cape Town. The group consists of participants from different DIME intakes. Some of the first income from public performances was put into acquiring matching headbands and shirts for the band members. However, the income that is received from these endeavours is, at times, insufficient to sustain public performances. After transport costs are covered, very little remains for the group to share. Transporting equipment to and from performance sites is particularly problematic, given the size and fragility of the instruments. With the performers being relatively young and inexperienced in business management, NICRO has agreed to provide participants with business skills to explore income-generating opportunities. Furthermore, DIME aims to explore avenues such as the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, and the Cape Town City Council, to discover additional empowerment opportunities for the performers.

Staff and volunteers

DIME's implementing and support personnel consist of two lecturing and research staff members at UWC, four to five students who act as volunteers, a NICRO social worker, and the music teacher. One of the UWC staff members involved with DIME is a counselling psychologist whose expertise is applied in intervening in the dysfunctional domestic environments of some participants. The music teacher was born in a community near Khayelitsha and is familiar with the dynamics and cultural traits of the communities from which participants come. He has extensive musical experience, coming from a family of musicians and having made music since the age of 13 and performed in the Far East, Europe and North America. The NICRO social worker attends music tuition sessions to provide support and counselling to participants. She also co-ordinates DIME's music tuition component and refers participants to the programme.

140

Mentoring provides for a senior, more experienced person to guide a younger, less experienced person. Mentors are responsible for:

■ Helping the children in the programme set realistic goals.

■ Offering them support in the process of maturing to adulthood.

■ Displaying trust, confidence and effective decision making skills.

■ Promoting responsibility and cultivate positive behaviour among the children in the programme.

(DIME 2002b:21)

Mentoring relationships require time to mature to the benefit and enjoyment of both the mentor and the children in the programme. Persons who act as mentors have to be taught skills to perform their mentoring duties, and provided with continuous training, supervision and adequate support (DIME 2002b:22). DIME's mentors are not 'super heroes', but young adults who may well have once been in the same situation as young participants.

All mentors are UWC students from the Faculty of Law and the Department of Psychology. They are recruited through on-campus advertising and through awareness being raised during lectures. Initially, the requirements for acting as a mentor included residence in Khayelitsha, registration for the next academic year, and good academic standing. Currently, most mentors live on the UWC campus and travel to Khayelitsha to provide mentoring support to participants. Potential candidates are interviewed before being appointed as mentors. Male and female students are encouraged to enrol for mentoring, as children from both genders are referred to DIME. Appointment as a mentor is largely based on interest, personality, availability and commitment to the project. Students with past criminal involvement are not excluded as mentors, as they might be in a better position to motivate youth not to re-offend (DIME 2002b:5).

The training of mentors begins with two four-hour session scheduled over two weeks. Equipping students with the necessary skills to provide mentoring support is, however, undertaken on a continuous basis to ensure that mentors are familiar with the challenges that programme participants face (Farren 2002). The training consists of the following:

■ The meaning of mentoring.

■ How to build and strengthen a mentoring relationship.

■ Development phases during adolescence.

■ Contingency management.

■ Conflict resolution skills.

■ Report writing.

(DIME 2002b:6)

At present, the training is not facilitated by means of a manual but consists largely of experiential learning. The UWC Audio Visual Department has assisted in the recording of some mentor training sessions. These videos are

used during follow-up training. Practical aspects of the training are covered during the supervision of mentors. Group discussions further allow mentors to share their experiences with fellow volunteers and other DIME officials.

Costs

From DIME's financial statements for the 18-month period 1 January 2003 to 30 June 2004 it is calculated that the cost per participant over the three to four month period of the programme is R1 984. As would be expected, the marimbas and drums are expensive. One set of marimbas costs R35 000. At the time that the research was done the students were paid R25 per hour for their mentoring duties, which take three to five hours per week. This stipend includes transport costs to and from music tuition sessions and remuneration for their mentoring obligations.

2.4 Monitoring and evaluation

An attendance register is kept to track absenteeism among DIME participants. Mentors are expected to compile reports recording the progress made by individual participants, and to inform the project about possible challenges such as drug dependency and domestic problems (DIME 2002b:10). These weekly reports capture information about the following:

■ School attendance and attitude toward teachers and learning.

■ Family matters and attitudes to parental authority.

■ Relationships with peers and the mentor.

■ Vision for the future.

Additional behavioural aspects and significant happenings are also recorded. The quality of these reports has been improved through increased training and supervision of mentors.

The first DIME intake had 14 participants. Of these, 11 completed the programme while 3 dropped out towards the end. Of the 11, one re-offended within the first six months following the intervention (DIME 2002c:13).

The second DIME intake also had 14 participants. Again, 11 continued, while 3 dropped out during the programme (DIME 2002c:28). Reasons for participants dropping out included a lack of interest in music tuition and being negatively influenced by peers. During the second programme, 2 participants engaged in crime.

The third DIME intake had 15 participants, and 2 dropped out during the programme.

Generally speaking, a low defaulting rate prevails – about one in every ten participants – and it would seem that most participants enjoy participating in the programme. Since DIME does not form part of formal diversion, participants are free to drop out at any time without consequence. Nevertheless, mentors encourage them to see the initiative through, and for the most part they do.

The DIME initiative is complemented by an evaluation strategy that includes assessing the participants before and after the programme and also records the perceptions of their parents and guardians and teachers. The mentoring reports provide for the compilation of a data set about the effects of the programme on the functioning of DIME participants. The effects of DIME, although determined largely through qualitative methods because of the relatively small number of participants, include:

- Improved relationships with parents.

- Accepting domestic responsibilities and doing chores.

- Improved commitment to schooling and interest in further education.

- Less truancy from both home and school settings.

- Commitment to music tuition.

- An increased sense of purpose and meaning.

    (DIME 2002b:15–17,19)

The impact assessment, furthermore, found that participants welcome the mentoring aspect of the project, since a safe and accepting atmosphere is created where they can voice concerns and express feelings. Participants appreciate the confidentiality that mentors maintain and value their availability as advisors, listeners and motivators. On the negative side, some mentors did not honour the times scheduled for mentoring activities (DIME 2002b:20). This made some participants distrust DIME's mentoring component.

2.5 Key lessons and views

- The popularity of DIME emphasises the need for similar endeavours in marginalised communities.

    Young people ask us: 'Do we have to commit crime to become involved with DIME?' (NICRO official)

- DIME provides a sense of achievement and an opportunity for participants to explore their musical talents.

    They discover that they can do things that they never imagined would be possible. These kids just never had the opportunity. (DIME official)

    They are so passionate about the marimbas that they talk about it most of the time. From that perspective, we feel that children are challenged in a positive way. (DIME official)

- DIME promotes the self-image and self-worth of participants.

    Through the actual performances, the children were able to transform old self-representations. They were, to put it simply, extremely proud of their new-found abilities and eager to showcase their skills to an audience. In this regard, our conclusion is that music can play a crucial role in psychological reintegration and the development of wholeness. (DIME official)

> At first I did not care and now I am a professional and want to look good and feel better, respect myself and other people. I am now an artist and I am now disciplined. (DIME participant)

■ One needs to guard against possible exploitation of children when doing public performances.

> When I play with my band, we get paid and we know that this is our career ... But I don't know about DIME. I don't think that they get paid enough. (Music teacher)

■ DIME provides for an enjoyable and life-enriching experience.

> I started a new life now and I am looking at my life through different eyes. (DIME participant)

> We also had a mentor, which was like a big brother. He talked to me about problems in life, like drugs and school. (DIME participant)

3. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

DIME highlights the informal and socio-cultural appropriateness of expressive intervention with at-risk children. It creates the opportunity for change in often desolate environments, coupled with the ability to explore and access hidden talents. As the literature notes, the place and value of music and cultural activities as diversionary options are, as yet, largely unexplored and the initiative can be considered as a leading example in drawing on indigenous practices to reach troubled children.

It appears DIME is succeeding in helping at-risk children develop self-discipline and a sense of self-worth through the accomplishment of making music. At the same time, it has the potential to foster a sense of belonging among participants, as activities are undertaken in a group and achievements depend on understanding the collective spirit. Evidence suggests that music tuition engages participants in creative and constructive ways to help at-risk children discover themselves and their talents. DIME provides them with an opportunity to interact positively to achieve a common goal. Its mentoring component helps provide children in need of guidance with support in dealing with issues related to adolescence and growing up. The initiative follows a developmental approach to impact on the participants' general mind-sets and behaviour.

As a word of caution to service providers who intend to set up similar programmes it needs to be restated here that DIME views itself as a complementary programme and not as a stand-alone intervention. The programme content is not directly related to youth offending as is the case with some of the previously discussed diversion programmes. DIME takes an indirect approach in this regard basing its programme on the assumption that the development of self-esteem, self discipline, mastery and co-operation will decrease the likelihood of re-offending. Music-based intervention, on its own, does not necessarily promote an understanding of the offence, its consequences and ways of preventing re-offending. For this reason, children on the programme are all expected to complete a more formalised diversion programme before participation in the music project. This approach would be encouraged should replication of this model be considered.

The fact that some participants dropped out of the initiative (albeit very few) highlights the fact that expressive interventions require some level of assessment to determine the suitability of the programme for potential participants. The absence of a formal assessment may result in an inappropriate referral where the intervention may not meet the needs of a particular person. In the case of DIME, it appears that interest and voluntary commitment are factors that indicate that a child will participate and complete the programme. It also appears that the initiative may be better suited to younger first-time offenders who have committed minor offences. Such observations have the potential to improve intake practices and lead to more effective service delivery.

Evidence suggests that music-based interventions, while very effective on the individual level, are not particularly restorative in nature, owing to the general lack of reparation, reconciliation, problem solving, understanding of the offence and involvement of parents, community members and victims. Practitioners wishing to implement a restorative element to their programme would therefore have to do this through alternative methods (see previous discussions in this review regarding the complementarity of programmes).

DIME has standardised monitoring and reporting systems in place. Its mentoring component has the potential to follow the progress of participants, although extended involvement will be required to track the longer-term impact of the programme in this way. As the literature notes, a stronger evidence-base is needed to demonstrate the potential of music intervention to change behaviour.

In terms of replication it is important to note that DIME model requires a high number of professional staff including psychologists, social workers and very importantly a qualified music teacher. The project also has access to the resources of a university both in terms of a readily available pool of volunteers as well as expertise in monitoring and evaluation. When setting up a project of this nature it is also useful to consider DIME's approach to volunteerism. There are many differing views on the management of volunteers with some organisations taking a purist approach, i.e. that volunteerism should be based on a desire to help without expectation of anything in return. The opposing view is that in a country characterised by poverty it is unrealistic to expect volunteers to work with no remuneration at all. Both arguments are legitimate. However, either approach will have an impact on the long-term sustainability of the project. Organisations that have opted not to pay their volunteers often experience high turn over, investing time, effort and money in training volunteers who leave the organisation when offered the opportunity of permanent employment. On the other hand, those who opt to pay volunteers create a long-term financial obligation that they are not always able to meet. DIME has opted to pay the mentors a stipend. Organisations wishing to run similar programmes would need to look carefully at the approach that would best suit them. Finally, DIME uses the marimba as the medium through which music is taught. The replication of the model in its current form would therefore require the acquisition of more of these (often expensive) instruments. This being said, there is no reason why the model can not be replicated using another, perhaps less expensive instrument.

DIME experiences problems/challenges common to this type of intervention, i.e. the need for the programme to be longer, children becoming dependent (not wanting to leave the group and make space for new participants), the fact that they have a limited number of instruments, in this case marimbas, which means that they have difficulty ensuring that everyone has equal access, and possible emotional dependency on the initiative. At the same time,

the programme highlights the challenge of balancing structured intervention with a relatively unstructured (and enjoyable) programme. Nevertheless, the post-intervention and reintegration potential of such initiatives should not be overlooked.

Endnotes

1 A marimba is a traditional African instrument from which the modern orchestral instrument known as the xylophone evolved.

References

CLC (Community Law Centre). 2002. About CLC. http://www.communitylawcentre.org.za/about_clc.php (Accessed 26 January 2004).

DIME (Diversion Into Music Education). 2002a. *Funding proposal: DIME project November 2002–November 2003*. Cape Town: Community Law Centre.

DIME (Diversion Into Music Education). 2002b. *First report to the Open Society Foundation of South Africa from project team*. Cape Town: Community Law Centre.

DIME (Diversion Into Music Education). 2002c. *Final report to the Open Society Foundation of South Africa, September 2001–September 2002*. Cape Town: Community Law Centre.

Farren T. 2002. Someone special for children at risk. *Mail and Guardian*, 25 January 2002. http://archive.mg.co.za/NXT/gateway.dll/PrintEdition/MGP2002/3lv0260/4lv0261/5lv02531.htm (Accessed 28 November 2003).

NICRO (National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders). 2000. *Mapping the future – empowering the child*. Cape Town: Juta.

11

DRAMA THERAPY

The Restorative Justice Centre

The Restorative Justice Centre (RJC) endeavours to promote the principles of restorative justice through the delivery of offender-focused programmes. Among others things, the initiative pursues the restoration of child offending by means of a drama therapy intervention.

As the RJC has been described earlier in this report, the reader is referred to Chapter 2 for more detail about its organisational structure and resources, staff component, partnerships and monitoring activities related to the drama therapy initiative.

1. RATIONALE AND AIM

The RJC drama intervention is in part a life skills training programme that uses drama and role play as a medium for experiential learning and crime prevention. The programme aims to develop children's awareness of crime, its origins and impact on society in order to prevent re-offending. It attempts to show participants that they are harming not only the victim and the community, but also themselves. At the same time, the programme allows participants to express and share their emotions regarding their circumstances and offences. The programme was developed by a drama specialist and consists mainly of verbal interaction and group activities. Since little reading and writing is involved, its approach is suitable for children with limited literacy.

2. ENTRY CRITERIA AND PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

The following criteria are used to refer children to the RJC drama therapy programme:

- The child has to admit to the offence and agree to participate in diversion.

- The offence has to be the first that he or she has committed.

- The offence has to be of a minor nature.

Additionally, the child has to be able to function in and benefit from group work. Sexual offenders and children with drug problems are excluded from the intervention. A Pretoria-based probation officer noted that 'hard-to-reach'

children are often referred to the drama programme because it offers opportunities for self-expression and more in-depth attention than mere short-term life skills intervention.

In order to participate in the drama programme the child is assessed by a probation officer shortly after his or her arrest. The assessment incorporates background information, contact particulars of the child's parents or guardian, the nature of the crime and a date to appear in court. Once a decision has been taken that the child is suitable for diversion, a referral letter is faxed[1] to RJC requesting that the child be accepted onto the programme. The young person's parents are then instructed to contact the relevant staff member at RJC to make the necessary arrangements.

Young people referred to the RJC drama therapy programme are generally between the ages of 11 and 18. The majority of them attend school, but their home environments are often characterised by abuse and dysfunction. More boys than girls are referred for diversion intervention. Boys mostly commit housebreaking, theft and assault, while girls are mainly referred for charges of shoplifting. Nearly all participants are from suburbs in and around Pretoria. Most children come from poor socioeconomic backgrounds.

3. CONTENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

The drama therapy programme consists of six sessions, each lasting approximately two hours. The sessions are held twice a week for three consecutive weeks. There are usually between eight and twelve children in a group. The group is facilitated by one person but he/she is assisted by a second facilitator during the first and last sessions of the programme when the parents attend, given that there are often up to 25 people present.

The sessions are not presented according to a fixed structure, but in terms of the needs of each intake. Programme content and requirements are identified during the facilitator's first interaction with the children and their parents, and age determines the pace and level of intervention. When there is a wide variation in the ages of the children, the group is divided into two to accommodate the different levels of understanding and insight.

The programme is not module-based and consists of the following sessions.

Session 1: Building an ideal world

To start with, the roles of the child, their parents and the facilitator are defined. Parenting skills are discussed and participants are encouraged to understand and support their children. In a group, children have to construct an ideal world with specific rules and responsibilities, the transgression of which would be accompanied by specific punishments. They also have to identify circumstances that could damage their ideal world. This exercise aims to help them understand the need for regulations in the real world.

Session 2: Re-enacting the offence

During the second session, each child has the opportunity to narrate the background and events of his or her offence to another child. He or she then becomes the director as the other child dramatises the offence. Through

watching the dramatisation of the crime, it is intended that the young person will realise the risks involved in committing an offence. Furthermore, participants reflect on the decision making, family dynamics and other matters such as drugs and violence that may have precipitated the offence.

Session 3: Effects of crime on self-esteem

Many children enter the programme with low self-esteem. Mentoring and coaching methods are employed to improve the way participants view themselves. Themes of decision making and peer pressure, among others, are enacted to elicit an understanding of how drugs, for example, contribute toward poor self-esteem.

Session 4: Dealing with labels and obstacles in life

The fourth session addresses the labels that friends, family and community members attach to offending children. Activities such as finding an object while being blindfolded and without speaking set the stage for discussions on how to deal with life's hurdles.

Session 5: Effects of crime on the community

During this session, some children enact offences while others play the roles of parents and community members. By acting the part of, for example, a parent figure, it is intended that the young offender will come to understand what his or her parent experienced as result of the offence.

Session 6: Forgiveness and taking responsibility

The sixth session is attended by the parents and allows for feedback about the programme and its impact on young participants. Ways for parents to support their children are explored, and the parent-child relationship is strengthened through forgiveness and the taking of responsibility. Children are also asked to write a letter of apology to their parents and the victim of the offence.

Outputs

With the drama therapy programme being able to accommodate between 8 and 13 participants at a time, the 2001/2002 financial year saw 84 children attending the intervention over an eight-month period (RJC 2002:2). During 2002/2003, there was a 25% increase in the number of participants (RJC 2003:2). A seasonal influx of cases has been noted, especially after the December festive season and school holidays. During school exam times the number of referred children usually decreases.

4. KEY LESSONS AND VIEWS

■ The drama therapy programme provides an opportunity for participants to confront their behaviour.

> The most difficult part of the programme was when we had to explain to the whole group what we did and why we were there. (Participant)

149

■ It appears that the drama intervention has a positive effect on referred children.

> It was a way to show us what life really is about, what is wrong and right, and to give us direction. Without the programme I would have done the same things as before. (Participant)

■ Careful consideration needs to be given to the impact of short-term interventions.

> Can we really change behaviour in six weeks? Coming from a social and psychological background, I must tell you that it will cause a miracle, but that is what the courts expect. (Stakeholder)

5. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The drama therapy initiative is a unique variation on conventional life skills-based intervention. Evidence suggests that its reflective, interactive and expressive activities have the potential to help participants begin to understand what offending behaviour is, the factors that led to the offence and the consequences it has had. Indications in the literature indicate that developing these insights could help to prevent re-offending. .

Role play can be viewed as an effective, creative, unstructured intervention for use with hard-to-reach children. As with traditional life skills training, emphasis is placed on strengthening the participant's self-esteem, as one way of preventing re-offending.

It is very important that diversion programme content is underpinned by an understanding of the causes of youth offending and that programme activities address the precipitating factors appropriately. The RJC drama initiative has the potential to affect change in the often dysfunctional and abusive home environments of participants by involving the parents in some of the intervention activities. However, as with most of the programmes discussed thus far, parental involvement is limited. Increased involvement by parents and caregivers remains an ongoing challenge for diversion service providers. Another question common to all programmes discussed thus far is whether life skills can have any real impact in the face of chronic poverty and economic need. In response to this it has been said that life skills messages could help influence participants' thought patterns and decision making processes so that they will not engage in criminal activities regardless of their circumstances. Other practitioners have argued that diversion service providers have a responsibility to include some form of vocational training or hard skills development in their programmes to address poverty and unemployment issues.

The RJC has a clear understanding of the challenges linked to a programme of this nature. It recognises, as the literature suggests, that language and social skills barriers could hamper meaningful interaction with some children. Its activities show that it understands that crime prevention concepts must be externalised before they are internalised. Throughout its programme the significance of group interaction and collective learning is evident.

Drama-based programmes are highly flexible and therefore suitable for meeting the general intervention needs of the group, besides having scope to promote individual insight and accountability. This fluid and adaptable approach is often absent from structured group-based programming. It is worth noting that the intervention can be altered according to the ages of participants, and that assessment information is used to ensure that the programme content is pitched at the right level.

Expressive programmes are relatively new and unexplored in this country. RJC has been involved in diversion since its inception and as a result has developed strong credibility with the courts. In replicating this model, a lot of work would need to be done to convince court officials with regard to the quality and effectiveness of the proposed intervention. In addition to the standard requirements for facilitation of life skills diversion programmes, practitioners wishing to run a programme of this nature would also need a sound understanding of drama therapy and its application in a diversion setting.

As with other expressive programmes, there is very little empirical evidence to indicate that drama therapy reduces re-offending. Tracking the progress of children in the RJC programme would provide valuable information with regard to the impact of this type of intervention.

Endnotes

1   RJC and NICRO officials said they do not have access to the assessments that probation officers undertake. Assessment is thus duplicated, because diversion facilitators have to repeat the process. This creates a gap in the flow of information between referral agencies and service providers.

References

RJC (Restorative Justice Centre). 2003. *AGM report 2002/2003*. Pretoria: Restorative Justice Centre.

RJC (Restorative Justice Centre). 2002. *Annual report April 2001–March 2002*. Pretoria: Restorative Justice Centre.

12

ZIMISELENI ('BE CONFIDENT')/GHETTO BOYZ RESEARCH AND INTERVENTION

(Ekupholeni Mental Health Centre)

The Ekupholeni Mental Health Centre is based in Katlehong on Gauteng's East Rand and targets individuals, families, groups and communities in distress to engage them in a comprehensive process of healing, recovery and empowerment (Ekupholeni 2001a:1). This chapter discusses Ekupholeni's Zimiseleni/Ghetto Boyz Research and Intervention project.

As Ekupholeni has been described previously in this report, the reader is referred to Chapter 8 for more detail about its background, aims and values, organisational structure and resources, staff and volunteers, partnerships, and monitoring and evaluation activities.

1. RATIONALE AND AIM

The Zimiseleni/Ghetto Boyz Research and Intervention Project operates on the premise that crime is functional and serves a purpose for some children. Creative ways are, therefore, needed to re-channel this energy into becoming law-abiding citizens. The programme explores the reality of children living in contexts of poverty, deprivation and crime, and targets hard-to-reach and on-the-edge-of-crime boys (Ekupholeni 2000:14). It takes an innovative approach to therapy and provides a model for intervention into their lives.

In 1999 Ekupholeni established a group for supporting borderline criminal children, but this support group struggled to achieve a sense of identity, purpose and cohesiveness (Ekupholeni 2000:14). In 2000, Ekupholeni interacted with a researcher and education expert to find out possible ways to determine how children perceive their realities. At that time, the support group had no formal structure and it was decided to engage in a developmental programme that would, at the same time, facilitate therapeutic intervention. Children had to be kept busy while still being therapeutically accessible. The counsellors and psychologists decided that an action research approach coupled with narrative therapy would help participants therapeutically (Ekupholeni 2000:14). The process was to assist participants in exploring and discovering their own difficulties from a relatively safe distance.

2. ENTRY CRITERIA AND PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

The Zimiseleni/Ghetto Boyz projects is targeted at children who are thought to be particularly at risk of offending. At present only boys participate in the programme. Entry into the programme is preceded by a detailed developmental and social history assessment, including:

- Biographical information.

- Reason for referral or presenting with a problem.

- Family structure, siblings and other significant caregivers.

- Birth history in terms of antenatal and post-natal care.

- Cognitive development and school history.

- Social and emotional development, i.e. friends, family, interests and behaviour.

- Family history and present family life.

- What the participants and Ekupholeni hope to gain/achieve.

- Impressions of mental health.

- Offending-related information, i.e. arrests and substance abuse.

Participants in the Zimiseleni/Ghetto Boyz programme are between the ages of 16 and 19. Their backgrounds are characterised by abuse, deprivation, lack of meaningful parental figures or role models, and dysfunctional family life. Some engage in substance abuse. All but three of the Zimiseleni group have, in the past, engaged in either criminal activities or substance abuse, or both (Ekupholeni 2001a:23). Most crime involved sexual abuse, robbery and theft. Some participants have served prison sentences in the past, while others have engaged in minor offences but have not been arrested. Poverty and a lack of parental support fuel minor offending (Ekupholeni 2002a:1). All participants are from the Kathorus area in Gauteng. Some children have severe learning difficulties, have missed years of school and will possibly never cope in mainstream education (Ekupholeni 2000:16).

3. PROGRAMME CONTENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

A method was needed to allow participants to explore their own realities through those of others without threatening the defensive structures they have nurtured over the years and that have effectively helped them to survive (Ekupholeni 2000:15). A decision was taken to involve the group directly in conducting research into their own reality as an intervention strategy. The following steps broadly outline the way the programme is implemented (Kistner & Clacherty 2000).

Step 1: Asking the question – externalising the problem

The research question the participants were set was to identify significant influences and events in the lives of Kathorus children. They were then provided with disposable cameras and asked to photograph and interview

children in the Kathorus area. The brief was that each photo should tell a story. The aim was to document the lives and circumstances of other children in the community. In answering the research question, participants were required to project their own experience into their search. Through this process they discovered themes to focus on that helped them obtain more information. For example, none of them would admit to using marijuana or other illegal substances. However, through the research question and the photographs, they acknowledged that many children smoke dagga. They then agreed that substance abuse causes poor school performance. Through this process they learned to attach moral value to activities and to come to some conclusions about what is good or bad for young people without judging themselves.

Step 2: Collecting data – exploration and moving from 'the other' to the self

As participants went about gathering information, they were drawn into a collective process of discovering that the photos reflected their own realities. At first, they were able to view challenges from a distance and in a depersonalised way, which paved the way to explore their own challenges. The focus on the world provided by the research experience created the opportunity to establish meaningful relationships with one another, the researchers and the therapists in a safe and task-centred environment. Moreover, they came to view themselves as researchers, which avoided negative labelling and ensured that they did not see themselves as 'problem children'. Instead, they were seen as observers who identify and confront problem behaviour. This helped their integration into the programme at Ekupholeni, as they felt safe in their roles as researchers.

Step 3: Analysis – reflection and ownership

Participants compiled albums, labelled photos and elaborated on themes over a number of weeks. Group analysis of the photos, through lively discussions, role play and probing, helped them compile a list of themes and challenges that young people face. As they undertook these activities, they increasingly shared their personal experiences and reflected on their own problems. They gradually took ownership of their challenges in more active ways. Problems of drug abuse were no longer denied or defended, but became a reality that participants had to take control of.

Step 4: The product – control and problem solving

As participants started to own their challenges, they were increasingly able to exert control over their lives. The concrete products of the endeavour (the photos and albums), and the discussions, symbolised increased control and autonomy, which in turn helped to break the cycle of learned helplessness.

The research–intervention programme allowed for the following methodological and process principles to be formulated:

■ Participatory methods are critical for understanding young people's environment, particularly why and how teenage boys living in poverty become involved in crime. The knowledge that is sought lies with the participants, so ways must be found to help them reflect and recount.

■ Action research is necessary because the research component of the project must lead from reflection to personal action. Participants have to gather the information themselves and be involved in analysing it. This reflection and critical analysis becomes the educational tool that influences attitudes and behaviour. Additionally, this therapeutic process should help participants to plan their future lives.

■ A shared value system is required that recognises the potential for growth and development in all human beings, particularly at-risk children.

■ There must be in-depth understanding of young people's developmental needs and the ways in which social conditions can undermine and damage their psycho-social growth.

■ Continuity of care is critical and can best be provided within the context of a service organisation that can meet the diverse needs of at-risk children and their families over prolonged periods.

(Ekupholeni 2000:17; Kistner & Clacherty 2000)

Costs

A review of the Ekupholeni budgets and expenditures shows an average cost of R5 600 per child during the first year of the Zimiseleni/Ghetto Boyz programmes. This amount covers staff and research costs, emergency relief, project material and school fees and uniforms (Ekupholeni 2000:19). During the second and third years this cost increased to about R8 300 per child per year, mainly owing to the increased demand for staff time outside of formal interaction with participants (Ekupholeni 2001b:19).

Outputs

The Zimiseleni project accommodated 13 participants and the Ghetto Boyz project 14. The groups met once a week for about two hours at a time. The following outcomes of the Zimiseleni and Ghetto Boyz programmes deserve mentioning:

■ All non-school-going participants voiced the need to return to school. Ekupholeni assisted with school fees and uniforms and managed to facilitate their reintegration with local schools (Ekupholeni 2002a:1).

■ A partnership with St Anthony's College ensured that participants received practical skills training to assist in finding work or starting their own income-generating projects (Ekupholeni 2002a:1).

■ The project allowed for a unique approach to simultaneous intervention and research that can inform policy and theory (Ekupholeni 2000:17).

■ The project stimulated further research. Gunfree SA commissioned research into the use of guns by township children. This follow-up endeavour showed how experienced the participants have become at collecting and interpreting information and, crucially, reflecting on the world around them. Participants received some financial support for the research and most used it to buy food and clothing (Ekupholeni 2002b:32).

■ Similar work was done for Soul City , but with a focus on the use and abuse of drugs among boys. The research findings were presented at a meeting of scriptwriters and film makers (Ekupholeni 2001a:25).

■ The project was widely marketed, among others, through a presentation at the Creative Rescue Conference (UNISA) and through publications in local newspapers and a research journal.

Toward the end of 2002, research was undertaken to determine the impact of the Research and Intervention Programmes on participants. The evaluators noted that:

> … The boys' progressive steps towards psychological integrity are what characterises the achievement of this programme … [They] are manifestly moving forward towards less defensiveness, greater intra- and inter-personal congruence, and a stronger and more positive identity and self-confidence resulting in more responsible life choices. Beyond this they have attained the ability to reflect on, and move beyond, the extremely negative personal and social webs of their lives. Given the context, this is a substantial achievement. (Donald & Clacherty 2001:17)

4. KEY LESSONS AND VIEWS

■ Some at-risk children require more in-depth intervention support than single-approach programming can offer.

> Emotional well-being cannot be fixed and each group runs its own course. The research group is running for the past three years. Their very existence dictates continued involvement. These children are so damaged and life skills only will not turn them from crime. (Ekupholeni official)

■ Interventions among high-risk children demand continued involvement and support.

> As we are gaining experience and confidence in this project, we are becoming more and more convinced that healing in this group of boys is a long-term process … Short-term interventions with such profoundly damaged children cannot possibly bring about lasting change. (Ekupholeni 2001a:27)

■ Evidence suggests that the Research and Intervention Programme is bearing fruit.

> Most of the at-risk children who completed our programmes are doing well. Some are doing their tertiary education and others are working. (Ekupholeni official)

5. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The research and intervention projects represent an innovative approach to intervening with at-risk and high-risk youth. They highlight the extreme difficulty in gaining access to high-risk youth and keeping them involved in intervention endeavours, particularly in the absence of formal or legal referral. It is noteworthy that the initiative shows an understanding of antisocial behaviour in terms of the *functionality of crime* for specific youths. Moreover, it shows that intervention needs to focus on the positive attributes of at-risk children by tapping into their talent and potential. Against the background of expressive intervention theory, it is evident that key factors for interventions of this nature include creativity, engaging participants in active and purposeful activities, an openness to participate and non-labelling attitudes.

The initiative's creative and expressive characteristics allow it to maintain the interest of hard-to-reach children through visual, verbal and technological stimulation, ultimately to bring about changes in behaviour and attitude. Looking at the conceptual framework of the initiative, it appears that participants experience the programme at a subconscious level, so that, eventually, they own the intervention and face their challenges. To make this happen, facilitators must thoroughly understand the challenges that high-risk youth face, and especially the interface between community, family and personal factors that could precipitate crime. It is commendable that the initiative did not focus only on changing the mind-sets of participants, but that it introduced activities that would support its good intentions, i.e. facilitating access to education and skills training opportunities.

This intervention is largely unstructured and conceptualised as a long-term process. Evidence suggests that both these aspects of the design are important in order to allow meaningful interaction between participants, as well as between participants and the project facilitator. The model also focuses on stimulating insight and change rather than just the successful completion of specific, time-bound activities. Working with high-risk children requires patience on the part of facilitators and the adaptability to deal with setbacks thus requiring a flexible approach.

The photographs the participants take serve as a bridge between their dysfunctional lives, on the one hand, and strategies to counteract high-risk behaviour, on the other. Throughout this process, they are expected to explore their experiences in order to find solutions, which could strengthen their ownership of the intervention. Taking photographs and compiling albums and stories are enjoyable activities which increase participants' interest in and continued involvement with the programme, and using these to illustrate the risk factors in the community stimulates thinking and wider exploration of antisocial behaviour in their environment.

As previously mentioned, expressive interventions mostly rely on collective activities and group interaction. The research and intervention initiative provides a safe and supportive environment for discussing and learning about the common reality of drugs, violence and antisocial behaviour that participants face, and is a potential support base for participants.

As with its other endeavours, Ekupholeni meticulously assesses and monitors its participants. Besides the monthly reports compiled for each participant, the research products (photographs, albums, etc.) can serve as mechanisms for tracking their progress.

Although the intervention was initially conceptualised at a theoretical level and without a supportive evidence-base, progress is being made in recording its outcomes.

References

Donald D & Clacherty G. 2001. *Evaluation: Leopards and Zimiseleni/Ghetto Boyz Child Programmes*. Johannesburg: Clacherty and Associates.

Ekupholeni Mental Health Centre. 2002a. *Final report for the period January 2001 to February 2002*. Katlehong: Ekupholeni Mental Health Centre.

Ekupholeni Mental Health Centre. 2002b. *Report to the Open Society Foundation for the period July 2001 to February 2002*. Katlehong: Ekupholeni Mental Health Centre.

Ekupholeni Mental Health Centre. 2001a. *Report to the Open Society Foundation for the period January to June 2001*. Katlehong: Ekupholeni Mental Health Centre.

Ekupholeni Mental Health Centre. 2001b. *Funding proposal for the Open Society Foundation – September 2001*. Katlehong: Ekupholeni Mental Health Centre.

Ekupholeni Mental Health Centre. 2000a. *Funding proposal for the Open Society Foundation – June 2000*. Katlehong: Ekupholeni Mental Health Centre.

Kistner J & Clacherty G. 2000. Presentation of the Zimiseleni Research and Intervention Project. Creative Rescue Conference, UNISA, Pretoria: 14–15 August 2000.

Part 4

OUTDOOR EXPERIENTIAL PROGRAMMES

OVERVIEW

Nature-based programming – also referred to as adventure intervention, ecotherapy, vision quests and wilderness therapy – originates from the emerging field of ecopsychology that explores the relationship between one's emotional health and the natural world (Cock s.a.:3). In this context, it is taken that motivations and behaviour can be altered through specifically designed programmes that take place in an outdoor setting. Nature-based programming aims to move participants toward pro-social values, such as respect for others and the acceptance of personal responsibility (Kimball & Bacon 1993:12). In general, it does not endeavour to replace other intervention practices, but the approach is frequently utilised to enrich the objectives of likeminded initiatives (Gass 1993:5). In pursuit of its goal, nature-based programming generally consists of various techniques, such as time spent alone, journaling and an array of teamwork activities, for example, abseiling, canoeing and hiking. The use of metaphors and symbolism is characteristic of adventure intervention (Miles 2003:52). Justifications for the use of wilderness intervention with at-risk youth include the following (Gass 1993:5–8):

- Programming is action-centred and multi-dimensional instead of the passive, often verbal approaches to analysis and intervention.

- Programming takes place in unfamiliar environments, thereby counteracting resistance to conventional (indoor) methods of intervention.

- Implementation takes place in a climate of change by means of physical and emotionally challenging situations.

- The way in which individuals and groups of participants approach and manage a challenge provides opportunity for assessment and programme adaptation.

- Programming emphasises successful rather than dysfunctional behaviour through the completion of progressively difficult and rewarding challenges.

Additionally, nature-based intervention targets the young person in totality, while still focusing on collective understanding and learning. At the individual level, the young person reflects on his/her life experiences and is open to input from others. At the group level, mutual support and a sense of interconnectedness and sharing prevails (Cock s.a.:6). Nature-based intervention is based on the following principles (Gass 1993:5; Murgatroyd in Wakeford 1996:68):

- The young person is a participant rather than a spectator in the programme.

- The participant is aware of the processes that are taking place, i.e. the strategies that are to facilitate learning and behavioural change.

- The youth participates in a reflective experience that enables him/her to relate current learning to the past, present and future, the outcomes of which should have value and relevance.

- Activities engage the young person emotionally and physically.

- Activities hold personal significance to the participant; they are real and meaningful.

161

Since wilderness intervention has potential for both physical and emotional risk, programmes need to be implemented by multi-skilled facilitators that can address group dynamics and conflict, while still facilitating a learning experience (Cock s.a.:4). As a rule, facilitators receive training and/or certification to act as nature-based intervention agents. Different arguments prevail regarding the ideal profile of a nature-based facilitator. While some believe that a background in counselling is required, especially when intervening among troubled clients, others feel that specialised schooling might distort the overall purpose of nature-based learning (Cock s.a.:5, 9):

> One of the troubles with too much training is the felt need to ask too many questions, provide set answers, and to excessively hold responsibility and with it the need to intervene.

Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that implementers need to have some understanding of 'psychological first-aid' to defuse the emotional distress, anxiety and interpersonal conflict that may arise during the intervention (Smith 2003:288). The planning of nature-based programmes is usually influenced by the specific needs of the target group, as this informs the scope of intervention and the length of the outdoor stay. The context from which participants come and will return to also plays a role, as is the presence of aftercare and follow-up activities (Gass 1993:73).

It is generally accepted that groups of between ten and twelve young participants enjoy the best results from nature-based programming. Implementation should preferably be undertaken by two facilitators (Cock s.a.:10). Programme duration varies between groups, but sufficient time needs to be allocated for participants to immerse themselves in nature in order to achieve optimal programme impact. Since the intervention takes place outdoors, nature-based intervention provides the opportunity for round-the-clock programming (Kimball & Bacon 1993:15).

Wilderness initiatives with at-risk children are largely undertaken by specialised agencies. Often organisations working with troubled children would refer potential candidates to these specialised programmes for additional intervention. In contrast to past practices, family members are increasingly becoming involved in the nature-experience, albeit through pre-programme orientation, a day visit during the intervention, or post-programme debriefing (Kimball & Bacon 1993:15).

PROGRAMME ASSUMPTIONS

Nature-based intervention assumes some form of disconnection between the self, on the one hand, and the environment and other people, on the other. The approach sees young people not as offenders, but as adolescents that will, given exposure to the proper experience, develop self-worth, personal responsibility and a sense of belonging to others and society (Kimball & Bacon 1993:19). In general, the wilderness intervention believes that:

■ Psychological and behavioural development continues throughout the life cycle.

■ Maladaptation and/or disconnectedness hamper effective functioning and positive development.

■ Society insufficiently focuses on the value of informal learning.

■ Past development or influences have to be revisited and understood in order to realign motivations for healthy development.

■ The participant is not a passive bystander in his/her development, but an active role player in the pursuit of his/her well-being.

■ Realignment, i.e. intervention, revolves around learning and insight.

The process of nature-based programming is based on the premise of developmental ideology that incorporates both elements of the youth's motivational system and his/her personality in relation to the outside world. Specifically, nature-based intervention is informed by experiential learning theory that is described as:

… a process which directly acknowledges, welcomes, values and uses the existing knowledge and competence of those being taught. Its use is particularly appropriate where the subject matter under consideration touches on people's deeply held beliefs and attitudes (Hobbs in Tinsley 1996:76)

FIGURE: THE PROCESS OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING.
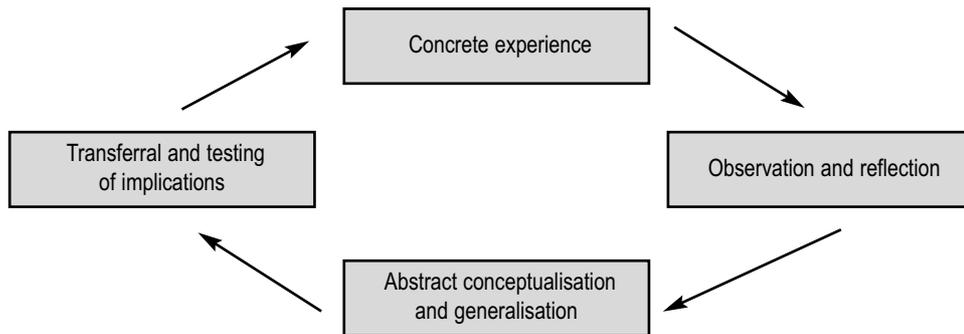
Source: Lewin in Hopkins & Putnam 1993:78–79.

In essence, nature-based intervention entails a four-stage cyclical process of effective experiential learning. At first, the participant experiences a state of disequilibrium or challenge through the concrete physical and/or emotional experience that takes place in an unfamiliar yet supportive environment. Active participation, teamwork and problem solving stimulate changes in thought patterns, which are reflected upon either in an individual or collective way. These changed concepts are then generalised and transferred to future behaviour and decision making practices (Nadler 1993:57).

VALUE

The most important value of nature-based intervention relates probably to the strengthening of the self-concept in terms of confidence, self-worth and self-knowledge regarding personal abilities and limitations (Herselman

1998:55–59; Miles 1993:55). Additional benefits of the approach include, amongst others, the following (Wakeford 1996:73; Miles 1993:55; Cock s.a.:4):

■ Intervention entails collective and individual learning in a controlled and supportive environment.

■ It promotes interaction among young people who share similar challenges in life. This counteracts feelings of isolation and causes participants to obtain a deeper understanding of their own circumstances. At the same time, it promotes expectations for improvement.

■ Participants learn from each other and have the opportunity to engage in collective planning, which, in turn, could strengthen and support future plans.

■ Interaction, which often spans a number of days, promotes the acquisition of healthy conflict management skills and respect for others.

■ Activities instil a sense of dependency on and service to others, as well as a sense of belonging to broader structures.

CHALLENGES AND SHORTFALLS

In addition to high resource demands, especially regarding infrastructural arrangements and implementation sites, wilderness programming with at-risk children requires skilled implementers who can focus on life planning, in general, and crime prevention, in particular. In this regard, it is imperative that programme planning be undertaken with the needs and circumstances of the target group in mind (Cock s.a.:10). Inadequate planning and a lack of structure, i.e. ground rules for behaviour and interaction, are major challenges to the successful implementation of wilderness programmes. Additionally, the period of intervention should be sufficient, while discomfort should not overshadow the aim of connecting with nature. A further challenge may relate to the provision of adequate follow-up and aftercare support once the intervention has been completed.

References

Cock PH. s.a. *Partnering learning and wellbeing education in powerful naturescapes*. Monash University: Graduate School of Environmental Science.

Gass MA (ed). 1993. *Adventure therapy: therapeutic applications of adventure programming*. Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt.

Gass MA. 1993. Programming applications of adventure therapy. In Gass MA (ed). *Adventure therapy: therapeutic applications of adventure programming*. Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt. 73–82.

Gass MA. 1993. Foundations of adventure therapy. In Gass MA (ed). *Adventure therapy: therapeutic applications of adventure programming*. Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt. 3–10.

Herselman E. 1998. Die impak van toubaanprogramme op groepseffektiwiteit. Unpublished masters dissertation. Bloemfontein: University of the Free State.

Hopkins D & Putnam R. 1993. *Personal growth through adventure*. London: David Fulton.

Kimball RO & Bacon SB. 1993. The wilderness challenge model. In Gass MA (ed). *Adventure therapy: therapeutic applications of adventure programming*. Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt. 11–42.

Miles J. 2003. Wilderness as healing place. In Gass MA (ed). *Adventure therapy: therapeutic applications of adventure programming*. Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt. 43–56.

Nadler RS. 2003. Therapeutic process of change. In Gass MA (ed). *Adventure therapy: therapeutic applications of adventure programming*. Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt. 57–69.

Smith TE. 2003. Alternative methodologies for processing the adventure experience. In Gass MA (ed). A*dventure therapy: therapeutic applications of adventure programming*. Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt. pp: 283–297.

Tinsley S. 1996. The development of a self-empowerment programme for juvenile delinquents. Unpublished masters dissertation. Johannesburg: Rand Afrikaans University.

Wakeford BM. 1996. The development of an expressionistic programme in the rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents. Unpublished masters dissertation. Johannesburg: Rand Afrikaans University.

13

ECOTHERAPY

The National Peace Accord Trust

The National Peace Accord Trust (NPAT) focuses on healing and reconciliation in South Africa. Its activities entail breaking the cycles of violence and trauma in order to restore functional and stable community life. To achieve this, the organisation makes use of community-based networking, skills training and nature-based intervention strategies to bring about personal and collective growth. For the purposes of this report, information was collected from NPAT's national office in Gauteng. Site visits to learn more about its ecotherapy programme took place in Kathorus (Katlehong-Thokoza-Vosloorus). Although NPAT engages in a variety of community-based and skills training endeavours, this chapter focuses primarily on its ecotherapy programme for at-risk and offending youth.

1. THE ORGANISATION

1.1 Background

NPAT originates from the work of various organisations that, in the early 1990s, endeavoured to facilitate peaceful political transition in South Africa (NPAT n.d.). As part of the move toward peaceful transition, faith-based organisations initiated and sponsored the National Peace Accord, which was signed on 14 September 1991 by political structures, trade unions, security forces, business and industry. Signatories committed themselves to peaceful negotiation in the period leading up to South Africa's first democratic election in April 1994. With peaceful transition achieved and the subsequent loss of financial support, the ten regional and 162 local peace committees scaled down their activities toward the end of 1994 (NPAT 2003a). Only in KwaZulu-Natal, where political violence continued unabated, did peace committees continue their work.

NPAT succeeded the National Peace Accord in working to heal and rebuild communities ravaged by alienation and conflict. Specifically, NPAT embraced the fifth chapter of the Peace Accord, which dealt with the psycho-social effects of violence through restoring, rehabilitating and strengthening community capacity. In 1994, NPAT's activities were focused on Gauteng's East Rand and rural KwaZulu-Natal. These communities were particularly traumatised by the dehumanising affects of the political violence that characterised the early 1990s. Rehabilitation in these areas required, among other things, the restoration of community values and trust. Only once this was established could economic development begin (NPAT n.d.).

1.2 Aims and values

NPAT aims to restore stability in vulnerable communities, particularly those traumatised by violence and crime. It believes that a healthy and stable nation can only be achieved once a sound foundation of psychologically healthy communities exists. This community-focused approach provides the basic building blocks for nation building. NPAT provides psychological and social support by facilitating the establishment of strategic community-based networks and interventions, of which ecotherapy programming forms part.

In part, NPAT works on the premise that healing begins at an individual level before spreading to and affecting whole communities. Among other aims, the initiative sets out to strengthen the healing process through providing skills and building capacity (NPAT 2003b). It targets civic organisations and government departments for therapeutic interventions and skills development to increase collaboration and community building in an ever-widening circle of healing.

1.3 Organisational structure and resources

A board of trustees oversees NPAT's work and provides it with overall direction. An Executive Officer oversees its projects in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape, the Free State, and the Northern and Western Cape. To implement its ecotherapy programme and train its facilitators, NPAT rents service sites from public and private structures. Each province provides unique sites and NPAT negotiates for access at reduced rates. Local resources are used for ecotherapy trails. For example, in the Hanover district, ecotherapy facilitators have secured a site on a private farm, free of charge. Other resources for ecotherapy intervention include meals for the facilitators and participants, transport to and from the site, and equipment for physical activities, such as canoeing and abseiling. NPAT promotes economically viable trails by using existing resources whenever possible.

NPAT is currently funded through grants and the deficit of the budget is supplemented by interest earned from capital investment. However, income is still not sufficient to achieve the organisation's five-year goal. NPAT estimates that approximately R25 million is needed to bring about self-sustaining healing programmes in all nine provinces by the end of 2007 (NPAT n.d.; 2003c).

2. THE ECOTHERAPY PROGRAMME

The early 1990s – a period in South Africa's history marked by political turmoil and violence – saw a number of young people actively involved in protecting their communities from rival political parties. The Kathorus area was a particular hotspot for violence between members of the Self Defence Unit (SDU) of the African National Congress, and those affiliated to the Self Protection Unit (SPU) of the Inkatha Freedom Party.

Once democracy was achieved in South Africa, many of these young people, then termed ex-combatants, were left without a sense of direction and purpose in life, which led to alcohol abuse and substance addiction, and continued resentment of community members from opposing political parties. This scenario fuelled their involvement in criminal activities. As a response, NPAT initiated ecotherapy trails with groups of militarised youth. The emphasis

of the interventions was on mental health rather than criminal rehabilitation methodologies. At first, separate seven-day wilderness trails were conducted with SDU and SPU members, and later combined trails were introduced to promote healing, understanding, forgiveness and restoration among participants.

In addition to the ecotherapy trails, the intervention included involving the young people in community service. Participants performed duties at the Katlehong Resource Centre (KRC), old age homes and hospitals in order to instil in them a sense of belonging to their communities. Participants also formed drama clubs, soccer teams and culture groups, some of which still exist today. NPAT noted substantial change among participants because of their constructive involvement in community matters. At-risk youth reconnected with themselves and their communities, with some becoming mentors to other troubled teenagers. Through the ecotherapy intervention some ex-combatants have themselves become experienced ecotherapy facilitators. Although they still maintain close links with NPAT, most of these facilitators operate independently by providing their own nature-based intervention services, thereby generating income for themselves. These independent ecotherapy facilitators manage two to three trails per month, which complements NPAT's vision of ecotherapy becoming widespread and self-sustaining (NPAT 2003c).

One group of ex-combatants has received training on basic research, project management and counselling from NPAT, and additional skills training was received from the Department of Labour. After successful completion of the training, the youths established the Sabilane Life Skills Project, with the aim of empowering those infected with or affected by HIV and AIDS. NPAT has facilitated numerous collaborative relationships for Sabilane, among others the Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa (PPASA) and its Men As Partners project. Today, the Sabilane Life Skills Project receives partial funding from a local HIV/AIDS consortium, which has also provided the initiative with a computer and office equipment. Sabilane serves as an example of the way NPAT promotes healing, while at the same time contributing toward self-sustained awareness and development in broader societal contexts.[1]

2.1 Rationale and aim

The practice of healing by making use of the outdoors is as old as human history. Across cultures, tales are documented and related of how common men and leaders left their familiar surroundings to spend time in nature. The ultimate aim of such excursions was to gain deeper understanding and spiritual growth. Most often, insight and new knowledge was brought back to the community and shared with others (NPAT 2003e:7).

Ecotherapy has fundamental links with ecopsychology, which focuses on the interrelatedness of phenomena – between the person and the environment, between psyche and nature, between mind and body, and so on. It involves endeavours that have a healing purpose. NPAT (2003e:2, 6) defines ecotherapy as a process where:

> ... an individual urban dweller or group ventures into the wilderness with the intention of insight, growth and healing.

The approach is based on outdoor experiences designed to increase psychological awareness and thus bring about emotional restoration (NPAT 2003f). Ecotherapy is about reconnecting. It applies a variety of mechanisms, such

as group processes, individual reflection, symbols and rituals, in an accessible ecotherapy setting to increase the awareness of participants about themselves, other people and the natural environment. Ecotherapy has the following advantages:

■ Programmes provide for accelerated healing experiences.

■ Participants are taken out of their everyday environment to allow opportunity for psychological and behavioural changes.

■ The process requires little equipment and is, therefore, transferable to most communities.

■ It provides an alternative to conventional one-on-one counselling, which is inaccessible to many at-risk youths.

Because of these advantages, NPAT considers ecotherapy a useful intervention for youth at-risk as they often show signs of being disconnected from themselves, their bodies, communities and significant others. Trauma often surfaces through psychosomatic symptoms. Through the physical experience of ecotherapy activities and the cognitive processes that accompany them, individuals are able to heal and reconnect body and mind (NPAT 2003e:15). Community-initiated ecotherapy is a tool that changes both mind-set and behaviour. It can successfully be applied to people seeking direction in their lives, youth in conflict with the law, victims of trauma, rape and other human rights abuses, and in cases of post-conflict resolution, to promote healing and reconciliation (NPAT n.d.; NPAT 2003d). The ecotherapy approach is characterised by specific methodologies according to the needs of the targeted individuals and groups.

However, NPAT believes that ecotherapy should not be applied separately from other intervention and support processes. Rather, it serves as a point of departure for growth and development.

> We've never done ecotherapy and just left it there ... Ecotherapy is like a platform. It gets the person to a different level from where they were. It changes something inside them. So, what is done after ecotherapy, is to help the person heal and to take responsibility. Ecotherapy is a quick way of getting to the issues of people's trauma when compared to other models. It is a great tool to get people in touch with themselves. But you can't just leave them there. You have to provide a more holistic way for them to heal. (NPAT official)

Several core concepts characterise NPAT's ecotherapy activities, as follows:

■ **Risk is required to promote learning, growth and healing**; it is present during all physical and psychological challenges. Ecotherapy facilitators constantly balance their sense of responsibility for the safety of the group with the need to let them take some risks in an uncontrolled environment, because an oversanitised environment does not foster psychological growth as effectively.

■ **Opportunities for creative expression often arise**. Creativity, besides helping participants see new connections, also helps them understand conflict and trauma. Trail participants are, whenever appropriate, prompted to engage in a variety of creative expressions to promote healing.

- **Accepting personal responsibility for healing is critical**. Even in situations where the participant is not directly responsible for the trauma, its symptoms are often based on fear of the event reoccurring. Unless this fear is faced and released, the symptoms of post-traumatic stress will continue to be fuelled.

- **Trauma is transformed by addressing the core experiences it involved**. Through a renewed sense of connection by relating to the environment, others and the self, ecotherapy creates an opportunity for participants to strengthen their ability to change and address personal trauma.

- **Ecotherapy is empowering**, as it allows participants to discover or rediscover themselves in new ways that lead to increased self-esteem and feelings of self-worth. In turn, higher self-esteem plays a pivotal role in addressing trauma.

- **Physical and nature-oriented activities enhance connection**. Traumatised individuals often feel disconnected from their relationship with the self, others and the environment. Ecotherapy sets out to positively reconnect the person to his or her internal being, and to external factors and role players.

- **The best outcomes of ecotherapy programming stem from voluntary participation**. It is assumed that if a participant made a conscious decision to embark on a therapeutic journey he or she will be less resistant to change. If young people are forced to participate they may make attempts to sabotage the programme.

- **Ecotherapy is highly flexible and can be directed toward individual and communal healing**. While ecotherapy is always valuable for individual growth and development, groups may benefit from connecting with and valuing the views of other groups they do not necessarily get on with. At all times, the ultimate aim of ecotherapy is healing, understanding and peace.

(Robertson 2003:28–32)

2.2 Entry criteria and profile of participants

No strict entry criteria exist for ecotherapy intervention, as programming depends on the needs of the client organisation or group of concerned persons. NPAT helps its clients prepare a trail and advises them on the appropriateness of post-trail support. Participants are usually from the same organisation or associated with a specific institution, such as a school or support centre. Troubled youth taken on ecotherapy trails often share the following backgrounds and characteristics:

- They have been abandoned by one or both parents.

- They are victims of sexual, emotional and/or physical abuse.

- Their family life is dysfunctional.

- They are unable to maintain meaningful relationships.

- They have attempted suicide.

- They display socio-emotional traits of disconnection, anger, disempowerment and low self-esteem.

The young people who are taken on ecotherapy trails range in age from seven to the mid-twenties, although the groups are usually made up of participants of roughly the same age. It has been observed that the outcomes of a trail depend to a large extent on the selection of participants (NPAT 2003e:38). Ecotherapy facilitators note that adolescents with severe behavioural problems show improved behaviour after completing a trail that included adolescents with no behavioural dysfunction. However, many ecotherapy facilitators prefer working with youths with similar profiles. It should be noted that ecotherapy is not limited to at-risk youths, but is also offered to victimised individuals.

2.3 Programme content and implementation

In general, ecotherapy trails accommodate between 12 and 20 participants. Trails with youth in conflict with the law usually consist of about 12 individuals in order to promote positive group cohesion and interaction. The frequency of trails differs between client organisations. Programmes are not scheduled over exam periods and fewer trails are undertaken during the winter. The availability of financial support also determines their frequency. Ecotherapy trails can take from three to 14 days, depending on the age and characteristics of particular groups. With young participants, a three- to four-day trail is ideal, while programmes for older youths and those in rehabilitation for drug addiction could take up to 14 days. During the latter, a drug counsellor usually accompanies the group.

The following section describes, in broad terms, the process of implementing an ecotherapy trail. The information presented here stems from interviews with NPAT staff and ecotherapy facilitators, the ecotherapy training manual (NPAT 2003e) and the document *Young Lions in the Wilderness – overview of wilderness therapy intervention with militarised youth of Kathorus* (Robertson 2003).

Phase 1 – Pre-trail preparation

Pre-trail preparation for an ecotherapy trail serves two purposes; firstly, it provides for the logistical arrangements for the outdoor experience and, secondly, it serves to prepare participants for the journey. To do this it is necessary to:

- Psychologically prepare participants for the intervention by relating in detail the trail's function as both a physical and psychological journey.

- Clarify expectations about the experience.

- Emphasise voluntary participation, as the participant should be willing to leave his or her comfort zone.

- Inform participants about the physical risks the trail may involve.

- Inform participants about follow-up activities and the need for these.

- Stipulate the rules and regulations of the trail.

- Inform participants about clothing requirements and tell them the departure time.

The design of a trail is influenced by an understanding of the participants' challenges, obstacles and achievements. This information is usually provided by the referral organisation. Once the facilitator is familiar with the participants' psychological profiles, the purpose of the trail can be determined, because this is formulated according to the group's psychological needs as well as their physical abilities. The patterns of attitudes, belief and behaviour are used to inform trail organisation. For example, participants may be:

■ Victims of trauma who are afraid of further victimisation and feel disconnected.

■ Offenders who have lost their sense of responsibility and are prisoners of poor socioeconomic environments.

■ Youths suffering from depression and feelings of helplessness, inadequacy and shame, and who feel detached from themselves, others and the environment.

To a large extent, the purpose determines the terrain that would be most suitable for a particular trail, because it must foster and support the intention. Once the terrain has been selected, its specific features can be included in the trail experience. When selecting the features, the ecotherapy facilitator balances their symbolic value with how the participants will negotiate the adventure. No two trails are the same, as each one is conceptualised and planned according to the dynamics and needs of a specified target group. For example, the content and structure of trails differed for the ordinary SDU and SPU members as for their leaders, particularly as the SPU group presented issues of status and control and a more reflective approach was chosen for them, to instil an understanding of chronology and why they were in their current situations.

Sometimes the purpose of a trail is difficult to maintain. Ecotherapy facilitators frequently have to apply creativity and flexibility to adhere to its overall purpose. Often the purpose is verbally reinforced to instil the trail message. On the practical side, the first phase is characterised by logistical arrangements such as booking venues, securing transport, organising meals and reserving sites, such as caves and protected mountains. Accessibility and affordability always govern the selection of a trail site. NPAT has developed a variety of checklists to ensure that the necessary arrangements are undertaken and supplies secured.

Phase 2 – The outdoor experience and intervention

An ecotherapy trail is always undertaken with the understanding that the physical obstacles and natural settings of the environment and their parallel psychological equivalents are part of the same process. The mental and physical challenges experienced by trail participants are internalised to bring about mental shifts. The following techniques are used to encourage psychological growth.

Symbolism

Symbolism is utilised extensively as a metaphor for real life situations and realities that individual participants face. The terrain itself may set the stage for symbolic interpretations:

■ Mountains invoke spiritual admiration because of their majestic and timeless nature. With trails undertaken in the Drakensberg (Dragon Mountains), an analogy is drawn between the name of the mountain and facing internal and external fear.

- Boulders could represent obstacles in the path of achieving a goal, including the psychological hurdles that one has to face in life. They call for strength, skill and determination to bring one closer to self-actualisation.

- Caves have special meaning, since they symbolise psychological well-being. A relatively open, accessible cave could represent a healthy mind where internal forces cohabit with external forces. A closed cave blocks the flow of energy, preventing the successful compromise between opposing systems.

- Trees and forests symbolise the family tree that branches outwards and connects with others. The forest is also viewed as the natural home of the traditional healer.

Symbolism can be used with nearly any activity related to the trail. For example, the packing of backpacks could be used to symbolise the way a person decides what is essential to sustain a healthy mind, and that additional matters could easily become a burden. Additionally, each participant carries his or her own backpack, and is, therefore, responsible for his or her own psychological well-being.

Rituals

The entire process of leaving one's comfort zone for a specific purpose and returning home is a ritual in itself. The ritual nature of ecotherapy intervention is based on a rites-of-passage journey that ultimately aims to enrich, re-align and justify the self. The intensity of mental transition is challenging, given the overwhelming effect and impact of ecotherapy activities. Therefore, rituals are particularly significant for ecotherapy interventions, as they provide a framework in which the mental transition takes place.

Rituals may be employed to mark or highlight particular aspects of a trail. These include opening ceremonies and closing ceremonies, as well as releasing and receiving rituals. Although part of the larger trail ritual, ceremonies provide their own opportunity for change and growth. Rivers, streams, lakes and the sea are frequently used to undertake cleansing rituals, reclaiming innocence, purity and peace of mind. Cleansing rituals are especially significant for traumatised youth. Since they always take place near water, trail equipment has to include floating devices to ensure the safety of those who cannot swim.

Narration

Narration is a central part of ecotherapy, as participants interact with one another and often share their most intimate life experiences. It is through interaction and guidance that experiences are deconstructed, faced and understood. Moreover, discussion and learning about the situation of others stimulates personal reflection. Trail participants often carve and paint walking sticks as a way of sharing their views and experiences with their fellows. The walking stick represents the personal story and individual history of each participant. Participants also take part in a 'cycle of life' exercise, in which they plan their future behaviour and activities and share these with the group.

Solitude

During a solo experience, participants spend a night out in the wilderness on their own. They are provided with enough water, a whistle to alert others in case of an emergency, and a torch. They are provided with pen and paper to write down their thoughts and experiences during the night. The aim of the exercise is to give the young person time to contemplate his or her life so as to achieve a deeper understanding of his or her current situation.

The above-described methods of psychological healing help to promote the emotional maturity that is needed to bring about internal change and growth. This process is characterised by opening up or releasing conflict or trauma, accepting it, and establishing productive ways of coping with it. Internalisation usually starts when participants start acknowledging their wrongdoings and shortcomings and exploring ways to counteract them.

The trail ends with participants sharing the most important experiences of the inner journey and their significance. Emphasis is placed on constructive ways they will deal with challenges once they have returned to familiar settings. A last cleansing ritual and song signal the official end of the trail. This closing ceremony allows participants to contrast their pre-trail emotional state with their current one. The challenge that remains is how to apply their new-found insights to their daily lives.

Phase 3 – Returning, debriefing and post-trail support

A hero's return from the ecotherapy adventure is vital to the success of ecotherapy. The hero leaves his home to meet the challenges, both internal and external, in order to return to his or her community with vision, knowledge, understanding and healing. The return can be celebrated at the base camp of the trail site, or in the community from which the participants come. However, participants may experience re-entry depression after completing a trail. In general, the length of re-entry depression is directly proportional to the length and intensity of the trail. Re-entry depression is often discussed with the group before they return, to better equip them to deal with it.

Upon return, ecotherapy facilitators schedule between three and five meetings with trail participants. Post-trail debriefing is done through discussions around the journals that were kept during the trail and the experiences that were accumulated. In spite of this, and quite paradoxically, an ecotherapy journey is internalised partly by releasing the physical experience. If the participant clings to the physical journey, the source of change is viewed as external. Instead, participants are guided to recognise and acknowledge the greater journey of learning, growth and healing:

> By letting go of the physical journey and engaging in reality with the internalised growth and healing, one brings the journey into everyday life and begins reaping the fruits of the journey. (NPAT 2003e:76)

This shift from one psychological state to another necessitated by the shift from the trail to home circumstances or current reality is in itself a challenge. The process requires releasing and accepting. Returning to dismal situations could be perceived as daunting. To facilitate internalisation of the adventure, participants are requested to recognise and acknowledge what they have learned during the trail. This often takes the form of a transition ritual.

During the actual trail, youths may open up deep wounds caused by psychological distress. Without proper support, internal conflict and trauma could surface and escalate. In these cases ecotherapy facilitators must contain or stabilise the youth's emotional condition. Upon return, the matter is brought to the attention of the client organisation for intervention and support.

As a rule, referral organisations continue with follow-up support to the trail participants. As previously mentioned a representative of the organisation usually takes part in the outdoor adventure in order to better understand the psychological impact on the participant and need for follow-up. Often there is an opportunity for the participants'

parents or guardians to attend follow-up sessions to comment on the observed behavioural changes of their child in the home environment.

Facilitators and training

For NPAT, an effective ecotherapy facilitator is someone who can meaningfully interact with the target group – someone who can show compassion and encourage hope, while facilitating healing. Language proficiency and, to a large extent, cultural appropriateness to participants, are seen as important. An ecotherapy training manual is used, and internal and external assessors evaluate the performance of candidate facilitators. The skills required from ecotherapy facilitators include, but are not limited, to the following:

- ■ Counselling, group facilitation and conflict resolution skills.

- ■ Outdoor, terrain, trekking and camping skills.

- ■ First-aid, accident prevention and rescue skills, and the ability to recognise emergency situations.

- ■ Creative activities, ritual and ceremony skills.

- ■ Team building, personnel and financial management, administration, recording and research skills.

  (NPAT 2003e:31)

NPAT has formulated the following values and principles for ecotherapy facilitators:

Values

- ■ A belief in and commitment to the delivery of quality ecotherapy.

- ■ An appreciation of the value of adventurous experience, guided or unguided, for all people throughout their lives.

- ■ An understanding that all physical, social, spiritual, intellectual or emotional experiences enhance the quality of life, strengthen learning processes, promote self-discovery, and contribute toward a sense of community, respect for the environment, personal well-being and self-fulfilment.

  (NPAT 2003e:29–30)

Principles

- ■ Ecotherapy facilitators must display a balance of technical and interpersonal skills, coupled with the ability to be sensitive to the needs of trail participants.

- ■ The emotional and physical safety of participants is a primary concern during all activities. Adventure activities should be chosen to stimulate confidence and self-esteem.

- ■ Every effort has to be made to ensure that no participant experiences a personally damaging degree of fear.

- Every participant has the right to access learning opportunities. Trail groups must value individuality and diversity, and anti-discriminatory practices are encouraged.

- Facilitators must seek to develop and affirm the concept of the whole person, i.e. body, mind and spirit.

- Sensitivity and respect are to be encouraged and cultivated toward people and the natural environment.

- Trail outcomes should facilitate healing, through processes of effective interaction among participants and with the environment, accepting challenge, facing risk, tackling problems, accepting responsibility, and realising aspirations.

  (NPAT 2003e:29–30)

In cases where the ecotherapy facilitator does not have all the necessary skills, experience and ability to undertake a trail with a particular group, the assistance of co-facilitators is called for (NPAT 2003e:39). Often the use of more than one facilitator is complementary to the overall outdoor experience, while at the same time allowing facilitators to learn from and guide each other.

Partnerships

Two partnerships in particular highlight NPAT's collaborative nature. One is the Kathlehong Childline, which NPAT supports in its work with at-risk and diverted youth. Young sex offenders are referred to Childline for diversion intervention, which in part consists of individual and group counselling. Generally, young offenders first receive individual counselling, and after this they engage in group activities and discussions. When a certain level of intervention has been reached, NPAT facilitates an ecotherapy trail, as part of the diversion endeavour.

> While in the wilderness, the outdoor experience helps with the therapy. It is quite, peaceful and they have time to think, because they are away from the township. (Childline worker)

During outdoor activities, participants often display emotions resulting from abuse, neglect and guilt. A Childline social worker provides emotional support to assist the youth in dealing with internal conflict. Participants continue to receive counselling intervention once they have completed the ecotherapy trail.

Another organisation which benefits from collaboration with NPAT is the Khanya Family Centre (KFC), also in Kathlehong. KFC's programmes include schools-based psycho-social counselling services provided by social workers and educational psychologists. The Centre also trains peer counsellors to support fellow learners. Part of this training includes an ecotherapy trail facilitated by NPAT. The aim of the trail is to address the internal conflict that some peer counsellors may experience when supporting others.

> The trail is done as part of their capacity building, because we realise that they have their own baggage in terms of personal problems. So, for them to be available to their peers, they also need to be in touch with themselves. The wilderness part is around self-awareness and looking at their own problems before they can assist their peers and facilitate any kind of help. (KFC worker)

Costs

Costs for ecotherapy trails vary according to the target group, province and trail site charges. Trails can cost from R120 to R300 per person per day. With careful planning and optimisation of available resources, a group of twelve people could have a life-changing experience with a three- to four-day trail at a total cost of R2 500. Costs can be lowered by securing implementation sites at minimal costs, making use of donated transport, and lobbying for funding from the private sector. For example, more than a hundred at-risk youth attended ecotherapy trails on the KwaZulu-Natal South Coast in 2002. Transport was arranged locally (among others, with the South African Police Services), food was collected through donations and from farmers, and sites secured at reduced tariffs. Overall, cash expenditure amounted to R16 000 – a cost of less than R160 per participant (NPAT 2003d:10).

2.4 Monitoring and evaluation

Ecotherapy facilitators are tasked to maintain a portfolio of all minutes of meetings, trail reports and follow-up activities with participants. Each trail portfolio reflects, in detail, on the following:

■ Duration of the intervention.

■ The number of participants and their biographical information (gender, age, population group, level of education, language and contact particulars).

■ The referral organisation, reasons for referral and purpose of the trail.

■ The presenting issues of participants, such as behavioural and emotional distress.

■ A description of the trail in terms of design, directions taken, physical obstacles, rituals and ceremonies.

■ Themes emerging from the trail, particular activities and group discussions.

■ Noticeable changes in participants both observed and through self-report.

■ An evaluation of the trail in terms of lessons learned, strengths and shortcomings.

Progress, status and ecotherapy trail reports are used to strengthen the delivery of services. In turn, these reports are used to help assess and evaluate facilitators. NPAT's future involvement with the monitoring of decentralised ecotherapy services includes ongoing training support, and assessment and certification of implementers.

NPAT is committed to the evaluation and researching of its ecotherapy endeavours. Over the past seven years, several studies have been conducted to assess how effective ecotherapy is as a means of promoting healing.

Ecotherapy and especially its implementation among victims of political violence have inspired research by universities across South Africa and abroad. One such study, conducted in 1997 by the University of Witwatersrand, aimed to assess the impact of ecotherapy trails on the perceptions of youths from previously conflicting groups in Kathorus. The pre-test and post-test studies concluded that:

> [The trail] played a significant role in reshaping the attitudes and perceptions of participants ... The wilderness environment, which was without familiar environmental features which used to remind them of their enemy perceptions, helped to provide a context for emotional relationships to develop without the physical and social hindrances of destroyed township life. (Kgalema in Robertson 2003:19)

Between 1998 and 1999, follow-up research into the impact of ecotherapy interventions found a significant decrease in the reported levels of post-traumatic stress after participation in ecotherapy activities (Makhale-Mahlangu in Robertson 2003:22). It was also found that nature-oriented therapy promotes positive thought processes, a sense of unity with others, and self-esteem. In 2000, research by Stephanie Schell-Faucon of the University of Cologne (Germany) supported previous findings about the positive impact of ecotherapy by noting that it:

■ Has a transformative effect on people's lives.

■ Initiates new social and interpersonal connections.

■ Develops coping and problem-solving abilities.

■ Has a ripple effect on participants' families and significant others.

■ Strengthens self-confidence and self-esteem.

■ Defuses trauma and rejuvenates spiritual interests.

(Robertson 2003:25)

In 2003, a study undertaken by Joseph Serekoan from the University of the Free State found that ecotherapy could be used in crime prevention programming because it:

■ Fosters peace at community level.

■ Transfers skills regarding the management of stress and problems.

■ Acts as a catalyst for change at both personal and communal levels.

■ Reinstates self-confidence, self-reliance and self-worth.

(Robertson 2003:27)

In 2003, NPAT continued a longitudinal assessment of ecotherapy programming on ex-participants. A total of 125 participants, of whom 98 were male and 27 female, formed part of the study. The following results are significant:

■ The incidence of crime among participants decreased from 83.2% to 19.2%. Serious offences declined from 28.0% to 4.8%, while less serious offences decreased from 49.6% to 13.6%. Involvement in both serious and less serious crimes declined from 5.6% to 0.8%.

■ Overall, substance abuse decreased from 64.8% to 22.4%. Alcohol abuse fell from 40.8% to 16.8%, drug abuse from 4.8% to 3.8%, and drugs and alcohol abuse combined decreased from 19.2% to 2.4%.

■ Post-trail trauma was found to be present with 37 (29.6%) participants, a significant decrease when compared to the 121 (96.8%) pre-trail cases.

■ The number of participants who are committed to permanent relationships increased from 48.8% to 70.4%.

(Robertson 2003)

2.5 Key lessons and views

■ NPAT is committed to establishing sustainable intervention initiatives.

What we do is sustainable. We want to see people actually saying 'We don't need NPAT anymore, we can do this on our own'. (NPAT official)

■ NPAT promotes its ethos of sharing and learning among client organisations.

Whatever training we receive [from NPAT], we plough back into the community. We don't keep it only to ourselves. (Official from a client organisation)

■ Effective follow-up should feature after ecotherapy intervention.

They come to us and we try to help them for now, but the thing is they have to go back to that frustrating environment. When we go on camps, they cry when we come back, because they don't want to go back home. (Official from a client organisation)

■ NPAT played a pivotal role in remedying the aftermath of political violence.

NPAT developed me and helped me to cope with the situation. After the wilderness trail I wanted to do positive things like helping the community to cope with the violence, especially the youth ... some wanted to commit suicide. (Former 'militarised' participant)

The whole point was about healing, but we got a bonus because we bonded with each other ... At that time, community members didn't really like each other. There was still tension after the violence. But at the end, people who were fighting now fought for peace. (Former 'militarised' participant)

■ It appears as if ecotherapy generally has a positive impact on participants.

... we do find that, despite the many problems they face after school, wilderness youths are more eager to come to us and help with our programmes ... They want to volunteer. They are taking an active role in doing something that is constructive and positive with their lives. (Official from a client organisation)

3. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Outdoor experiential interventions share some of the premises of life skills-based programming where it is taken that a level of psychological readiness (e.g. relevant self-concepts and self-awareness) is required for further development to take place. However, whereas life skills training assumes that offending behaviour stems largely from inadequate decision making abilities, ecotherapy intervention assumes it stems from psychological disequilibrium regarding the self in relation to others and the environment, which could result in a lack of direction, purpose and value in life.

As with life skills-based interventions, it is clear that ecotherapy views the development of insight and understanding as a prerequisite for the promotion of pro-social behaviour. However, this type of intervention targets the broader mental health of participants with specific focus on the negative effect of past experiences. To do this, they are taken out of their comfort zones and confronted with activities that hold specific psychological value. Physical activity and the resulting sense of achievement promote a healthy self-concept and sense of connectedness. However, evidence suggests that post-trail support is needed to sustain these psychological changes.

As the literature indicates, nature-based programmes are often used to enrich other interventions. NPAT believes nature-based programmes are effective whether used before other interventions, as preparation, or after them, as reinforcement.

The ecotherapy intervention can be said to have some restorative elements, mainly in terms of problem solving and the promotion of insight. While the community and family appear to play a relatively small role in the NPAT model and the victim is not directly involved in the process, the flexibility of the programme means that these can be built into the intervention should this be appropriate.

As with other group-based diversion programmes, assessment information is used to structure the general intent and direction. Assessments are needed to ensure that the activities suit the participants' abilities and mental capacities. However, the question of whether all individual needs can be addressed in a group setting, raised in previous chapters, remains. It is worth noting here that the literature emphasises the positive interrelationship between dynamic group activities and individual growth. Furthermore, nature-based programmes give an opportunity (e.g. the solo exercise) for individual reflection and insight.

In terms of monitoring and evaluation of impact, NPAT shows a commitment to developing a strong evidence-base. The ecotherapy programme has been the subject of research by a range of academic institutions and the findings from the studies undertaken provide useful information with regard to the efficacy of the intervention. However, as with other multi-modal programmes, it is difficult to disaggregate the influences of other partner agency's developmental activities on participants.

When it comes to replicating the ecotherapy initiative, it should be noted that outdoor programmes demand more resources, (transport, accommodation, equipment, etc.), than for example office-based life skill programmes. Nevertheless, as NPAT indicates, effective service and collaboration networks can minimise these costs. Organisations wishing to implement an ecotherapy programme also need to take cognisance of the training requirements for staff. Facilitators need to have excellent facilitation and communication skills. Besides having the necessary physical abilities, they must be skilled in interpreting group dynamics to make use of development opportunities offered by the wilderness experience. The same applies to conflict situations that could disrupt the intervention process. They must also be able to contain psychological distress until they can get professional assistance.

In conclusion, the strong focus on broad psychological health and changing harmful mind-sets makes nature-based intervention a highly appropriate one for hard-to-reach and high-risk children. Although one could expect resistance to intervention from hard-to-reach target groups, evidence shows that nature-based programmes succeed in removing such barriers.

Endnotes

1   Similarly, the establishment of the Ekupholeni Mental Health Centre (see Chapter 8) was facilitated through NPAT's involvement in, amongst others, the training of support workers and securing a site and infrastructure for Ekupholeni's operations.

References

NPAT (National Peace Accord Trust). n.d. *Healing communities, building stability – National Peace Accord Trust Overview*. Modderfontein: National Peace Accord Trust.

NPAT (National Peace Accord Trust). 2003a. The History. http://196.36.199.67/history.asp (Accessed 9 October 2003).

NPAT (National Peace Accord Trust). 2003b. The Mission. http://196.36.199.67/mission.asp (Accessed 9 October 2003).

NPAT (National Peace Accord Trust). 2003c. The Vision. http://196.36.199.67/vision.asp (Accessed 9 October 2003).

NPAT (National Peace Accord Trust). 2003d. *Project proposal: to train restorative justice role players to deliver wilderness therapy as a diversion programme in all nine provinces*. Modderfontein: National Peace Accord Trust.

NPAT (National Peace Accord Trust). 2003e. *Ecotherapy facilitator training*. Modderfontein: National Peace Accord Trust.

NPAT (National Peace Accord Trust). 2003f. The Means. http://196.36.199.67/means.asp (Accessed 9 October 2003).

Robertson G. 2003. *Young Lions in the Wilderness – overview of wilderness therapy intervention with militarised youth of Kathorus*. Modderfontein: National Peace Accord Trust.

14

SIYAVUKA

Educo Africa

Educo Africa endeavours to contribute to people's lives by providing courses that value and empower individuals and communities. Its programmes aim to nurture respect and responsibility for nature (Educo Africa 2002a:1). It focuses on developing South Africa's youth by offering programmes in leadership, life skills and employability training. It commits itself to excellence in the field of adventure-based and experiential learning that targets at-risk, disadvantaged and traumatised youth (Educo Africa 2002b:3). This chapter provides an overview of its work with young offenders.

1. THE ORGANISATION

1.1 Background

Educo Africa was established in 1994 as an independent office of Educo International, which originated in Canada in 1969 and currently has branches across the globe. The local office was set up with the assistance of Educo in Canada and the USA (Colorado). This international collaboration ensured that the South African branch drew on the experience of more than three decades of work in outdoor education so as to establish a dedicated and professional intervention service (Educo Africa 2001:1). The local branch remains affiliated to Educo International. Educo Africa currently provides developmental and intervention services in Namibia, Botswana and South Africa (Educo Africa 2002a:10).

1.2 Aims and values

Educo aims to strengthen the foundation of society by reinstating fundamental life values in youths by making them believe in themselves and their future (Educo Africa 2002a:1). In pursuit of this goal, Educo provides leadership, developmental and intervention programmes, involving outdoor-based and experiential learning, to empower young people. Drawing on the inspiration of adventure and nature-facilitated learning, Educo's programming endeavours to:

■ Instil a culture of human rights and dignity.

■ Restore the dignity and power of victims of abuse and violence.

■ Channel the direction and energy of youths toward positive living.

■ Empower individuals for greater employability.

■ Help young people understand and value the environment.

■ Provide the impetus for overcoming dismal situations and taking responsibility for themselves.

■ Help them recognise their own value and that of others.

■ Strengthen the quality of relationships and interactions.

(Educo Africa 2002b:3,7)

Educo commits itself to the values of:

■ Development of leadership and personal mastery.

■ Strengthening of communities and teamwork.

■ Diversity and multi-culturalism.

■ Awareness about the environment.

■ The spirit of adventure, challenge and discovery.

(Educo Africa 2002a:1)

1.3 Organisational structure and resources

A board of trustees, consisting of officials from business, religious, professional and academic spheres, provides overall guidance to Educo and is managed by an executive director. Educo follows a democratic and participatory approach in its management, with all full-time staff members being involved in strategic planning and decision making.

Educo Africa's offices are situated in Plumstead, Cape Town. In addition to office space, the building also has meeting areas, storage space and an information room. The organisation has three 16-seater vehicles and a pickup van for transporting participants and equipment to programme sites. In addition to wilderness sites accessed on a needs basis, Educo frequently uses the Groot Winterhoek area for its training and intervention activities. The Groot Winterhoek Outdoor Leadership Centre is situated about 120 kilometres north of Cape Town, in the mountain range east of Porterville (Educo Africa 2003:14). This 30 608 hectare conservation area offers various opportunities for facilitating experiential learning, reflection and adventure. The wooden cabins at the Centre are used for accommodation, cooking, indoor training and storage.

Educo sets its own service priorities and is responsible for generating income to fulfil its mandate. At present, the larger part of intervention programmes, in particular those for at-risk youth, depend on donor funding and

sponsorships. The organisation therefore has to raise funds to provide for the youth intervention programmes. Less than half of its income comes from clients' registration fees and corporate programmes (Educo Africa 2002a:10). It receives support in the form of grants, donations, individual gifts and discounts on goods and services.

2. THE SIYAVUKA PROGRAMME

Siyavuka is an intervention designed specifically for at-risk youth and the adults who work with them. It forms part of Educo's broader programming that targets private and non-profit organisations, adult women, marginalised young people and school-going youth. The name 'Siyavuka' refers to the awakening of inner potential and knowledge of the self (Roberts 2000:42). Initially the Siyavuka programme worked only with young people but over time, the initiative has broadened to include the participation of service providers in outdoor programmes to facilitate the ongoing transfer of the participants' experience and learning into broader spheres of intervention and support. The service providers' involvement has assisted in strengthening their understanding of the intervention process, and promoted their personal self-worth.

2.1 Rationale and aim

In South Africa, young people are increasingly seen as being at-risk because of the pressures and demands of modern day living. The breakdown of positive family values, fragmentation of society and violent crimes increases the incidence of teen suicide, substance abuse and offending.

The socio-political climate of the mid-1990s was conducive to development initiatives that would complement the then Reconstruction and Development Plan. Since the dawn of democracy in South Africa in 1994, Educo's mandate has been to make a positive contribution to reconstruction, development and healing in vulnerable and marginalised communities (Educo Africa 2002b:6). Siyavuka believes that undesirable behaviour originates from a maladjusted perception of the self, and of the self in relation to others (Roberts 2000:35) and that a meaningful wilderness experience can promote self-esteem, learning and pro-social behaviour that can be implemented at home and in the community. The wilderness processes that can engender positive change include:

- Functioning in an unknown environment where the supporting factors for antisocial behaviour are absent.

- An experience of belonging through group work, co-operation and trust.

- Having a different experience of the self, and of the self in terms of others.

- A sense of achievement from acquiring new skills.

- An experience of challenging and rewarding activities.

- An experience of offering assistance to others and contributing to the success of the programme.

- Being exposed to positive adult role models.

- Relating to the natural environment.

The Siyavuka intervention aims to develop young people's inherent need for challenge and growth. Its programmes are based on a developmental model known as the Circle of Courage, which incorporates four interactional elements that promote a healthy self-esteem: belonging, mastery, independence and generosity (Educo Africa 2001:2). The premise is that all four elements need to be addressed and stimulated, otherwise the circle is incomplete. An incomplete circle of courage could reduce self-esteem and lead to negative behaviour. The programmes are also based on theories of metaphoric experiences, general systems and tension (Roberts 2000:36).

2.2 Entry criteria and profile of participants

Educo has devised an instrument that gathers information about the following biographical, personal and behavioural characteristics of its participants:

- Age, language and gender.

- Reasons for intervention or support, such as family dysfunction, criminal behaviour, domestic violence and abuse, truancy and substance abuse.

- Physical profile in terms of attributes and sport activities.

- Intellectual characteristics, such as school performance, reading and writing abilities, and language abilities.

- Social profile in terms of peer relationships and communication.

- Emotional dynamics, such as crises, their causes and coping mechanisms.

Client organisations must compile a profile for each participant. This enables Educo to ensure that the envisaged programme will respond to the needs of each participant. The appropriateness and success of a wilderness programme depends to a large extent on the participants' mental ability to cope with its demands and impact.

Young people referred to the Siyavuka programme are mostly historically disadvantaged youth, young offenders, gang members and at-risk street youth. It is estimated that about 60% of Siyavuka participants are from rural areas (Educo Africa 2002b:6). Most participants are not attending school and are from low socioeconomic backgrounds. More boys than girls are referred to the programme. Their ages range from eight to 18 years.

2.3 Programme content and implementation

Siyavuka has its roots in the development of people through experiential learning and wilderness-based activities. Its ethos focuses on personal and collective growth and learning that takes places in a natural environment. Cultural barriers are transgressed in favour of responsible collaboration (Educo Africa 2002b:3), and emphasis is placed on the self and its functioning within broader contexts. This means that, despite being offenders, participants must be treated as individuals who still have to discover their true potential. Siyavuka focuses on strengths and the development of competence. The programme is based on the following developmental principles:

- Each person has potential and strengths that, through facilitation, can develop toward wholeness and well-being.

- Development cannot be forced, only nurtured and supported, and is not time-bound.

- Each individual has to be understood and responded to as a whole at any given time.

- Mistakes are opportunities for learning and growth.

- The present and future are more important than the past.

  (Roberts 2000:28)

The Siyavuka programme is highly flexible as each intervention is planned in collaboration with the client agency to best meet the needs of troubled youth. The entry-level course takes between seven and nine days to complete. It consists of adventure-based activities, such as backpacking, rock climbing and abseiling, canoeing, trust and team-building exercises, group discussions and personal reflection. The second level course could last between seven and twelve days. It involves more challenges and commitment, with the option of:

- Expeditions that entail traversing rugged terrains.

- Ecology courses that focus on relationships and the community.

- A rites of passage course to clarify life expectations and facilitate maturing into adulthood.

  (Educo Africa 2001:3; Roberts 2000:54)

Each participant enters into an agreement with Educo. The contract stipulates the roles and responsibilities of both participants and programme facilitators. This activity is undertaken during the initial meeting with referred youth, which also serves as an opportunity for Educo staff and participants to meet and learn more about each other. The meeting is usually held in the two weeks prior to the wilderness experience and provides an opportunity to clarify expectations (Roberts 2000:47).

The wilderness presents both mental and physical obstacles that create opportunities for experiential learning. Of great importance is that youths are taken from their familiar, often crime-conducive environments, and placed in a setting that forces them to explore their inner selves. They face various challenges and obstacles, reflect on them, and generalise them to everyday life. Educo uses a broad range of methods during the implementation of its programmes.

The Siyavuka programme uses the following methods:

- A **vision quest or solo experience** where time is spent alone in the wilderness. This 'time-out' opportunity is for reflecting on personal dilemmas.

- **Mirroring**, that involves reflecting back to the participant his or her unrealised strengths and gifts, and issues that he or she may be struggling with.

- **Rituals** from a variety of cultures and traditions, to mark meaningful accomplishments or thresholds of change.

- **Games and activities** that are used for icebreakers and to promote trust, interaction and co-operation.

- **Adventure activities**, such as abseiling, hiking, canoeing and mountain climbing, that challenge participants to discover new strengths and endurance. When appropriate, participants lead or guide the group.

■ **Community service projects**, that allow participants to give back to the community and environment what they have received.

■ **Journal** writing, that provides an opportunity to explore feelings, thoughts and experiences. Themes or personal views may be shared with the larger group of participants. Journals include quotations relevant to the experiences ahead.

■ **Daily chores**, such as cooking and cleaning, that are used to foster co-operation, trust and caring for others.

■ A '**talking stick**' that is passed from one participant to another during group discussions. The person holding the stick has to right to talk and to be listened to.

■ **Craft activities**, such as painting t-shirts or bandanas, that allow participants to integrate what was learned during the outdoor experience. The product also serves as a reminder of the experience when participants return to their home environments.

■ **A letter written to themselves**, on the second last day of the wilderness intervention, about the time they spent in nature. This letter is mailed to participants one month later.

■ **Candle ceremonies**, that serve as rituals to reconnect with a special relationship in the youth's life. They give a sense of belonging to and caring for others.

(Educo Africa 2002a:4; Roberts 2000:47–52)

Each of these Siyavuka activities endeavours to instil one or more elements of the Circle of Courage. For example, the solo exercise promotes independence, while adventure activities strengthen mastery. Similarly, preparing meals incorporates the elements of generosity and belonging.

Staff and service providers

Educo's staff consists of 20 members, of whom 15 are to various extents tasked with service delivery. The Siyavuka programme has three full-time staff members who are responsible for managing and implementing the intervention. Educo staff have received training to strengthen the overall functioning of the initiative. Skills learnt include organisational and financial management, information technology systems, monitoring and evaluation, accreditation procedures and project-based management (Educo Africa 2003:3). In general, service providers are expected to be competent in an array of technical wilderness and interpersonal skills. Language proficiency, cultural appropriateness and approachability are viewed by Educo as key attributes of an effective service provider.

At Educo, the participants' safety is paramount. To ensure their well-being, resources are invested in developing and training programme facilitators. All personnel are required to have certificates in first-aid, supervision of abseiling, leadership in mountaineering, lifesaving, facilitation and counselling (Educo Africa 2003:2). Educo hosts an annual wilderness course for all staff members, the aim of which is to allow staff to reflect, develop and bond with each other, and to reconnect with the spirit of the organisation (Educo Africa 2002a:9). Educo recognises that the work is stressful given the emotional investment linked to dealing with at-risk youth. Potential burnouts are monitored and dealt with by, for example, mandatory leave and spacing programmes to allow facilitators time to recuperate.

Partnerships

Educo receives more demands for its programmes than it can supply. This allows it to select the kind of collaborations that will have the best strategic impact in the field of youth justice. The Siyavuka programme fosters working relationships with youth development organisations, diversion agencies, schools, children's homes, shelters and places of safety (Educo Africa 2002c:2). Such partnerships are crucial, as young participants often require continued or longer-term support after completing a wilderness programme (Educo Africa 2002a:3). Educo's partnerships with the following are particularly valuable for its work with troubled and at-risk youth:

■ **NICRO**'s Journey programme consists of life skills training and experiential learning, and NICRO approached Educo to help it develop this programme. The Siyavuka and Journey programmes have jointly managed to construct an effective diversion programme that heals young offenders and prepares them for life.

■ The **Bosasa Horizon Youth Centre** in the Western Cape provides secure care, developmental, diversion and reintegration services for awaiting trial youth (Bosasa n.d.:1). Some of these youths are detained for up to two years. Bosasa's intellectual and skills development services include environmental awareness. In 2003, Educo provided training and education in outdoor and nature-based programming for young offenders and Bosasa service providers.

■ Educo engaged with the **Western Cape Department of Social Services** to promote the use of experiential learning when dealing with troubled youth. To achieve this goal, it undertook a wilderness intervention with both offending youth and probation officers.

■ Siyavuka has been collaborating with the **National Association for Child Care Workers** since its inception in 1997. The Association hopes to expand developmental options within the child and youth care system. Part of its strategy entails targeting regions and designing courses to extend nature-based intervention on a national scale. Educo's wilderness programme provides experiential learning to children and youth from shelters, children's homes and places of safety.

■ In 2001, Educo developed a partnership with the **Nature Conservation Board**, using the Groot Winterhoek Wilderness Reserve. Educo renovated the outdoor leadership centre so that the site could serve as a base camp for wilderness programmes. This site is frequently used for the Siyavuka programme. The renovated centre also helps the Nature Conservation Board with residential environmental education in the region.

Costs

In 2003, the cost of Educo's Siyavuka programme was estimated to be between R1 800 and R2 000 per participant, which covered subsistence, transport, accommodation, equipment and supplies, and staff fees.

2.4 Monitoring and evaluation

At Educo, programme evaluation is process-oriented to help streamline activities and enhance outcomes. Emphasis is placed on gathering programme-specific and meaningful information. During 2001, Educo embarked on a process to examine and improve its own research and evaluation activities, using reflection practices to refine

programme methodologies, assumptions and philosophies (Educo Africa 2002d:1). Evaluation activities include the following:

■ Course debriefing and recording lessons learned.

■ Formal once-a-month staff reflection days and informal dialogue.

■ Discussions and debriefing with partner organisations.

■ Annual strategic planning and biannual strategic review.

Through this process, a monitoring system was implemented to capture biographical, personal and behavioural information about programme participants. An analysis of the profiles of 270 Siyavuka participants showed that:

■ The programme received more male (203) than female (67) participants.

■ Most participants are from public/mainstream schools (173).

■ Referral agencies included children's homes (94), schools (50), legal and diversion structures (48), youth development organisations (26), reform schools (13) and shelters (13).

■ Reasons for placement included family dysfunction (76), truancy (23), physical abuse (22), substance abuse (18), domestic violence (16) and theft (15).

(Roberts 2000:60–61)

In 1999, South Africa's Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People At Risk (IMC) commissioned research into Educo's approach to working with young offenders. The aim of the project was to examine the programme content and document its impact on the lives of participants. The research found that Educo's wilderness programme (Roberts 2000:69–70):

■ Contributes to reduced levels of substance abuse.

■ Promotes self-confidence, self-respect, self-acceptance, leadership and inner strength.

■ Increases participants' knowledge about the natural environment and how to care for it.

■ Enhances relationships, decision making and problem-solving skills.

■ Facilitates reintegration with the home environment.

■ Asserts independence.

■ Fosters generosity in the sharing of experiences and learning from others.

■ Creates channels for participants to interact with adults in a meaningful way.

■ Constitutes a life-changing and positive experience.

The research document serves as a learning resource for other organisations involved in youth care. In particular, the Siyavuka programme is described against the background of African culture and the wisdom of elders (Educo Africa 2002b:6).

2.5 Key lessons and views

■ Awareness needs to be created about the value of non-traditional intervention strategies.

> Understanding within the [youth justice] sector for our developmental approach remains a big challenge ... We need to shift mind-sets. More attention should be paid to youths in an individual way, but the juvenile justice system is not there yet. (Educo official)

■ There is a need to involve parents, families and caregivers in interventions with youth-at-risk.

> We realised that one cannot work with youth without involving their caregivers, as they themselves often need healing and transformation. The programme provides them with a platform from which to render services. Often this platform is absent in the youth at-risk sector. (Educo official)

■ There should be effective follow-up after participation in nature-based programming.

> The wilderness project on its own has only a certain amount of value. It has huge value in the moment. It is probably the most powerful experience that a diverted youth can do in terms of transformation and self-reflection, but it needs to be supported ... When a youth comes out of the programme, he needs the right support to sustain the change. (Educo official)

■ The quality of intervention and support services can easily be compromised by too large a number of participants.

> Chasing numbers is a real trap, because everybody wants numbers and statistics. Funders want to see impact numbers for Rands and it is a very hard line to walk. (Educo official)

■ Educo provides the opportunity for growth through reflection that very few disadvantaged youths have.

> As far as those who participated are concerned, Siyavuka definitely works. Most never had an experience like this ... They always associated fun with having drugs and drinking ... They thought that a stone is a weapon during a gang fight. Now a stone has new meaning. (Service provider)

> The whole experience was great. It was a dynamic process and being in the outdoors was nice. The potential that the youth displayed was tremendous and there was a lot of bonding and growth. Nobody thought that such few days could bring this much change to the youngsters. (Service provider)

3. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The Siyavuka model is a good example of the flexible nature of outdoor-based initiatives, and the extent to which wilderness interventions can be structured to meet the needs of different target groups. It shows a broad understanding of the risk factors associated with disrupted community and family life, and the pressures that children face today. In response to these, Siyavuka endeavours to realign the (often destructive) focus of at-risk children toward increasing levels of pro-social awareness. This helps bring about positive change in personal functioning. Educo believes that this process comes about through rediscovering the self in relation to others and the environment.

Siyavuka's aims are realised through group work and the achievement of challenges that bring about psychological change and give direction in life. Educo sees the value of constructive challenges for bringing about personal development, and also the value of reflection – the often difficult task of revisiting those happenings that could have contributed to a troubled mental state. The Circle of Courage concept provides a useful framework for the development and change that the programme hopes to bring about. Other nature-based interventions could perhaps benefit from a more structured framework to help at-risk participants plan ways to sustain the personal change their programme has brought about.

Replication of wilderness programmes is complex. International literature indicates that the majority of these interventions are run by highly specialised organisations thus limiting the extent to which they can be replicated and rolled out. Educo has made a considerable effort to ensure the transfer of skills to service provision organisations and has embarked on a three-year capacity building project with a range of child and youth care practitioners. According to Educo, the participation of service providers in the actual wilderness experience is extremely beneficial, as this strengthens their understanding of the experience and puts them in a better position to capitalise on the outdoor experiences and events in their own post-wilderness programming. It is also important to remember, when considering replication, that nature-based programmes as stand-alone interventions, do not incorporate all the elements of a fully restorative process. They generally do not include direct reconciliation and reparation activities. However, most organisations running these programmes incorporate aspects of restorative justice through partnerships with other organisations.

References

Bosasa. n.d. Bosasa Youth Centres. Johannesburg: BOSASA.

Educo Africa. 2003. *Educo Africa Newsletter No. 7 (2002–2003)*. Cape Town: Educo Africa.

Educo Africa. 2002a. *Educo Africa Newsletter No. 6 (2001–2002)*. Cape Town: Educo Africa.

Educo Africa. 2002b. *Funding proposal submitted to the Open Society Foundation of South Africa*. Cape Town: Educo Africa.

Educo Africa. 2002c. *Final report for the Open Society Foundation*. Cape Town: Educo Africa.

Educo Africa. 2002d. Educo's monitoring and evaluation process 2001. Open Society Foundation for South Africa Workshop on the Strengthening of Evaluation for Youth-at-Risk Programmes. Benoni, February 2002.

Educo Africa. 2001. *Funding proposal submitted to the Open Society Foundation of South Africa*. Cape Town: Educo Africa.

Roberts JL. 2000. *Wilderness, a circle of courage, and the wisdom of elders – guiding the development of young people at risk*. Cape Town: The Transformation of the Child and Youth Care System.

THE OUTWARD BOUND TRUST
OF SOUTH AFRICA

OBT-SA

The Outward Bound Trust of South Africa (OBT-SA) uses outdoor and adventure activities to stimulate individual growth and community transformation (OBT-SA 2002a:6). The initiative draws on a decade of local, and six decades of international, human and community development activities that provide a variety of wilderness experiences to youths and adults from all walks of life. Although OBT-SA targets a variety of clients, among others corporate enterprises and schools, the information presented here relates largely to the organisation's involvement in youth-at-risk programmes.

1. THE ORGANISATION

1.1 Background

Established in 1941 in Great Britain, Outward Bound is the oldest adventure-based educational organisation still in operation across the globe. It originates from a World War II military programme that aimed to increase the physical and mental abilities of marines, particularly those of younger soldiers, as there was concern about high casualty rates. This programme consisted of a 21-day survival course and formed the basis of the first Outward Bound programme. Today Outward Bound functions as a non-profit organisation in nearly 40 countries on five continents (Stetson n.d.:8).

In 1992, OBT-SA was formally established at Hogsback in the Eastern Cape. The organisation is now based in Knysna in the Western Cape and employs around 50 staff members. From its inception it was recognised that the international Outward Bound programme would have to be tailored to suit the unique needs of South African societies. Generally, OBT-SA's youth programmes adhere to the ethos of experiential learning as a way of developing basic human capacities. In addition, local programmes have a specific focus on overcoming cultural challenges and bringing together people from different backgrounds.

1.2   Mission and aims

OBT-SA's mission is to impact positively on the lives of South African youth who have been marginalised and disadvantaged by the country's political history and the injustices of the past. The organisation helps people develop

life skills, compassion and a positive attitude to life and its many challenges (OBT-SA 2003a). More specifically, the initiative aims to:

- Encourage self-respect, care for others, responsibility for the community and sensitivity toward the natural environment.

- Put its belief in the value of compassion into practice by actively helping all human beings.

- Strengthen greater understanding between people, especially youth from different backgrounds and cultures.

- Collaborate in removing the barriers that separate the people of the world.

  (OBT-SA 2003b)

1.3 Organisational structure and resources

The overall direction of OBT-SA is steered by a board of trustees. An additional committee handles the safety aspect of the programme (OBT-SA 2002b:1). An executive director, with the assistance of a director, two programme co-ordinators and other support staff, undertakes the management of the organisation. An operations director at OBT-SA's base camp in Sedgefield oversees the work of all programme facilitators and support staff.

OBT-SA provides wilderness-based development and intervention services at three sites in South Africa. The main service site, owned by OBT-SA, is near Sedgefield on the Garden Route. The two other sites, the Sterkfontein Nature Reserve near Harrismith in the Free State and Lapalala in the Limpopo Waterberg Mountains, serve as mobile sites for OBT-SA's activities. These are rented from conservation boards on a needs basis. All equipment, staff and programme participants are transported to and from the service site. OBT-SA aims to establish additional service sites near the Hartebeespoort Dam in Gauteng Province and in Cape Town in the Western Cape.

A variety of vehicles, including three pick-up trucks, two larger trucks and a number of motorcars, are used to transport equipment, staff and participants between programme sites. OBT-SA also has three sailing boats and a motor boat, and numerous canoes and kayaks are used for lake and river activities. Equipment for wilderness courses includes sleeping bags, life jackets, backpacks, cooking utensils and abseiling gear.

OBT-SA does not receive financial support from Outward Bound International. Its main sources of income are corporations, schools and adult clients, including tourists, who access wilderness programmes on an open enrolment basis. OBT-SA is to a large extent self-sustainable through the delivery of these contracted programmes. However, interventions for at-risk youth are highly dependent on external funding. Some cross-subsidisation for programmes for at-risk youth comes from corporate resources.

2. THE PROGRAMME

OBT-SA offers two kinds of programmes: corporate and adult adventures, and youth development and intervention services. The corporate services include team-building and institution-strengthening programmes, funded by private initiatives which use OBT-SA's services (OBT-SA 2003c). Youth development courses are divided into

schools-based and at-risk initiatives. OBT-SA invites various schools to enrol learners in youth development and discovery courses.

OBT-SA's mandate is to contribute to the development of South Africa's youth. It targets disadvantaged youths and those who are at risk of destroying themselves and their hope of a successful future through activities such as substance abuse, gangsterism, violence and crime (OBT-SA 2003d). These youths often lack any social or support structures. OBT-SA's at-risk programmes aim to break the cycle of offending and misconduct and address the root causes of crime. At-risk interventions take place in close collaboration with partner organisations. Some of these are:

- **The East Rand Project.** In 1997, Thokoza police officials approached OBT-SA to assist in combating violence between rival political groups in the East Rand townships of Thokoza, Kathlehong and Vosloorus. Interventions served as a starting point for promoting trust, communication and teamwork. The 21-day course aimed to transfer life skills and to arouse compassion and instil positive attitudes toward life and its many hurdles.

- **The Streets Project.** In 1999, OBT-SA embarked on the Streets Project together with Othandweni[1] in efforts to assist with the desperate situations facing children and youth living on the streets in South Africa. The purpose of the programme was to help street children discover their inner capacity and to seek realistic solutions to their dismal circumstances.

- **Project Chrysalis.** The Chrysalis Academy is a Western Cape-based initiative that aims to help young adults take control of their lives by providing them with the skills to become economically productive citizens and positive agents of change in their communities. Participating youths are then expected to serve as role models for others. A 21-day OBT-SA wilderness adventure forms the second phase of the Chrysalis programme. Emphasis is placed on the acquisition of environmental, leadership, teamwork and personal empowerment skills. At the same time, the programme serves as a crime prevention intervention.

- **The Boys Town Project.** After the East Rand project, OBT-SA was in a strategic position to form partnerships for intervening with troubled youth. This resulted in a working relationship with Boys Town centres in Randfontein in Gauteng and Macassar in the Western Cape. As with other OBT-SA activities, the collaboration aimed to promote personal growth and leadership among Boys Town youth through a meaningful wilderness experience.

    (OBT-SA 2002a:5)

2.1 Rationale and aim

The OBT-SA approach to youth development is founded on the following philosophical assumptions:

- Each person venerates life for having experienced it in real, dramatic terms.

- One learns to respect oneself from life experiences.

- Compassion for others results from respect of the self.

- Service to humanity is an expression of compassion for others.

    (Tompkins 1998:7)

This philosophy fuels the following operational assumptions:

■ People have more resources and capacities than they think they have.

■ A small group of people has the resources within it to overcome profound physical and mental challenges.

■ Young and old alike are capable of critical decision making and responsibility.

■ Learning is enhanced by presenting problems rather than solutions or methods.

■ Reflection on experiences allows for the formulation of personal goals.

■ Stress and shared adventure are important catalysts in the process of self-discovery.

■ Self-concept and self-value determine a person's future.

■ A short-term experience can bring significant long-lasting learning.

   (Tompkins 1998:7)

OBT-SA aims to make young people aware of their inner strengths and potential so they can lead healthy lifestyles and care for others (Stetson n.d.:9). Youth programmes act as catalysts for personal growth and change through experiences that involve physical activities, appreciation for others, skill and self-reliance (D'Almeida 1994:1).

2.2 Entry criteria and profile of participants

Apart from good health and a willingness to participate in a wilderness experience, OBT-SA does not set rigorous entrance criteria for its young clients. Participants are required to complete a medical form to ensure that they can cope with the physical demands of the programme. With at-risk youth, instructors often require additional background or profile information.

> ... a serious drug problem is an entry issue. It may lead to a risk for the person or the group, for example, if the person becomes violent. Some youths are on light drugs, which we seldom know of. But if it is a serious issue, that may be a criterion for exclusion. (OBT-SA official)

With OBT-SA's at-risk programme, the responsibility for identifying and selecting suitable candidates rests with the organisation that refers them. Partner organisations have different entry criteria and kinds of assessment. For OBT-SA's collaboration with Boys Town, youths were selected for their leadership qualities (Insideout 2002:18–19). The Othandweni partnership only accepted street children who were on a clear path to self-fulfilment. Assessments must indicate whether potential candidates are receptive to OBT-SA's approach to development. To help assess this, OBT-SA engages with the partner organisation through meetings and workshops to ensure an understanding of its activities.

Youths who participate in OBT-SA's at-risk programmes are largely between the ages of 15 and 25. More boys than girls are referred[2]. Programme facilitators noted that girls often struggle with the physical demands of courses, but that they do complete the activities successfully. Most participants have left school at an early age, or attend informal education programmes at shelters or children's homes. Many young participants are from backgrounds

characterised by deprivation, unemployment, homelessness, broken homes, and alcohol and drug abuse. Most are from lower socioeconomic spheres, although youths from affluent households – who are often involved in drug abuse – are also referred. Some participants may have problems with reading and writing. However, the only activity that requires writing is keeping a journal.

> Very little reading and writing is done since the programme is nature-based. Participants are encouraged to keep a journal of their experiences, perceptions and emotions during the programme. The solo activity [during which most journal writing is to take place] is very useful to capture reflections on life. Still, the programme is possible even for illiterate people. The journal is a benefit. (OBT-SA official)

2.3 Programme content and implementation

OBT-SA's personal growth adventure programme involves:

- Commitment to perform at one's best.

- A series of difficult challenges in unfamiliar environments.

- Understandable stress.

- Services toward fellow programme participants.

- Group exercises to engender teamwork and participation.

- Acquisition of new skills.

- Reflection to internalise the OBT-SA experience.

  (Tompkins 1998:7)

All OBT-SA programmes follow a standard content and implementation plan, but this is used merely for direction purposes, as specific programme planning is done in collaboration with the referral organisation. Programme activities are scheduled in advance, but can be excluded or altered as the course proceeds. Facilitators have the skills and the mandate to alter the programme content in the field.

> The programme is a fluid process. It can't be rigid because instructors facilitate the exercises and then do debriefing. The outcomes of a debriefing session guide subsequent exercises. (OBT-SA official)

Young participants are not directly involved in the planning of a wilderness programme, but actively take part in implementing it. Among other things, they help to set goals for outdoor experiences and decide on particular duties within the group, such as meal, resting and free time. Although each OBT-SA programme is unique, they are all characterised by five separate phases of development and implementation. The *Outward Bound Trust of South Africa Instructors Handbook* is used to ensure that the required service standards are met (Tompkins 1998).

In general, youth development programmes accommodate between six and twelve participants, who are supervised and guided by one facilitator. With at-risk groups, however, two facilitators are present at all times, because not all of these participants sustain their motivation to complete the course. Also, experience has shown that some of these children may cause problems during programmes.

From time to time one would get a runaway or attempted runaway. With at-risk youth, at night one of the two facilitators is always awake to make sure that no one dashes off. But because the courses are hard and the kids are out of their comfort zones, some do want to run away. In these cases, the group gets involved to talk him out of it. (OBT-SA official)

Preparation phase

During the first phase, facilitators review the course programme and the client organisation's aims and objectives. They are expected to:

■ Become familiar with the client organisation's background and purpose.

■ Draft a list of the capacities that the client organisation wishes to have strengthened.

■ Consider possible outdoor activities that could facilitate the developmental process.

■ Review anticipated routes in terms of risk areas, emergency management and drinking water points.

Programme facilitators often refer back to previous courses during their planning. They must keep in mind any recent changes to OBT-SA's policies and procedures. During the preparation phase, they identify and inform potential co-facilitators, and interact with logistics and support personnel to make sure they understand the needs and expectations of the course. They review the group's medical forms to identify possible problems.

Training phase

The training phase serves as a period of instruction and limited activity that aims to familiarise participants with the educational aims of the experience. Participants are informed about policies, environmental aspects and safety procedures. Efforts are made to establish a healthy team spirit, confidence and trust. Typical activities during the training phase involve group dynamics, confidence in the water, first-aid, and an introduction to physical challenges. Course conditions are formulated in conjunction with the group, which usually include doing one's best, living in harmony with fellow participants, taking care of the natural environment, and making the course a meaningful learning experience for everyone involved.

Medical interviews are conducted with each participant to identify possible hazards, such as allergies and heart or respiratory problems. These are discussed with the course co-ordinator and a protocol developed for managing them.

Main phase

The main phase of the programme is the period during which most of the physical challenges are undertaken. The activities that are available at the various programme sites are used in combination to structure a wilderness course. Physical challenges depend to a large extent on the capabilities of the group, the length of the course and natural elements such as rain. The following are some of the main activities of an OBT-SA programme.[3]

■ Solo

During a solo experience, participants are set up in separate individual locations in which they are expected to survive on their own with only essential camping equipment. The purpose of a solo is to provide participants with an opportunity to reflect, introspect, meditate and appreciate nature. They discover their own levels of independence, patience and stamina. They often write journals to record feelings and emotions.

■ Rock climbing, abseiling, wall climbing and traverses

These physical activities familiarise participants with basic mountaineering skills. All activities pose physical and mental challenges in a safe and powerful way. They also serve to promote communication, decision making, responsible risk taking and trust among team members. Activities are often accompanied by fear, but persevering and completing them successfully brings a sense of accomplishment.

■ Expeditions and camping

Expeditions take the form of hiking through a wilderness area with the help of maps and compasses. All equipment is taken along and participants prepare their own food. Expeditions provide an opportunity for individual and group achievements, such as map reading, camp craft and natural history, and developing leadership skills. Expeditions and camping can take place with minimal input from the course facilitator, thereby ensuring an empowering and learning atmosphere.

■ Service

During this component the group is expected to provide a service to help a community or person or to protect the environment. The ultimate aim is to promote personal growth and a positive self-image by being of service to others. Central elements of the service component are compassion, generosity and caring. This exposes participants to the needs of the community and engenders a sense of responsibility and encourages young people to claim a stake in local development. Service activities often involve repairs to the infrastructure of schools, crèches and clinics.

■ Initiatives

Initiatives include games and challenges that strengthen communication, leadership, trust and healthy group dynamics. They involve purposefully creating situations where mistakes are made by participants in order to encourage problem solving in a controlled environment. Tasks often seem impossible and allow for enjoyable interaction. Examples of these initiatives are blinded walks and trust falls.

■ Canoeing, kayaking and sailing

Flat water canoeing and sea kayaking activities require particular safety measures, especially for participants who have seldom or never been exposed to water sport. Water activities provide an opportunity to confront fear of water in an interactive and pleasurable way. River and sea encounters allow facilitators to draw on numerous metaphors to instigate awareness, personal growth and an appreciation of nature. Sailing provides participants with tasks that require co-operation, support and leadership.

■ **Ropes course**

The ropes course presents participants with personal challenges and incorporates the themes of teamwork, trust and choice. The high ropes course in particular dispels preconceived limits and allows for an experience that draws on failure and success, risk taking, the importance of support and encouragement, and facing new challenges. This experience can meaningfully be transferred to other aspects of the course and daily life.

■ **Physical training**

Each day commences with a warm-up session to stretch muscles and tone legs, ankles and joints for the physical demands that lie ahead. Physical training teaches participants to look after their bodies and also helps prevent injuries.

Debriefing is a key component of any OBT-SA programme and sets the stage to transfer an activity's learning points to real-life situations and environments. The physical and emotional experience becomes a metaphor for daily life. It is worth quoting a programme facilitator at length on the process of transferral.

> We make use of physical activities and experiences to bring our philosophy home. True learning happens in different ways and depends on the group. Objectives are set at the beginning of the programme and I discuss them with the group in detail during the first day so that they can see why they are here and what the ideas are behind the programme. After each activity and in the evenings before all go to sleep, we debrief the group on what they have experienced and how this relates to real life. We sit down and discuss what the youths think they can take from the day's activities. For example, if you take a large Whaler and there is no wind, you then have to row and six people are needed, as well as others to manage steering and take decisions, so you also need a captain. This is an excellent activity to show the group what teamwork is about and how all people are interdependent on others. So, mostly we discuss the objectives with them in advance, and the children themselves then tell the instructor how they benefited and what they learned from the activity. We don't spoon feed the youths in saying 'This is what we now did and this is what you were supposed to have learned'. Each participant experiences the activity in his or her unique way, and this comes out during group discussions. They share their different experiences with each other. This is where the learning process comes in, with the sharing of experiences and talking about it. (OBT-SA official)

In preparation for the next phase, the programme facilitator withdraws his or her direct involvement with the group process and begins to focus primarily on teaching skills. The aim is to transfer the responsibility from the instructor to the group. This often results in healthy conflict within the group, as participants take charge of daily chores. They have to divide duties and function as a team in order to complete the programme successfully. The course instructor continues to act as a facilitator, especially when conflict in the group poses a threat to the emotional and physical safety of some participants. One-on-one discussions are often undertaken to ensure that individual participants continue to engage in the OBT-SA experience.

> Part of the programme has the core aim of leadership skills development. What we do is basically hand the course over to the group for them to take ownership of the programme. As the programme continues, the instructor increasingly takes a back seat to allow more and more group control over what they are doing and learning ... With time, more and more decision making responsibilities are given to the group. Toward the end of the course, the group practically runs the programme. Some groups even take over the facilitation of discussions, which is great ... The instructor will just interfere if there is real safety issues involved. (OBT-SA official)

Final phase

During the final phase of the programme, participants take full responsibility for the course. Experiences, whether they speak of success or failure, are managed and celebrated by the group as a whole. In most cases, the quality of group functioning resembles the standards that the facilitator set at the beginning of the course. The only difference is that the group now maintains the standards because of their own interest in and use of social and technical skills. At this stage, the phrase 'we did it ourselves' becomes important.

Closing phase

At a practical level, the closing phase involves cleaning all equipment, camp areas, bathrooms, vehicles, and other resources used during the programme. At a developmental level, transference of the wilderness experience to real life situations continues to take place. Questions that are central to this process include: Where do I go from here? Why do we climb mountains? Do adventures only happen in the wilderness? Individual sessions are undertaken with participants to help them internalise the experience. Some form of ritual characterises the closing process. Participants are presented with certificates for completing the course, and Outward Bound pins. These pins are recognised worldwide and are awarded to participants who feel that they deserve one. Words of wisdom or a phrase for future conduct are often used to send participants off with positive, eager attitudes.

Wrap-up phase

In this last phase the course facilitators compile and disseminate the required feedback reports on the performance of individual participants. They do this from their own experiences, as well as from those of the group, and often refer to notes kept during the course of the programme.

Follow-up and aftercare

OBT-SA is to a limited extent involved in follow-up and aftercare activities once at-risk youths have successfully completed a wilderness course. However, these tasks rest primarily with the referral or partner organisation. OBT-SA officials acknowledged that proper aftercare services should be put in place to sustain the mind-sets and healthy attitudes that were nurtured during the intervention.

> After the programme, kids are very exited. They go out to conquer life. Self-esteem is up, confidence is up. That is the time when they need something to apply it to, otherwise it will start to decline. (OBT-SA official)

> There has to be a supporting structure to take them further. Otherwise we take them to the edge and teach them to fly and then they get back to their own environment and see all the barriers that will stop them. It can become frustrating to them. (OBT-SA official)

Staff

OBT-SA currently employs around 50 staff members, half of whom are programme facilitators. Other staff members include operations, training, administration, co-ordination, catering and maintenance personnel (OBT-SA 2002b:16). During the organisation's first years of service provision, programme facilitators mostly came from Outward Bound initiatives abroad. Fortunately, OBT-SA experienced a dramatic increase in the number of South African facilitators as local persons learned to run wilderness-based programmes. This move has contributed to OBT-SA being seen as a localised initiative. At the same time, the use of local facilitators promotes communication and interaction with young participants.

> It is best to have a facilitator that comes from the same background of the programme youths, because then they can identify with him or her. (OBT-SA official)

The general profile of an OBT-SA programme facilitator would be a person with a post-school qualification who is in his or her early to mid twenties. The nature of the programme requires facilitators to stay out in the wilderness for extended periods of time and is thus better suited to younger people who are less likely to have family responsibilities. Facilitators usually leave the organisation when they reach their early thirties. Potential facilitators need to show compassion, responsibility, empathy and understanding of interpersonal differences.

Candidate facilitators are subjected to rigorous training and mentoring before being certified as OBT-SA wilderness instructors. The training consists of a five-day in-the-field assessment, followed by four month's residential instruction in the OBT-SA philosophy, safety, programme implementation, and first-aid, rescue and debriefing skills. A large part of the training is based on the comprehensive *Outward Bound South Africa Instructors Handbook*. Candidates who have passed a peer review act as programme assistants for a month, after which they are appointed as co-facilitators for a period of three months. Successful completion of all phases and components leads to the status of full OBT-SA instructor.

Partnerships

The wilderness programmes that OBT-SA provides to at-risk and troubled youth necessitate close collaboration with referral organisations to help sustain the change brought about by the intervention. It is important for OBT-SA's at-risk programmes to be implemented in partnership with structures that have the staff, time and expertise to further capitalise on the outdoor experience and ensure continued growth, self-respect and caring for others. The organisation's relationship with Boys Town serves as a good example of this. At the beginning of the partnership, Boys Town staff from various regions completed a nine-day course to gain first-hand experience of the OBT-SA process and operations. Additional work sessions were then held to clarify the roles, responsibilities and expectations of the partnership. In particular, OBT-SA officials were given the task of showing how wilderness experiences can be applied to Boys Town's day-to-day functioning and work with its young clients. Having carefully

completed the groundwork and developed a clear partnership, OBT-SA was then able to start running outdoor programmes with youth from Boy's Town. OBT-SA has established similar relationships with Chrysalis Academy and Othandweni, among others.

With OBT-SA being part of Outward Bound International, excellent working relationships exist with branches elsewhere in the world. OBT-SA regularly engages in exchange programmes, particularly with staff from England and Australia. Annual Outward Bound conferences provide further opportunity for sharing information, skills and ideas.

Costs

The 2003/2004 enrolment fees indicate that programmes for at-risk and troubled youth are more expensive than schools programmes, particularly since an additional facilitator is required. A three-week at-risk-youth course costs about R5 500 per person, and a two-week course about R3 800 per person. In effect, the at-risk programme costs around R265 per youth per day. Fees include all meals, accommodation, equipment, park fees and facilitation for the duration of the course.

2.4 Monitoring and evaluation

Internationally, Outward Bound programmes receive substantial interest from academic and research institutes. In America, England and Australia, well-known universities continually engage in investigative inquiries to develop an understanding of the psychological, educational, sociological and physical values of Outward Bound's initiatives. Between 1969 and 1998, more than 60 books, journal articles, postgraduate studies, conference papers and monographs were written about Outward Bound Australia's activities alone (Niell 1998:2). This Outward Bound branch has a full-time researcher on its staff and research findings are published both internally and in scientific journals.

Locally, research about the Outward Bound approach and programming is not as prolific. OBT-SA's management has identified the need to conduct research on the organisation's wilderness programmes for specific target groups, and plans to collaborate with tertiary training and research institutes in this regard are under way.

In 2002, The Open Society Foundation for South Africa commissioned research to evaluate OBT-SA's interventions with three different youth-at-risk groups. The following results of the qualitative research are notable:

■ Participants learned a variety of hard skills, such as hiking long distances, swimming and basic first-aid skills.

■ Metaphors have particular value in applying the lessons learned during the course to everyday situations.

■ Of the four kinds of competence that the courses aimed to instil: craftsmanship, self-reliance, physical well-being and fitness, and social responsibility and compassion, self-reliance appeared to be the most commonly reoccurring theme.

■ The levels of competence and skills that participants acquired varied according to the nature of post-course debriefing offered by partner organisations.

■ Valuable lessons that participants learned included leadership, planning, setting of goals, and finding direction.

■ Most of the participants who were interviewed stated that they were applying the lessons they had learned to daily life.

■ Increased awareness about nature resulted in some participants starting their own environmental protection groups.

■ Several youths reported that they had stopped smoking cigarettes and using mandrax and marijuana as a result of the course.

(Insideout 2002:39–44)

Some respondents did not manage to implement what they had learned from the OBT-SA course. Reasons for this included:

■ Returning to the same unsupportive environment, peer pressure, and involvement in crime.

■ Transport difficulties to attend reunions with other programme participants.

■ Being orphaned without any support structures.

(Insideout 2002:45–46)

In terms of ongoing internal monitoring and evaluation, OBT-SA has various systems in place to ensure that participant, programme and outcome information are captured and distributed to relevant internal and external structures. Upon arrival at OBT-SA, participants undergo a pre-intervention assessment that captures data regarding their:

■ Self-awareness in terms of emotional wellness, accountability and adaptability.

■ Self-management in terms of decision making, problem solving and goal setting and planning.

■ Interpersonal relationships in terms of relationship building, communication, conflict management, leadership and teamwork.

After completing the programme, participants again undergo the assessment and the two sets of information are compared to determine how effective the intervention has been. This information is disseminated to the client organisation.

The course co-ordinator, who oversees all aspects of individual programmes, regularly communicates with the client organisation about participants' progress. Client organisations receive a course report that stipulates the overall aim of the programme and its specific objectives. The extent to which each objective was achieved and the activities and methods that were used in the process are described in great detail. Referral organisations are informed about the impact of the wilderness experience upon individual participants. This feedback focuses on the following:

- Personal qualities such as physical and mental stamina, self-discipline, adaptability and self-confidence.

- Interpersonal skills such as care and consideration, level of participation, ability to gain trust and respect, and communication.

- Decision making skills such as the ability to assess, plan and find solutions.

- Leadership and teamwork skills, such as work delegation, supervision and follow-up.

- Environmental awareness.

Internal course reports compiled by the facilitators reflect on the processes and incidents that occur during the programmes. An internal report highlights the dynamics of the group, noteworthy happenings during the course, such as medical emergencies and rescue operations, and any logistical problems that were experienced. A section of the report focuses on shortcomings and recommendations.

Participants also have the opportunity to evaluate the courses that they have completed. Through these evaluations, OBT-SA receives recommendations on how to improve its services.

At the end of each programme, the facilitators meet with the co-ordinator, staff manager and operational director to deliberate on process and outcomes. The OBT-SA training manager and an external Outward Bound officer evaluate programme facilitators' skills annually. Safety practices are regularly monitored by Outward Bound officials from abroad. Staff members conduct monthly internal safety audits to assess the state of programme equipment.

2.5 Key lessons and views

- Effective follow-up is often problematic after youths complete nature-based courses.

  Internationally, youths would go through the programme and go back to some sort of supportive structure. But often with local programmes, youth go back to a vacuum, back to the streets. Something needs to happen. (OBT-SA official)

  Sometimes Outward Bound by itself is not the best thing ... To break the cycle youths need a supportive structure to go back to. (OBT-SA official)

- Working with at-risk and offending youth requires a particular profile of facilitator.

  It is best to have a facilitator that comes from the same background of the programme, because then they can identify with them.

  I would be careful in taking on a group of young offenders. It would depend on the types of crime that they have committed ... We will be concerned for the instructor's safety and the safety of the group. (OBT-SA official)

- Implementers working with troubled and at-risk youth require counselling skills.

> Instructors do not have in-depth counselling skills. We are not social workers. We have the basics on how to handle situations. We don't attempt to counsel ... Guiding is perhaps the strongest word I can use. (OBT-SA official)

> We are not psychologists, although we do get a lot of personal stuff coming up during the course. If one can help, of course you will, but it is not our field of speciality. (OBT-SA official)

- Nature-based programming has an emotional impact on facilitators.

> The programme has a high impact on instructors in the sense that they are physically and emotionally exhausted after the course. Especially during the fist few days, you think for yourself and for the whole group ... With the at-risk programme, you often have to deal with difficult boys and psychologically they can make life difficult for the instructor and the group. (OBT-SA official)

- The programme provides a platform for bringing about change and development.

> The philosophy is to not only take them out on an adventure, but to take them out on an experience that will change their lives. They are out of their comfort zone. They are pushing their barriers. They are learning discipline, and they go further than they thought they would ever be able to. There is a tremendous impact on self-esteem, self-perception and hope for the future. (OBT-SA official)

- Programmes have to be flexible to accommodate the demands of specific groups.

> The programme is very flexible. It has to be, otherwise it will not work. We do draft activity schedules in advance, but if we see that something won't work, we do exclude some activities or build in additional ones, depending on the nature and needs, as well as the composition of the group. (OBT official)

3. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

OBT-SA bases its work on many of the same general assumptions as the previously discussed nature-based programmes, viewing antisocial behaviour as the result of a sense of disconnectedness between the self and the environment. It aims to change and strengthen the mind-sets of participants, especially those who find themselves on destructive paths. It takes a psychological approach to understanding youth at-risk behaviour, and values the relationship between the self and others. OBT-SA values group interaction and learning through problem solving, reflection and positive stress, and the shift in decision making from the facilitator to the group can help promote conflict management and leadership skills.

Although nature-based programmes, in general, show promise at intervening at the psychological level by building self esteem and positive interaction, they face the same challenges of every programme discussed thus far – the fact that the children on the programme are likely to go back to an impoverished home environment characterised by family dysfunction. In the case of OBT-SA the responsibility for follow-up lies predominantly with the referral organisations although OBT-SA makes a concerted effort to evaluate each individual child and to make recommendations with regard to appropriate follow-up.

Unlike many of the dedicated diversion interventions discussed thus far, the OBT-SA programme does not address specific risk factors related to offending. Although crime and antisocial behaviour may be discussed during debriefing sessions, such interaction is largely unstructured. This is understandable given that their core focus is on developing leadership and not on reducing crime *per se*. It seems though that nature-based initiatives generally might benefit from a more structured crime prevention focus given the high number of young people that get involved in crime and the potential that wilderness programmes have for impacting on hard-to-reach youth.

On the question of whether nature-based interventions promote restorative justice, indications are that the OBT initiative does give young offenders a chance to make amends for their wrongdoings. Although the initiative's community service component primarily sets out to instil compassion, generosity and care for others and is not limited to young people who have committed crimes, it can incorporate messages of accountability and restoration. The service component of the OBT initiative sets it apart from similar nature-based interventions. It should also be noted that participants from referral organisations such as Othandweni have already been involved in restorative activities as part of their diversion programming.

Replication of the OBT-SA model would be very difficult. OBT-SA is an established service provider in the outdoor/wilderness sector and has extensive resources including property, vehicles and equipment. In addition to this, a significant investment is required for the training and mentoring of staff, especially as it relates to safety and proficiency in running outdoor programmes.

Research indicates that wilderness therapy has great potential for effecting change in troubled youth. The problem lies in the fact that these programmes are highly specialised and expensive and are therefore not accessible to the majority of children who need them. As discussed in the previous chapter, considerable effort needs to be made to ensure the transfer of skills in the wilderness field and this cannot be taken on as an ad hoc activity. Organisations in this sector need to make a conscious decision as to whether they wish to operate purely as a service provider to other organisations – this is a legitimate choice and in the case of OBT-SA, programmes for disadvantaged children are subsided by income from corporate groups – or whether they want to embark on a capacity building initiative. The latter involves significant commitment both in terms of time and organisational resources. The Educo Capacity Building project (discussed briefly in Chapter 14) is a good example of this type of work.

Endnotes

1   The reader is referred to Chapter 3 for detail of Othandweni's work with at-risk and offending street children.

2   During 2002, OBT had a gender profile of 68% male and 32% female participants for all programmes (OBT 2002b:5).

3   The *OBT Handbook* has clear stipulations for each of these activities in terms of purpose, teaching considerations, presentation and debriefing, and there is a detailed safety policy for every physical challenge.

References

D'Almeida J. 1994. Introduction. In Tomkins P. 1998. *Outward Bound instructor handbook*. Knysna: Outward Bound Trust of South Africa.

Insideout. 2002. *Evaluation of the Outward Bound (OBT-SA) intervention within three different youth at risk initiatives*. Cape Town: Insideout.

Niell J. 1998. *Outward Bound Australia theory & research: a reference volume*. Tharwa: Outward Bound Australia.

OBT-SA (Outward Bound Trust of South Africa). 2003a. About Outward Bound South Africa. http://www.outwardbound.co.za/about-opening.htm (Accessed 27 June 2003).

OBT-SA (Outward Bound Trust of South Africa). 2003b. Mission Statement. http://www.outwardbound.co.za/method-mission.htm (Accessed 27 June 2003).

OBT-SA (Outward Bound Trust of South Africa). 2003c. Corporate courses. http://www.outwardbound.co.za/courses-corporate.htm (Accessed 27 June 2003).

OBT-SA (Outward Bound Trust of South Africa). 2003d. Youth at risk. http://www.outwardbound.co.za/courses-youth.htm (Accessed 27 June 2003).

OBT-SA (Outward Bound Trust of South Africa). 2002a. *Outward Bound South Africa – Winter 2002*. Knysna: Outward Bound Trust of South Africa.

OBT-SA (Outward Bound Trust of South Africa). 2002b. *Outward Bound South Africa 2002 Annual Report*. Knysna: Outward Bound Trust of South Africa.

Stetson CP. n.d. An essay on Kurt Hahn, founder of Outward Bound (1941). United States of America: The US Fund for Leadership Training.

Tompkins P. 1998. *Outward Bound instructor handbook*. Knysna: Outward Bound Trust of South Africa.

16

THE JOURNEY

National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO)

The Journey Programme of the National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO) creates an opportunity for high-risk youth to deal with their past in order to nurture self-worth, commitment and responsibility.

As NICRO has been described previously in this report, the reader is referred to Chapter 4 for more detail about the organisation's background, aims and values, organisational structure and resources, general profile of participants, staff and volunteers, partnerships, and monitoring and evaluation activities.

Toward the end of 1995, the Journey programme was initiated by the Inter-ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk (IMC) and was formally established by NICRO in 1996 (Monaheng 1997:9; Van Eeden 1997:49). Educo Africa[1] was instrumental in developing the wilderness aspect of the programme and gradually capacitated NICRO officials from the Western Cape to undertake the process. The programme was eventually rolled out nationally. Its structure and process differs from province to province, depending on the availability of resources and expertise (Ryklief 2002:1). The field work for this review was undertaken at NICRO Free State and the chapter therefore largely reflects the experiences of the NICRO staff and participants from that province.

1. RATIONALE AND AIM

Some diversion cases are characterised by dysfunctional backgrounds, repeat offending and involvement in serious offences. High-risk youths often exhibit uncontrollable behaviour such as truancy, aggression and substance abuse. In addition, they frequently have low levels of literacy and accompanying learning difficulties, poor communication skills, low self-esteem and have been exposed to various kinds of abuse and trauma. Very often they are without a caring father figure in their lives. Ryklief notes that:

> It is these pains that need healing in order for them to be able to deal with their childhood and make the transition to become an adult and take up their responsibility in the community. (Ryklief 2002:2)

The Journey is an intensive intervention that helps troubled youth confront their behaviour in the course of its outdoor adventure activities (NICRO 2003e). It aspires to nourish self-expression, commitment, responsibility and a sense of belonging among participants, and emphasises the need for group work, determination and commitment to achieve life's goals. Its aim is to take troubled youth out of their communities and put them in a wilderness or nature setting so that they can deal with childhood matters, face their anxieties, get to know themselves, and develop a vision for the future (Ryklief 2002:2). More specifically, the programme endeavours to:

■ Enable young people to acknowledge and deal with their past in a constructive way.

■ Support them in regaining control of their lives through counselling, awareness and the development of skills.

■ Help them develop realistic and comprehensive future plans.

■ Use outdoor activities as a basis for testing strengths, building confidence and re-exploring needs and values.

■ Provide for vocational skills training and aftercare service delivery.

(Moolman 2002:1)

2. ENTRY CRITERIA AND PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

Selection criteria for the Journey programme follow roughly the same pattern as other NICRO diversion initiatives, except that its participants are largely high-risk youths. As a principle, repeat offenders and those who have committed more serious offences are considered for the Journey. They are assessed to ensure that they are mentally capable of completing the programme, as well as physically capable of participating in the various outdoor activities. The Journey accepts both male and female participants, although on separate programmes, with the majority being male. NICRO Bloemfontein runs an average of one female group per year compared to four or five male groups.

3. CONTENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

In the Free State, the Journey's outdoor activities are undertaken over a five- to six-day period. The intake size is approximately 20 participants at a time. Since the intervention is the most expensive diversion programme NICRO provides, service providers often have to wait before a suitable number of participants can be mobilised for the intervention to be financially viable, and the court is requested to extend or postpone individual cases.

The Journey Programme is largely co-ordinated from the NICRO offices. The buildings occupied by NICRO Bloemfontein are rented from the Department of Public Works and a small hall on the premises is available for the orientation phase of the programme. The programme is implemented at the Zastron Outdoor Centre, a camping and adventure facility in the southern part of the province. The site is mostly used for open-air school activities and is ideal for the Journey, since physical activities and obstacle courses are readily available and the Centre staff are experienced and provide help. NICRO provides transport to and from the site.

The Journey can be broken down into phases, each with its own specific objectives. The programme starts with individual assessments, orientation and preparation, followed by the intervention itself and debriefing and follow-

up functions. The dynamic and flexible nature of each Journey gives the facilitators scope to constantly adapt its content to suit the needs of particular groups (Ryklief 2002:1).

Phase 1: Assessment, orientation and preparation

Assessments are done to learn more about each participant's family background, relationships within the family, and the influence of peer pressure and causes of the offence. The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that the family as support structure are faced with are identified and documented (Moolman 2002:2). Interviews are conducted with the parents of participants. Questions posed by the Journey assessment instrument relate to school attendance, learning abilities, recreational activities, personal interests, and basic needs, such as clothing. The aim of the assessment is to identify the participants' individual needs so as to establish common interests and intervention requirements for the whole group. Specific aims and objectives for each programme are formulated on the basis of these assessments, and each programme design, including its activities, is unique.

Orientation entails an initial meeting with all participants during which the aim and processes of the programme are discussed (Moolman 2002:2; Van Eeden 1997:49). Participants are informed that the Journey is not just a camp, but an experience that will challenge them physically and emotionally. Voluntary participation is stressed. Offenders referred by the courts are told the consequences of choosing not to attend and actively participate in the programme (most often they will be referred back to court for formal prosecution). Some Journey participants are referred from other sources such as schools, and their commitment to participate is especially important, given that there are no formal sanctions should they fail to complete the programme. An information session is also held with parents during which consent and indemnity forms are completed.

During the two days before departure there are team-building exercises to ensure group cohesion and to create support structures (Moolman 2002:2–3). The aim of these activities is to promote trust among participants, while at the same time allowing group members and facilitators to become acquainted with each other. Participants are constantly reminded of the aim of the programme and that each of them needs to take the opportunity offered to explore their own lives. (Ryklief 2002:5).

Group rules are formulated with the input of the participants, and concerns and expectations are clarified. Each participant commits himself or herself to the programme by signing and endorsing the programme rules (Moolman 2002:3). They are told what to bring (i.e. clothes, cutlery and bedding) and what items are not permitted, for example mobile phones and radios.

Phase 2: The adventure

For the Journey to be a success, it is important that the young person be removed from familiar surroundings and any usual securities (Van Eeden 1997:50). Since most of the participants live in urban settings, a retreat to the outdoors is an excellent option. The adventure phase consists of problem-solving courses, abseiling, river-rafting, canoeing, horse riding, swimming and mountain climbing. Participation in these activities is often challenging, given that most participants have never done these things before.

The activities test many limits. Participants are challenged and encouraged to confront their fears of failure and of being physically and emotionally hurt. Among other things, they do an all-night 'solo' to reflect on past actions and experiences in an effort to answer the question: who am I? They also have to participate in an activity called the 'high ropes', which involves walking across a horizontal pole about 15 to 20 metres up in the air (Van Eeden 1997:53). This causes much fear and anxiety in participants, and they encourage one another to complete the activity. Such experiences teach the value of trust, encouragement and support. They extend the participants' physical abilities, in parallel with their mental capacities, by acknowledging and rewarding the successful completion of activities (Ryklief 2002:6). The idea behind these physical and mental challenges is to link what is experienced during outdoor activities with indoor therapeutic and intervention sessions.[2] The aim of these outdoor activities is to:

■ Create awareness of one's own skills and abilities.

■ Lead, listen and learn from others.

■ Develop adaptability and self-discipline.

■ Learn to co-operate with others through communication.

■ Develop an awareness of responsibility toward others.

■ Enhance the personal strength of others.

■ Restore the ability to trust oneself and others.

(Moolman 2002:3)

Throughout the adventure, participants are prompted to 'open up' and share their views, life experiences and lessons they have learned during the programme. The lessons learned through outdoor and group activities are meant to be internalised and put into practice outside the learning site; in other words, in the participants home, school and community environments. They are expected to internalise what they have learned during the adventure in order to cope with the demands and pressures of everyday life. Central to this awareness, however, is introspection and 'making peace' with past happenings and behaviour (Moolman 2002:3–4). This process is often accompanied by strong emotions.

In planning for the future, each participant is expected to develop his or her own plan of action. Without a plan, it is believed that participants will be left without direction after completion of the programme. Future plans include short- and long-term goals, and strategies for repairing the damage caused by the offending behaviour and taking responsibility for actions. Participants are provided with life skills training for implementing their action plans. Such training depends on the needs of the group, and could include problem-solving techniques, decision making, communication and responsibility themes.

Phase 3: Debriefing, reintegration and follow-up

The Journey is an intensive programme that attempts to create the 'emotional high' that is needed to change the direction of participants' lives. To maintain this positive thrust and attitude, substantial reintegration, aftercare and

follow-through services are needed (Ryklief 2002:2). These functions are undertaken in the form of follow-up sessions, parent-child reconciliation and vocational skills training.

After returning from the adventure, feedback is provided to the participants' parents or guardians. They are given an opportunity to inquire about their children's participation and progress, and about links to resources, such as programmes aimed at improve parenting skills. Successful completion of the Journey is celebrated with a 'claiming victory' function to which parents, friends and teachers are invited. This function gives participants an opportunity to share their experiences with significant others, and to publicly commit themselves to change (Moolman 2002:4). It also serves to elicit support from parents and teachers in the changing process. Community members are encouraged to participate through pledges and messages to the participants, who also receive certificates for their bravery and commitment to the programme.

Follow-up and aftercare services are provided in the form of group meetings to assess how plans have been put into practice and what progress has been made. There are individual interviews and sessions with the youths' parents or guardians, usually within the first three months following the programme (Moolman 2002:4–5). Youths can be enrolled for or referred to vocational training programmes, and provided with additional life skills training in problem solving, decision making, relationships and communication. At this stage vocational skills training is seen as being especially important for sustaining positive attitudes (Ryklief 2002:8), and it not only ensures income but also satisfies the human need to be productive and contribute to preserving the family. In this process, the participants' educational levels pose particular challenges and employment is mostly sought in the unskilled sections of the mechanical and building industries. The Department of Labour helps with vocational skills training for participants.

NICRO Western Cape has in the past made use of an additional follow-through programme to ensure the changes brought about by the Journey programme are sustained (Ryklief 2002:1). Big Brother Big Sister South Africa (BBBSSA)[3] enrolled Journey participants in a one-year mentorship programme, which matched each Journey participant to a well-trained mentor with whom the participant interacted for at least one hour each week. The aim was for positive role models to support the participants in achieving the education and career plans that they set themselves during the adventure phase of the programme.

It should be noted that NICRO programme facilitators constantly evaluate the progress that individuals make. Should it be observed that they have not sufficiently internalised the programme's lessons, or are experiencing problems in completing tasks, more direct and individual attention is paid. Active participation in and internalisation of the aims of the Journey are continuously evaluated, and form the basis of feedback reports.

Costs

NICRO's service sites and branches rely predominantly on outcomes-based funding channelled via the national office. This is a fixed amount that is paid to the provincial office for each child who participates in the Journey programme. This unit cost represents all costs, i.e. personnel, material, transport, overheads, etc. In 2003 the cost per Journey participant was R1 500.

3. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The Journey succeeds in its general intention of creating an environment in which participants can acknowledge and deal with their pasts in a constructive way. Evidence shows that most participants confront their pasts, and that the experience can be quite emotional. It is commendable that the intervention helps participants learn to express their emotions effectively. As mentioned in previous chapters, nature-based intervention appears to be an effective strategy for reaching high-risk children, especially those on destructive paths.

The Journey's activities progressively promote understanding and the development of strategies for improving the individual's behaviour. Drafting plans for the future in particular has great potential for guiding participants toward increasing levels of pro-social behaviour. Collective learning and sharing of experiences are critical throughout the programme. The Journey is multi-modal and is a follow-up to the successful completion of a life skills training programme, so it provides opportunities for strengthening the psycho-social skills that have been learned. As previously noted, follow-up activities are crucial in order to sustain the progress made during the programme.

The Journey programme shows a clear understanding of the multiple risk factors that high-risk children face, and is very valuable in not only strengthening participants' emotional well-being and sense of purpose but also imparting vocational skills. Many of the participants in the programme have left school at an early age and struggle to secure employment owing to their limited educational level. They are thus susceptible to being drawn back into a life of crime. NICRO's efforts to provide them with tangible skills and to secure employment for them are therefore commendable. Indications from the literature are that the majority of nature-based initiatives, do not focus on the economic empowerment of participants.

The involvement of the participants' parents deserves special mention, as their support and understanding of the programme can prove critical for putting plans into action and following them through once the participants return home. At the same time, parents themselves may benefit from activities aimed at improving their parenting skills and their relationship with their child.

As indicated in the previous discussions, stand-alone nature-based programmes do not usually incorporate direct restorative justice activities, especially in terms of reconciliation and reparation. However, the Journey, like many of NICRO's programmes, comprises a range of components and can include a restorative element if necessary. NICRO also makes continued efforts to promote reconciliation between participants and their parents. As previously emphasised, strengthening the ties between at-risk children and their parents appears to be pivotal in reducing antisocial behaviour. NICRO's multi-faceted approach to programming is made possible by the fact that it is a large service provider with a range of services at it disposal. This may not always be possible in smaller organisations and again highlights the need for strategic partnerships between organisations in order to provide a holistic service to young offenders.

Endnotes

1   The reader is referred to Chapter 14 for more information about Educo Africa.

2   As one facilitator noted: "Even at night when one wants to go to the toilet, you decide: shall I wake someone to go with me, or shall I face it alone? That is where the communication and trust part comes in, because the toilet is far from the sleeping place, it is dark and there are monkeys in the trees."

3   The reader is referred to Chapter 17 for more information about BBBSSA's mentoring programme.

References

Monaheng A. 1997. Overview of the diversion programmes within NICRO. In Muntingh LM & Shapiro R (eds). *NICRO diversion options (3rd edn)*. Cape Town: National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders.

Moolman A. 2002. *Journey Programme training manual*. Bloemfontein: National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders.

NICRO (National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders). 2003e. Developing young people's potential. http://www.nicro.org.za/projects-youth.asp (Accessed 9 June 2003).

Ryklief AR. 2002. *The Journey Programme – a brief outline*. Cape Town: National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders.

Van Eeden K. 1997. The Journey Programme. In Muntingh LM & Shapiro R (eds). *NICRO diversion options (3rd edn)*. Cape Town: National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders.

Part 5

MENTORING PROGRAMMES

OVERVIEW

Internationally, and particularly in North America, mentoring as a means of supporting disadvantaged young people has been in use since the late 19th century and continues to receive wide support (Crowley & McIntyre 1999:2). Mentoring programmes recruit and train adults to provide at-risk children with guidance and a positive outlook on life over a specific period of time. Freedman (in Crowley & McIntyre 1999:2) defines mentoring as:

> ... a sustained, close, developmental relationship between an older, more experienced individual and a younger person, with a goal of building character and competence on the part of the protégé.

In South Africa, structured mentoring is a relatively new concept (Open Society Foundation for South Africa [OSF] 2002:1). The mid-1990s saw the formalisation of the country's first mentoring programme when Inanda residents expressed the need to have older youth mentoring and guiding troubled children in the gang-ridden township (Farren 2002:32). The Eersterus-based National Youth Development Outreach Centre (YDO) followed suit in matching diversion participants to positive role models.

In the context of diversion, mentoring programmes set out to:

- Foster stable, trusting and ongoing friendships between adults and at-risk children.

- Help young participants cope more effectively with the challenges they face.

- Develop young participants' potential at home, at school and in the community.

- Enable them to explore constructive social and recreational opportunities.

- Increase self-awareness and self-value through meaningful interaction.

- Facilitate responsible and effective behaviour to prevent re-offending.

    (Crowley & McIntyre 1999:7; Ngwenya 2002:12–13)

In the light of these envisaged outcomes, participation in mentor programmes should be voluntary. The assumptions are that the young person:

- Will be responsive to the idea of mentoring.

- Has limited links with positive peers and support services, both within and outside the family.

- Experiences challenges that a mentoring relationship could address.

- Displays signs of non-engagement, but with the potential of engagement in a positive relationship.

    (Crowley & McIntyre 1999:5)

Mentors are adult volunteers who agree to act as mentors and friends to at-risk children. Although many are employed, students also volunteer for mentoring. Some initiatives welcome ex-offenders to act as mentors, since they are seen to have valuable experience and understanding of these young people's circumstances and the challenges they face. Nevertheless, it is critical that the mentor displays a high level of success in his or her work

219

and personal life (Crowley & McIntyre 1999:8). Volunteers are usually screened for their suitability to serve as mentors, and some form of training or orientation precedes the matching of mentoring relationships.

With some programmes, a mentor interacts with two to six children, while in others the mentor interacts with only one (Ngwenya 2002:13). It is generally accepted that mentoring relationships should last for a minimum of six and a maximum of twelve months (OSF 2002:18). Service providers, such as Youth Development Outreach (YDO), note that successful mentoring depends on significant time commitment (Mbambo 2002:7). In dealing with young offenders, mentoring programmes are often used in combination with other interventions such as life skills training and community service (Ngwenya 2002:12).

THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS

Mentoring is founded partly on the view that, at some stage in his/her life, each person requires or required some form of guidance and support. In addition, people generally feel the need to be noticed and acknowledged. If children do not receive the attention they need, they may engage in destructive activities, merely to be noticed (OSF 2002:3–4). Justifications for mentoring are also based on social learning and modelling theories that view behaviour as the continuous reciprocity of cognitive, behavioural and environmental influences (Tinsley 1996:75). In part, this process entails gaining experiences upon which guidelines for conduct are established. Throughout the process, interaction with others acts as a catalyst for establishing behaviour patterns. To effect modelling, four processes are followed:

- Sufficient attention is paid to the model to deduct its functioning value.

- Through a process of retention, the person remembers the model and/or its value.

- The retained memories influence and transpire through behaviour.

- The behaviour is motivated through incentives.

Some of the risk factors associated with youth offending, such as an upbringing without the presence of a meaningful father figure or role model, can therefore be positively affected by successful mentoring (Crowley & McIntyre 1999:2).

VALUE

Mentoring programmes acknowledge the inadequate personal relationships and damaging environments that often characterise the background of at-risk children. In contrast – and complementary – to shorter-term diversion interventions, mentoring support allows for extended interaction with the child (Ngwenya 2002:13). At the same time, it provides for the follow-up and aftercare needs of diversion programming. Although the value of mentoring for the young person is generally recognised, its positive effects also extend to the family and broader community (OSF 2002:17). In addition, mentors themselves may experience the initiative as a life-enriching experience. Seen more broadly, mentoring benefits diversion through its opportunities for inspiring and strengthening constructive lifestyles, hence its particular value for reintegration programming (Mbambo 2002:7).

Owing to the recent increase in the popularity of mentoring intervention (Van der Merwe & Dawes 2004:25), little evidence currently exists regarding its effectiveness with offending youth. The findings of two North American studies of the effectiveness of the Big Brother Big Sister initiative with at-risk (and not offending) youth noted that participants were: less likely than those from the control group to have started using drugs or alcohol; less likely to hit another person; felt more competent in their school work; improved their school attendance and performance; and reported improved family and peer relationships (Tierney, Grossman & Resch in Van der Merwe & Dawes 2004:25).

CHALLENGES

Mbambo (2002:7) notes that the use of mentoring in the criminal justice system is fairly new and that efforts should be made to promote its credibility. This calls for proper evaluation based on clear indicators related to at-risk youth. The planning and implementation of mentoring programmes present, amongst others, the following challenges:

- Recruiting and securing volunteers who are suitable for mentoring relationships with at-risk and offending children.

- Gaining the support and understanding of communities for mentoring programmes.

- Setting the boundaries of the mentoring relationship regarding the level and nature of its involvement in the child's family and school environments.

- Nurturing and monitoring healthy relationships where the mentor does not act as a parent or instructor but as a friend.

- Helping the mentor to be creative in communicating crime prevention messages.

- Keeping volunteers motivated to see the mentoring relationship through.

- Determining that referred children will benefit from mentoring.

- Ensuring appropriate exit strategies for the termination of mentoring relationships.

- Counteracting the possibility of the child viewing the programme as a continuation of supervision for his or her offending behaviour.

- Effective monitoring of the mentoring relationship.

- Instilling an understanding of youth development among volunteers.

- Deciding whether to remunerate volunteers or not. Payment may ensure continued involvement and accountability, although the loss of funding could see the collapse of the entire initiative.

- Obtaining the support, commitment and understanding of at-risk youth for mentoring programmes. In part, this challenge could be addressed by mandating completion of the mentoring programme by the court, although this would conflict with the notion of mentoring as a voluntary process.

(Crowley & McIntyre 1999:9; Farren 2002:32; OSF 2002:4–5, 17–19)

221

References

Crowley D & McIntyre S. 1999. ONE2ONE – a mentoring project for young offenders. Paper presented at the Children and Crime: Victims and Offenders Conference convened by the Australian Institute of Criminology, Brisbane, 17–18 June 1999.

Farren T. 2002. Someone special for children at risk. *Mail and Guardian*. 31 January 2002. p. 32.

Mbambo B. 2002. Mentoring: a prevention, diversion, alternative sentencing and reintegration model for the child justice system. *Article 40*. 4(3):6–7.

Ngwenya K. 2002. Saved from a life of crime. *Drum*. 4 April 2002. 12–13.

OSF (Open Society Foundation for South Africa). 2002. Mentoring programmes – workshop report. http://www.osf.org.za/File_Uploads/docs/ MentoringProgrammesforYouth18June2002.pdf (Accessed 13 March 2004).

Tinsley S. 1996. The development of a self-empowerment programme for juvenile delinquents. Unpublished masters dissertation. Johannesburg: Rand Afrikaans University.

Van der Merwe AP & Dawes. 2004. *The development of minimum standards for diversion programmes: a literature review*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council.

17

BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF SOUTH AFRICA (BBBSSA)

Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Africa (BBBSSA) is a non-profit organisation that, through fostering long-term mentoring relationships, helps children and at-risk youth to realise their full potential (BBBSSA n.d.) The organisation aims to restore a positive life vision through inspirational role modelling for youths and minors between the ages of six and 18 years (BBBSSA 2003a; 2003b). Although quite recently established in South Africa, the Big Brother Big Sister (BBBS) approach to youth empowerment and development is based on a century's work and experience with the mentoring of children by adults. This chapter explores BBBSSA's work with young offenders.

1. THE ORGANISATION

1.1 Background

Big Brothers and Big Sisters were two organisations founded in the USA in 1904 and 1905 respectively (BBBSSA 2003b). In 1977, the two merged to establish Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. In 1998 Big Brothers Big Sisters International (BBBSI) was established, with the aim of promoting and supporting the development of its mentoring concept through independent affiliates (Louw 2002:7). Since then, the initiative has been rolled out to 36 countries globally.

The South African branch, launched in September 2000, was the first in Africa. The inception of BBBSSA was initiated by the Partners for Children Educational Trust, which was established in 1998 in response to the critical need for youth-focused crime prevention strategies. The guiding philosophy behind the Trust is that crime flourishes in communities that are deprived of opportunity and hope, but decreases in communities characterised by positive role models and viable rewarding alternatives. In March 2001, BBBSSA started its mentoring activities in Cape Town (BBBSSA 2003b), and the Johannesburg branch was opened in October 2002. The BBBS methodology was moulded to complement South African contexts after substantial consultation with BBBSI. In June 2002, BBBSSA was granted full affiliate status to BBBSI.

1.2 Aims and mission

The primary aim of BBBSSA is to promote the development of young people by offering long-term, personal mentoring relationships between carefully selected adult volunteers and children who are in need of additional adult companionship and guidance. The organisation's mission reads as follows:

> To promote the establishment of consistent, caring and goal-directed one-to-one relationships between an adult volunteer and a youth in need so as to provide a role model, mentor and perhaps, most of all, a friend who will inspire in the youth a capacity for positive living. (BBBSSA 2003b)

According to BBBSSA the concept and practice of mentoring is age-old. The organisation sees mentoring as a system that allows for an older, more experienced role model to provide, over time, a younger person with guidance, care and support so as to help them maximise their potential (BBBSSA 2003a). The ultimate outcome is to instil personal values such as self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others through positive role modelling.

Although each mentoring relationship determines its own objectives, the following goals are central to all mentoring endeavours and to the organisation as a whole (Louw 2002:9–10):

■ To establish and develop trusting relationships between mentors and the children they are mentoring that ensure a safe space for children to openly express and share their feelings.

■ To provide assistance to young people in dealing with, and rising above, their current circumstances and situations.

■ To support participants in setting realistic, achievable and measurable goals so as to strive for and develop a positive sense of self and vision in life.

■ To encourage and contribute to the development of positive lifestyles through role modelling and effective communication.

■ To contribute to the development of the children's self-esteem through encouragement, recognition and acknowledgement.

■ To assist relationships within the children's domestic and/or school environments by strengthening communication, conflict resolution and relationship-building skills that could help establish positive family interactions.

■ To help children with their academic duties so as to increase their chances of realising their full potential and taking advantage of future opportunities.

(Louw 2002:9–10)

The BBBSSA mentoring model consists of three critical partners: BBBSSA as the facilitating organisation; adult volunteers who act as mentors; and young people who are considered as at-risk or in need of guidance and support.

1.3 Organisational structure and resources

BBBSSA is directed by an executive officer, and its affairs are overseen by a board of trustees. An additional structure, consisting of developmental specialists, provides advice and direction to the organisation.

BBBSSA rents office space for its management and administrative staff. Infrastructural requirements are kept to the minimum in order to decrease overheads. With the BBBS programme primarily based on volunteering in the true sense of the word, volunteers do not receive payment for their training or mentoring services, and have to provide their own transport to and from meetings with the children they are mentoring. The organisation needs some resources for outreach, marketing, recruiting, training, assessment and supervision, but apart from organisational and co-ordination structures, it can be implemented with minimal infrastructure and resources.

BBBSSA approaches local and international foundations, corporate bodies and trusts for financial support. It does not receive financial assistance from the international BBBS governing body and it is highly dependent on external financial support. Of the financial assistance dedicated to specific projects, the largest proportion is received for the diversion support programme (Louw 2002:16). This could in part be because of the explicit need to intervene with young people in conflict with the law.

2. THE MENTORING PROGRAMME FOR AT-RISK YOUTH

BBBSSA's work can be divided into two categories: schools-based programmes, which aim to create a safe, effective and conducive learning environment at educational facilities, and community-based programmes, which revolve around the referral of children who are in need of care and support (Louw 2002:24). Referrals for the latter come from social workers, children's homes and orphanages, and from the National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO). BBBSSA's support of young offenders is explored below.

2.1 Rationale and aim

It is generally accepted that, during the formative years, the quality of relationships with adults is a critical feature in the development of children and adolescents (Louw 2002:8). Young people need to receive guidance and support from significant elders in order to become responsible adults. In many communities, especially marginalised ones, such nurturing is often inadequate. Single-parent households, absent father figures and family dysfunction and disruption exacerbate the situation. With the disintegration of family structures, and the escalation of AIDS fatalities, children are increasingly being left without support frameworks and positive role models. In consequence, mentoring as a form of social intervention is increasingly recognised as a possible solution.

If young offenders are to be successfully reintegrated, a chief priority is to sustain the impact and effect of diversion programmes. After completing diversion programmes, youths often return to the poverty, violence and peer pressure that may have contributed to their offending in the first place. It is therefore critical that they be provided with support to help them maintain responsible behaviour patterns and to choose positive alternatives to crime. The BBBSSA approach can complement diversion endeavours by matching a young offender with a concerned, caring adult who will provide appropriate support and counsel to sustain the impact of diversion experiences.

As a first step in realising this imperative, BBBSSA engaged in a strategic partnership with NICRO. Minor and first-time offenders who had completed NICRO's Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES)[1], and those guilty of more serious crimes who had completed the Journey programme[2], were referred to BBBSSA for mentoring support. YES entails young offenders acquiring the life skills that are needed to understand the consequences of misconduct. At the same time, conflict management, communication and decision making skills are imparted (NICRO 2000:6). The Journey programme is an intensive intervention with strong outdoor adventure elements that lead troubled youths to reconsider their actions and decisions (NICRO 2003). The aim of the BBBSSA-NICRO partnership was to provide diverted youth with a longer-term sustainable source of assistance during their reintegration back into domestic and community environments. The premise was that mentoring support over an additional one-year period could enhance the new, constructive behaviour and attitudes that were established through the YES and Journey programmes. While BBBSSA no longer receives referrals from NICRO, partnerships have been established with a range of organisations and institutions providing services to at-risk youth, including Pollsmoor Prison.

2.2 Entry criteria and profile of participants

Participants have to be between the ages of seven and 18 years. Voluntary participation is required, although this concept is difficult to apply when dealing with young offenders. As will be discussed later, the voluntary nature of the mentoring programme poses particular challenges to the overall BBBS philosophy.

Background characteristics of young people considered for participation in the post-diversion and reintegration mentoring programme include the following:

- Many are from single or sibling-headed households characterised by a lack of parental – specifically paternal – guidance.

- A large number are from environments typified by family dysfunction and violence, gangsterism, sexual abuse, and alcohol and drug abuse.

- Most have left school at an early age.

- Many exhibit uncontrollable and antisocial behaviour and family relationships are poor.

2.3 Programme content and implementation

Mentoring relationships are unique. Each match is characterised by its own developmental requirements, implementation strategy and resources. This individual approach to youth empowerment renders the programme highly flexible and thus able to address the developmental needs of its participants. This has significant meaning for dealing with young offenders, as they most often have particular values and behavioural attitudes that need to be considered during intervention.

The BBBSSA programme consists of several procedures that ensure quality mentoring relationships. In general, these entail referring and assessing participants, recruiting and training volunteers, matching and implementing

the relationship, monitoring and supervision, and closure. Procedures related to recruiting volunteers and assessing participants run concurrently, and are conducted as two separate processes until matching takes place. Case managers ensure that policies and procedures are undertaken professionally and in accordance with the standards set by BBBSI.

Phase 1: Referral and assessment of participants

Diverted youths are referred from court to a diversion service provider and on completion of the formal diversion programme are then referred by that agency to the mentoring programme. When deciding whether a mentor could be beneficial to a particular situation the BBBSSA case worker thoroughly assesses the referred youth and also considers the domestic situation and family dynamics. More specifically, the assessment focuses on the following:

- Biographical information – place of residence, age, gender, language, population group and schooling.

- Source of referral, relationship to the participant and reason for referral.

- Motivation for participating in the programme and expectations in terms of outcomes.

- Interests and the nature of recreational activities.

- Social skills, friendships and intimate relationships.

- Intellectual development, future educational needs and career path.

- Family composition and nature of relationships with parents and other family members.

- Experience with drugs, alcohol and gangs.

- Physical health and specific medical conditions.

- Mental health and counselling history.

In addition, the assessment focuses on the applicant's aspirations, perception of himself or herself, family functioning and trust in others. The youth and his or her parent or guardian have to complete application forms, and personal interviews are conducted. All information is collated in a report that outlines the youth's preferences, interests and family background. The assessment determines a candidate's appropriateness for the mentoring programme and guides the selection of a mentor.

Phase 2: Recruitment and training of volunteers

Mentors are volunteers who meet regularly over a period of time with an identified young person in a professionally managed programme that creates and supports their relationships. Volunteers are recruited from all walks of life. Students, professionals and retired persons can volunteer their mentoring services. BBBSSA has a comprehensive selection procedure which involves an assessment of personal interests, preferences and suitability of the applicant for the programme. The applicant's background is checked for involvement in criminal activities[3] and a professionally administered personality profile is compiled (BBBSSA 2003a). Mentors are asked whether they have

any particular preferences in terms of the personality, age, population group, gender and language of the child they are going to mentor.

Following successful screening, the prospective mentors complete a training course of 21 hours in social education. For cost-effectiveness and group interaction to facilitate learning, it is aimed to have around 20 trainees at a time. Training takes place either over a weekend, over three consecutive Saturdays, or once a week over an eight-week period. Volunteers are not provided with stipends for transport to and from the training venue. It is assumed that if they do not have the resources to attend the training they might not be in a position to get to and from the meetings with the children they are mentoring. However, training is provided in community settings to make transport easier for mentors, and student volunteers are trained on campus. The core mentoring training covers the following areas:

- Roles and responsibilities of volunteering and mentoring.

- The development of self-esteem and communication.

- Sexuality, gender and HIV/AIDS.

- Values and ethnicity.

- Child development and child abuse.

This training on youth-specific matters is aimed at empowering volunteers to offer the best possible support to the children being mentored. Appropriate training also gives mentors confidence in their capabilities to deal effectively with an array of concerns (BBBSSA 2003c). The training of volunteers prior to matching is perhaps the most pertinent deviation from the American BBBS model. The South African branch believes that thorough preparation puts volunteers in a better position to address the demands of mentoring (Louw 2002:21), and that their interaction with case managers during the training process further informs their matching profiles and prospects. Many volunteers are students who particularly benefit from the programme by developing practical skills, experiencing workshops and exploring interpersonal dynamics.

Volunteers do not pay for the training that they receive, but if they withdraw from the programme directly after training they have to reimburse BBBSSA for the training expenses (BBBSSA 2003a). Training workshops that deal with subjects of interest or pertinence to mentoring are scheduled throughout the year. These could include substance abuse, rape and domestic violence, gangsterism and trauma management. The mentors are encouraged to attend these sessions. In addition, they learn about creative ways to engage with the children they are mentoring, such as food gardening and making arts and crafts.

Phase 3: Matching and implementing the relationship

The matching of a volunteer to a young person is largely based on the development of a profile of interests that are common to both parties. This process informs BBBSSA what the young person's developmental needs are, which in turn suggests what skills, strengths and resources the volunteer needs to have. A subsequent match plan highlights areas that might need strengthening, and strategies for the development of the relationship. Measurable

indicators are linked to developmental strategies. The success of individual matches is determined by the extent to which the mentoring goals are achieved over the one-year period.

Once a potentially successful match profile is finalised, the case manager organises the first meeting between the mentor and the child. Here they exchange contact details and make arrangements for their next visit. Interaction between the mentor and child has to take place for at least one hour per week over the one-year period.[4] Meetings can take place at the child's home or at chosen venues such as libraries, parks, malls or community centres. Generally, the mentor and the child being mentored collaboratively decide on what activities to undertake. Some mentors provide assistance with homework, while others attend or participate in sporting activities. The possibilities for interaction with the young person are endless, although activities have to be enjoyable to both parties. Outings can also be undertaken with the permission of the child's parent or guardian.

If the mentor or the child experiences problems with the match, the case manager is informed. The two parties can either receive counselling from the case manager or, if deemed necessary, alternative matches can be arranged. Whenever the mentor or the child will be absent for a long period of time, for example during holidays, the other party has to be informed in advance. Telephonic contact during such periods is encouraged.

Phase 4: Monitoring and supervision

Case managers regularly communicate with mentors, children and the latter's parents or guardians to ensure that the relationship is developing and that all parties are comfortable with arrangements. Formal supervision takes place fortnightly during the first month after matching, as well as during the second, sixth and twelfth month of the mentoring relationship (BBBSSA 2002:3). In general, monitoring and supervision of diversion matches occur more frequently than with other matches, as mentors frequently require additional support from case managers. Supervision usually takes place in person. Case managers are always accessible to mentors, parents or guardians and young participants. Mentors complete an activity log after each meeting with the children they are mentoring. The nature of the activity, date, time and duration are recorded. Activity logs are forwarded to the case manager on a monthly basis and form the basis for discussion during supervision sessions.

Phase 5: Closure of the match

From the onset, it is explained to the child that the relationship with the mentor is for a one-year period only. Mentors are encouraged to prepare the children they are mentoring as the time for closure approaches. Participants are, from time to time, reminded of the remaining duration of their interaction, and the number of meetings could be decreased during the last quarter of the year. Furthermore, case managers send letters to the parents or guardians of the mentored children, or to the relevant referral point, informing them of the match's date of closure. Very often children have to be counselled about the closure. A match closure checklist, completed by the case manager, captures information about the nature of the relationship and whether additional referral services are needed.

After the one-year mentoring period, volunteers can decide whether they would like to continue or terminate their relationships with the children they have been mentoring. If a continued relationship is wished for, the relationship

then functions outside the boundaries and responsibilities of BBBSSA. Nevertheless, such commitments are encouraged. Internationally, mentoring relationships last on average between three to five years, while others last a lifetime. Volunteers receive a certificate upon successful completion of the programme.

Implementation with diverted youth

During the first 18 months of the BBBSSA-NICRO partnership, the following problems were experienced with the referral of Journey participants to the mentoring programme:

■ The fact that youth were not mandated by the court to participate in the mentoring programme after completing the formal diversion programme created problems with commitment to the mentoring relationships. Mentoring children referred from the courts created a dilemma. BBBSSA operates on the principle of voluntary participation. This approach was not successful with this difficult target group as many of them failed to arrive for scheduled meetings, etc. Insisting that the mentoring component be made part of a court order was problematic in that it reinforced the idea that mentoring is a form of punishment, thus detracting from the value of a voluntary positive adult–child relationship.

■ Because many of the participants came from low socioeconomic backgrounds and did not have telephones, mentors had difficulty contacting them. Also, many of the children being mentored no longer attended school so this could not be used as a point of contact. These factors made it difficult to arrange regular meetings.

■ Because the Journey programme caters for high-risk youth with a possible history of behavioural problems, these participants posed particular challenges for the recruitment of suitable mentors, given that they were expected to deal with a range of complex social and psychological problems.

(BBBSSA 2002:3)

In order to address these problems, BBBSSA made the following adjustments to the programme:

■ Matching is now undertaken before the diverted youths start the formal diversion programme, so as to help develop a good relationship while the youth is progressing through its various components.

■ BBBSSA hosts adventure weekends during which mentors and children have more time to interact and strengthen their relationships.

■ The post-diversion relationship has been made more sustainable by the court's decision to have the mentoring component form part of the overall diversion endeavour, so that diverted youth have to complete the 12-month mentoring programme before cases against them are withdrawn.

(BBBSSA 2002:5)

Although the improvements are an ongoing process, these changes have already made a difference to the BBBS programme.

Staff and volunteers

Four case managers in Cape Town and one in Johannesburg, each with about 125 cases to manage, are responsible for co-ordinating and administering BBBS mentoring relationships. Additionally, they participate in recruiting and training activities and in raising awareness among stakeholders and referral agencies about the programme. Case managers are all qualified social workers.

Volunteering is vital to the success of the BBBS programme. It is highly dependent on the willingness of caring adults to enrol in the programme and engage actively in mentoring endeavours. However, significantly fewer men than women enlist as mentors – only approximately a quarter are men (Louw 2002:18, 23). Many people show interest in becoming involved with the programme, but a large number of them do not follow through to become mentors. Of the 1 566 inquiries that were made to BBBSSA during 2001 and 2002, 41% did not proceed with formal application and another 24% withdrew their applications. Attempts to curb the high disengagement figures include sending through application forms immediately upon inquiry, and communicating the dates for training as soon as possible to candidates.

FIGURE 17.1: NUMBER OF VOLUNTEER ENQUIRIES, APPLICATIONS, TRAINED VOLUNTEERS AND SUCCESSFUL MATCHES, 2001–2002
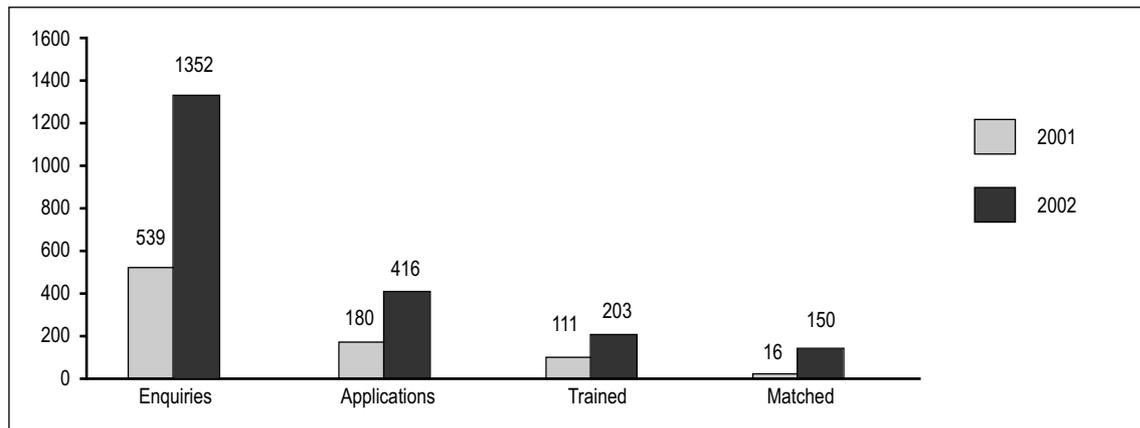
Source: Louw (2002:23).

Greater awareness about BBBSSA, in part owing to the active marketing of the programme and improved recruiting practices, has resulted in a significant increase in the number of enquiries, applications, trained volunteers and successful matches. The majority of matched volunteers are in the 20–24 age group.

TABLE 17.2: AGES OF MATCHED VOLUNTEERS, 2001–2002

Age group	Number	%
< 20	23	16.9
20–24	58	42.6
25–29	18	13.2
30–34	12	8.8
35–39	6	4.4
≥ 40	19	14.0
Total	**136[5]**	**99.9**

Source: Louw (2002:23).

A programme for recruiting and keeping adult volunteers was developed to promote a steady supply of mentors, while also ensuring their commitment and long-term involvement with BBBSSA. The objectives of this programme are to:

■ Promote a culture of volunteering that will encourage recruitment and satisfy the need for suitable mentors.

■ Establish a culture at BBBS that values the importance of volunteering within the organisation, so as to give volunteers the feeling of belonging to the organisation.

■ Get volunteers to understand the need for commitment, so that they will honour their mentoring obligations.

(Louw 2002:16)

BBBSSA greatly values the contributions and sacrifices that volunteers make in implementing the mentoring programme. To keep volunteers motivated and committed to their mentoring relationships, it arranges outings for mentors and children whenever external support and resources can be secured. The purpose of these outings is to:

■ Provide opportunities for mentors and children to experience something different from their usual visiting routine.

■ Create an environment where volunteers and young participants feel supported and part of a larger initiative.

■ Help strengthen mentoring relationships and make volunteers feel their commitment is worthwhile.

(Louw 2002:17)

Volunteers receive newsletters and attend coffee evenings during which they share their mentoring experiences with fellow volunteers (BBBSSA 2002:3).

In spite of the above efforts, the recruitment of suitable mentors for young offenders continues to pose challenges to BBBSSA. For example, 90% of referred youths are male, and there are not enough male mentors to go around

(BBBSSA 2001a:2–3). The profile of offending youths demands particular characteristics and personal dynamics from a mentor if he or she is to communicate and interact meaningfully with them.

Partnerships

BBBSSA fosters strategic partnerships with relevant government departments, social and youth agencies, and education institutions. Collaborative relationships are needed to ensure that the mentoring programme has the support of key stakeholders, such as the Departments of Education, Social Services and Justice. Networking is also needed to recruit both volunteers and young people to the initiative.

With the recruiting of adult volunteers posing diverse challenges, BBBSSA networks with various organisations and structures to secure a suitable number of applicants with the right kind of profile. Civic structures, universities and other developmental initiatives are specifically targeted, as well as some private enterprises. Since men are particularly hesitant to act as volunteers, BBBSSA engages with a number of community-based, male-focused initiatives to recruit appropriate mentors for diverted youth, for example the 5 in 6 Project[6] and Embizweni[7]. Collaborative relationships with other NGOs, such as You Managing Conflict (UMAC), are also used to identify and recruit potential volunteers.

Collaborative working relationships also feature in the training of volunteers. Specialised knowledge is obtained, for example from the Cape Town Drug Counselling Centre, to comprehensively train mentors on substance abuse, addiction and how to offer support (BBBSSA 2003c). Private initiatives further contribute toward the organisation's work, although this kind of support is more often for one-off events than for ongoing assistance. For example, Ratanga Junction, the Cape Town-based fun fair and entertainment centre, sponsored a group of volunteers and participants to promote communication and relationship building between mentors and children (BBBSSA 2003d), and Ajax Cape Town, a Cape Town-based soccer club provided mentors and children with complimentary tickets to a local soccer match (BBBSSA 2001b:2). Negotiations with the Cape Town Aquarium resulted in the free entry for a group of mentors and children. Some fast-food outlets also provided meal vouchers.

Availability and marketing

Referrals of at-risk youth are received frequently, thereby adding to the existing list of participants awaiting matches. As mentioned earlier, BBBSSA struggles to find enough suitable volunteers to act as mentors, particularly adult men. This means that the availability of the programme is somewhat limited and participants sometimes have to wait to be matched with an appropriate mentor. To counteract this problem, the initiative has to be actively marketed and the following methods are employed:

- Posters about BBBSSA are displayed at shopping centres, private companies, government departments, schools and universities.

- Specific organisations are targeted and meetings are held where information is presented to them about the initiative. These meetings are also used to recruit potential mentors.

■ Articles and advertisements are published in local newspapers and circulars.

■ The BBBS message is spread through radio advertisements and interviews.

In addition to mentoring, volunteers can contribute their time by becoming ambassadors for the programme (BBBSSA 2003e). Their marketing efforts could entail such things as networking with friends and colleagues, and hosting small functions to recruit potential volunteers (BBBSSA n.d.).

Costs

At the time that the data was collected (2003) the average cost of a match was approximately R3 500. However, the BBBS programme for diverted youths totalled R8 400. This included the adventure camp that mentors and children attend to build and strengthen their relationships. Additional resources are needed for the extensive monitoring and supervision of diversion matches. Although BBBSSA interacts and negotiates with entertainment bodies for free or reduced entry, it sometimes has to pay all the costs of the outings. Events such as bowling and ice-skating cost between R150 and R200 per person, which includes all transport, entry and meal expenses. Initially, BBBSSA invested substantial financial resources in their public awareness and recruitment activities and outsourced much of this work (Louw 2002:18). Currently, BBBSSA does this work itself, which they have found to be more cost effective.

2.4 Monitoring and evaluation

Diversion matches are extensively monitored from the start of the relationship, with the monitoring decreasing over the one-year period. At the end of a mentoring relationship there is a detailed evaluation. Case managers, volunteers, parents and guardians and referral agencies have to evaluate the progress that has been made toward the development of the child being mentored. These evaluations focus largely on the child's levels of:

■ Confidence (self-confidence, ability to express feelings, decision making, interests and hobbies, personal hygiene and appearance, and sense of the future).

■ Competence (attitude toward school and use of school and community resources, school performance, and the avoidance of crime, substance abuse and risky sexual practices).

■ Care (respect of other cultures and relationships with family, peers and adults).

At the same time, mentors report on their own experience and the impact of the mentoring relationship on their lives. Their reports include comments on their:

■ Ability to communicate with young people.

■ Ability to solve problems.

■ Commitment to volunteering and service.

■ Understanding of the issues that young people face.

- Understanding of other cultures.

- Acquisition of skills.

- Recommendations for future mentoring.

At the end of the relationship, all evaluation forms are submitted to the BBBSSA office so that the outcomes of particular matches and relationships can be evaluated.

Two evaluations of the BBBS programme are noteworthy, one from America and the other from the first evaluation of the initiative in South Africa. The former study, conducted in 1995 by Public/Private Ventures in Philadelphia, aimed to determine the impact of the BBBS programme on its participants and is useful when looking at the impact of mentoring more generally. The following results are significant:

- 53% of mentored children were more likely to stay in school.

- 46% of mentored children were less likely to use illegal substances.

- 33% of mentored children were less likely to hit another person.

- 32% of mentored children were less likely to engage in violence.

- 27% of mentored children were less likely to start using alcohol.

    (BBBSSA 2003b)

The study also recorded increased levels of self-confidence and self-esteem among young participants, greater ability to trust people, and improved decision making practices. Mentored children were also more likely to further their education after school (BBBSSA 2003b). Moreover, it was found that 80% of participants in a non-violent young offender programme were not re-arrested after completion of their mentoring programme.

In 2002, Research & Evaluation Services CC, a Cape Town-based group of consultants specialising in programme evaluation, conducted an early outcome study of the BBBS programme in South Africa. Key findings were:

- Young people were emotionally engaged in the mentoring relationship and the initiative was perceived as youth-centred.

- Children in the programme reduced their involvement in actions that led to the damage of property.

- Children in the programme increased the time that they spent in cultural and social activities.

- Children in the programme communicated more intimately with peers.

- Children in the programme had improved self-concepts and felt they were coping better.

- Children in the programme attached greater meaning to education, especially to schooling.

    (Louw 2002:4–6)

An additional finding of the research relates to the typology of relationships, and may have significant consequences for future training, support and supervision activities. It was found that relationships that are

235

characterised by mutual friendship, equality and reciprocity seem to function in a more positive way for both mentors and children. In relationships typified by more control on the part of mentors, who pass down advice to children, the mentored youths are likely to be reserved and unlikely to communicate their problems and challenges. The 'friendship for its own sake' type of relationship may therefore have more of the desired impact on the child than the 'help' approach.

2.5 Key lessons and views

■ Awareness and training should precede the implementation of mentoring relationships.

The culture of volunteering is not yet firmly established in South Africa. You can't just recruit people as volunteers, but need to make them aware of what it is about. This is quite a huge challenge. (BBBSSA official)

BBBSSA always makes sure that the mentors know what they are letting themselves in for. (BBBSSA official)

■ Detailed assessments are necessary to capture the potential value of mentoring for individual participants and adults.

The level of commitment from kids differs, because they are in the programme for different reasons. (BBBSSA official)

It takes a special person to be a mentor for at-risk youth. They need to put in more effort. (Department of Social Services official)

■ Mentoring relationships require time to mature and become meaningful.

These youngsters do not open up very easily. They do not trust people, because everyone who told them that they care has ended up disappointing them. (BBBSSA mentor)

■ A particular mentor profile is needed for intervention support among at-risk youth.

My background and upbringing is characterised by violence and drugs. So, for me as a mentor, it is possible to tell him what and how to avoid such a life, because some of my friends didn't make it. Some are dead because of it. (BBBSSA mentor)

■ It appears that mentors benefit personally from the mentoring training.

I treat my own children better now that I have received training on how youths think. (BBBSSA mentor)

■ Some mentoring relationships continue past the minimum one-year period.

He stole my heart, and he really needs me. I cannot and do not want to leave him, not with being in matric and having exams and challenges ahead. I want to support him in his career ahead. (BBBSSA mentor)

■ Young participants appear to benefit positively from mentoring.

> My mentor helped me to get a holiday job. He also helps me with my homework and explains mathematics to me. He really motivates me to learn for my future. (Child in BBBSSA mentoring programme)

> My Big Brother has enough knowledge about teenage experiences and he is always there for me. (Child in BBBSSA mentoring programme)

3. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The BBBSSA mentoring initiative acknowledges the dysfunctional domestic environments experienced by many at-risk and offending children. The literature and research highlight the association between young people's antisocial behaviour and broken homes, abuse, neglect and family discord. The initiative has responded by providing post-intervention aftercare and support to maintain the changes brought about by diversion programmes.

There are some disagreements about BBBSSA's guiding principle of voluntary participation. Part of BBBSSA's work involves crime prevention, and when dealing with children in conflict with the law voluntary commitment to intervention may not be the best approach. One problem is that arrested youths weigh the prospects of formal charges against participation in diversion programmes. Many opt for the diversion option as the lesser of two evils, which cannot be said to be truly voluntary participation. Another is that referral to the mentoring programme is sometimes made mandatory by the court, which means that participation is no longer voluntary. Nevertheless it is clear that there is scope for accommodating offending children in BBBSSA's overall programming. If deviations from international principles become necessary in order to do this, this should be accepted. It is rare that one can import a model from another country without having to make some adjustments for local conditions and needs.

The literature also describes difficulty of recruiting volunteers, especially those with the skill to engage with offending children, which places a higher burden on recruitment and matching activities. Evidence and data highlight the need for adult men for this kind of mentoring. Given these children's backgrounds and the modelling process required, it is considered that cross-gender matching might prove less effective than same-gender matching.

Although relationships require time to mature, research suggests that young people do become emotionally attached to their mentors. It is, therefore, not surprising that BBBS relationships last for longer than the prescribed one-year period. Getting to know someone, especially on a personal level, over a one-year period could cause emotional dependency on that relationship. BBBSSA does allow mentoring relationships to continue past the prescribed timeframe, although this may make it harder to find experienced mentors for the programme.

The BBBSSA mentoring programme for young offenders is intended as a follow-up and after care service for children who have already participated in a more targeted, crime specific diversion programme prior to being matched with a mentor. The relationship is largely limited to interaction between the mentor and the child and does not necessarily include or focus on changing the mentored child's domestic environment. Expecting at-risk

youth to rise above their present circumstances and change their home environment without being provided with appropriate opportunities is perhaps expecting too much of mentoring on its own. In order to affect real change, these complex issues need to be targeted through a range of interventions with mentoring forming the support component.

Both BBBSSA and DIME (discussed in Chapter 10) use mentoring as a mode of intervention and it is worth commenting on some of the main differences between the two models:

- The profile of volunteers differs to some extent. While DIME makes exclusive use of students, BBBSSA welcomes mentors from various backgrounds, provided that they are viewed to be suitable role models to young participants.

- At DIME, between three and four children are matched with a mentor, whereas BBBSSA relationships are one-on-one.

- At DIME, volunteers are remunerated and provided with transport support, while BBBSSA believes that payment may skew the true intent of assisting at-risk youth.

- Mentoring relationships are to varying degrees supervised, but BBBS relationships appear to be more frequently supervised, and at predetermined intervals.

- The timeframe for DIME's mentoring relationships is substantially shorter than BBBSSA's, which often stretch beyond the required timeframe.

The BBBSSA initiative illustrates the value of a set of guidelines and service standards for improving the quality of mentoring relationships. Its mentoring processes are flexible and its strategies can be adapted to suit the unique mentoring needs of each child. To achieve this, mentors must have a keen understanding of the risk factors involved in youth offending. Evidence shows that the youth-centred and mentoring-focused training that volunteers receive enhances the overall quality of the programme. BBBSSA makes in-depth assessments of both mentors and children, and its practice of setting up matches with a developmental plan in mind is noteworthy. Matching does not take place haphazardly, but through meticulous procedures that assess the compatibility of volunteers and at-risk children.

The BBBSSA initiative is one of a very few programmes that makes use of evidence (although limited to at-risk youth) in conceptualising its supportive response to youth offending. It has well-formulated recording and monitoring systems, the resources it invests in follow-through activities ensure that information about the number, nature and level of intakes is readily available, and its regular monitoring activities can be used to determine the outcomes of its programme. Although evidence points to a reduction of particular forms of antisocial behaviour, the initiative has yet to provide compelling evidence that it is successful in reducing the chances of recidivism.

Endnotes

1   The reader is referred to Chapter 6 for more information about YES.

2   The reader is referred to Chapter 16 for more information about the Journey Programme.

3   In the past, checks on adult volunteers for criminal backgrounds delayed matching activities. Negotiations with the Director of Public Prosecutions resulted in waiting periods being shortened to about three weeks.

4   Although such limited time may bring into question the programme's ability to stimulate change, it is considered that the value of an hour's interaction with a concerned adult stretches far beyond time boundaries (Louw 2002:6). It is also likely that mentors spend more time with the children than the scheduled one hour per week.

5   Owing to missing data, there are discrepancies between the numbers presented here and those in Figure 17.1.

6   The 5 in 6 Project developed out of a campaign that indicated that one in six men was an abuser, thereby implying that five in six men are not.

7   Embizweni is a non-governmental organisation based in Khayelitsha in the Western Cape that focuses on changing men's perspectives on community and development matters (BBBSSA 2001b:1).

References

BBBSSA (Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Africa). 2003a. Frequently Asked Questions. http://www.bbbssa.org.za/FAQ.html (Accessed 15 July 2003).

BBBSSA (Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Africa). 2003b. About Us. http://www.bbbssa.org.za/AboutUs.html (Accessed 15 July 2003).

BBBSSA (Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Africa). 2003c. Newsletters. http://www.bbbssa.org.za/PR_drugs.html (Accessed 15 July 2003).

BBBSSA (Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Africa). 2003d. Newsletters. http://www.bbbssa.org.za/newsletter_may.html (Accessed 15 July 2003).

BBBSSA (Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Africa). 2003e. How to contribute. http://www.bbbssa.org.za/Contribute.asp (Accessed 15 July 2003).

BBBSSA (Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Africa). 2002. *Interim report to the Open Society Foundation for South Africa – June 2002*. Cape Town: Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Africa.

BBBSSA (Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Africa). 2001a. *Report to the Open Society Foundation for South Africa – September 2001*. Cape Town: Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Africa.

BBBSSA (Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Africa). 2001b. *Community-based programme progress report – August 2001*. Cape Town: Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Africa.

BBBSSA (Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Africa). n.d. *Information brochure*. Cape Town: Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Africa.

Louw J. 2002. *The difference an hour can make. An early outcome study of Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Africa*. Cape Town: Research & Evaluation Services CC.

NICRO (National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders). 2003. Developing Young People's Potential. http://www.nicro.org.za/projects-youth.asp (Accessed 9 June 2003).

NICRO (National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders). 2000. *Mapping the future – empowering the youth*. Cape Town: Juta.

Part 6

REINTEGRATION PROGRAMMES

OVERVIEW

In August 2004, the Deputy Minister of Correctional Services reported that 60% of the South Africa's prison population was under the age of 35. With the average sentence lasting just short of ten years, this translates to a young person entering prison at the age of 18 or 19 and leaving in his mid or late twenties. By this time, the person may find it difficult to secure a role in society, let alone employment (Michaels 2004:1). In addition, there are concerns about the growing number of children in South African prisons. In July 2004, it was reported that more than 29 000 youths between the ages of 14 and 20 were incarcerated (De Lange & Mabasa 2004:1). Adding to the problem is that prisons are often viewed as universities of crime from which youths can graduate as master criminals (Mhlongo 2004:3). This situation is compounded by overcrowding in most prisons and the subsequent over-extension of resources. In the light of these realities, it is of paramount importance to implement programmes that serve to prevent re-offending among ex-prisoners.

Reintegration entails the structured transformation of offenders into law-abiding citizens through intervention and support, a process which includes transition and aftercare (Altschuler & Armstrong 1999:2; Conklin 1998:510). Reintegration focuses on the involvement of broader social structures when dealing with offenders, because strengthening the ties between the offender and the community can help prevent recidivism. Community members have a stake in ensuring that ex-offenders are properly reintegrated, since they are likely to return to the community upon release from prison. Equally critical is the active participation of the family in the reintegration process. Upon release, ex-prisoners often lack stable support structures, transport and other necessities for starting a productive life (Van Ness & Heetderks-Strong 2004).

The following principles are considered important for successful reintegration programmes:

■ Potential candidates need to be carefully selected for participation, which should at all times be voluntary. Wherever possible, the inmate should participate in decision making processes.

■ Social reform while imprisoned should be emphasised to narrow the gap between prison and community life. This necessitates close liaison between the institution and the community.

■ Contact should be promoted between community members and prisoners, especially with the inmate's family, and the family should be provided with reintegration support.

■ Both reintegration and custodial officials should be involved in the reintegration process in order to develop a support base within the prison.

■ Focus areas of the programme should include:

■ Mental health through individual, group and/or family contexts to improve the participant's self-concept.

■ Social functioning to strengthen role fulfilment, relationships and adaptation. Points of emphasis are reconstruction and crisis management.

■ Literacy and numeracy education and appropriate vocational skills training.

■ Programmes should take the form of:

   ■ Sub-group intervention that provides support for inmates with similar backgrounds or those who have committed similar offences.

   ■ Problem-oriented programmes that aim to alleviate specific reintegration challenges, such as anger management and overcoming drug addiction.

   ■ Individual programmes that address personal matters which cannot always be dealt with in group format, such as emotional development and self-exploration.

■ If vocational skills training is provided, attempts should be made to help the offender find employment.

■ Whenever possible, an effort should be made to reconcile the victim and the offender so as to promote the principles of restorative justice.

■ The released prisoner and his or her family or environment should be supervised and monitored through professional involvement.

(Van Ness & Heetderks-Strong 2004; Conklin 1998:522–523; Jacobs 1990:230–231; Neser 1993:234, 321, 324–326, 351–353)

Reintegration programmes need to be planned in detail to ensure a comprehensive approach to intervention and support. The social investigations that programme facilitators compile must be suited to the changing needs and circumstances of individual participants (Matshego & Joubert 2002:126). Short-, medium- and long-term planning must be undertaken to facilitate reintegration, because what has been learnt during confinement could prove difficult to implement and sustain in daily community life (Altschuler & Armstrong 1999:3–4).

In the mid-1990s, an analysis of research in the USA into the effectiveness of correctional interventions, in particular those aimed at young offenders, found that some kinds of programmes have more success than others, although no single programme emerged as highly successful and universally applicable (Palmer in Conklin 1998:521). The most effective programmes were based on social and life skills training, education and vocational training, family intervention and multi-modal approaches.

PROGRAMME ASSUMPTIONS

Reintegration programmes are based on three principles. Firstly, they assume that incarceration alone is insufficient to deter offenders from engaging in crime once they are released. The use of imprisonment alone has not yet indicated measurable declines in youth arrests following release (Altschuler & Armstrong 1999:2). Secondly, the prison environment is not suitable for the development of the young person, given the realities of drug abuse, violence, sexual assault and gangsterism in many of South Africa's prisons (*The Economist* 15 September 2004). Thirdly, it is considered that correctional steps early in life could prevent an adult life of crime (Matshego & Joubert 2002:124; Van Zyl Smit 2001:5).

244

VALUE

It is generally accepted that punitive responses to youth offending – which largely focus on retribution and deterrence – fail to help change offending behaviour. Reintegration serves as a more pragmatic approach to the prevention of crime. Since it is estimated that 60% of prisoners in South Africa reoffend after their release (Streek 2001:10), effective reintegration is critical in reducing or preventing recidivism (Matshego & Joubert 2002:123). Local moves to increase the education and training of young inmates (Stephen 2004:5) promote the development of youth's potential in an effort to build a safer society. At the same time, reintegration promotes restorative justice through its focus on preserving the family and involving the community in preventing crime.

CHALLENGES

Some factors which can undermine the intentions and progress of institution-based reintegration programmes are the spin-off effects of overcrowding and gangsterism in prisons, the non-availability of professional staff, inadequate post-release care and the absence of market-related training (Matshego & Joubert 202:123–124). Effective reintegration is costly, and the required structures needed to facilitate post-release support may not be present (Altschuler & Armstrong 1999:4). To put these programmes into practice requires a change in community attitudes toward working with offenders and their reintegration, because negative perceptions and apathy often hamper successful re-adaptation (Bruyn 1993:285). The public is generally reluctant to welcome ex-prisoners into their community and accessing local resources can prove difficult (Matshego & Joubert 2002:126).

References

Altschuler DM & Armstrong TL. 1999. Reintegrative confinement and intensive aftercare. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*. US Department of Justice: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. July 1999. pp: 2–15.

Bruyn HJ. 2003. An overview of the treatment of offenders in prison and correctional supervision. In Glanz L (ed). *Managing crime in the new South Africa: selected readings*. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council. pp: 275–286.

Cloete MGT & Stevens R. 1990. *Kriminologie*. Halfwayhouse: Southern.

Conklin JE. 1998. *Criminology (6th edn)*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

De Lange I & Mabasa T. 2004. Concern over kids in SA prisons. *The Citizen*. 30 July 2004. p. 1.

Glanz L (ed.). 2003. *Managing crime in the new South Africa: selected readings*. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.

Jacobs WJ. 1990. Misdaadvoorkoming. In Cloete MGT & Stevens R (eds). *Kriminologie*. Halfwayhouse: Southern.

Matshego BJ & Joubert JMC. 2002. Best practices in the institutional and community-based treatment of young offenders. *Acta Criminologica*. 15(2):123–127.

Mhlongo A. 2004. Jailbreak junior. Prison rehab hope for child criminals. *Independent*. 12 June 2004. p. 3.

Michaels J. 2004. We are waging war on our young people. *The Star*. 11 August 2004. p. 1.

Neser JJ. 1993. *Penitentiary Penology (2nd edn)*. Johannesburg: Lexicon.

Streek B. 2001. Skosana on a mission to keep juveniles from prison. *Mail and Guardian*. 5 July 2001. p. 10.

The Economist. 15 September 2004. Where life means death. http://www.economist.com/displayStory.cfm?story_id=2545915 (Accessed 15 September 2004).

Van Ness D & Heetderks-Strong K. 2004. Chapter 6: Reintegration. In Restoring Justice (2nd ed). Cincinnati: Anderson. http://www.restorativejustice.org/rj3/Introduction-Definition/Reintegration.htm (Accessed 15 July 2004).

Van Zyl Smit D. 2001. Sentencing children convicted of serious crimes. *Article 40*. 3(4):4–5.

18

TOUGH ENOUGH PROGRAMME

National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders

The Tough Enough Programme (TEP) falls under the umbrella Offender Reintegration Programme of the National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO) and sets out to provide prisoners with the opportunity to lead a constructive, pro-social life once they are released. Toward this end, TEP engages directly with young offenders as well as with their families and communities.

As NICRO has been described previously in this report, the reader is referred to Chapter 4 for more detail about the organisation's background, aims and values, organisational structure and resources, general profile of participants, staff and volunteers, partnerships, and monitoring and evaluation activities.

1. RATIONALE AND AIM

Perhaps the greatest challenge facing released prisoners is that of becoming constructive, contributing citizens (NICRO 2003; 2001:4). With the recidivism rate for released offenders estimated at roughly 60%, crime prevention strategies among this high-risk group are of great importance. High recidivism rates are compounded by the DoCS being short-staffed and prisons being overcrowded, hence the challenge in providing comprehensive reintegration and developmental services to inmates prior to their release. TEP is based on the assumption that change can be brought about by in people by creating opportunities for them that will stimulate responsibility.

Central to the TEP programme is the question: Are you tough enough to face the challenge of living a constructive life? Identifying and accepting challenges, and receiving guidance to overcome them, are its primary components. It focuses not only on the inmate but also on his or her family, and it offers economic opportunities and appropriate skills training. It aims to:

■ Develop ex-offenders' skills so they can live constructive lives and contribute toward the community.

■ Help them establish and maintain positive and empowering relationships.

■ Realise and develop their full potential and creativity.

247

- Help them put into practice the goals they have set themselves.

- Empower families to help reintegrate relatives who have offended.

- Empower communities to help with reintegration activities through the use of mentors.

   (NICRO 2001:2)

TEP's approach is unique in that it demands a radical change from conventional service delivery, which is usually structured and facilitator-based, to a support strategy driven by the needs of the participants to which the facilitator must respond (Mangokwana & Lomofsky 2001:i). The reintegration programme is, therefore, client-based, highly flexible and individualistic in its application.

TEP has been in operation since 2000, although its implementation with young inmates came into being only recently, at the Pollsmoor Prison in Cape Town. This began with a prolonged process of negotiation and consultation with the DoCS. The successful implementation of the programme at Pollsmoor will serve as a basis for implementation in other correctional facilities.

2. ENTRY CRITERIA AND PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

To take part in TEP, young inmates apply voluntarily and have to commit themselves to the programme. In order to qualify, they need to have a minimum of three months remaining of their sentence, some level of family support and a fixed residential address after release. They enter into a contract that stipulates the responsibilities of NICRO and the participant.

At present only young male inmates are considered for enrolment. TEP participants have mostly committed property offences such as housebreaking, shoplifting and theft, which reflects the poor communities from which they originate. Most are also from single-parent households.

3. PROGRAMME CONTENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

TEP is a nine- to twelve-month intensive intervention programme that starts three months before release. The larger part of the programme entails reintegration support in domestic and community settings (NICRO 2002a). The initiative facilitates the successful reintegration of offenders by providing developmental social services, both behind bars and on the other side of the prison wall (NICRO 2002b:13). It addresses both the rehabilitative and preventative objectives of crime prevention (Mangokwana & Lomofsky 2001:i).

TEP participants often form groups both inside and outside the prison to help one another achieve their goals. NICRO workers help participants and their families throughout the process, to simplify the complexities of reintegration and promote an environment in which the TEP participant can put his or her life goals into practice (NICRO 2003). Wherever possible, participants are attached to a mentor. Both the prison-based and community-based parts of TEP involve minimal reading and writing. Support and the transfer of skills take place through individual and group discussions. The programme caters for not more than 15 participants per intake in order to

maximise the quality of the initiative. On the other hand, too small a number is not ideal, as the success of programme relies to a large extent on group dynamics and interaction. TEP consists of the following six phases.

Phase 1: Recruitment and assessment

TEP participants are recruited by the NICRO facilitator, who asks for a list of names of inmates who will be released approximately three months from the proposed start date of the programme. A meeting with potential candidates is scheduled during which an outline of the programme is presented. Interested youths nominate themselves for participation. A substantial part of the assessment done by the NICRO worker entails determining their level of commitment to the programme and willingness to take full advantage of the opportunity (NICRO 2001a:8). It is of primary importance that potential participants want to change their lives, hence the principle of self-referral to the programme. The assessment also focuses on:

- Background history.

- Levels of education.

- Physical health, history of drug use etc.

- Work experience.

- Family composition and functioning.

- Attitude to the offence.

- History of criminal behaviour, causes of the current offence and the relationship to the victim.

- Peer relations at home and in prison, and with an intimate partner outside prison.

The assessment further explores the candidate's personality and his understanding of the TEP process. Any symptoms of depression, anxiety or deviance are noted. Successful applicants complete a contract setting out the service details and duration of the support.

Phase 2: Setting the challenge

During a five-day workshop, group members set themselves individual challenges. They decide how they plan to deal with problems that could arise after release. They re-examine their past and present lives and think about how to avoid repeating previous wrongdoings. They have to take responsibility for their behaviour, especially for the offences they have committed, and make plans for restoration (NICRO 2001:9). Group discussions deal with their experiences in the prison, their fears, and what they can expect upon release. Systems are identified that can support them once they are released back into society, and strategies are developed for accessing additional resources. Possible gaps in support networks are identified and contingency plans drafted to deal with any shortcomings. The workshop also includes basic coping skills, team- and trust-building exercises, and group and individual counselling.

It is important to note that the topics covered during the second phase of the programme are identified by participants themselves. To strengthen this aspect of the work, NICRO has drafted a semi-structured facilitation manual that covers themes generally identified by participants. These include the following topics:

- Who am I and where am I going?

- Decision making.

- Alcoholism, substance abuse and gangsterism.

- Communication and effective listening.

- Conflict management (passive, aggressive and assertive behaviour styles).

- Problem solving.

- HIV/AIDS and sexuality.

- Victims of crime, their rights and the effects of crime.

- Parenting skills and child neglect.

- Trust and responsibility.

    (Jordaan 2002)

The facilitator assesses the particular group's intervention needs to decide which of the above-mentioned topics need to be discussed. The South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (SANCA) and the AIDS Training, Information and Counselling Centre (ATICC) offer additional sessions where necessary.

The second phase of TEP involves substantial emotional 'opening up', often in group format, and some participants drop out during the first five-day session. The programme is truly only for those who are tough enough to face themselves, their actions and their futures. However, some also drop out because of early release or being transferred to other correctional facilities.

Phase 3: The strategy

During the next eight weeks participants start putting into practice the decisions they made during the second phase of the programme. They deal with issues either in groups or individually (NICRO 2001:9). They devise strategies for coping with their individual challenges, whether these are related to drug abuse, offending, aggressiveness or relationship problems. It is critical that they show resilience and perseverance in putting their individual plans into action, as their goals may not be easy to achieve.

In this third phase of TEP the facilitator interacts with community and family members so as to create an environment that will support the participant's reintegration. Visits to inmates' families serve as an opportunity to identify any form of dysfunction. Effective intervention in common problems such as alcohol and drug abuse and domestic violence is challenging and time-consuming for TEP facilitators. Nevertheless, there is a need to understand family dynamics in order to properly support the TEP participant. It is also important for family

members to acknowledge the part they may have played in the TEP participant's offence. Community leaders and political figures are approached to assist in sensitising communities about the role and value of offender reintegration programmes. In some instances, strong opposition to the reintegration of offenders has been noted, particularly in communities with a high crime rate.

> Coming out of the prison is one of the most critical tasks for the offenders. Our communities are still negative and think that, although this person did his sentence, he still needs to be sentenced outside. That's why some of them come back [to prison]. (NICRO official)

During this phase of the programme, the victim of the offence is contacted to explore the possibility of reconciliation with the offender through family group conferencing or victim–offender mediation (NICRO 2001:9–10).

A certificate ceremony to acknowledge the inmates' participation is attended by parents, family members and friends, and concludes the third phase.

Phase 4: Implementation and mentoring

After release, participants are required to implement the strategies they devised in prison, to ensure that they successfully reintegrate into society and family life. The participant puts his or her life plan into practice as a daily strategy, so that it becomes his or her future plan. The fourth phase lasts between six and nine months, and is characterised by independence and the strengthening of relationships with significant others (NICRO 2001:10).

A mentor is assigned to participants to provide support after release. The mentor could be a family member or friend, a police officer, a social worker, a community member or a minister of religion (NICRO 2001b). The purpose of the mentor is to provide informal assistance to participants and sensitise the community to the importance of supporting the reintegration of ex-offenders. Potential mentors are screened in terms of their current lifestyles, commitment to and suitability for the programme, skills and employment history, previous volunteering and availability.

A manual has been developed for the eight-session training and orientation of potential mentors, which lasts two weeks. Interested persons need to be at least 25, should not have a criminal record and should be able to show that they have lived a relatively constructive life for the past five years. They are expected commit to the mentoring relationship for approximately one year. Although visits initially take place on a weekly basis, interaction decreases to about one or two visits per month toward the end of the one-year period. Regular meetings are held with NICRO officials to discuss progress made with the mentoring component of TEP. Mentors receive some reimbursement for the expenses they incur during mentoring, but only after three months of active involvement in the programme. A certificate recognising their participation in TEP is provided.

In addition to the mentoring support, participants with entrepreneurial interests can be referred to the 'Start and Improve Your Business' programme or a vocational skills training programme, with the possibility of benefiting from NICRO's Economic Opportunities Programme.

Phase 5: Staying out

The last phase of TEP involves the participant accepting full responsibility for refraining from re-offending. The NICRO worker regularly meets with mentors and participants to ensure that the latter keep to their life plans. The facilitator's involvement diminishes as progress is made. For the participant, the fifth phase is a continuous activity and highly dependent on the outcomes of the previous four phases (NICRO 2001:11).

Phase 6: Tracking

An important component of TEP entails tracing ex-participants to measure the programme's impact and success and keep track of individual progress. Tracking is done for at least 18 months after the completion of the programme (NICRO 2001:11). Key indicators for the overall evaluation of TEP include re-offending, employment and accessing support when necessary.

Staff and volunteers

Only one NICRO staff member, an auxiliary social worker, currently runs TEP for young offenders at the Pollsmoor Prison in Cape Town. Although the programme can best be implemented by two facilitators, financial limitations presently hamper the appointment of a second facilitator. The workload is extremely high – at any given time there are around 60 participants in various stages of the programme. Activities shortly after release are the most demanding, as much time is devoted to each participant in negotiations with various stakeholders, for example communities, correctional supervisors, families, schools and employment agencies.

Ideally, a TEP service provider is someone who is devoted to youth development and able to interact with young offenders at their level, proficient in various local languages, and skilled at establishing and maintaining participants' respect – as many participants lack interpersonal trust and discipline. A professional qualification, preferably in social work, is required for dealing with TEP participants in the broader contexts of their families, communities and society at large.

Partnerships

TEP is highly dependent on the buy-in and co-operation of DoCS personnel, both inside and outside the prison. DoCS staff help with logistical arrangement during the first three phases of the programme, for example in mobilising participants to attend sessions and providing a suitable venue, and community corrections officials undertake the parole supervision and monitoring of participants. Working relationships exist with other NGOs, such as ATICC, that participate in the facilitation of particular workshops. Community-based structures, such as churches and community forums, play an equally valuable role in the successful reintegration of TEP participants. In addition, the Department of Labour is a critical partner in vocational skills training and securing employment for participants.

Costs

At the time that the data was collected (2003) the total cost of putting one participant through TEP was R1 389, which included victim–offender mediation (R225) and the training of a mentor (R225).

4. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

TEP facilitators formally evaluate the implementation of each phase with participants to assess their experience of the programme. During each prison-based session participants comment on the value of the session, the effectiveness of the facilitation, what they enjoyed and learned, and the appropriateness of the information and the material that was used. This feedback has proved valuable in streamlining the overall content and direction of the programme. Mentors compile monthly progress reports in which they describe the problems that participants struggle with and suggest activities to address these.

The participants' life plans are used to measure the effect the programme has had on individuals' progress. Six-monthly and twelve-monthly reports on each participant's situation and circumstances are sent to the DoCS, and quarterly meetings are held with DoCS officials to discuss the overall running of TEP. Programme managers and implementation staff meet regularly to discuss the programme and its implementation. They attempt to trace and evaluate the effectiveness of TEP within 18 months of ex-prisoners completing the programme (NICRO 2001:14).

With TEP being in its trial phase, 24 young inmates at the Pollsmoor Prison participated during the period 2000–2002 (NICRO 2002b:14). Up to July 2003, about 57 youths were at various stages of involvement in the programme. At a national level, a total of 890 adult inmates participated in TEP during 2002 (NICRO 2002a). One group of young offenders is taken in at a time, and the prison-based part of TEP is finalised before recruitment for the following group begins. There are four intakes each year – a total of about 60 youths.

After its first year of implementation, Southern Hemisphere Consultants did a qualitative evaluation of the effectiveness of programme delivery to TEP participants. Key findings included the following:

- The content of the programme is flexible and driven by the needs of participants.

- A particular strength of TEP is its longitudinal approach to service delivery and the active involvement of family members in the reintegration process.

- Positive effects on participants that were mentioned were improved relationships with family members, achieving goals such as starting businesses, taking responsibility, seeking help when needed, wanting to repair the damage caused by the offence, and increased tolerance and patience.

- Challenges facing TEP include securing employment for participants, preventing re-offending in crime-ridden environments, and dealing with the harsh attitudes of and rejection by community members.

(Mangokwana & Lomofsky 2001)

5. KEY LESSONS AND VIEWS

■ Indications are that TEP is achieving success among young participants.

> TEP works. The number of people who return to prison is very small, and most of those who do go back to prison is because of parole violations and not necessarily because of re-offending. (NICRO worker)

■ Participants take pride in having completed the programme.

> We were 16 at the beginning, but only five of us completed the full programme. We were the only guys that were tough enough. (TEP participant)

> I told my friends everything about the programme and wish that some of them could do it. (TEP participant)

6. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

In general, it appears that the initiative's multiple activities and the involvement of a range of resource and support persons help participant's lead constructive lives. As the literature notes, ex-prisoners need various forms of assistance, as well as support at the domestic level, to improve their chances of not re-offending. Having concrete future plans seems to help promote pro-social behaviour. It is noteworthy that participants draft their future plans with alternative strategies in mind, should shortcomings or contingencies derail these plans, and that the plans contain both short- and long-term goals that are linked to activities for living a constructive life. TEP shows a good understanding of the factors that could present challenges to successful reintegration, and it is commendable that steps are taken to strengthen the family as a support base for reintegration.

TEP intervenes at both the individual and the group level. The groups provide a structure for prison-based support, and participants can learn from fellow participants. A support group such as this can also counteract feelings of isolation. Reflection activities help participants acquire a sense of responsibility and make a commitment to change, and indications are that the programme has a strong emotional impact on participants. In its principles for successful reintegration intervention, TEP includes the focus areas of psychological health (including the family), social functioning and vocational skills training. Involving the participants in planning the intervention is valuable because it promotes interest and ownership, thereby increasing the chance that they will see the programme through. It should be kept in mind that TEP is a voluntary programme and participants can leave the initiative at any time.

TEP's multi-modal programming helps realise restorative justice, especially because it creates avenues for reconciliation between the offender, his or her family and the victim of the offence. It is noteworthy that it engages in activities to sensitise communities about the need for effective post-release support, as it has been noted that communities are often reluctant to welcome back ex-prisoners. The recruitment and training of community members to act as mentors to ex-prisoners is equally noteworthy, as they broaden the participants' support network and can help the community see the value of reintegration.

Given the demands of the programme, especially in terms of counselling and intervening with the families of participants, it is clear that professional training is needed to implement it effectively. Another consideration for replicating the programme is the necessity for collaborating with correctional services officials and with community-based service networks so as to mobilise community support.

Individual participants are assessed in detail, and the information obtained is used in planning the programme and in identifying participants' family problems. Multi-sourced monitoring systems are used to track the participants' status and progress, and it is valuable that participants have an opportunity to evaluate the intervention themselves. However, although the qualitative evaluation can help inform the programme and indicate whether it is bearing fruit, a stronger evidence-base is still needed to verify TEP's effectiveness in preventing re-offending in the long-term.

In summary, TEP confirms views expressed in the literature suggesting that programmes which have a developmental focus, offer skills training and involve the family have greater potential for successfully reintegrating ex-offenders.

References

Jordaan M. 2002. *Group work manual*. Mitchells Plain: National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders.

Mangokwana A & Lomofsky D. 2001. *Formative evaluation of the impact of 'Tough Enough' offender reintegration programme*. Cape Town: Southern Hemisphere Consultants.

NICRO (National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders). 2003. Make a Fresh Start. http://www.nicro.org.za/projects-offenders.asp (Accessed: 22 October 2003).

NICRO (National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders). 2002a. NICRO Annual Report 2001–2002. http://www.nicro.org.za/articles-annrep02 (Accessed 9 June 2003).

NICRO (National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders). 2002b. *NICRO Western Cape Biennial Report 2000–2002*. Cape Town: National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders.

NICRO (National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders). 2001. *Offender reintegration programme – funding proposal to the Open Society Foundation*. Cape Town: National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders.

19

REINTEGRATION AND DIVERSION FOR YOUTH (READY)

The President's Award for Youth Empowerment

The President's Award for Youth Empowerment (TPA) provides comprehensive, informal and non-competitive developmental programmes to young South Africans. The programmes are structured on three levels: Bronze, Silver and Gold, each with four areas of involvement: skills development, physical recreation, service and expedition. These levels of achievement feature in TPA's prison-based Reintegration and Diversion for Youth (READY) initiative.

1. THE ORGANISATION

1.1 Background

TPA has its origin in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award which was initiated in 1956 by HRH Prince Philip (TPA 2003a). To date the initiative has been successfully rolled out to 111 countries internationally, of which 20 are in Africa. The South African office opened in 1983 and was initially known as the Gold Shield Award. In 1994, it was re-launched as The President's Award with former president Nelson Mandela as its Patron-in-Chief. TPA is a full member of the International Award Association (IAA), which is a UK-based administrative structure that oversees award programmes across the globe. Internationally, programmes that are affiliated to the International Award programme (IAA) are currently the fastest-growing youth development programmes. Initially, one of TPA's services was a pre-release youth intervention called the 'Young Offender Programme'. The name was later changed to Reintegration and Diversion for Youth (READY), mainly because of the stigmatisation resulting from the term 'offender'.

1.2 Aims and values

Through its programmes, TPA endeavours to instil lifelong civic responsibility, teamwork and self-discipline among participants. The organisation subscribes to the aims of the IAA (1990), which:

■ Introduces young people to worthwhile voluntary activities.

■ Provides participants with the opportunity to learn about responsibility, challenge and personal achievement.

256

- Helps youths become mature, responsible members of society.

- Provides all young people with equal opportunity to improve themselves.

The fundamental aim of TPA is to empower young people from disadvantaged communities through skills training and experiential learning that focus on personal development. TPA's mission is to enable South African youth, especially marginalised individuals and groups, to bring about a culture of industry and gain a real sense of self-worth (TPA 2003b). In pursuit of this mission, the organisation's core values include the following:

- Young people are a national priority; they have the right to develop to their fullest potential to become responsible, contributing and caring citizens.

- Every young person is entitled to good quality, comprehensive educational and developmental programmes.

- Young people must be protected against exploitation that could interfere with their development.

- Young people are not only beneficiaries, but participants in their own development.

- A reciprocal relationship exists between young people and their communities.

- Young people should be entitled to develop appropriate work skills and be exposed to enabling technology.

- Young people need to be exposed to the full range of available vocations, and should be provided with expert guidance.

- Young people should be given an opportunity to learn the concepts involved in small and medium-sized business development, and encouraged to establish and secure their own source of income.

- Every young person needs at least one adult who is committed to his or her personal well-being and development.

  (TPA 2003c)

1.3 Organisational structure and resources

For overall guidance, TPA has a governing body and a board of trustees. The executive management of the organisation is undertaken by TPA's chief executive officer. Programme staff hold monthly meetings to discuss progress and financial needs. TPA rents office space for its national office in Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape, and has a vehicle available for the officials to use in recruiting, training and quality control activities.

TPA relies on private, corporate and, to some extent, government support for its activities. The main fund-raising body is the Duke of Edinburgh South Africa Foundation. These funds are used to secure the long-term sustainability of the award scheme in Southern and East Africa (TPA 2003d). The IAA does not directly fund TPA's work, although national offices can apply for project-specific funding. Donor funding is critical for the long-term sustainability of TPA and contributes to about 75% of the organisation's endeavours. In addition, TPA engages in fund-raising activities, especially during visits by members of the British royal family.

2. THE READY PROGRAMME

READY is a specific intervention for young offenders serving custodial sentences. It aims to build leadership skills with a view to aiding the reintegration process and preventing re-offending.

2.1 Rationale and aim

The rationale for READY's inception can be found in three interrelated principles. Firstly, when seen in a broad developmental context, READY is structured to fill the gap left by formal education (TPA 2003d). Every young person has unique abilities and talents, some of which are stimulated by formal tuition, while others are grossly neglected by this approach. Life skills, leadership and perseverance are more successfully acquired through self-experience and practice outside formal structures. Many imprisoned youth are semi-literate and experiential learning is of more value than classroom-based tuition.

Secondly, the recidivism rate among South African offenders is estimated at a high 60–70% (Mann 2003:13; *Mail & Guardian* 2001; Simpson & Rauch 1999). This poses tremendous challenges for the reintegration of offenders currently in South African prisons. The psychological and capacity development of imprisoned young people is particularly challenging, given their vulnerable backgrounds and difficult circumstances. In addition to its custodial directive, the development of imprisoned persons has become a focal point within the DoCS, as it moves towards a more restorative approach to corrections. In this respect, it is noted:

> The Department regards all persons under the age of 21 (young offenders) as an extremely vulnerable category of prisoners whose needs have to be specifically addressed. It is also the Department's viewpoint that young offenders in its care have to be seen in the context of the South African youth problem. (DoCS n.d.)

One of the DoCS's principles for service delivery is a holistic approach to developing young prisoners. In achieving its developmental and rehabilitative task, the DoCS relies on civil society initiatives, such as READY.

Thirdly, being imprisoned often leads to stigmatisation and low self-esteem. In prison, inmates are provided with identification numbers and function under strict rules, which often takes away a sense of individuality and hope for the future. These factors could contribute to re-offending after release (Mann 2003:13).

In the light of the above, READY aims to bring about positive change in young inmates, such as responsibility, self-worth and commitment, in order to prevent a life of continued offending. The programme aims to:

> Work in partnerships with other youth leadership organisations in order to provide youth in conflict with the law with a programme that will expand their horizons, build their sense of self-worth and give them the opportunity to articulate their roles in communities into which they wish to reintegrate. (TPA 2002a)

Based on the values of integrity, knowledge, compassion, courage and respect, READY aims to reach interested young offenders to enable them to achieve particular awards within the facilities where they are held (TPA 2002a). Central to this aim is to make the programme worthwhile for its implementers, and to empower them to provide quality services to young offenders.

258

2.2 Entry criteria and profile of participants

Participation in the READY programme is voluntary and promoted through in-prison awareness activities. Although some implementers scrutinise the applicants' prison files to determine their suitability for the programme, no formal assessment precedes enrolment. Parole boards usually have a say in selecting participants, as do prison and area managers. TPA provides the following basic entry criteria for READY:

■ Interested youths have to be between the ages of 14 and 25.

■ The duration of the sentence, or what is remaining thereof, should allow for the completion of the particular award.

■ Participants have to engage in all four levels of the award, i.e. service, expedition, skills training, and sport and physical recreation.

In general, young persons awaiting trial are not considered for enrolment owing to the uncertainties surrounding the length of time that they will spend in prison and the outcome of court proceedings. Participation is free of charge. As a rule, no limitations are set regarding the nature and seriousness of the offences that interested youths have committed. However, first-time facilitators tend to allow only non-serious offenders to enrol in the READY programme.

READY participants need to be medically fit to undertake the sport and expedition parts of the programme. A medical form has to be completed, giving details of the participant's health history and status and co-signed by his or her parent or guardian. Since READY is not classroom-based, but predominantly practical in composition and implementation, no limitations are put on young persons with learning disabilities. Success in the programme is not dependent on reading and writing competence, but on willingness to enrol and commitment to see the programme through.

READY participants are usually between the ages of 16 and 21. More boys than girls take part in the programme. The majority of participants are of school-going age. Many have attended or are attending school, but, owing to various challenges to scholastic development, most have only completed the lower grades. The majority of participants are from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Although it is expected that most participants will have committed serious or repeat offences (given the restrictions in law relating to the sentencing of children to imprisonment in South Africa, i.e. children under the age of 14 may not be sentenced to a prison term and imprisonment must be used as a measure of last resort in terms of the Constitution), children are not excluded from the programme on the grounds of their offence category.

2.3 Programme content and implementation

With TPA being part of an international organisation, pre-existing approaches in youth development are used, but were adapted in developing the READY programme to ensure its appropriateness for South African contexts. READY is the result of 40 years of international and 20 years of local experience in youth development, which means that the programme and its supporting structures have been well refined (TPA 2003d). By 2002 the

programme was available at 57 correctional facilities in five provinces in South Africa: the Eastern, Western and Northern Cape, Gauteng and the Free State.

The READY model requires the recruitment and training of prison staff (usually warders) by qualified TPA trainers. These staff members are then tasked with the implementation and running of the initiative, while TPA staff provide support and guidance on a continuous basis. The direct service to youth at risk is therefore carried out by the prison staff and not by TPA itself. The following section provides an overview of the content and components of the READY programme (IAA 1990; TPA 2003e).

The three awards

TPA's award scheme consists of three different levels or awards, Bronze, Silver and Gold. Each award has its own set of requirements that are to be completed within a specific period of time. Participation becomes increasingly advanced as candidates proceed with the programme.

TABLE 19.1: OVERVIEW OF THE READY PROGRAMME

Component	Bronze	Silver	Gold
Community service	Practical service to others over a six-month period, e.g. lifesaving or first-aid	Practical service to others over a period of more than six months, e.g. child care or welfare	Practical service to others over a twelve-month period, e.g. AIDS awareness or youth service training
Skills training	Acquiring skills over a six-month period, e.g. typing, computer training or woodwork	Acquiring a skill over a period of more than six months, e.g. boat building or playing an instrument	Acquiring a skill over a twelve-month period, e.g. vehicle maintenance or drama
Expedition	Plan and undertake a two-day, sleep-over venture of 24 kms	Plan and undertake a three-day venture over 48 kms with two nights camping or spend more time on a study than journeying	Plan and undertake a four-day venture over 80 kms with three nights camping or complete a nature-related study project
Sport and physical recreation	Physical activity for at least six weeks to reach a given standard, e.g. athletics or yoga	Physical activity with improved performance over at least eight weeks, e.g. cycling or archery	Physical activity for at least twelve weeks to a certifiable standard, e.g. weight lifting or squash

Source: TPA 2003e

READY does not entail formal lectures or structured group discussions, since personal development is promoted through hands-on activities. Crime-related themes such as drug abuse, violence and alcoholism are addressed on a needs basis and informally.

Community service component

READY's service component aims to contribute to the personal development of participants, on the one hand, and the upliftment of local communities, on the other. The service component of the programme should not be confused with community service orders which are imposed as a sentence or part of a sentence. The purpose of READY's community service is not to give something back to society through reparation but to instil a sense of community, generosity and care for fellow citizens. In turn, community-based structures benefit from this voluntary assistance, and community members are sensitised to the value of reintegrating ex-offenders into society.

Because the service part of the programme should preferably focus on a particular need within the community surrounding the correctional facility, the kind of service required might not necessarily be a participant's first choice. Community service can be rendered at a variety of institutions, ranging from schools to old-age homes and orphanages. Participants can, for example, provide care to animals at a local kennel, apply first-aid during sports, assist in home-based care for those infected or affected by HIV/AIDS, or provide lifesaving assistance at a public swimming pool. The possibilities for community service are endless. READY volunteers and custodial staff always accompany participants during their service activities. At present a protocol is being developed, in collaboration with the DoCS, to ensure that proper security arrangements are implemented during community service outside prisons.

Skills training component

The skills aspect of the READY programme aims to enhance young inmates' vocational abilities. Participants choose a hobby or career interest to follow regularly, so as to improve their knowledge and skill in a particular field. The focus of skills training is on practicality and applicability outside the prison environment. Choices could include panel beating, mechanical engineering, cookery, beadwork, pottery and carpentry. Entrepreneurial skills training is popular, as are computer training courses, although these are not always available. Some implementation sites collaborate with business skills training endeavours, such as the Junior Achievement Trust, to promote alternative routes for employment after release.

The skills training component of READY is often applied in the rendering of community service. At the Grahamstown Prison, the Department of Sports, Culture and Recreation (DoSCR) was instrumental in implementing skills training activities. A youth day was organised during which inmates were exposed to activities such as beadwork and fabric painting. The occasion shed light on the vocational needs of young inmates and strategies for filling training gaps were implemented.

Expedition component

Expeditions are undertaken to instil a spirit of adventure, discovery and appreciation of nature. The aim of these expeditions is to push the physical abilities of participants to the limit. Usually fifteen youths venture outside the prison and are accompanied by five to six prison warders. Outdoor activities also entail environmental education. Expeditions are mostly undertaken in the form of hikes, but can be completed on horseback or by bicycle, canoe or boat. Some correctional managers prefer not to have inmates venturing outside prisons for long periods,

especially for the Gold Award. In these cases, the expedition is undertaken within the prison compound, or is converted to exploration, which entails participants studying a particular topic of nature.

It appears that the expedition part of READY has a greater impact on participants than the service, skills and sport components. This is probably due to the fact that the activity is usually undertaken outside the correctional facility, where the opportunity exists for self-reflection without the constant reminder of being in custody. Spending time with oneself without the interference of fellow inmates is valuable for participants to contemplate their lives. In addition, most participants are from disadvantaged backgrounds and have never been exposed to outdoor adventures.

> For some people it is the first time that they can really reflect on life – what are you actually doing, in personal life, as well as with family responsibilities? There they can open up their minds and just breathe. (READY official)

Sport and physical recreation component

READY aims to instil a sense of lifelong good health and physical wellness among its participants. The sport and recreation component of the programme aims to ensure that young inmates continue with sporting and active lifestyles once they are released from prison, or after having successfully completed a particular READY award. A variety of sport including soccer, table tennis, volleyball and basketball, are introduced, and participants choose between individual and team sports.

TPA recently approached the DoSCR to streamline the sporting activities of the two organisations. A common vision was agreed on and activities are co-ordinated to ensure that READY participants benefit from the Department's endeavours. The collaboration was first implemented in Grahamstown and is currently being replicated at other READY sites. The Department provided much-needed sporting equipment, and Handball South Africa and Rhodes University also contributed resources.

The sport component of READY is of particular value for reintegration, since released young people can become members of sports clubs or establish their own teams. In either scenario, the aim is to have ex-offenders engage in constructive, mind-occupying activities that contribute toward the prevention of re-offending.

> We need to link youths with structures outside prison, otherwise they'll simply return. Outside they are left on their own. So we thought of linking them with existing sporting clubs and people interested in sports. We cannot counsel them. We cannot find them jobs, but they can play sports. (DoSCR official)

To further promote reintegration, READY encourages community and school-based sport teams to compete against prison teams in order to stimulate communication and interaction across the prison wall.

Upon completion of each award, the participant receives a certificate that reminds him or her not only of the achievement, but also of the commitment that was made to leading a constructive life.

The READY initiative is designed to be adaptable, given that volunteer warders have to rely on the resources and facilities available at their prisons to implement the programme successfully. A particular prison might have carpentry training available, while another can provide auto mechanic or textile skills development. However, although this flexibility is necessary, this approach may limit the participants' developmental opportunities (especially in an under-resourced prison), since they have to participate in the activities and services that are offered at the facility where they are incarcerated.

Staff and volunteers

READY has a dedicated staff component that includes a project manager who oversees the implementation, functioning and quality of the programme, and an administrator who keeps track of enrolment figures, logistics and budgetary arrangements. Staff members are all Gold Award recipients, which strengthens their understanding of the principles and functioning of TPA's programming.

Volunteering constitutes the basis of TPA's work. Committed volunteers promote the use of READY and, indirectly, its sustainability. Volunteers are drawn from the ranks of the DoCS and are recruited through consultation with DoCS provincial and area managers. The volunteers are mostly young adults, aged between 25 and their late 30s. According to TPA this approach to the delivery of developmental services bridges the gap between generations (TPA 2003d). In addition, the preferred age limits ensure that participants find facilitators approachable. Volunteers range from prison warders to educators, social workers and psychologists who are in the employ of the DoCS. Positive relationships between READY volunteers and participants are of paramount importance to the overall success of the programme.

TPA is of the view that the programme is best run by facilitators who are in regular contact with participants. Although READY should ideally be implemented by professional prison staff, the value of warders should not be underestimated given the amount of time that they spend with young inmates on a daily basis.

Given the centrality of prison staff in the implementation and overall success of READY, substantial resources are invested in their training. A programme manual guides training endeavours. Some DoCS personnel have been trained to the extent that they are qualified to act as trainers for newly recruited volunteers. Challenges inherent in the recruitment and sustaining of READY volunteers include the following:

■ Staff shortages at some prisons hamper the recruitment and training of adequate numbers of volunteers.

■ From time to time, trained volunteers are transferred to other correctional facilities where READY is not necessarily available, or the content of the programme at the new site differs from what the volunteer is used to.

■ Although participation is voluntary, some prison managers nominate staff to participate in the initiative. This scenario is not always to the benefit of READY, as involuntary commitment is often detrimental to the overall quality of the programme.

Partnerships

Since 1983, TPA has fostered valuable collaborative relationships with a variety of organisations, structures and individuals. It currently has relationships with more than 150 youth and developmental organisations throughout South Africa. In addition, more than 2 000 volunteers, trainers and helpers participate in the running of READY. READY cannot be implemented without networking and the pulling together of varied resources. Logistical support and support in-kind are received from, among others, the National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO), the Department of Social Development/Social Services (DoSD/DoSS), the South African Police Services (SAPS), and the National Youth Commission (NYC). Site-specific collaboration, for example with community-based structures such schools and church groups, takes place on a needs basis. For example, TPA has collaborated with NICRO and the Port Elizabeth-based Stepping Stones One Stop Youth Justice Centre in developing and implementing crime prevention activities. A collaborative arrangement with the Junior Achievement Trust and Business Skills for South Africa was also entered into in order to create economic opportunities for participants. In future, TPA aims to establish links with Big Brothers Big Sisters South Africa (BBBSSA)[1] to complement READY with a pre- and post-release mentorship component.

While all its collaborative relationships are important, TPA's main partner in implementing the READY programme is the DoCS. Without its approval, participation and support, READY simply cannot work.

Cost

At the time that the data was collected (2003), TPA calculated its costs on a per capita basis. In 2001, TPA estimated the total cost for one READY participant at R100. However, actual expenditure in 2002 shows an increase in the implementation cost per participant to about R130 (TPA 2002b). At that time vocational skills training was the most expensive component per participant (R58), followed by excursions (R41), sports (R6) and community service (R2.50). Given escalating costs, this unit tariff will have increased significantly since then.

Because READY has buy-in from the DoCS, funds are from time to time made available for specific sites to help implement the programme. Outdoor training activities may be funded, or secured free of charge from local recreational parks. At the same time, DoCS resources are directly applied in the implementation of the programme, i.e. through practical/vocational skills training, the use of facilities and the volunteers' time.

2.4 Monitoring and evaluation

TPA staff undertakes quality control of all courses and programmes provided to READY participants. Site visits are undertaken quarterly to monitor the status of particular programmes. During these visits, TPA staff interact with participants to discuss their expectations and individual progress, to gain feedback about possible amendments to the programme, and to hear comments on the attitudes of facilitators. Participants do not formally evaluate READY, as many are not sufficiently skilled in writing. Suggestions for improving the programme are obtained from facilitators and management staff at DoCS.

Each programme site compiles year planners showing the number of youths in the facility; the number of READY volunteers; potential community-based support; equipment requirements; target numbers per award level; the list of activities available; and the anticipated dates for the expedition and award ceremonies. These factors serve as benchmarks for programme implementation. At the same time, site volunteers indicate the nature of support required from TPA officials.

Outputs

During the past two decades, TPA has reached an excess of 80 000 young people through its developmental initiatives. Since its inception in 1994, around 14 000 young inmates have participated in the READY programme (TPA 2003). In 2001 there were 3 272 enrolments for READY (TPA 2002b), and in 2002 this increased to 4 443 imprisoned youths participating in the Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards.

FIGURE 19.1: MONTHLY ENROLMENT FOR THE READY PROGRAMME, MARCH 2002 TO FEBRUARY 2003
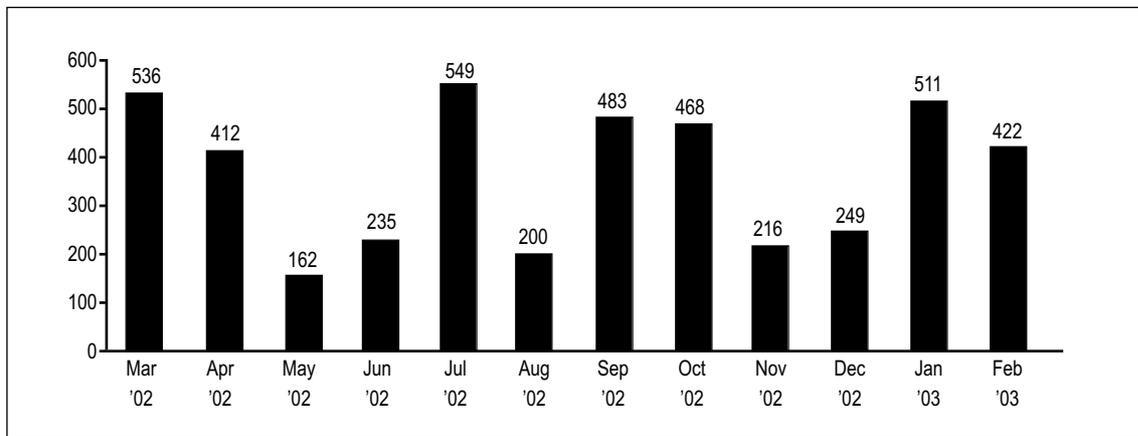
Source: TPA June 2003.

Enrolment figures for the READY programme vary depending on the time of year. The first quarter of each year is characterised by large numbers of young inmates signing up for READY. Intakes during May and June tend to decrease. July again sees a sharp increase in intakes, possibly due to Bronze Award holders enrolling for the Silver Award. Another explanation for the increase could be new intakes for the Bronze Award, as enrolment for this level could take place twice per year. Award ceremonies are usually conducted during the months of September and October, and serve as a valuable marketing strategy to recruit new READY participants. The end of each year sees few intakes, possibly because implementers are writing exams or are on leave and are not actively recruiting participants.

Recruitment for READY depends on the number of facilitators responsible for implementing the programme. Some prisons have only one facilitator with about 10 to 20 participants, while others have 80 to 100 participants with four volunteers implementing the programme. There are no fixed guidelines as to the number of participants per volunteer. Enrolments for the READY programme tend to decrease with progression from the Bronze to the Silver and Gold Awards.

FIGURE 19.2: ANNUAL ENROLMENT FOR THE BRONZE, SILVER AND GOLD AWARDS, 2001
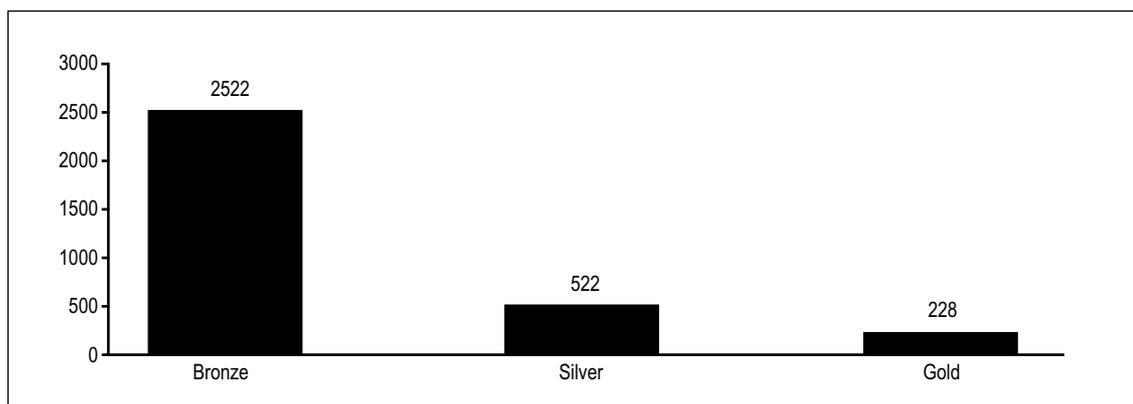
Source: TPA 2002a.

READY does not have a lot of dropouts. However, some participants are transferred to other correctional facilities where READY may not be provided, or the programme content differs drastically from what the participant was used to. It is estimated that a low 3–5% of released READY participants will re-engage in criminal activities (Mann 2003:1; TPA 2003a). In fact, of the nearly 8 000 young people who participated in READY between 1994 and 2000, only two have returned to prison (Skosana 2000; *Saturday Star* 2000).

Available impact data

Four research studies of READY and their main findings deserve mentioning. Firstly, the MTN Centre for Crime Prevention Studies engaged in an evaluation of what was then called TPA's Young Offender programme. The evaluation entailed an analysis of information obtained from service providers, partners and programme participants. The following results are noteworthy:

- Participants were extremely optimistic about the programme and emphasised its role in empowering young offenders.

- Young offenders noted that the initiative gave them meaning and purpose, and guidance not to engage in criminal activities.

- Participants saw the practical and life skills that were obtained as valuable for future economic opportunities.

- An increase in feelings of self-confidence and self-esteem prevailed among participants.

- The teamwork approach of some activities was seen as promoting skill in solving conflict and aggression.

- Higher levels of trust among participants, and also between participants and volunteers, were recorded.
  (Netto & Humphreys 2000)

Limitations and challenges to the initiative were found to be the exclusion of inmates in maximum security; inadequate support on the part of the DoCS, particularly regarding funding; and a lack of aftercare support for released participants.

Secondly, two separate studies conducted in 2002 and 2003 on the opinions of Gold Award holders from both the READY and Learning for Life programmes yielded the following results:

■ All respondents said they would recommend the programmes to others.

■ 95% of respondents said the programmes had had a positive influence on their lives.

■ 65% of respondents said the programmes were excellent, 26% said they were very good, and 8% said they were average.

■ 76% of award holders volunteered assistance to TPA's programmes.

■ 72% of respondents felt that TPA had changed their way of thinking about South Africa (18% did not respond to the question).

   (SA Futurserve CC 2003)

Thirdly, in 2001 Southern Hemisphere undertook a qualitative evaluation of the READY programme in the Western Cape and Gauteng. Key findings of this study were:

■ Resources for activities in prisons are limited and creativity is required to implement particular components, especially community service and expedition.

■ Facilitation of the programme has a positive impact on volunteers since they become acquainted with inmates at a personal level. At the same time, volunteers commit more to general rehabilitation activities.

■ Staff shortages at the DoCS could hamper the successful implementation and completion of READY programmes.

■ Implementers are in need of continued training and support.

■ READY requires a post-release component to facilitate reintegration.

   (Mangokwana & Lomofsky 2001)

In summary, the evaluation highlighted the following:

> The findings show that the President's Award provides an excellent framework for young offenders to engage in constructive activities in prison, and that it contributes significantly to their improved behaviour, self-esteem and confidence. The element of trust that is created is perhaps the most important factor for the participants. Learning a skill and participating in the expedition provides young offenders with a sense of their own potential and some security about their future. Both of these emerge as key issues shaping the minds of the participants. These factors, together with the identity that is created by being a member of the President's Award, provide a powerful combination for rehabilitation. (Mangokwana & Lomofsky 2001:ii)

Fourthly, in 2003 Umhlaba Development Services undertook a qualitative evaluation of the READY initiative. Eleven prisons were proportionally sampled from the 58 READY service sites in South Africa. A total of 46 individual interviews were conducted with participants, while 125 youths took part in focus group discussions. Twenty-one facilitators were involved in the study. On the positive side, the study found that:

■ Each interviewed participant provided positive responses about the programme.

■ The vast majority of respondents were exposed to skills and experiences to which they previously had little or no access. In addition, READY provided for productive and time-occupying activities in an often boring and depressing environment.

■ All interviewed participants reported changes in behaviour and attitude, and said that the programme offered an alternative to becoming involved with prison gangs and other forms of negative behaviour. Furthermore, READY boosted their self-confidence to face the outside world upon release.

■ The programme helped them form or improve relationships with fellow inmates, warders, family and friends.

■ The community service component provided participants with the opportunity to repay some of the debt their offences caused. At the same time, it facilitated the acquisition and application of skills.

■ Participants valued expeditions, in part because of the trust that is placed in them during excursions.

(Umhlaba Development Services 2003:10–16)

However, the study also found that:

■ READY does not primarily promote relationships between young participants and their families. Also, not all parents of participants fully understand what the initiative is about.

■ The limited number of facilitators at prisons means that READY cannot accommodate all interested inmates. In addition, some facilitators have not received training on the programme, while others voiced the need for more regular support from TPA officials.

■ The overall management of the programme appears to be hampered by the centralised co-ordination of nearly 60 different prisons throughout the country.

■ Participants do not have access to post-release continuation with the programme.

(Umhlaba Development Services 2003:12–15)

In summary, the study noted that READY is both positive and effective. Of particular value is its impact on the lives and attitudes of both the participants and the facilitators (Umhlaba Development Services 2003:4). However, the extension of the initiative into the community should receive urgent attention in order to promote reintegration endeavours.

2.5 Key lessons and views

■ Youth development initiatives should guard against taking on too large a number of participants.

> My sense is that in the past there has been a real push for numbers. It was all about getting many youths involved in the programme ... I feel strongly that it had an effect on quality. (TPA official)

■ Prison-based reintegration programming should ensure post-release support.

> The work in prison is nothing compared to the work that we should do on the outside ... Any youth that is not looked after and monitored constantly, quickly falls back [to crime]. (Stakeholder)

■ READY has value in the daily running of correctional facilities.

> At one prison, a warder told us that, since the introduction of the programme, there wasn't any fighting in the juvenile section for three months. (TPA official)

■ The prison personnel's volunteering and commitment are critical for READY's success.

> Facilitators do not always have the time needed for READY, so they have to make up time. People who do this are the ones dedicated and committed to youth development. (READY official)

> The programme helps them [the warders] to take initiative to become true correctional officials. It broadens their minds as to what they really can do. (TPA official)

■ Participants see value in what they have achieved through READY.

> Getting an award and a certificate made me realise that I can achieve a lot in life. (READY participant)

> Every time I see the medal I will think of my time in prison, not the part of my punishment, but what I've learned. (READY participant)

3. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

READY shows a sound understanding of the needs of institutionalised youth. As the literature indicates, prison life is detrimental to young people's development. Moreover, young prisoners often struggle to benefit from formal prison-based educational programmes. With this in mind, READY provides young inmates with alternative developmental initiatives and opportunities to discover their potential and strengthen their talent.

In terms of the aims of the initiative, READY introduces participants to worthwhile activities such as the acquisition of skills and participation in recreational activities. The community service component is valuable for facilitating a sense of belonging among participants. The literature notes that prison-based intervention programmes should promote contact between prisoners and the community. The READY sport activities have the potential to instil a sense of self-discipline and achievement among participants. The expedition component draws on the principles of nature-based experiential learning, in particular reflection and confronting the self, to promote higher levels of responsibility. Many ex-prisoners experience difficulties in finding employment, and READY endeavours to promote skills training and – although this appears to be limited – employment.

Although the initiative is prison-based, some components, for example community service and involvement in sports clubs, strengthen the chances of successful reintegration once the young person is released. The programme could however benefit from more involvement from the families of participants. Strengthening ties between young offenders and their families is particularly valuable for reducing antisocial behaviour.

269

The intervention could also potentially be strengthened through more structured interaction with the risk factors involved in antisocial and offending behaviour. Although the general developmental intent of the initiative is clear, the programme creates a valuable opportunity for interacting with young inmates about risk factors, particularly in light of the realities of drug abuse and violence in prisons. In addition, there is no formal assessment of participants, which lessens the ability of the initiative to focus intervention at the individual level. As the literature notes, reintegration programmes should preferably include individual and problem-oriented activities to address the personal challenges that prisoners might experience.

Having said this, it is important not to lose sight of READY's primary intent, which is the facilitation of general developmental opportunities for imprisoned youth, the outcomes of which could prove crucial for pro-social behaviour. In essence, READY sets out to facilitate the development of young inmates through self-discovery and the strengthening of self-confidence and skills. The strong evidence base of the initiative, i.e. that only two of the nearly eight thousand ex-participants returned to prison, raises the question of whether other reintegration programmes, in general, are possibly over-interventionist. The counter-arguments to this is that participation in READY is voluntary and that possibly only those youths who are truly committed to personal change enrol in the programme.

It is noteworthy that it is prison warders and development personnel who implement the initiative. The literature notes that both custodial and reintegration officials have great potential for developing a supportive base for development within the prison.

Endnotes

1   The reader is referred to Chapter 17 for more information about BBBSSA.

References

DoCS (Department of Correctional Services). n.d. *Young offenders*. Pretoria: Department of Correctional Services (Directorate: Communication Services).

IAA (International Award Association). 1990. *Leaders' training pack*. London: The International Award Association.

Mail and Guardian. 2001. The real 2001 report card. 20 December 2001. http://archive.mg.co.za/nxt/gateway.dll/ PrintEdition/MGP2001/31v00000/41v00001/51v00047.htm (Accessed 12 November 2003).

Mangokwana A & Lomofsky D. 2001. *Formative evaluation of the Young Offender Programme of the President's Award*. Cape Town: Southern Hemisphere Consultants.

Mann A. 2003. *Breaking out the cycle*. Horizons – The President's Award Learning for Life Programme. 12–13.

Milne C, Neves D, Van Vlaenderen H & Routledge M. 2003. *Formative evaluation of the President's Award's AIDS Challenge Programme*. Grahamstown: Centre for Applied Social Research & Action.

Netto L & Humphreys M. 2000. *The President's Award Young Offender Programme – evaluation report*. Grahamstown: MTN Centre for Crime Prevention Studies.

SA Futurserve. 2003. *Gold Award Holders Association – Phase Two project report*. Port Alfred: SA Futurserve.

Star. 2000. Glimpse of hope through the bars. 21 October 2000. p. 10.

Simpson G & Rauch J. 1999. Reflections on the First Year of the National Crime Prevention Strategy. In Maharaj J (ed). *Between unity and diversity: Essays on nation building in post-apartheid South Africa*. Cape Town: David Philip. www.csvr.org.za/papers/papncps.htm (Accessed 12 November 2003).

Skosana BM. 2000. Welcome and opening address at the Gold Award Ceremony on 5 November 2000, Drakenstein Prison, Paarl. http://www.dcs.gov.za/speeches/Parent.asp?Page=Speeches\ 14Nov2000htm (Accessed 13 November 2003).

TPA (The President's Award for Youth Empowerment). 2003a. *Fact sheet*. Grahamstown: The President's Award for Youth Empowerment.

TPA (The President's Award for Youth Empowerment). 2003b. An inspiration for life. http://www.presidentsaward.co.za/Inspiration.htm (Accessed 25 June 2003).

TPA (The President's Award for Youth Empowerment). 2003c. Our mission. http://www.presidentsaward.co.za/mission.htm (Accessed 25 June 2003).

TPA (The President's Award for Youth Empowerment). 2003d. Vision, values and strategies. http://www.presidentsaward.co.za/vision.htm (Accessed 25 June 2003).

TPA (The President's Award for Youth Empowerment). 2003e. How it works. http://www.presidentsaward.co.za/howit.htm (Accessed 25 June 2003).

TPA (The President's Award for Youth Empowerment). 2002a. *Annual report for the year ending 28 February 2002*. Grahamstown: The President's Award for Youth Empowerment.

TPA (The President's Award for Youth Empowerment). 2002b. *Financial reports*. Grahamstown: The President's Award for Youth Empowerment.

Umhlaba Development Services. 2003. *President's Award: evaluation report READY initiative*. Braamfontein: Umhlaba Development Services.

20

DISCOVERY AND DESTINATIONS

Khulisa Child Nurturing Services

Khulisa is a Gauteng-based organisation that has been operating in the field of crime prevention amongst the youth of South Africa for over seven years. The organisation aims to reduce the chances of re-offending by encouraging self-discovery and self-mastery through such activities as creative writing and life skills training. Khulisa has a unique approach to working with imprisoned young people in the form of its Discovery and Destinations programmes.

As Khulisa has been described earlier in this report, the reader is referred to Chapter 5 for an overview of the organisation's establishment, aims and mission, and organisational structure and resources.

1. RATIONALE AND AIM

The Discovery and Destinations programmes were developed in response to the demand for effective rehabilitation, post-release support and reintegration services for South Africa's imprisoned youths and young adults. Prisons, particularly given their overcrowded conditions in South Africa, are increasingly seen as exacerbating rather than preventing offending behaviour and drug abuse. With high levels of recidivism within the first six months of release, it has become clear that ex-offenders face more than just stigma once they are released from prison (Khulisa n.d.:1).

Discovery is a prison-based therapeutic intervention. The programme aims to help prisoners maximise their opportunities to attain a self-sustaining situation upon release (Van Selm 2002:1). The programme promotes personal change and healthy self-awareness among participants. The assumption is that this change will, in turn, lead to new levels of responsibility and accountability. Internal change is brought about through the creative stimulation of interests and talents. Creative writing forms the core of the programme, specifically because of its reflective and emotional aspects.

The Destinations programme serves as a stepping stone to employment for Khulisa's Discovery participants after they have been released from prison. Destinations aims to prepare participants for employment through training in a variety of practical business skills. In part, the programme aims to secure work opportunities for ex-offenders in the business and community sectors.

2. ENTRY CRITERIA AND PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

For Discovery, Khulisa provides DoCS officials with the programme's entry criteria, after which the Department helps select appropriate participants. In general, potential candidates should:

■ Have achieved Grade 9 or the General Education and Training Certificate.

■ Have a clean prison record.

■ Show commitment to participate.

■ Enrol voluntarily for the programme.

■ Be able to function individually and in a group situation.

■ Be fluent in spoken and written English.[1]

Because the programme consists largely of self-study modules, a certain level of understanding, reading and writing ability is required. Khulisa therefore makes use of the Learning Ability Battery (LAB) to determine whether applicants are trainable, what additional courses they may require and what particular areas of their education need strengthening. This assessment focuses on non-verbal communication and mathematical levels to identify prior learning trainability (Khulisa 2003b:1). An assessment of a 2002 intake group at the Leeuwkop Prison in Gauteng indicated that all candidates had above average learning potential. Potential Discovery participants need to give their consent for drug and polygraph testing because of the nature of the programme and the prevalence of drug abuse among prisoners.

Discovery participants are largely in their late teens or early twenties. They are often young people who have been convicted for violent offences, such as rape, murder and armed robbery. In the past, the programme was implemented with inmates who had between a year and 18 months left of their sentences. Currently the programme also focuses on inmates serving lengthy sentences. The main reason is that those serving long sentences can start using their newly acquired skills to render services to fellow inmates, such as drug and HIV/AIDS counselling. Participation in Destinations is preceded by a careful and individual process of monitoring and assessment. In addition to the training and personal development that potential candidates need to complete before applying for Destinations, they are asked to write a creative essay explaining why they want to participate in the programme. Assessment further focuses on personality characteristics and competence levels to match potential participants with employers.

The Destinations programme favours candidates with non-violent backgrounds, particularly in the light of possible work placement. Most participants are between the ages of 18 and 26. Only male ex-offenders are considered for participation, because the majority of prisoners are men and they are therefore seen as a high priority target group. Most participants are from lower socioeconomic environments.

3. PROGRAMME CONTENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 Discovery

The Discovery programme follows a two-pronged strategy, namely self-discovery and experiential learning, to bring about transformation and development (Khulisa 2003a). It promotes reconciliation between the victim and the offender, whenever possible, to help and speed up rehabilitation. Khulisa officials arrange mediation meetings between the offender and the victim at the prison. Discovery was developed with the input of beneficiaries, penologists, educationists, correctional officers and psychologists. The programme's approach entails:

■ A multi-disciplinary focus on knowledge, values and attitudes.

■ Culturally sensitive activities, exercises and methods of skills transferral.

■ Ensuring a variety of personal skills are acquired, such as problem solving, teamwork and communication.

■ Facilitating career paths and continued learning.

Discovery runs over a one-year period and is based on creative writing, personal transformation, group therapy and vocational skills development. Needless to say, the buy-in and commitment of the DoCS is critical for the programme to be a success. Discovery consists of three sub-programmes: Usiko, My Path and Train-the-trainer.

Usiko

Usiko entails the narration of cultural stories. This programme aims to combine storytelling with multi-modal life skills activities to promote self-respect and a sense of responsibility among participants. Stories have a value and moral focus to help participants learn outcomes-based life skills. The encouraging and educational contexts of stories are strengthened through dance, music, visual arts and drama. More specifically, the stories provide for learning in the fields of numeracy, communication, humanities, life orientation, arts and culture, and the natural sciences. The programme consists of 120 indigenous stories.

My Path

My Path is a certificate programme that recognises prior learning and provides knowledge that may later improve the chances of gaining employment. In total, the programme consists of 36 themes that are completed over a period of 36 weeks. It aims to develop young inmates' emotional, technical and social skills through a process of self-discovery and creative writing. More specifically, it seeks to empower participants to:

■ Undertake decision making in a constructive and meaningful way.

■ Deal with emotions through self-affirmation.

■ Manage stress through a healthy lifestyle, relaxation and exercise.

■ Value other people's perceptions and share thoughts and feelings in trusting relationships.

■ Understand personal emotions and methods of dealing with reactions.

■ Have self-value and be aware of personal strengths and weaknesses.

■ Develop assertiveness without infringing on the rights of others.

■ Experience empathy through understanding other people's feelings and reactions.

■ Take responsibility for their decisions and behaviour.

■ Experience group dynamics through co-operation and leadership.

(Van Selm 2002:6)

My Path consists of three courses or phases, Exploration, Consolidation and Preparation, also known as the ECP courses, which help participants explore their paths and consolidate their discoveries, and prepare them to live according to their new-found knowledge. Through the ECP courses, participants find new personal qualities and use the past as a measuring tool for future activities (Van Selm 2002:3). More specifically, ECP involves the following courses:

■ The first course, or exploration phase, focuses on self-exploration and self-knowledge. The self is explored as an emotional, social, physical and psychological being with creative abilities. Personal beliefs are challenged so as to build confidence, trust and purpose. Prison life is also explored to make peace with reality and to overcome inappropriate attitudes.

■ The second course, or consolidation phase, serves to merge strategies, while skills training focuses on setting goals, managing stress, communication, value and morality building, healthy self-concepts and life career strategising.

■ Based on the outcomes of the previous two courses, the third course, or preparation phase, entails the acquisition of basic business and entrepreneurial skills.

The programme consists of a series of self-study manuals with detailed descriptions of the tasks participants must undertake, and guidelines on how to achieve the anticipated outcomes. Participants receive basic stationery for doing the written assignments. Learning outcomes are specified and assessment criteria provided through which participants can determine whether they have achieved the required objective (Van Selm 2002:2).

The preparation course, in particular, draws on meditation, journal keeping, creative writing and art exercises to facilitate a process of introspection and self-expression. Learning is enhanced with activities such as drumming, drama and presentations. Videos and creative games form part of the programme, to stimulate thinking and emotional development. At the same time, creative and interactive activities ensure commitment to homework and exercises. A two-hour weekly meeting allows for group discussion and guidance by a trained facilitator. Group discussions primarily serve to enable learning from the experiences of others (Van Selm 2002:9).

Train-the-trainer

This training skills programme is open to participants who have successfully completed My Path. Only selected prisoners can enrol for the programme, which has a particular HIV/AIDS and drug counselling focus. Drugwise and Alcoholics Anonymous participate in the training, although Khulisa is in the process of developing modules to manage these themes independently. The programme is designed in accordance with the principles of the National Qualifications Framework and conforms to the syllabus of the City & Guilds International Certificate in Training Skills. It serves primarily as an opportunity for prisoners who wish to follow a career in education, development and training (EDT). It facilitates entry into the EDT field, forms the foundation for further qualification in this field, and opens up possible career paths. The programme is undertaken on a self-study basis and consists of four modules:

■ Module 1 introduces the participant to the EDT field and education as lifelong learning.

■ Module 2 is about the principles and methods of instruction.

■ Module 3 focuses on the establishment of a positive learning environment.

■ Module 4 is about evaluation and assessment in EDT.

The DoCS undertakes all practical arrangements for the Discovery programme, i.e. organising groups, ensuring attendance and providing the necessary equipment. At the Johannesburg Prison, Discovery participants are isolated from fellow inmates for the first few months of the programme to reduce possible drug and peer influences, and housed in single instead of double cells in order to stimulate reflection and creative writing.

3.2 Destinations

The Destinations programme is a post-release intervention and is run over a three-month period with training taking place twice a week for the whole day. Although some training components were outsourced in the past, Khulisa is increasing its capacity to render all training themes. Training takes place at Khulisa's offices and transport is provided to participants. The programme starts as soon as possible after release. The support intervention has the following components:

■ Meticulous screening during imprisonment.

■ Psychological evaluation.

■ Active participation for at least 12 months in the Discovery rehabilitation programme described above.

■ Mentoring by a qualified social worker and ex-offender.

■ Training in life skills development.

■ Exposure to family counselling.

■ Testing for drug abuse before the programme.

■ Participation in entrepreneurial and business skills training.

■ Work placement.

(Khulisa 2003b)

Participants may attend an outdoor camp before starting Destinations in order to develop group co-operation and a basic support structure for the training process. The training begins with a two-day workshop on the principles of ubuntu to promote a sense of caring for and living in harmony with others. An understanding of *ubuntu* assists reintegration because participants see themselves as being part of and co-responsible for the functioning of broader structures, and it helps re-establish family bonds and a sense of morality and obligation. The Destinations programme includes:

■ Life skills, i.e. communication, self-concept and conflict resolution.

■ Basic computer literacy.

■ Public speaking.

■ Project co-ordination.

■ Entrepreneurial and basic business skills, i.e. office etiquette, budgeting and financial literacy.

■ Professional and work-related communication.

Khulisa believes that private businesses have an opportunity to substantially contribute toward crime prevention in South Africa. They could do this partly by employing former offenders who have the potential to become loyal and, in time, skilled workers. Businesses have the potential to give hope to ex-offenders. Khulisa has a success rate of around 85% with placing ex-Destination participants in sustained employment. Its officials engage in 'cold calling', where private initiatives are approached for placement opportunities, and it also has existing working relationships with services to facilitate work placement. Potential employers are visited in person to clarify expectations, and negotiations about salaries ensure that they are kept above minimum wages.

In addition to a help-line telephone number for specific assistance, Khulisa encourages ex-participants to become members of the Khulisa Fellowship, which provides opportunities for members to meet on a regular basis and to share their personal experiences of life on the outside. A quarterly newsletter informs members about Khulisa's activities. Current and ex-participants can have their articles and letters published in the circular. The Fellowship also provides channels for keeping track of ex-participants (Khulisa 2001:1).

Partnerships

Khulisa's pre-release rehabilitation programme (Discovery) is highly dependent on the interest and involvement of the DoCS. The Department provides a venue, a co-ordinator, and furniture for the programme, but no direct financial support. DoCS staff members are instrumental in providing Khulisa officials with the necessary background information about participants and assist in recruiting procedures. As part of the Discovery

programme, Khulisa fosters a working relationship with Drugwise, FAMSA, SANCA, Gunfree SA and Lifeline. Counsellors present some of the modules of the programme and train selected participants to act as peer group counsellors.

The Destinations programme has close working relationships with private companies, because its ultimate success depends on finding sustainable employment for participants. Khulisa constantly seeks new partnerships to surpass its already high placement rate.

Costs

In 2003 Khulisa calculated that its rehabilitation and reintegration programme costs were around R20 000 per participant for the 18-month intervention (Benjamin 2003:4). It was estimated that in 2002 the prison-based rehabilitation programme costs about R8 800 per participant (Van Selm 2002:1).

4. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

In addition to the weekly contact with Discovery participants, written tasks and group discussions serve as valuable monitoring tools. After Khulisa has secured employment for Destination participants, employers are regularly asked to complete evaluation forms describing their performance and commitment. Besides monthly follow-up visits by a Khulisa official, parole officers continue to supervise Destination participants. Khulisa also has to update the DoCS regularly on their individual progress. The Khulisa Fellowship has a database for keeping track of all members and the correspondence to and from ex-participants (Van Selm 2002:3).

Overall, Khulisa recorded an 85% non-recidivism rate among participants who completed its rehabilitation and reintegration programmes, which is an improvement of 65% on estimated national indications for recidivism (Benjamin 2003:4; Khulisa n.d.).

4.1. Key lessons and views

■ The programme provides for self-discovery and the development of potential.

> I didn't know that I could write. Initially I wrote lazily and didn't put much effort in. With time it improved and up to today I have two articles published. It was a journey of discovering myself and my talents. (Ex-Discovery participant)

■ The outsourcing of some reintegration work attests to the organisation's commitment to high quality service delivery.

> Some modules were facilitated by highly competent individuals, for which Khulisa had to pay money, so we greatly value that. (Participant)

■ Through its programmes inside and outside of the prison and through the Khulisa fellowship, Khulisa's foster long-term relationships with young participants and is thus able to track their progress after release .

> Even if you are outside and without a job, this is our home. We are lifetime members of Khulisa. (Ex-Destinations participant)

> Even if one loses his job, Khulisa will help in finding a new job. (Ex-Destinations participant)

■ Given the intensity of the intervention and its long-term nature, the programme, in particular Destinations, can accommodate a limited number of participants at a time.

> The fact that there is limited admittance into the programme is a problem. (Khulisa official)

5. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The initiative shows a clear understanding of the challenges that young inmates face while they are in prison, including the constraints on effective rehabilitation and reintegration efforts, and the problems that they encounter once they are released. The initiative's response to these challenges has been to develop a long-term, high intensity intervention. Khulisa believes in the potential of high-risk youth to lead constructive lives, if they are appropriately empowered and supported. Both Discovery and Destinations appear to draw on multiple methods of intervention and support to counteract the multiple risk factors that confront young inmates, both while they are institutionalised and upon their release. The initiative also promotes the realisation of restorative justice through efforts to reconcile the victim and the offender.

Discovery consists of clear, consecutive steps for guiding participants toward personal change and healthy self-awareness. As with the previously discussed reintegration programmes, Discovery also believes that self-worth, confidence and coming to terms with one's actions are neccessary before further development can take place. The use of stories with a cultural and moral value promotes personal contemplation and the exploration of behaviour and emotions. Similarly, creative writing provides an opportunity for participants to express their emotions. As the literature notes, reintegration programmes should preferably consist of individual activities that aim to strengthen the participants' emotional well-being. Participants benefit from sub-group intervention where weekly gatherings allow for collective learning and the sharing of knowledge and views.

As noted in the discussion on the TPA READY programme in the previous chapter, the Khulisa model highlights the need for the prison staff's commitment and support for creating an atmosphere conducive to change and for gaining the logistical assistance it needs to implement the programme effectively.

Discovery has a strong focus on learning. Since the training part of its programme consists of self-study modules and is undertaken with minimal supervision, an appropriate level of literacy is required to participate in and benefit from the programme. This in itself is one of the programme's limitations, because the entry criteria automatically exclude a large part of the prison population who are victims of a poor education system and whose subsequent scholastic performance has been poor. This, and the limited number of young inmates taken in at a time, means that Discovery runs the risk of being perceived as an initiative for a few 'elite and clever' inmates.

Securing employment after release presents a tremendous challenge to most ex-prisoners, so it is commendable that Destinations invests in the participants' vocational abilities and finds them employment, to counteract the risk

factors associated with unemployment and poverty. The initiative highlights the challenges of persuading the private sector to employ ex-offenders and the programme could perhaps benefit from a move to self-employed and entrepreneurial endeavours.

Both initiatives show a strong commitment to the (multi-sourced) monitoring of participants throughout their development. Assessments to determine the suitability of potential participants appear to be in-depth. The initiative, in general, appears to favour a particular profile of young inmates, specifically regarding their learning abilities and the nature of the offences that they committed. Careful selection coupled with the voluntary nature of participation in the initiative may well contribute to the high success rate of the programme.

References

Benjamin C. 2003. Juvenile offenders prove they can go straight. *Business Day*. 24 February 2003.

Khulisa. n.d. Introduction (Unpublished information document). Johannesburg: Khulisa.

Khulisa. 2003a. How Discovery works. http//www.khulisaservices.co.za (Accessed 5 September 2003).

Khulisa. 2003b. *Khulisa rehabilitation/reintegration programme at Leeuwkop Prison – progress report May 2002 – January 2003*. Johannesburg: Khulisa.

Khulisa. 2001. *Khulisa Fellowship Newsletter December 2001*. Johannesburg: Khulisa.

Van Selm. 2002. *Proposal prepared for the Open Society Foundation for the rehabilitation programme at Leeuwkop Medium B Juvenile Prison*. Johannesburg: Khulisa.

21

Conclusions

The above chapters have described the approaches, strategies, activities, structures and relationships of the reviewed organisations and their diversion or reintegration services. This concluding chapter discusses these approaches and their resulting interventions. The analysis follows roughly the same themes as those that were considered in the discussion and analysis of the individual programmes:

■ Understanding and interpretation of the risk factors involved in youth offending.

■ The activities followed to realise the aims of the programme.

■ The existence (and nature) of complementary or multi-modal programming.

■ Planning and implementation against a background of rights-based and/or restorative justice approaches.

■ Assessment of referred children prior to the intervention (the outcomes of which are used to inform the focus and content of the intervention, and to monitor participant and programme outcomes).

■ The presence of a system for monitoring the intervention. This includes the monitoring of the activities that participants engage in, and measuring the programme outcomes.

■ Skills and capacities of service providers to implement the programme effectively.

The first three themes intersect to a large extent and are addressed under the first heading.

1. PLANNING INTERVENTIONS AROUND AN UNDERSTANDING OF RISK FACTORS

Although not a specific activity of the review, it is worthwhile to reflect briefly on the processes that appear to have been followed thus far in the conceptualisation and establishment of diversion and reintegration services in South Africa. A number of these derive from internationally acclaimed youth development organisations, and some of their strategies have had to be adapted to meet local service needs. The establishment of some others has been informed by international experience and an exchange of knowledge. Yet it appears that a large number derive from local innovations.

Indications are that these local innovations were most often based on a set of theoretical assumptions about at-risk behaviour, although little evidence existed at the time that they were established to support such assumptions. In

these cases, the review was not able to determine the extent to which needs assessments (informed by an adequate understanding of the risk factors involved in child and youth antisocial behaviour) supported their conceptualisation and implementation. Nevertheless, it is commendable that some of these local initiatives are strongly committed to providing and broadening evidence about the outcomes and impacts of their programmes, thereby strengthening the body of knowledge about 'what works' for diversion in South Africa. It is equally noteworthy that some local interventions follow more rigorous approaches, such as pilot studies, before launching their programmes. In sum, it is advisable for initiatives to revise their intervention approach and activities from time to time, and provide or update evidence for the validity of the work they undertake.

The manner in which diversion and reintegration interventions interpret and understand the risk factors for child offending should inform the choice of programme participants, as well as the way their behaviour is to be addressed. It is evident from this review that programmes commonly do not always have a clear understanding of the causes of youth offending.

Although the link with risk factors in family, community and victim-focused interventions is not as clear as that in other interventions, there is some evidence that they do take into account factors such as family stressors and inadequate parent–child communication. This is clear from the fact that family group conferencing is considered to be a suitable intervention when an offence takes place within the domestic setting or when the offender is known to the victim. Activities include bringing together the various parties to deliberate on how the youth can make amends for his or her wrongdoing. Not only is reconciliation between the child and the victim promoted, but attention is also paid to the parent–child relationship. There is thus scope for family group conferences to include activities that aim to strengthen the communication and conflict resolution skills of participating parents and their at-risk children.

In addition to their emphasis on healing damaged (familial and interpersonal) relationships and making amends, family group conferences aim to promote an understanding of why the offence took place and how it can be prevented in future. These conferences are therefore highly individualised responses to youth offending and have the potential to address the participants' specific (domestic and individual) needs. However, they appear to be less effective with offences that stem from economic need. Fortunately, they can be implemented in conjunction with economic and skills empowerment activities.

Interventions that are based on life skills training also appear to acknowledge the role that parents play as both contributors to and inhibitors of antisocial behaviour. Their inclusion in interventions appears to be crucial, as evidence suggests that strengthening parent–child relationships plays a critical role in preventing antisocial behaviour. Life skills-based programmes tend to consider inadequate socialisation to be the cause of antisocial behaviour, and some see youth offending as the result of poor decision making and ineffective communication abilities on the part of the child. In addition, life skills interventions take into account the relationship between developmental age and risk factors. Life skills training may therefore endeavour to equip at-risk children with the skills to communicate and resolve conflict effectively, and give particular attention to proper decision making abilities.

As with family group conferencing, life skills training aims to promote an understanding of the offence, in order to help prevent re-offending. Evidence suggests that both these types of intervention generally result in a concrete plan. With life skills interventions, the plan is to guide future behaviour, while the family group conference focuses on ways the child can make amends for wrongdoing. In contrast to restorative interventions, life skills training is undertaken in groups. Although this has value for collective learning and the sharing of experiences, group activities can fail to meet the unique needs of individual participants. Life skills training is best implemented in combination with other diversion and reintegration programmes, especially those with a restorative focus.

The low self-image of at-risk children is a concern for both life skills training and outdoor experiential interventions. While life skills programmes tend to view a low self-image to some extent as resulting from having offended, nature-based interventions view it as resulting from disconnection between the self and others and between the self and the environment (manifesting in a lack of direction, purpose and value of life). This disequilibrium is understood in the contexts of unfavourable social conditions (especially violence) and the risk factors associated with disrupted family life. As a response, outdoor experiential programmes try to provide at-risk children with opportunities for confronting these psychological difficulties through physical challenges that hold developmental value. An understanding of the past, through personal reflection, achievement and learning from others, is seen as having the potential to reinforce self-worth and direction in life. Owing to their intensive psychological development focus, outdoor experiential programmes (if coupled with a psycho-therapeutic component) are suitable for intervention with hard-to-reach children and those who find themselves on self-destructive paths.

TABLE: SUMMARY OF MAIN PROGRAMME ASSUMPTIONS OF DIFFERENT DIVERSION/REINTEGRATION APPROACHES

	Family, community and victim-involved approaches	Life skills training approaches	Expressive approaches	Experiential approaches	Mentoring approaches	Reintegration approaches
Programme assumptions	Crime affects not only the victim, but also the family and community. Crime is effectively managed with the active involvement of all stakeholders.	Adolescence entails a shift in skills required to function effectively and to understand the consequences of behaviour.	Language and social barriers make it difficult for at-risk youths to express themselves effectively. Emotions influence behaviour and have to be expressed in a constructive way.	Disconnectedness between the self and others/the environment hampers effective functioning. The past has to be understood before strategising for the future can be undertaken.	During their formative years, young people require guidance and support from older/more experienced persons.	In the light of high recidivism rates, detention/ institutionalisation alone fails to prevent crime. The prison environment is not conducive to the development of the young person.

	Family, community and victim-involved approaches	Life skills training approaches	Expressive approaches	Experiential approaches	Mentoring approaches	Reintegration approaches
Programme assumptions	Responsibility and accountability are achieved by making amends for the wrongdoing, either symbolically or directly to the victim and/or the community. Conflict and relationships damaged by the offence are strengthened through dialogue and negotiation.	Offending results from inadequate ability to react appropriately to particular situations. Specific skills are required to maintain direction and focus in life. The acquisition of relevant life skills strengthens responsibility and accountability. Collective interaction creates opportunity to learn from others.	Externalising themes promotes insight and understanding. Mastering a skill strengthens self-concepts, which in turn promotes responsibility. Creative and enjoyable activities promote interaction and learning.	Unfamiliar settings and active participation in physical and emotional challenges stimulate learning. Responsibility is promoted by instilling pro-social values through collective understanding and learning.	At-risk youth often grow up without a father figure/ positive role model in their lives. Longer-term trusting relationships help at-risk youth to cope with challenges. Meaningful interaction stimulates a positive self-concept, which in turn promotes responsibility.	Imprisoned youths have low self-esteem, which is compounded by the lack of developmental programmes. The family and community have an active role to play in preventing reoffending.

A critical hurdle for outdoor experiential programmes is whether its outcomes remain effective once the child leaves the programme. The risk is that, because of their troubled domestic environments and lack of parental support and understanding, some may struggle to implement what they have learnt. Effective follow-up and aftercare support is imperative. Nature-based programmes should therefore not be undertaken in isolation but should be supported by complementary initiatives such as life skills and vocational skills programmes.

Some expressive programmes also value just as highly the psychological benefits that are associated with a sense of achievement and the mastering of skills as a means to stimulate pro-social behaviour. Owing to the variety of activities, i.e. music, drama and art, one has to consider the nature of particular expressive programmes in order to comment on their interpretation of at-risk behaviour. Although some of them seem to have a weak understanding of risk factors, they are largely in agreement about the difficulties that are experienced in

intervening with high-risk and hard-to-reach children, for example language and social barriers. To overcome these obstacles, expressive interventions embark on creative activities to maintain participants' interest and promote their self-worth. Activities are mostly undertaken in groups, thereby fostering a sense of belonging. In essence, activities allow participants to interact constructively and learn from each other in pursuing common goals. The group can also be a support base for participants. As with most other group-based intervention, however, expressive interventions may fail to address the participants' individual needs, especially at the domestic level. Despite the creative and relatively unstructured nature of expressive programmes, they share with nature-based interventions the aim of strengthening self-worth and the general pro-social functioning of participants. However, a common challenge for some forms of nature-based and expressive interventions is how to include crime prevention messages in their programme.

Mentoring programmes, on the other hand, show a specific understanding of the risk factors related to the absence of pro-social role models during the formative years of children. Indications are that abuse, neglect and family discord pose severe risk to the pro-social behaviour of children. As a response, mentoring initiatives try to match at-risk children with concerned and caring adults in an effort to counteract the risk factors that are generally associated with broken homes and absent parental figures. It is evident that mentoring initiatives focus on the individual needs of participants, although the ability of mentoring relationships to impact at the domestic level appears to be limited. In fact, indications are that continued dysfunctional domestic environments are mostly detrimental to mentoring relationships. At present, mentoring programmes feature as part of post-intervention support, most often after life skills and nature-based interventions.

Mentoring relationships are particularly valuable when implemented with older youths, particularly those who have served prison sentences, because they can broaden the support networks that are often critical for reintegration. At the same time, they allow for greater community participation in reintegration efforts, as indications are that communities are often reluctant to welcome back ex-offenders. Reintegration programmes mostly show a clear understanding of the risk factors that are involved once a young offender is released, so they include activities for intervening with possible domestic challenges and strengthening (often vocational) skills, to counteract the possibilities of re-offending. As with life skills-based intervention, reintegration activities are often guided by concrete plans for promoting pro-social behaviour. Similarly, a key objective of reintegration initiatives is to strengthen the participants' self-concepts. Reintegration programmes mostly consist of group and individual activities aimed at addressing the challenges that young prisoners might face upon their release. Emphasis is also placed on coming to terms with past (criminal) behaviour, which necessitates individual reflection and restorative activities such as victim–offender mediation.

2. RIGHTS-BASED AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE APPROACHES

As highlighted in the individual chapters, evidence suggests that some diversion initiatives take a strictly rights-based approach to intervention, while others display a combination of rights-based and restorative justice approaches. Indications are that the balance between the two frameworks is related to the core assumptions about child offending and the kinds of interventions that result. The interface between rights elements and restorative justice principles needs to be acknowledged in diversion programming.

When considering predominantly rights-based policies and instruments, it is observed that all diversion interventions speak up against institutionalising the young offender in cases of minor and first time offences, and where the offender does not pose a threat to society. It is also noted that all diversion initiatives treat children in a manner that promotes their dignity and worth.[2] In essence, they all entail some form of development, either directed at the individual, the familial, or the interpersonal and social level. Diversion programmes on the whole aim to develop offending children so they can participate in meaningful community life. Their activities entail the mobilisation of non-custodial resources to intervene with youth offending. Police officials are to a very limited extent involved in diversion programmes, although evidence suggests they can serve as resource persons in some forms of interventions, for example family group conferencing. The strengthening of responsibility is also a recurring theme across all diversion programmes.

However, diversion interventions, when seen in isolation, vary as to how they endeavour to realise the principles of restorative justice. Life skills training, mentoring initiatives, expressive programmes and nature-based interventions have little restorative value for the victims of crime because they do not include specific reparation activities. Except in the case of mentoring programmes, the community appears to play no role in these types of interventions. Nevertheless, indications are that some life skills and expressive initiatives actively pursue reconciliation between the young offender and his or her parents. Life skills training, in general, aims to create an understanding of the offence in broader contexts and impacts, although this appears to be limited in the case of expressive and mentoring initiatives. Some life skills and expressive programmes also have a dedicated component to strengthen participants' empathy for the victim. Interestingly, nature-based programmes, as with life skills training and family group conferencing, do try to promote understanding but, as previously mentioned, indications are that reflection is not primarily focused on a specific activity, i.e. the offence, but on a broader understanding of antisocial lifestyles.

■ The reintegration programme, in particular Destinations, can accommodate a limited number of participants at a time.

> The fact that there is limited admittance into the programme is a problem. (Khulisa official)

Family group conferences, on the other hand, present ample opportunity for reconciliation and reparation to take place. They aim to promote accountability, problem solving and the restoration of the damages caused by offending behaviour. In fact, family group conferencing appears to be the only diversionary method that allows for the direct involvement of the victim of the offence. Accountability can be strengthened by the victim directly confronting the offender about his or her actions. Family group conferencing values understanding, problem solving and reparation, and family group conferencing is the only diversion option that ensures that young offenders have a direct say in the decisions that affect them. Community service, however, does not involve the victim of the offence, and reparation is understood in the sense of making amends to the community for the wrongdoing. Evidence suggests that community service has less restorative value than family group conferences, particularly because the parents are absent from the intervention process. Indications are also strong that community service may be perceived and experienced as punishment, if the restorative justice message is not sufficiently conveyed. Although some life skills and nature-based interventions have community service elements, their purpose appears to be instilling a sense of generosity, care and belonging, rather than focusing on the making of amends.

Evidence suggests that some reintegration initiatives entail restorative elements, specifically related to reconciliation between the offender, his or her parents and the victim of the offence. Central themes appear to include forgiveness, remorse and understanding. In such initiatives the community also plays a valuable role in reintegration activities. Reintegration programmes, in general, also include developmental and recreational components. They also appear to focus specifically on the strengthening of self-respect and responsibility among participants.

TABLE: ALIGNMENT OF AT-RISK INTERVENTIONS WITH THE RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PARADIGM

Approach:	Outcomes:			Involvement of:		
	Responsibility	**Reconciliation**	**Skills development**	**Victim**	**Family**	**Community**
Family, community and victim-focused programmes:						
FGC	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Community service	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Life skills training	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗
Expressive	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
Outdoor experiential	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Mentoring	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
Reintegration	✓	✓/✗	✓	✓/✗	✓	✓

3. ASSESSMENT OF AT-RISK CHILDREN

Assessments serve primarily to determine the nature and level of intervention with at-risk and offending children. If properly undertaken, they can serve as a basis for comparison against which participants' progress can be measured. Although assessments are undertaken to determine whether at-risk cases are suitable to be diverted, most diversion initiatives undertake a second assessment to inform programming. The review noted that these second assessments often overlap with the primary assessment made by referral officers, but that diversion implementers mostly do not have access to the primary assessment.

Indications are that therapeutic programmes tend to entail more in-depth assessments than non-therapeutic interventions, and that such information is generally used for monitoring purposes. As previously mentioned, how far individual assessments can inform the approach and content of structured programmes is debatable, and there is concern about assessment information that is not appropriately used, i.e. where the intervention or the activities opted for are unlikely to address all, or at least the majority of the causes of the antisocial behaviour. In such cases, participants should be referred to supportive programmes. The broad observation is that diversion and reintegration programmes should pay more attention to the assessment of intervention needs, rather than to the mere compilation of general biographical information. The first priority of an assessment is to indicate whether an intervention will be able to address the risk factors that a case may present. Furthermore, assessment appears to play a critical role whenever participation in the programme is truly voluntary, as is the case with most reintegration initiatives.

4. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Diversion and reintegration initiatives need to encompass adequate monitoring and evaluation systems so as to track the progress (or lack thereof) of individual participants and determine the quality of the services rendered. In practice, a distinction is usually made between process and impact monitoring and evaluation activities. The former relates largely to those monitoring activities that are undertaken during implementation, or shortly thereafter, while the latter relates to determining the longer-term impact of the intervention on participants.

Process monitoring practices are generally used by most diversion and reintegration initiatives, although the level and methods of monitoring differ substantially among programmes. Evidence suggests that some programmes undertake pre- and post-intervention measurements, which have tremendous value in determining the immediate outcomes of the programme at the individual level. The same applies where initiatives compile monthly progress or status reports of individual participants. However, it appears that such monitoring systems seldom have the capacity to collate and translate outcome data for intake groups or for all at-risk children who participated in the programme over a specific period of time. Wherever possible, initiatives should be prompted to capitalise on and optimise their pre- and post-programme monitoring activities. At present, low-cost and user-friendly data programmes exist that could be accessed and implemented to increase the use of routinely collected intervention information.

Very few diversion and reintegration initiatives have detailed systems in place to keep track of and analyse the participants' background profiles. It appears that such profiling, which could be used to align interventions with the risk factors that participants present, more often features as part of external evaluation activities. It is, however, commendable that some initiatives rely on a broad source of monitoring informants, for example parents and teachers, to gauge the outcomes of its interventions. Similarly, some interventions follow time-bound or interval monitoring systems that are linked to standardised aftercare practices. This, however, appears to be the exception rather than the rule, and many initiatives struggle to provide comprehensive follow-up and aftercare services.

In general, initiatives follow conventional post-intervention evaluation by participants, the information from which informs the programme's activities. Questions can be raised, however, about the quality of some of these activities, as indications are that the majority of interventions deal with children who have reading and writing problems. Moreover, evaluation formats are often only available in English.

Some serious reservations remain about the nature of some evaluations conducted in the diversion and reintegration field. Although qualitative evaluation designs have specific value for informing process matters, they tend to merely point toward the possible impact of an intervention. However, compelling (statistical) evidence is required to substantiate (qualitative) claims. Nevertheless, some diversion and reintegration initiatives are committed to basing their impact assessments on more rigorous evaluation methodologies. It is generally accepted that pre- and post-intervention measurements and, if possible, some form of control or comparison group, have greater potential to portray the impact of a programme accurately. It is also critical for evaluations to measure what interventions set out to change with at-risk youth. Although very few initiatives state pertinently that they aim to reduce re-offending, the lack of general recidivism data across most approaches to diversion and reintegration is a cause for concern. Furthermore, the multi-modal nature of most intervention programmes poses challenges for evaluation activities, as it is often difficult to disaggregate the influence of one programme from the other(s).

In general, the majority of diversion and reintegration initiatives could benefit from more stringent monitoring practices, as well as a closer link between monitoring and evaluation activities. Although external evaluations are credited for their objectivity, they tend to be costly. Intervention initiatives themselves could be empowered to produce stronger evidence about the impact of their endeavours on at-risk children.

5. SKILLS AND CAPACITIES OF SERVICE PROVIDERS

The review indicates that the nature of diversion and reintegration initiatives to a large extent dictates the skills and abilities of service providers. Working with at-risk children necessitates the ability to identify and develop appropriate responses to risk factors, often within the broader functioning of the participant. Toward this end, professional training might be required, especially with interventions that entail a therapeutic component. Counselling skills are needed for the outdoor experiential programmes, given their reported emotional impact on participants. In addition, service providers must have appropriate abilities for intervening in the sometimes dysfunctional domestic environments of at-risk children. Professional training is also required to successfully undertake reintegration work with young prisoners and family group conferencing with at-risk children.

Notwithstanding the above, life skills training, mentoring and some forms of expressive programmes, given their general developmental focus, could be implemented by in-service trained persons, although additional skills might be required to intervene at the family level. At all times, an effort should be made to ensure that in-service trained facilitators have a clear understanding of the risk factors that participants face. Specialised life skills-based initiatives, as is the case with sex offender interventions, demand professional skills on the part of implementers. Furthermore, some interventions require additional skills from service providers, for example, the physical abilities of facilitators of nature-based programmes.

With volunteering forming the backbone of some initiatives, especially in the case of mentoring, where positive role models are needed to stimulate changes in attitude and behaviour, resources are invested in their abilities to render diversion services. However, initiatives often run the risk of empowering lay persons in youth at risk work and then losing these skills because the volunteers are poorly paid, or not paid at all. Effective recruitment (screening) and support activities are therefore of paramount importance whenever volunteers play a central role in the delivery of services.

A frequently mentioned aspect of intervening with at-risk children, especially in a therapeutic context, is the emotional impact of diversion and reintegration activities on service providers. Burnouts and excessive workloads are detrimental to the quality of interventions, and some initiatives have mechanisms for counteracting these, such as debriefing sessions and forced leave. The emergence of diversion in South Africa has contributed to the specialised training that is currently available in the child and youth justice spheres, and some diversion and reintegration initiatives actively promote the development and broadening of service providers' skills, to the benefit of their interventions.

6. CONCLUSION

Despite various challenges, diversion and reintegration services in South Africa are increasingly demonstrating the value of a criminal justice system that embraces the principles of restorative justice. The greatest achievement of the reviewed organisations and intervention services is the realisation of child justice in the absence of formal legislation. This is indicative of government and civil society's commitment to the well-being and development of South African youth. It is envisaged that the forthcoming Child Justice Act will ensure effective structures and standardised procedures for promoting the rights of at-risk children and youth in the country.

In conclusion, diversion and reintegration initiatives in South Africa follow unique approaches to ensure a rich variety of responses to youth offending. Interventions are generally based on relevant programme assumptions that direct the delivery of services. Interventions appear on the whole to be appropriate for reaching the diverse profiles of at-risk youth in the country. The multi-modal and inter-sectoral collaboration apparent in current intervention programming will contribute toward its overall success.

Endnotes

1   One participant noted that '[a]lthough the programme material is in English, the facilitators made difficult aspects easier through explanation in our home languages'.

2   With reference to the one life skills-based initiative where concerns were raised about a particular method of instilling victim empathy (see Chapter 9, SAYStOP), it is understood that the intent of the activity is not to degrade the young person, but to create an experience of powerlessness. It is recommended that the planners of diversion and reintegration programme consult relevant human rights experts to ensure that intervention activities do not infringe upon the rights of at-risk children.