

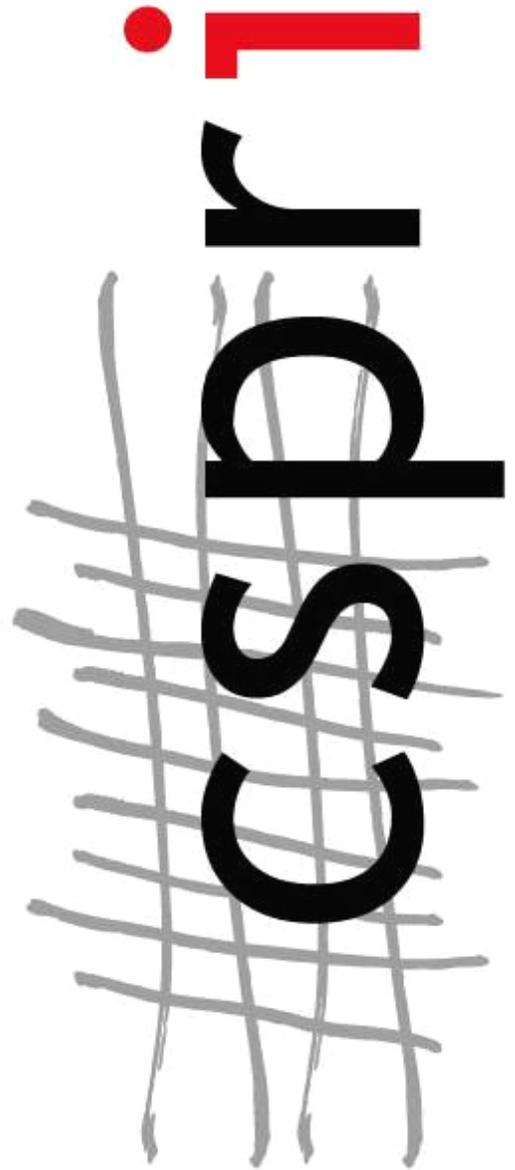
**PRISONER RE-ENTRY IN  
CAPE TOWN –  
AN EXPLORATORY  
STUDY**

by

Lukas Muntingh

**CSPRI Research Paper No. 14**

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**CIVIL SOCIETY PRISON REFORM INITIATIVE**

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Civil Society Prison Reform Initiative (CSPRI)

c/o Community Law Centre

University of the Western Cape

Private Bag X17

7535

SOUTH AFRICA

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**LM Muntingh**

[lmuntingh@uwc.ac.za](mailto:lmuntingh@uwc.ac.za)

**J Sloth-Nielsen**

[jsloth-nielsen@uwc.ac.za](mailto:jsloth-nielsen@uwc.ac.za)

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LM Muntingh

# PRISONER RE-ENTRY IN CAPE TOWN – AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

By

Lukas Muntingh<sup>1</sup>

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## 1. Introduction

Every month in South Africa approximately 6000 sentenced prisoners are released, some on parole and some on expiry of sentence. After serving their prison sentences it is society's expectation that they will refrain from committing crime and be productive citizens. They are expected to find employment, rebuild relationships with their families and communities, and cease from engaging in certain activities and avoiding the risks that caused their imprisonment in the first instance. Unfortunately, it is the case that many released prisoners commit further offences and find their way back to prison, some in a remarkably short period of time while others return after several years. There are no reliable recidivism statistics on South African offenders and whether such data will indeed enhance understanding is also debateable.<sup>2</sup> At the same time there has also been substantial research in the past 20 years on what works and what does not work in offender reintegration.<sup>3</sup>

This study is concerned with the immediate post-release period and asked a very simple question: "What happens to people immediately after they have been released from prison?" The question is aimed at gaining a deeper and empirical understanding of what prisoner re-entry and reintegration into society mean and what the obstacles are to successful reintegration. When people's lives have effectively been put on hold for several months or years, how do they pick up the strings where they had left them, if there are indeed strings to pick up? Increasingly scholars are using the term 're-entry' to describe the process of coming back to society from prison and being part of daily societal life.<sup>4</sup>

When discussing prisoner re-entry and reintegration it is important to understand that prisoners and ex-prisoners are not a representative sample of the total population. Apart from the obvious demographic characteristic that 98% are male and that they are predominantly between the ages of 18 and 35 years, they have other characteristics placing significant hurdles in the path of re-entry and reintegration. From research done in the UK it is known that ex-prisoners have behind them a history of social exclusion. When the UK prison population is compared with the general population, the following distinct differences emerge:

- prisoners are:
  - 13 times as likely to have been placed in care as a child,
  - thirteen times more likely to be unemployed,
  - ten times more likely to have been a regular truant as a child,

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<sup>1</sup> The author is Project Coordinator of the Civil Society Prison Reform Initiative (CSPRI), a project of the Community Law Centre at the University of the Western Cape. All correspondence can be directed to [lmuntingh@uwc.ac.za](mailto:lmuntingh@uwc.ac.za)

<sup>2</sup> Muntingh L (2005) *Offender rehabilitation and reintegration: taking the White Paper on Corrections forward*, CSPRI Research Report No 10, CSPRI, Bellville, p. 28

<sup>3</sup> See Dünkel F and Van Zyl Smit D (2001) 'Conclusion' in Dünkel F and Van Zyl Smit *Imprisonment Today and Tomorrow*, Kluwer Law, The Hague, p.809

<sup>4</sup> See for example Lynch JP and Sabol WJ (2001) Prisoner Re-entry in Perspective, Crime Policy Report Vol 3 September 2001, Urban Institute and Metreaux S and Culhane (2004) Homeless Shelter Use and Reincarceration Following Prison Release, Criminology and Public Policy, Vol 3 No 2 pp 139-160.

- two and a half times more likely to have had a family member convicted of a criminal offence
- six times more likely to have been a young father,
- fifteen times more likely to be HIV-positive,
- Of prisoners, 80% have the writing skills, 65% the numeracy skills, and 50% the reading skills of or below the level of an 11-year-old child,
- Of prisoners, 60 to 70% were using drugs before imprisonment,
- Of prisoners, over 70% suffered from at least two mental disorders,
- 20% of male and 37% of female sentenced prisoners have attempted suicide in the past.<sup>5</sup>

While there may be differences between the South African and UK prison populations, there is no reason to believe that similar patterns are absent. It is against this background that the question is posed of what happens to prisoners when they are released. A better understanding of these experiences should enable better service delivery and ultimately fewer prisoners returning to prison. Not addressing these will keep the revolving doors of the prison system turning. Rejection and desperation come quickly as one respondent in this study described it two months after being released from his second long prison sentence: “*I want to go back to prison because things are not working out for me. This is how I feel - it does not mean that I will do it.*”

## 2. Prisoner re-entry

Studies on prisoner re-entry is a fast emerging field in especially US-based research<sup>6</sup> and seeks to understand what happens to prisoners when they are released, and in particular what hurdles they face. Prisoner re-entry research typically focuses on four dimensions being:

- *Issues facing returning prisoners:* Returning prisoners confront a range of personal issues that jeopardize their chances of succeeding in the community and reoffending. Substance abuse, mental illness, lack of accommodation, being HIV-positive or having Aids, being unemployed and having low educational qualifications are some personal challenges faced by released prisoners.
- *Impact of prisoner re-entry on families:* Returning parents have to resume or start assuming the role of parent in a family set-up that often faces significant challenges. Families may in themselves experience deep-seated problems and therefore have great difficulty in accepting a family member or parent that has been in prisons. The incarceration of a parent remains an important indicator for future delinquency amongst children.
- *Impact of prisoner re-entry on communities:* There is increasing evidence that certain communities and indeed certain families contribute disproportionately to the prison population and that high incarceration communities are destabilized in a variety of ways.<sup>7</sup> The net effect is large numbers of predominantly young men circulating through the prison system on a continuous basis from these communities.
- *Challenges to prisoner reentry:* ‘Returning prisoners confront a number of challenges that make it difficult for them to gain access to jobs, benefits, or services that might assist in their transition back into the community’. Unlike the USA, there are few barriers that legally exclude release prisoners from state assistance, but poor support services, uncoordinated

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<sup>5</sup> Social Exclusion Unit (2002) *Reducing Re-offending by Ex-prisoners: Report by the Social Exclusion Unit*, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, p 6.

<sup>6</sup> Baer D et al (2006) *Understanding the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry: Research Findings from the Urban Institute’s Prisoner Reentry Portfolio*, Urban Institute, Washington, p. 1

<sup>7</sup> Clear T (2007) *Imprisoning Communities – How mass incarceration makes disadvantaged neighbourhoods worse*, Oxford University press, New York.

services or absence of services to released prisoners and their families remain a significant problem.<sup>8</sup>

This exploratory study is done from this perspective and investigates the four dimensions described above based on the data collected from a small sample of released prisoners. A larger study over a longer period will undoubtedly yield a better understanding and investigate the four dimensions in greater depth.

### **3. Methodology**

This study is descriptive in nature and is based on three interviews with a sample of individuals who were imprisoned and subsequently released in Cape Town. A structured interview schedule was used in all three interviews and all interviews were conducted by the author. Respondents were selected randomly for inclusion in the study based on their date of release, which had to fall within certain parameters to enable tracking within the overall time frame of the project. The only other selection requirement was that the respondents had to live in the greater Cape Town area. Interviews started at Goodwood Correctional Centre but this proved inefficient as the overwhelming majority of prisoners are transferred to Pollsmoor Medium C Correctional Centre prior to release. The bulk of respondents were subsequently selected from Pollsmoor.

The first interviews were conducted during November and December 2007 approximately one month prior to release and were aimed at gathering information on biographical details, experiences in prison and future plans following release. The second set of interviews was conducted approximately one month after release (during January and February 2008) and focussed on experiences after release and paid particular attention to the realisation of plans and intentions recorded in the first interview. A third interview was conducted approximately one month after the second interview and used the same interview schedule. Once all the interviews were completed, the data was collated and analysed.

A total of 38 respondents were selected prior to release and they were tracked in the course of the research. Tracking individuals after release proved to be a challenging task and the results in this regard are described further in Section 4 below. False addresses given and respondents not being at the given address resulted in a drop-out of 45% for the first post-release interview. The drop-out rate for the second post-release interview was, however, only 20%.

Given the size of the sample, the results reported make no claim to be representative of the prison population or of released prisoners. It does, however, make a contribution to the nature and range of variables that need to be considered and addressed when conducting research on prisoner re-entry and rendering services to prisoners and ex-prisoners.

Ethical approval for the project was obtained from the Research Ethics Committees of the University of the Western Cape and the Department of Correctional Services (DCS). Each respondent was briefed on the project prior to participation and signed a consent form, a copy of which is attached as Appendix 1.

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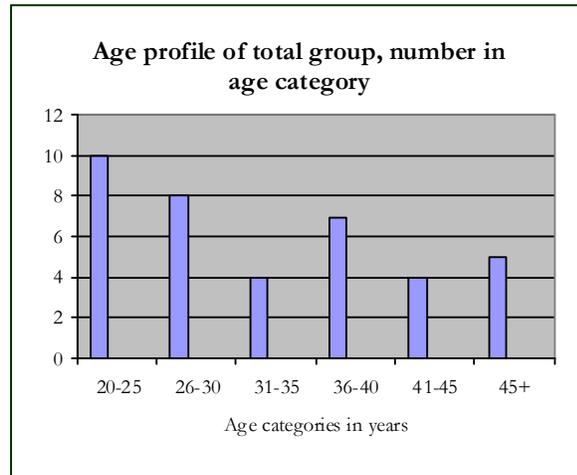
<sup>8</sup> Social, Economic and Workforce Programs Division (2004) *The Challenges and Impacts of Prisoner Reentry*, NGA Centre for Best Practices, <http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/REENTRYBACKGROUND.pdf> Accessed 16 May 2008.

### 3. Profile of full sample

#### Age and gender

The age profile of the total group is presented in Chart 1, indicating that nearly half of the respondents (47%) were aged younger than 30 years at the time of the first interview. All respondents were males.

Chart 1



#### Education

The educational profile of the participants is presented in Table 1 indicating that only 26% of respondents had obtained an educational qualification above Grade 10. The remainder, 74%, had a qualification below Grade 10, and 24% did not proceed to secondary schooling.

Table 1

Category	N	Percentage
Post-matric qualification	3	7.9
Grade 11-12	7	18.4
Grade 8-10	19	50.0
Grade 0 - 7	9	23.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	

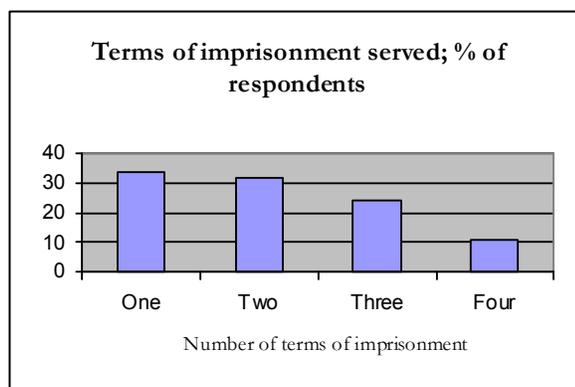
#### Marital status

Of the total group, 32% were married (13.2%) or in a common law relationship (18.4%). The remainder were separated (5.3%), divorced (7.9%) or single (55.3%).

#### Imprisonment history

Respondents were asked about their imprisonment history and for the purposes of this study, only terms of imprisonment as sentenced prisoners were recorded. Several respondents noted that they had spent longer or shorter periods as unsentenced prisoners in prison. Recording awaiting trial periods as well as the uncertainty of some respondents about the exact periods spent awaiting trial did not make this data very reliable.

Chart 2



Respondents were, however, able to recall with much greater clarity and preciseness

when they had served terms of imprisonment. Chart 2 shows the number of terms of imprisonment served by the respondents. It is indeed a significant observation that, in total, 66% of the respondents had served at least one prior period of imprisonment to the one they were being released from at the

time of the interview. One previous term of imprisonment had been served by 32% of respondents; 24% had served two previous terms and 11% had served three previous terms.

On average the respondents were busy with their second term of imprisonment at the time of the interview. The average term of imprisonment was just below three years across all categories. The shortest term of imprisonment served was one month and the longest was 20 years.<sup>9</sup>

Despite the small size of the sample, the data indicates that a very large proportion of the prison population consists of individuals who repeatedly cycle through the system, and that only a lesser proportion were indeed first time prisoners.

### **History of imprisonment in family**

Respondents were asked if any family member had ever been imprisoned. The findings show that 66% (or 25) of the respondents have had a family member imprisoned. This family member was an uncle in 9 cases, a brother in 9 cases, the respondent's father in 7 cases, a cousin in 3 cases and a brother in law in 1 case. Acknowledging the small size of the sample, the data nonetheless indicate that the respondents come from environments characterised by high incarceration rates.

The majority of respondents (55%) grew up with both their parents, with the balance growing up with a single parent, grandparents, avuncular relative or sibling.

### **Employment**

Employment status prior to imprisonment reveals a somewhat unexpected profile. Of the group of 38, 18 (47%) were full-time employed (2 of which were self-employed), 14 (38%) were engaged in casual jobs, and only 5 (13%) described themselves as being unemployed. One respondent was a student at the time of imprisonment. Respondents who were economically active (full time employment and casual jobs), were primarily involved in the construction and maintenance sector. Although this was not explored in detail, it is assumed that these positions were unskilled and semi-skilled positions which would attract wages at the lower end of the spectrum.

The profile indicates that questions need to be asked about the often-made link between crime and unemployment. The profile indicates that it may indeed not be unemployment *per se* but rather low income versus high expectation that may be a driving factor. Furthermore, economic activity and income levels should be seen as factors amidst a range of factors that move or draw individuals towards criminal activity. There is also the question of what is regarded as employment by the respondents, for example belonging and working for a criminal gang may indeed be regarded as 'employment'. This is an issue that was not explored in such detail during the study and further research is required.

### **Substance use and abuse**

Respondents were asked if they use and/or abuse any drugs or alcohol prior to or during imprisonment.<sup>10</sup> Only 7 of the respondents indicated that they have never used any drugs or abused alcohol. Respondents who reported drug use and alcohol abuse listed various combinations of use,

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<sup>9</sup> This particular respondent (#31) was sentenced to death for murder and robbery in 1988. The sentence was commuted to life imprisonment and he was being released on day parole.

<sup>10</sup> There was no fixed definition set for what use and abuse mean and it was left to the respondents to interpret this.

for example “dagga and Mandrax” or “dagga, Mandrax and crack cocaine”. The frequencies with which individual substances were listed by the respondents are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2**

Substance	Frequency
Dagga	20
Mandrax <sup>11</sup>	12
Alcohol	8
Tik <sup>12</sup>	7
Cocaine & Crack Cocaine	3
Ecstasy	1
Heroin	1

Dagga was the most frequently listed drug used by the respondents, followed by Mandrax and alcohol. From the sample it is clear that substance use and alcohol abuse is highly prevalent with 82% reporting that they had in the past or are currently using drugs and/or abusing alcohol.

### **Gang membership**

Nearly half of the sample (18 out of 38) reported belonging to a street gang, a prison gang or both. Of this group 11 belong to a prison gang only (26, 28 and RAF); 5 belong to both a prison gang and a street gang (e.g. 26 and Americans, 28 and Hard Livings), and 2 belonged to street gangs only (Americans).

### **Programme participation history and rating**

Respondents were asked if they participated in any programmes while they were imprisoned and what their opinion was of these programmes according to four rating categories: “It was a waste of time”; “There were some useful parts in the programme”; “The programme was good and useful” and “It was excellent”. The results are presented in Table 3 below. It is firstly noticeable that the majority of respondents did participate in at least one programme and the majority participated in more than one programme. The pre-release programme run by the DCS was the most frequently identified programme, followed by the Restorative Justice Programme and Aggression Management Programme. Opinion on the Pre-release Programme was divided with 8 respondents describing it as good or useful and 8 saying that it only had some useful parts. The Restorative Justice and Aggression Management Programmes were regarded positively by respondents. The overall impression is that the majority of respondents found the majority of programmes they attended to be good and useful.

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<sup>11</sup> Methaqualone was introduced into the pharmaceutical market as non- addictive ‘sleeping pills’ in 1965. It was listed in the US Federal Register of March 1966 as an approved sedative-hypnotic under the trade name Quaalude. The abuse potential of methaqualone soon became apparent, resulting in the drug being listed in the 1971 United Nations (UN) Convention on Psychotropic Substances. It was subsequently banned in most UN member countries. Methaqualone is currently listed in the UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1988. <http://www.saps.gov.za/drugs/meth.htm>

<sup>12</sup> Tik or methamphetamine, part of the amphetamine group of drugs, potent and easy to make, was first discovered in Japan in 1919. It's still legally produced in the United States in the guise of medication prescribed for weight loss, as a nasal inhalant and even for narcolepsy and attention deficit hyperactivity disorders. <http://www.scienceinfrica.co.za/2005/june/tik.htm>

**Table 3**

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Waste of time</b>	<b>Some useful parts</b>	<b>Good/Useful</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Total</b>
Pre-release programme	1	8	8		17
Restorative justice programme		2	9	1	12
Aggression management		3	7		10
Crossroads	1	3	5		9
Life skills	1	3	5		9
drug abuse/NA	1	2	4	1	8
CCR conflict resolution		2	5		7
Gangsterism		1	4		5
Personal development		1	4		5
Alcoholics Anonymous		2	1		3
HIV/Aids		1	2		3
Sexual conduct			2		2
Arts and crafts	1	1			2
Manhood programme			2		2
Other <sup>13</sup>		3	3	2	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>4</b>	

Respondents were also asked they acquired any new skills while they were imprisoned. These skills referred to so-called 'hard skills'. Twenty of the 38 respondents listed one or more of such skills that they acquired during imprisonment. It should be noted that this may not have been during the last term of imprisonment but during previous terms of imprisonment. Of this group, the majority (13 out of 20) acquired a technical skill such as bricklaying, carpentry or plumbing. Three respondents studied further and acquired a further educational qualification (e.g. matric) and four respondents gained skills through on-the-job training in the prison kitchens or on prison farms.

Respondents were also asked if they have gained any insights about themselves while they were imprisoned. Only three respondents noted that they had not learnt anything while the remainder noted a rich collection of insights and observations about themselves, as listed below in Table 4.

**Table 4**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
You must respect yourself and others.	10
I must exercise self-control; think before you do something.	8
I realised the mistakes that I have made in the past.	4
I am tired of being in prison; Prison is not for me – I am not as brave as I thought; Your life is destroyed in prison.	3
I can and will do without drugs.	3
I found myself and put the lost pieces together.	3
I must live like and adult and take responsibility.	2
One can change – it is possible.	2
I am a leader.	1

<sup>13</sup> Crime Prevention; Job seeking; Koinonia; Family Violence; Boundaries; Bible Way; President's Award, and Positive Muslims.

Response	Frequency
I had to admit that I am an alcoholic.	1
If you don't help yourself, nobody will.	1
On the outside I did things to impress my friends.	1
I was very angry- now I have learnt to forgive.	1

### Assessment of family relationship

In anticipation of release, respondents were asked how they rate the relationship with their families. The responses are presented in Table 5. The majority (23) rated this as being 'Good' or 'Very good'. As will be described further, the quality of family relationships appears to have a significant influence on access to employment and support. In the course of the interviews numerous respondents made reference to the fact that once you are imprisoned, the friends you had on the outside are nowhere to be seen and that it is only your family that visits when you are imprisoned.

**Table 5**

Rating	Frequency
Very poor/no contact	1
Poor	8
Acceptable	6
Good	13
Very Good	10

### Plans for after release

Facing release, prisoners need to plan for their release and respondents were asked about this. From a research point of view it has to be acknowledged that the respondents may not have been entirely honest and responded in a manner that would be socially acceptable. It is unlikely but not impossible that a prisoner who is about to be released will state that his plan is to continue committing crime and return to prison. However, for the purposes of this study the plans described by the respondents are accepted for what they are, namely plans.

Monitoring these plans after release became a central feature of the two follow-up interviews and is discussed further in the Section 6 of the report. As Table 6 indicates, finding employment was the most featured component in the respondents' post-release plans. While most expressed a general need or desire to find employment, a smaller proportion had a more detailed plan in this regard, e.g. to return to their previous place of employment, or to start an own business.

Finding accommodation does not appear to be high priority for the respondents and it must be assumed that in respect of accommodation that the majority had a place to reside upon release.

Restoring or building family relations was mentioned by a large number of respondents and expressed in different ways. Contributing to household income and fulfilling a constructive father role are examples. A number of respondents also expressed the need to have a relationship with a woman or marrying the person that they have a relationship with.

Remarkably few respondents noted managing particular risks that may have a very direct link to their original imprisonment, such as substance abuse, gang conflict, and friends with anti-social attitudes. A similarly sized number of respondents expressed a desire to engage in constructive recreational and spiritual activities, as indicated in the last set of responses in Table 6.

**Table 6**

Category	Plan	Frequency
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Category	Plan	Frequency
Employment	Return to previous employer for employment	15
	Find employment	15
	Look for casual jobs	3
	Start own business	2
	Continue with existing business	2
Accommodation & Transport	Find accommodation	4
	Buy a car	2
Family relations	Support mother/family/wife financially	9
	Find a girlfriend/get married	5
	I want to be father to my children	4
	Regain my family's trust	2
	Obtain custody of my children	1
	Re-unite my family	1
Risk management	Finish parole successfully	2
	Make peace with the Americans (gang)	1
	Ignore friends that are a bad influence	1
	Stay off drugs	1
Sport, religion and personal development	Participate in sport	3
	Do work in the community (crime prevention)	2
	Be active in church/return to religion (Islam)	2
	Live healthy (HIV+)	1
	Obtain driver's licence	1
	Finish Grade 12	1

### Prospects after release

Respondents were asked to rate their prospects for securing employment, accommodation, access to health care, assistance with substance abuse, and general support and problem solving. With the exception of assistance with substance abuse, the majority of respondents rated their prospect of finding employment, securing accommodation, access to health care and support with general problems as 'good' or 'very good'. It must be noted that a significant proportion of respondents (14 out of 38) rated their chances of securing employment as 'poor' or 'very poor'.

**Table 7**

Category	Rating	Frequency
Employment and securing income	Poor & Very poor	14
	Acceptable	4
	Good & Very good	20
Finding accommodation	Poor & Very poor	5
	Acceptable	1
	Good & very good	32
Access to health care	Poor & Very poor	1
	Acceptable	5
	Good & very good	32
Assistance with substance abuse disorder	Poor & Very poor	11
	Acceptable	8
	Good & very good	4

	Not Applicable	15
Assistance with problem solving and general support	Poor & Very poor	8
	Acceptable	3
	Good & very good	24
	Not Applicable	3

Respondents were also asked how they feel about the future; optimistic or pessimistic. The overwhelming majority described themselves as feeling optimistic (24 out of 38). This optimism was articulated in several ways, such as being keen to take on new challenges, or “*wanting to make a better life for my family*”, or wanting to “*rebuild myself*”. A smaller proportion described themselves as feeling nervous, anxious or even scared. This was more noticeable amongst respondents who had served longer sentences. One such respondent described it aptly: “*I feel afraid. I am getting out and have to plan for the future. It is hard to plan at this stage. It will be the first time in 14 years that I have to plan properly and take responsibility for my family.*” Another respondent, aged 48 years, whom had spent 18 of the past 27 years in prison was blunt about his attitude: “*It is a pity that I have to go out. I am afraid.*”

#### 4. Tracking the sample

Tracking released prisoners is a challenging endeavour, even when working with a relatively small sample. Even though all the respondents live in the greater Cape Town area, tracking involves a significant amount of travelling, especially when the respondents were not able to provide a landline or cell phone number during the first interview, by means of which an appointment could be set up for the follow-up interviews. In these instances it was necessary to physically locate the respondent first and then make an appointment for the interview. Respondents were tracked in the following areas: Retreat, Athlone, Macassar, Mitchells Plain, Strandfontein, Strand, Chris Nissen Park (Somerset West), Stellenbosch, Belhar, Masipumelelo (Fishhoek), Delft, Manenberg, Gugulethu, Langa, Elsiesrivier, Belrail, Scottsdene (Kraaifontein) and Durbanville. It was also found to be easier to track respondents over weekends.

As far as was possible appointments for the interviews were made telephonically. After the first round of post-release interviews it was also possible to obtain a cell phone number if the respondent had one, which was the case in most instances. The availability of cell phones facilitated tracking greatly, especially for the second round of post-release interviews. In nearly all cases the respondents adhered to appointment dates once these have been confirmed.

Table 7 sets out the interview history of each respondent and Figure 1 summarises this in a flow chart. From the original 38 respondents identified prior to release, 21 were interviewed roughly one month after release. Of the 17 respondents who were not tracked and interviewed for the first post-release interview, 7 provided false addresses during the first interview; three were rearrested and returned to prison; one respondent’s release date upon confirmation turned out to be too late for inclusion in the study; one moved out of Cape Town; and in two instances their families had lost contact with them although the addresses given were correct. In one of the latter cases the respondent’s mother had an interdict against him prohibiting him from entering the address he listed as his home address in the pre-release interview. Three respondents could not be contacted for the first post-release interview but continued efforts secured their participation when the second round of post-release interviews were conducted, roughly a month after the first post-release interviews.

When the second round of post-release interviews were undertaken, the 21 respondents who were interviewed in the second round plus a further three who could not be contacted at that stage were

targeted. Of this group of 24, a total of 19 were interviewed. Of the six that fell out, two declined to be interviewed<sup>14</sup>, one did not keep the appointment<sup>15</sup>, one was rearrested and in custody, and one moved away from his known address<sup>16</sup>. Fortunately the three respondents, with whom interviews were not held during the first round of post-release interviews, were traced and they were interviewed. The second post-release interview with one respondent was delayed as he was hospitalised following multiple stab wounds sustained in a rival gang attack.

**Table 8**

<b>Respondent Nr.</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Interview</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Interview</b>
1	Moved to Worcester and out of reach	
2	False address	
3	Rearrested	
4	Yes	Yes
5	Yes	Yes
6	False address	
7	Yes	No, moved away, whereabouts unknown
8	Yes	Yes
9	Yes	Yes
10	Yes	Yes
11	Address correct, but family lost contact with him 4 weeks after release.	
12	Yes	Yes
13	Release date too late for inclusion	
14	Yes	Declined 3 <sup>rd</sup> interview
15	False address	
16	No	Yes
17	Yes	Yes
18	Yes	Yes
19	Yes	Yes (rearrested but released on bail)
20	Yes	Yes
21	False address	
22	Yes	Yes
23	Yes	Declined 3 <sup>rd</sup> interview
24	Yes	Yes, delayed as respondent was hospitalised following gang attack.
25	No	Yes
26	Address correct, but mother has interdict against him for this address. Family lost contact with him.	
27	Yes	Yes

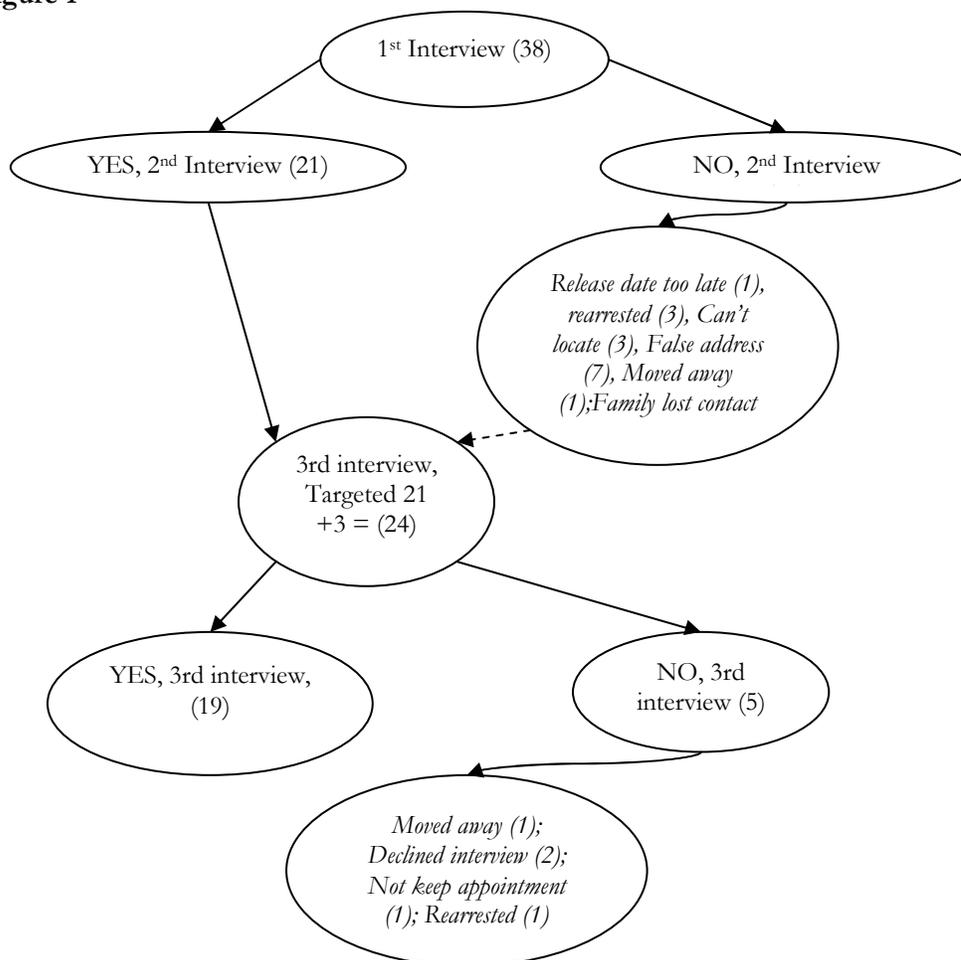
<sup>14</sup> While appointments were made and confirmed with both respondents, they declined to be interviewed on the day concerned.

<sup>15</sup> This particular respondent has a severe addiction to Mandrax and dagga and from discussions with his sister it was evident that his personal life had taken a turn for the worse.

<sup>16</sup> Efforts were made to trace the respondent at another known address but this was not successful.

Respondent Nr.	2 <sup>nd</sup> Interview	3 <sup>rd</sup> Interview
28	Rearrested	
29	Yes	Yes
30	False address	
31	Released on day parole but returned to prison for violation after 2 weeks.	
32	Yes	Yes
33	Yes	Yes
34	Yes	Not at address for 3 <sup>rd</sup> interview
35	Yes	Rearrested on new charges and detained in prison
36	False address	
37	No	Yes
38	False address	

Figure 1



The plan was to conduct the first post-release interview approximately one month after release and the second post-release interview, approximately two months after release. The median value of the time lapse from release to the first post-release interview is 32 days and the median value from the

first post-release interview to the second post-release interview is 38 days. This broadly conforms to the planned schedule for the interviews.

## 5. Problems experienced after release

A number of themes were explored in relation to problems that ex-prisoners may experience. Additional information was also collected and incorporated and reported in this section. The themes explored were: emotional state of mind, family relations, finding employment, substance abuse, abiding by parole conditions, relationships with former associates, re-arrest, health care and access to support services.

### Emotional state of mind

The majority of respondents described their emotional state of mind as positive and that they are coping with being released from prison. A number of respondents did, however, report some problems in this regard, ranging from experiencing minor stress but being able to cope with it, to total despair and considering returning to prison. The following are some of the statements made:

- *In the first two weeks I was a bit flustered – it is not easy to adapt. It also takes time to get use to be on parole.*
- *I feel depressed about not getting work.*
- *I am always worried when I see my parole officer. It is difficult to keep to the parole conditions when you have to find casual jobs.*
- *Sometimes stress but I can control it [Respondent uses Mandrax to calm him down]*
- *I get angry about sitting here (home) the whole day. After losing my job two weeks ago, I have been sitting at home listening to music and watching TV.*
- *I don't feel very good. I am staying with other people and this hurts. My sister kicked me out of her house because I use drugs (dagga and Mandrax)*
- *Everything I try is not working. I have many skills and ideas but nothing is working [out].*
- *I am very aggressive and started using Tik after release. I stopped yesterday and promised my girlfriend that I will not start again [Respondent very depressed about HIV+ status and started using Tik in self-destruct attempt]*
- *I want to go back to prison because things are not working out for me. This is how I feel- it does not mean that I will do it.*

The above statements reflect a range of sentiments, some of which are not unique to ex-prisoners, while others indicate despair, frustration and self-destruction due to the inability to be functional in society. In the course of this research, no evidence was found that particular attention is paid to the mental health of ex-prisoners by DCS, either in preparing them for release or providing access to mental health care services. Substance abuse and addiction also appears to be strongly linked with poor mental health in the above statements. Not one of the respondents indicated that they had approached the DCS or any other organisation after release to assist them with this aspect of their lives. It then appears that ex-prisoners are reliant on themselves, friends and family for emotional support and guidance. Moreover, it appears that from this small sample that there is reason to believe that mental health issues are important problems faced by released prisoners. This would be in line with studies done in other countries.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Social Exclusion Unit (2002) *op cit*, Baer D et al (2006) *op cit*

## Family relations and accommodation

Returning to family life after imprisonment did not feature as a widespread problem and the majority of respondents reported that they were fairing well on this front. The majority expressed satisfaction and pleasure about being back with their families. These opinions were, however, not verified with family members.

Problems that were reported related to domestic violence<sup>18</sup>, lack of financial means to support children and parents, lack of contact with children, and being accepted and trusted by family members. One respondent (#33), who had just completed his third term of imprisonment at age 26 and lives with his parents, described this well: *There are no problems but I need work to help support my family. They think of me as I was, but I have changed and they need to accept this. "Ek het nou my eie gedagte". [I can now make up my own mind.]* From the interviews with him it was apparent that his family, and in particular his mother, was very sceptical about his statements that he was now a changed person and had placed gang involvement and drug use behind him. This sceptical attitude by family members is in all probability more widespread than what was reported by the respondents, especially when multiple terms of imprisonment had been served and there is substance abuse involved. Overcoming suspicion and regaining family trust were mentioned by a number of respondents, acknowledging that this will take time but also not having a clear plan as to how to achieve this.

In two instances the families of respondents had lost track of them. In one case (#26) the respondent's mother had obtained an interdict against her son prohibiting him from entering the property as he had reportedly stolen some of the household contents to sell for Tik. In the second case (#11), the respondent stayed at his family's house for the first month after release but then came there less and less frequently.<sup>19</sup> Numerous attempts were made to interview him, but all failed. At the last visit to his family's house, his brother confirmed that they had lost contact with him. This particular respondent has a long history with dagga and Mandrax addiction and has been in prison as an awaiting trial prisoner on ten previous occasions although he has served only one term of imprisonment. In both cases substance abuse and addiction had played a significant role in the disintegration of family relations.

With a few exceptions, all the respondents come from poor working class areas where unemployment is rife and substance abuse common. Respondents who had not found employment but lived with their parents or extended family members, were also acutely aware of the fact that it was expected of them to make a contribution to household income and that in the medium term, this obligation will become a real threat to family relations. Taking care of ailing and elderly parents place further strain and guilt on this relationship.

Four respondents expressed the desire to reunite their families as their wives (or partners) and children had to live with relatives while they were in prison. Reuniting their families meant that they would need to find suitable family accommodation and employment, both of which are significant challenges. Two respondents noted that their youngest children did not know them when they were released from prison and that it is a continuing process of building a relationship with these children and gain their trust.

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<sup>18</sup> One respondent reported that he had physically assaulted his girlfriend and another reported an incident that involved verbal abuse but not physical violence.

<sup>19</sup> The respondent was also released on parole and his brother reported, at the last visit to his house, that Community Corrections officials had been there on a number of occasions when he was not at home. This will in all likelihood be recorded as a parole violation which will result in his re-imprisonment if arrested.

The death of a parent while imprisoned was observed to be a traumatic event and more than one respondent remarked on this, indicating that this was indeed the event in their lives that steered them in a different and more positive direction. Respondent #37 requires special mention in this regard as he spent 18 of the past 21 years in prison. Both his parents died while he was imprisoned and in his own words “*Ek het hulle dood bandiet*”<sup>20</sup>, indicating some sense of culpability. In 1998 his mother died and this brought him to great personal insight: *It is your own decision (to change) – it is only you that makes that decision and nobody else. In 1998 when my mother died I made that decision. When my mother died I realized that I was a fucked-up case. I had to do something to my life.* The death of his mother brought great guilt and remorse upon him as he was especially close to her. At age 41 he is unemployed and staying with his siblings and is experiencing great difficulty in adjusting to life on the outside to the extent that he is considering returning to prison.

Most respondents returned to live with their families and finding accommodation was not a frequently cited problem. One respondent (#34) was evicted from his sister’s house two weeks after his release because he relapsed into drug use. At the time of the interviews he was sharing a shack with a fellow ex-prisoner in the same informal settlement as his sister lives. Another respondent’s (#12) informal structure was severely damaged by neighbourhood vandals while he was in prison and his wife and children staying with her parents. While he lives in a serviced and formal residential area, the informal structure they lived in at the time of the interviews was not fit for human occupation.

In summary, respondents who were able to return to live with a parent or family members found themselves in a far better position than those who did not have access such a resource. Family connections opened up other resources, such as employment and general support. Ex-prisoners, who had to set up or re-build a household on their own, found themselves in many regards at a disadvantage in respect of income and accommodation. Overcoming suspicion and being taken seriously by family members do remain as significant challenges and problems in family relationship may indeed emerge as a more significant problem over time if not addressed.

### **Finding employment**

Finding employment appears to be an enormous challenge for ex-prisoners, despite the majority rating their chances of finding employment as ‘Good’ in the first interview (see Table 7). At the time of the first post-release interview only 9 out of 21 respondents had found employment.<sup>21</sup> For a full description of the interview data on finding employment, please see Appendix 2. This remained stable by the time of the second post-release interview with 10 out of 19 respondents being employed. It should also be noted that 3 of the 10 respondents who had secured employment, returned to the employment positions they had prior to imprisonment. A further 3 respondents were employed in the family business. It was therefore only 4 out of the total group who were able to secure employment in the open market.

Doing casual jobs was the only source of income for a significant number of respondents, but the majority of respondents had no income since they had been released and had to rely on family and friends for accommodation, food and cash. Only one respondent (#22) noted that he was drawing UIF and that his wife will also shortly be receiving this benefit. Uptake of social security was not specifically investigated but it did not emerge from the interview data as a significant source of income.

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<sup>20</sup> The expression is difficult to translate as the noun ‘bandiet’ (derogatory for prisoner) is used as a verb. Literally it means ‘I prisoner-ed them to death’.

<sup>21</sup> Employment is understood to refer to fixed full-time or fixed part-time employment.

Two respondents lost the employment that they had secured, although one was able to find employment in a family business. The other respondent lost his position as security guard after he was hospitalised following a gang attack.

A number of respondents regarded the parole conditions as an inhibiting factor on finding employment. If a parolee secures employment, the employer has to confirm this in writing to DCS Community Corrections to enable the amendment of house arrest conditions and allow the parolee to be at his place of employment for certain hours. This requirement effectively precludes parolees from taking up or looking for casual jobs on a regular basis, although it was reported by more than one respondent that they often take a chance and leave their residences hoping that the parole officer will not do a monitoring visit. The administrative requirement of a letter from the employer also hinders employment in the informal sector as these businesses are often not able to provide such letters. The alternative is that this type of employer must state in an affidavit that he or she will be employing this particular parolee and submit this to DCS Community Corrections. These requirements, as logical as they may be for monitoring parolees, create real hurdles for the same parolees who are often desperate to find employment.

One respondent (#5) was particularly unhappy with the parole conditions and described it as follows:

*People have difficulty in finding employment and they (DCS) don't give people enough time to go and look for employment. You need confirmation from places you went to (when you look for employment) and they then get suspicious when you need proof that you were there. We need more flexibility on this. If they want to see that you are rehabilitated, they can formulate a more flexible approach. This is too rigid. You get no time to go and look for work so when you are finished with your parole, you have not found work.*

A further hurdle that ex-prisoners face is that the certificates that they may have acquired for skills obtained in prison, clearly indicate that the certificates were issued by the DCS. According to one respondent, this puts potential employers off: “*Die tronkepapiere maak mense bang*”. (The prison certificates scare people.)

It was evident from the interviews that the respondents who had not secured employment, were uncertain about how to go about this task, and furthermore, were not aware of possible resources that may assist them in finding employment, such as the Nicro Office in Mitchell's Plain which has a programme specifically aimed at assisting ex-prisoners to find employment. Only one respondent out of the total group approached this office for assistance. It was also clear that the DCS Community Corrections officials do not see assisting ex-prisoners to find employment as part of their responsibilities.

The impact of unemployment on the respondents manifested itself in a number of ways. The lack of purpose and sitting at home waiting for the parole officer to visit was described as extremely boring and giving rise to destructive thoughts. Lack of income and the inability to fulfil financial obligations or making a contribution to household income weighed heavily on many of the unemployed respondents. There is little doubt that such circumstances affect mental health, as verbalised by one respondent (#12) during the second post-release interview. He has a wife and three children:

*It is getting worse- I don't have any money. I am not even able to look for work, because I don't have money for transport. My wife worked for three days this week. But when things are like this, a person is useless. If you have a family- it is different- it is very frustrating and you start thinking. We did not eat last night and only ate porridge this morning. Will see what will happen today for supper tonight. There are only two units of electricity left.*

A number of respondents' households (e.g. #4, #12, and #24) were effectively without a steady income of any sort, forcing them to rely on extended family members, neighbours and friends for food. This was referred to as ‘*skarrel*’. One respondent remarked that he needed to take certain medication with food but was unable to do so as there was no food in the house.

From the responses it is clear that little was done in preparation of release to secure employment or at least to improve the chances of finding employment. Moreover, the respondents were not aware of possible resources that they can access to find employment. With the exception of a few respondents who were able to return to previous positions of employment or employment within a family business, the majority were left to their own devices with no support to find employment or at least some form of income.

### **Substance abuse**

As described above (see Table 2), substance abuse and addiction was very high in the sample and only 7 of the original 38 respondents stated that they do not or have not used drugs or alcohol. In the post-release interviews, 5 out of 16 respondents, who previously reported that they used drugs, stated that they had started using drugs and/or alcohol again after release. The majority said that they had abstained from drugs and alcohol. This was, however, not verified by any other means, e.g. asking family members. What is perhaps more interesting is that none of the respondents, who had previously admitted drug or alcohol abuse, had joined support groups such as Alcoholic Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous after their release. While imprisonment may have provided them with the opportunity to stop using drugs, sustaining abstinence is a significant challenge, especially in the case of Mandrax and Tik.<sup>22</sup> Without continued support their chances of staying off drugs are significantly less.

Family support in respect of substance abuse disorders also appear to be absent. The impression was created that drug addiction was a very private matter and a problem that the addict must resolve on his own. One respondent (#5), who is an alcoholic since his mid-teens and had been dry for ten months at the time of the second post-release interview, explained that his father deliberately leaves an opened bottle of brandy in the kitchen to test him and would also consume alcohol in his presence.

From the interviews it was evident that the respondents were not aware of what resources were available and how to access them. If this information was provided to them prior to release, it was not done in a manner and format that would make accessing substance abuse support services post-release a priority for them.

It should furthermore be borne in mind that ex-prisoners with substance abuse disorders return in nearly all instances to the same communities and conditions in which they started using drugs and abusing alcohol. Even if they had stopped using drugs for several months or even years while in prison, these environments present a high risk for facilitating a relapse. The fact that 5 of the 16 respondents with a history of substance abuse started using drugs and alcohol again within one month after release is testimony to this.

### **Abiding by parole conditions**

The DCS defines parole as follows: “*Parole placement is the conditional release of an offender subjected to continuous good conduct and adaptation from a correctional centre after a minimum prescribed portion of sentence has been served in the centre and under specific conditions that allows for the offender’s re-incarceration in the event of non compliance of conditions of placement.*”<sup>23</sup> Correctional supervision, on the other hand, is “*a community-based sentencing option by the court which an offender serves under set conditions in the community. It also refers to an option where the Commissioner may convert a sentence of imprisonment after a portion has been served in a correctional centre*

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<sup>22</sup> According to a number of respondents all drugs are easily available in prison and to stop using drugs is therefore more a choice than a result of imprisonment.

<sup>23</sup> DCS website <http://www.dcs.gov.za/>

*under certain set conditions.*<sup>24</sup> Both options are provided for in Chapter 6 of the Correctional Services Act and a range of conditions are provided for.<sup>25</sup> Correctional supervision, as a sentencing option, is described in the Criminal Procedure Act.<sup>26</sup> Perhaps the most restrictive of these is house arrest (section 52(2)(a)) which requires the parolee or probationer to be either at his/her place of residence or at work for specified hours every day. A limited amount of free time is also provided for during which the parolee or probationer is allowed to be away from his/her place of residence or place of employment. This free time is usually allocated over weekends allowing the individual to run personal errands, attend church or visit family and friends.

Of the total group of respondents of 38, 10 were released on 'sentence expiry date' and there were therefore no further requirements. On the remaining 28, information was collected on 27.<sup>27</sup> In some instances this information was collected from family members and the conclusion was drawn that if the family members had lost contact with the individual and he no longer sleeps at the address that he gave to Community Corrections as his home address, then he is in violation of his conditions of release. The profile of the remaining 27 respondents is presented in Chart 3. The chart shows that 70% of the respondents were able to comply with their community corrections conditions in the roughly two-month period after their release. Compliance is regarded as not having been re-arrested for a violation. On the other hand, 2 gave false addresses, 2 were no longer staying at the addresses they provided and their families did not know of their whereabouts<sup>28</sup>, 1 respondent's day parole was revoked and 3 were rearrested by the police on charges unrelated to community corrections conditions. In short, one third of the respondents released on community corrections violated their conditions within two months.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid

<sup>25</sup> 52 (1) When community corrections are ordered, a court, Correctional Supervision and Parole Board, the Commissioner or other body which has the statutory authority to do so, may, subject to the limitations in subsection (2) and the qualifications of this Chapter, stipulate that the person concerned-

(a) is placed under house detention;

(b) does community service;

(c) seeks employment;

(d) takes up and remains in employment;

(e) pays compensation or damages to victims;

(f) takes part in treatment, development and support programmes;

(g) participates in mediation between victim and offender or in family group conferencing;

(h) contributes financially towards the cost of the community corrections to which he or she has been subjected;

(i) is restricted to one or more magisterial districts;

(j) lives at a fixed address;

(k) refrains from using or abusing alcohol or drugs;

(l) refrains from committing a criminal offence;

(m) refrains from visiting a particular place;

(n) refrains from making contact with a particular person or persons;

(o) refrains from threatening a particular person or persons by word or action;

(p) is subject to monitoring;

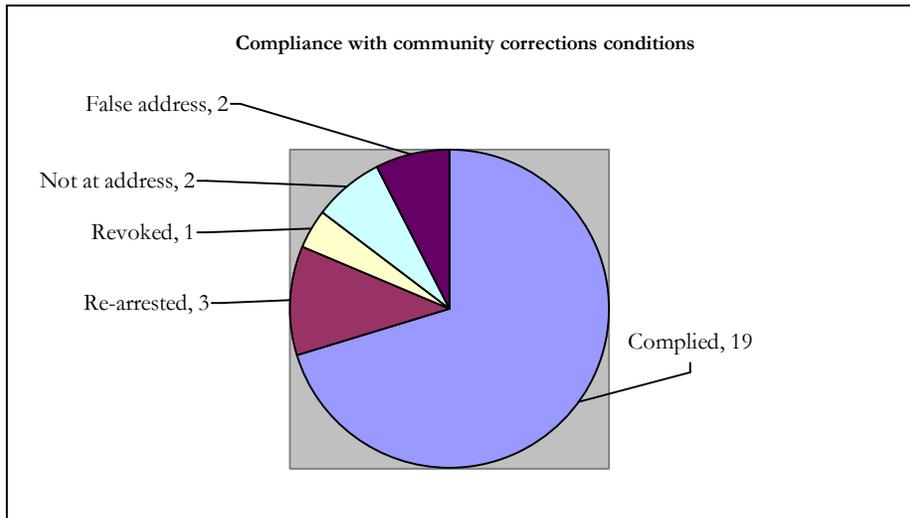
(q) in the case of a child, is subject to the additional conditions as contained in section 69.

<sup>26</sup> Section 276

<sup>27</sup> Note that one respondent was excluded from follow-up as his release date was too late for inclusion.

<sup>28</sup> There is a possibility that the two respondents who provided false addresses to the researcher and the two whose families had lost contact with them may have given new addresses to Community Corrections and are thus being monitored at these addresses. This does, however, seem unlikely.

**Chart 3**



Being under this form of supervision is, however, not only about complying with the conditions. One respondent (#5) complained about the fact that officials from DCS visit him dressed in their uniforms and this had alerted neighbours that he is an ex-prisoner and on parole. He lives in a secure complex and when his neighbours enquired if he was on parole, he explained that he was imprisoned for the crime of assault although his conviction was in fact for housebreaking and theft. His argument was that if he was honest about it and there is a burglary in the complex that he will immediately be under suspicion.

A number of respondents also complained about the limited free time they are allowed. Two noted that they would like to be more involved in church activities but that their current parole conditions restricted this. Being given free time to look for employment, if only casual jobs, is indeed a source of frustration, as noted above in the section "Finding Employment". One parolee complained that he had received two warnings from his parole officer when he took on casual jobs and was not able to inform his Parole Officer.

For respondents who were unemployed, the lack of daily purpose and sitting at home waiting for the parole officer to visit was described as extremely boring and giving rise to destructive thoughts. During interviews several respondents described their day as consisting of sitting around, watching television and doing nothing, but mindful that a DCS official may arrive at any time.

Parolees are also required to visit their Community Corrections office once per month. For those that are without income this is problem if they have to make use of public transport. Parolees, who are employed, need to take off from work and, according to one respondent, "*colleagues will become suspicious if one has to take off work every month*". Visits to Community Corrections offices, reportedly, also take the whole day as it is not at an appointed time but only by date. The reported result is that large numbers of parolees wait from early morning to see their parole officer.

### **Former associates**

Ex-prisoners return in nearly all cases to their community of origin where the conditions contributing to their involvement in crime persist. One important factor is the friends, former associates or fellow gang members. During the interviews prior to release, a large number of respondents commented on the so-called friends who were now (during imprisonment) nowhere to be seen; they do not visit nor

do they make any contact and give support. This often found expression in the cliché “*When days are dark, friends are few*”. Despite these sentiments, ex-prisoners still had to deal with gang members and former associates when they were released. In general, the respondents expressed a desire not to be involved in gang life and to stay away from the friends and associates whom they believe contributed to their involvement in crime. In the short period of follow-up after release, a number of issues were observed in the experiences of the sample.

Some respondents were able to deal with the problem of former associates fairly easy, for example Respondent #18 moved out of the area where he used to stay and was thus able to avoid them. The majority of respondents returned to their areas of origin and had to interact with (former) associates and gang members. In these interactions the objective appears to be ‘keeping to yourself’ and not causing any tension or conflict. Visits from former associates and gang members accompanied by invitations to come with them,<sup>29</sup> was reported by several respondents. More aggressive interactions were also reported, especially the case of Respondent #24 described below. In overview it appears that the respondents did not have a clear plan on how to stay away from individuals they have now come to regard as a risk to themselves, save for sitting at home and keeping to oneself.

Developing alternative positive peer relationships that would be an alternative to former associations did not, with a few exceptions, emerge as the mechanism to deal with the risks posed by former associates. One respondent, (#8), is an example of this. By the age of 29 years he had already served two terms of imprisonment for robbery and was released on parole; the term of which is 18 months. Following his release he became actively involved in his local church. Through a relative he was also able to secure a steady casual job at a large retail chain as a shelf packer. From the interviews it appear that he spends all his free time (as per his parole conditions) involved in church related activities and was thus able to develop a network of associates with pro-social values. In his case he was able to develop, in a fairly short time after release, an alternative network of friends and activities. Employment also ensured that he is occupied during the day and not faced with the daily boredom experienced by many other parolees.

At the other end of the spectrum in dealing with former associates is the case of Respondent #24 who noted in his pre-release interview that he wanted to make peace with The Americans gang. He appears to be sincere in his efforts to extract himself from gang involvement but this is easier said than done. He belongs to The Nice Time Kids although he states he is not active but there must have been some major source of conflict in the past which he did not want to disclose, but realised nonetheless that his own survival depended on a truce with The Americans gang. During the first post-release interview he explained that he had spoken to The Americans gang and they agreed that they would leave him alone. However, a few weeks later he found himself in the territory of a rival gang, The Sexy Boys, approximately one hundred metres from his house. He was attacked by seven members of The Sexy Boys one Saturday afternoon and stabbed in the face, neck, back and chest. He explained that his two brothers wanted to avenge the attack but he instructed them not to, realising that this would only lead to a spiral of attacks and counter attacks. He also declined the protection of his own gang, The Nice Time Kids, for the same reason and noting that he cannot move away from gang involvement and simultaneously ask for protection. Following the attack and stabbing of Respondent #24, he did not lay a charge with the police, even though he knows his attackers by name. He also has not sought or was offered any victim support services at the hospital where he spent five days recovering from the attack. From his description, his parole officer also did not offer any support or counselling services. During the second post-release interview it was evident that he was in need of counselling. He was extremely nervous and any sound in the street outside drew his active attention.

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<sup>29</sup> The Afrikaans expression used was “Om saam met hulle te loop” (to walk with them), which means a lot more than merely the physical act of walking together in a group.

Making the decision not to associate with certain people and gang members after release was reported by the overwhelming majority of respondents. Following through on this, respondents encountered two major challenges. The first is how to manage the daily interaction with individuals in the community, especially in gang infested communities associated with high imprisonment rates. From the interviews it appears that withdrawal and isolation are the mechanisms adopted by most respondents. This is evidenced by statements such as: “*I ignore them*”; “*I don’t pay attention to them*” and “*I stay at home*”. The second challenge is to develop alternative pro-social networks. In this regard, the respondents experience more serious difficulties as they don’t appear to be equipped or have a plan to develop such pro-social networks. The case of Respondent #8 described above, seems to be an exception to the overall trend.

### **Re-arrest**

Table 1 shows that out of the sample of 27 respondents on whom information was available, a total of four were re-arrested and re-imprisoned. Three of these were re-arrested and re-imprisoned prior to the first post-release interview being done. One respondent was arrested and returned to prison after the first post-release interview was done. Two further respondents were arrested but released on bail and will appear in court at later dates. In short, six were arrested of whom four were re-imprisoned during the first two months after release. The fact that nearly a quarter of the respondents on whom information was available came into conflict with the law in such a short period is reason for concern.

In the first of the two cases who were arrested but released on bail, the respondent (#12) was arrested for an old case, reportedly from 14 years ago. He was detained in the court cells at Cape Town over a Friday and released on bail the following Monday. In the second case, Respondent #19 was arrested in front of his house for dealing in Tik. He maintains that he did not have the drugs on him as it was lying in the road next to him. He felt further aggrieved by the incident as he was reportedly with a group of friends standing outside in the street, but he was the only one arrested. He felt that it was unfair that he was the only one selected by the police. Upon further enquiry he admitted that he has a history of dealing in drugs and this was probably what made the police single him out. His personal history does, however, not reflect any previous prison sentences served for dealing in drugs.

Respondent #31 presents an interesting case history as he was originally sentenced to death in 1988 at the age 20 for murder and robbery. His sentence was later converted to life imprisonment. In mid-January 2008 he was released on day-parole, a system by which prisoners are allowed to leave the prison during the day dressed in civilian clothes but return to prison at night. It is a particularly useful option for prisoners who have served very long prison sentences and require time to adjust. Respondent #31 obtained employment on a building site in the Belhar South area, an estimated 25 km from Pollsmoor. A family member would collect him in the morning from Pollsmoor and take him to the building site and return him to Pollsmoor in the evening. This worked well, despite the obvious costs this incurred for his family members, until his family members developed a transport problem and he was not returned to prison one specific evening. He was also not able to obtain public transport and was in any case not use to using public transport after being in prison for the past 20 years. He waited at his family members’ house until the next day when officials from the DCS came to collect him. Despite his pleas, his actions were reportedly regarded as a parole violation and his day-parole was revoked. At the time of writing he was appealing the decision of the Correctional Supervision and Parole Board. A follow-up interview was held with him in prison and it is evident that his case is a complex one, hinting in the direction of conflict between him and senior officials of the Department clouding the decision concerning his parole. This is not entirely surprising as he was a general in the 26-gang and in the course of his long prison sentence stabbed both officials and

other prisoners. He maintains, however, that in the last twelve years he had turned a page and withdrew from gang activity, studied and obtained a Grade 12 certificate. In this particular case it appears that history reaches into the present-day after release.

Three of the respondents reported that they had received warnings from their parole officers for not being at home when they were supposed to be there and although this had not yet lead to their arrest, it does place them at an increased risk of being returned to prison.

### **Health care**

Health problems and access to health care was an issue raised by only three respondents. The first complained about constant and severe headaches which were in all likelihood related to his deteriorating eyesight. The second complained of TB-like symptoms and that he need to go for a TB test as his wife and two children have had TB and it is likely that he has also contracted it. He also resides in an area with reportedly a very high incidence of TB. The third respondent that raised health care as an issue reported that after his release he went to have his CD4-count tested as he is HIV-positive. He reported that his girlfriend and wife (separated) are also HIV-positive. Further information on his state of health and access to health care services is unfortunately not available as he moved from the given address and it was not possible to trace him.

It is cause for some concern that all three respondents had serious and chronic medical conditions but it does not appear as if these were addressed during their imprisonment or that they were brought into contact with appropriate resources in the public health care system prior to or following their release.

### **Access to support services**

Respondents were asked if they had approached any government department, non-governmental organisation, community based organisation or faith-based organisation for assistance with a particular problem following their release. With a few exceptions, none of the respondents knew where to seek assistance or knew of what type of assistance may be available. Speaking to the DCS social worker at Community Corrections was mentioned by two respondents as being helpful in explaining their conditions of parole. One respondent went to The Haven for accommodation and was assisted. Two respondents reported that they wanted to go to Nicro and one reported that he had visited the Nicro offices in Mitchell's Plain. He was given a date to return but did not do so as he did not have money for transport. An Islamic community based-organisation provided one respondent with a caravan in which he and his wife now resides. In one case, the respondent's parole officer provided him with information on the venue and meeting times of the nearest Narcotics Anonymous group. At the time of writing it was not confirmed whether he had in fact joined this group. Three respondents noted that they attend church for spiritual guidance although this should not be interpreted in the narrow sense of providing assistance with specific problems.

In summary, the overwhelming majority of respondents had not, over a two-month period, sought assistance from government departments or civil society organisations despite the wide range of challenges that they face upon release and the large number of organisations which would be able to provide assistance. Knowledge of such services presents a challenge as it is apparent that they were not aware of them nor were they directed to them prior to release or while on parole. The few respondents who were able to identify services, such as Nicro, explained that they do not have money for transport to the organisation's offices. It would appear that linking prisoners to resources prior to release would improve their knowledge and access to services.

## 6. Positive aspects after release

### Achievements

In the same manner that respondents were asked about problems that they may have experienced, they were also asked about achievements or aspects of their lives that they feel good about or are satisfied with. From the quantum of responses recorded it is clear that respondents experienced far more problems than notable achievements. This is indicative of their overall state of mind but also of ability and skill in self-reflection.

The overwhelming majority reported that they feel good to be out of prison. Despite the many hardships being faced, they expressed a sense of relief to be away from the prison environment and to be with their families again. The information collected on this particular point dispels the often encountered view of prison officials that 'prisoners want to be in prison'. The following are some examples:

- *I feel to be a better person than what I was. Prison taught me to take responsibility. My self-image is much better.*
- *I am thankful to be outside. I am strong, I am calm except for the lack of money; we are both unemployed.*
- *I feel good about the fact that I am not involved in crime anymore and rid of drugs.*
- *I realise that I am a different person now and I feel good about it.*

As noted above in Section 3 above, the majority of respondents have a history of substance abuse and addiction. Six respondents stated that they feel good about abstaining from drugs and alcohol. Respondent #5, who had been an alcoholic since his teen years responded in the first post-release interview as follows: *"I have been dry for 10mths. I feel healthier, feel better, and think more positively. I didn't know there was anything else besides alcohol."* Other respondents in this group expressed similar views but it must be noted that none of them have joined any support programme and are thus at increased risk of relapse and some of them had in fact relapsed in the two months after release.

The group of respondents who had found employment, felt extremely relieved and lucky to be in this position. Other responses on this issue indicated more moderate achievements as one respondent (#33) explained: *"I feel proud about going to look for work. It means that I am taking the initiative"*. Respondent #14 explained that he feels proud about being able to secure income through casual and odd jobs although he does not have full-time employment.

Involvement in religious activities was also cited by a number of respondents as something that they feel proud of. In these instances this was a goal that they had set for themselves and was able to achieve it.

Identifying positive aspects and achievements in their personal lives appear to be more difficult for the respondents and hint strongly in the direction of limited self-reflection skills. Building resilience and improved risk management skills rely much on being able to identify personal strengths and achievements and developing these further. In the post-release period support aimed at this will be extremely useful.

### Use of skills acquired in prison

In Section 3 above it was reported that the respondents attended a wide range of programmes while in prison. They were consequently asked if they apply the skills and knowledge acquired through these programmes after they had been released. Although this method of questioning and assessment

cannot determine the effectiveness of these programmes, it does indicate towards the conscious utilisation of skills acquired through them. It furthermore raises questions about the sustainability of programme impact and whether individuals are able to transfer these skills from the prison programme setting to life outside of prison.

The following are some of the comments from respondents on whether they found the programmes they attended useful and if they are still applying what they have learnt in the programmes:

- *The sexual conduct programme helped me to understand sexual relations. Also understand what the consequences are. The (DCS) Pre-release Programme opened my eyes about my responsibility. How to control myself, this is helping me.*
- *I've learnt a lot - to avoid conflict and stay away from crime.*
- *The programmes helped me a lot to get wisdom, respect and self-discipline – and how to care for people around you.*
- *I see these things around me and the programme helped me to deal with conflict situations.*
- *It helped somewhat. You need to think before you do something. You reflect on what you are doing. The street does not need me anymore. I avoid conflict now, even with my neighbours.*
- *Especially regarding alcohol they opened my mind as to the effects of alcohol. The Cross Roads and Restorative Justice Programmes were very good. I also learned self-control and how to interact with other people.*
- *They help. You had one mindset but now I have a different mindset. I had a negative mindset (interested in gangs) – the programmes help you to be different outside.*
- *The Manhood Programme showed me how to respect myself, women and people around me.*
- *The Family Violence Programme – I learned to talk to my wife properly. I go to church now. Learned to think before I speak. I don't want to be aggressive with my wife anymore.*
- *I don't use alcohol anymore. They made me change my life. I tell my friends about the programmes and experiences in prison; some of them listen to what I have to say.*
- *The programmes were about communication and the community. They can see that I have changed. It is about communication and respect.*
- *I learned things – some things are useful. I learned that I must walk away from conflict. I must keep quiet with my wife.*
- *Those programmes helped me then and so I internalised them.*
- *I found it useful, for example on gangsterism. A gang member goes with the organisation – he does not think for himself. I saw many things since I have been out. I see them insulting each other and I can't go with that. People see that I have changed. People now greet me. They see that I am on the right path now. I am getting older and what do I have to show for myself at this age?*
- *It helps me here and there. If I want to steal, I remember that it is wrong.*
- *The programmes still help. I see these things around me - a friend of mine is back in prison. It's because he was involved in gangs. Now nobody is now interested in him, including these gangsters that he was involved with. The wife of another friend is pregnant but he is in prison. He was arrested on the night before his wedding. What was he thinking? Getting married is not easy, you must think it through. He didn't think because he was doing drugs.*

The above comments reflect a wide range of skills and insights acquired through the programmes attended by the respondents as well as their own observations. Two months after release, the respondents in general still reported optimism and vigour in utilising and applying these insights. A longitudinal and more intensive evaluation may indeed yield more reliable results about how programme impact is sustained or not. From the interviews it was also apparent that although the majority of respondents returned to their families, none of the families were involved in any type of programme that would facilitate the re-entry process and sustain what the respondents may have learned in the programmes they attended in prison.

## Recommendations from released prisoners

Preparing prisoners better for release and supporting them better after release are crucial to successful re-entry and the respondents were therefore asked for their inputs on these issues.

### Finding employment

Predictably, the greatest number of comments (from 22 respondents) was received in respect of finding employment. These referred to improving people's skills to find employment; training prisoners and ex-prisoners in marketable skills; placing ex-prisoners in employment; assisting people to look for employment more effectively; relaxing parole conditions to enable more effective work-seeking activities, and providing material assistance to released prisoners.<sup>30</sup> The following are some of the comments made:

- *They need employment - that is the most important thing.*
- *I need a job and this is what occupies my mind. When your assistant called (to make the appointment for the interview) I thought it was for a job. If you have a job, you have a purpose; it keeps you busy and if you are busy then you stay away from the wrong things.*
- *We need to be linked with employment. They can create work for people when they get out.*
- *They can help one to be engaged in activities and further your education. I went to a training facility to improve my qualification but they were full.*
- *They need to show more sympathy for your personal circumstances- especially in finding employment. If you are employed you have to declare everything to your employer and then your chances of finding work are slim. Attitudes of people are against ex-prisoners. Being on parole limits your chances of finding work. Why do they release you on parole if there are such administrative requirements that influence your chances of getting work?*
- *They must provide work-related skills training. They have the money to do this and to support people.*
- *Finances are a problem because you are unemployed and things are tough at home. Maybe an allowance and some house ware will help. There is a lot of pressure to support the household and everything is expensive*
- *Support with money- you come out with nothing and you must support your child.*
- *People must be willing to support ex-prisoners. You don't know how to look for work and you have to rely on family and friends. In need assistance in looking for work.*

### Personal decision-making

In response to the issue of pre- and post-release support the category of responses with the second highest frequency (17 respondents) was somewhat surprising as it did not relate to support or training that can be provided, but described a process of personal decision-making. These respondents explained that to be rehabilitated, or to stay out of prison, or stay out of trouble depends on a conscious and deliberate decision made by the individual to change his life. They explained that without this decision, employment and intervention programmes have little meaning and limited chance of success. Once this decision has been made, only then do other support services become important and meaningful. This view therefore does not discard interventions and support programmes, but places them in a particular context of willingness and readiness for change. Conceptually this view can be understood as a specific phase in a change process such as described in the trans-theoretical model developed by Prochaska *et al.*<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> In the course of the interviews several requests were made to the author for employment or a financial contribution, and although declined for ethical reasons these are indicative of the desperation felt by some respondents. When such requests were made, the respondents were referred to service delivery organisations such as Nicro.

<sup>31</sup> For a more detailed description on this issue see Muntingh L (2005) *Offender rehabilitation and reintegration: taking the White Paper on Corrections forward*, CSPRI research Report No 10, CSPRI, Bellville.

- *Pre-contemplation stage:* There is denial of the problem, with individuals being unaware of the negative consequences of their behaviour, and either believing that the consequences are insignificant or having given up on changing their behaviour.
- *Contemplation stage:* Individuals are likely to acknowledge the advantages and disadvantages of changing, and are likely to overestimate the disadvantages of changing, with this resulting in them experiencing ambivalence.
- *Preparation stage:* Individuals have decided to take action within the next month and have commenced with small steps toward that goal.
- *Action stage:* Individuals are overtly engaged in changing their problem behaviours.
- *Maintenance:* They have been able to sustain their action for at least six months, and are focused on preventing relapse.<sup>32</sup>

Placing the emphasis on the individual ‘making that decision’ refers to a person who has moved past the pre-contemplation and contemplation stages and is in all likelihood in the preparation stage or thereafter in the above model. The following selection of statements reflects this:

- *It is your own decision.*
- *Depends on yourself - do they want to be helped?*
- *A person must help himself. He must find employment. I made a decision not to go back. Your freedom is taken away inside there.*
- *Life is on the outside not on the inside. It is an individual choice but I need employment. All has worked out so far for me.*
- *They must explain to him that life is not in prison but outside. He will achieve nothing in prison.*
- *There is lots of assistance but it is your own decision when you come out.*
- *This is his decision- you must make that decision- protect yourself, I realized I need to be there for my children and my girlfriend. There are young guys in there who commit the one offence after the other and then he picks up a long sentence – [Hy loop hom vas binne in die jare in.<sup>33</sup>]*
- *Prison will make bring no change in a prisoner. All these programme certificates are just prison papers. [Die tronk sal niks kan maak aan ‘n bandiet nie. Dis net tronk papiere.] It is your own decision that makes the change - in 1998 when my mother died, I made that decision.*
- *You must start with yourself. The DCS can only assist you so far. If you have family responsibilities you must come to this realisation by yourself. It took me long but because I have children, I realised this eventually. You are here in this world to do good things.*
- *The Pre-release programme is good but this is in the end your own choice.*
- *This is your decision not theirs (DCS). The DCS does not help, you rehabilitate yourself.*
- *The decision is with the individual to make. Many programmes are compulsory, so you do it because you must. But only God can recreate you. The officials need rehabilitation as well. They are not skilled to facilitate and run the programmes.*
- *The programmes help – it covers a wide range of issues. It is here (outside) that you make a decision.*
- *It is not people who can help you. It is you yourself and what aims you have. If you have no aims then it will be difficult. I made the decision that that is not the lifestyle I want. You must convince yourself. You must be able to trust yourself and have confidence in yourself.*

### Personal support

Apart from making a personal decision, it was also evident from the interview data that personal support is important. Even if individuals have made the decision to change, this is not an easy path

<sup>32</sup> Prochaska JM et al (2004) The Trans-theoretical Model of Change for Multi-level Intervention for Alcohol Abuse on Campus, *Journal of Alcohol and Drug Education*, Volume 47 Issue 3, p 36-37.

<sup>33</sup> Literally translated, it means ‘He collides with the years’.

to follow and the prominence given by respondents on having personal support should be taken seriously. Respondents noted the following as being important: having a confidant; access to psychological support; encouragement, and not forsaking people because they are prisoners or ex-prisoners. The following are some of the statements made:

- *You need somebody to confide into. Somebody who can understand and motivate you. Somebody who can recognise your potential. Maybe support groups for ex-prisoners by ex-prisoners will help.*
- *People around them can help them. They need assistance with different problems, for example to see a psychologist. If there is a problem I'll see a psychologist.*
- *Getting them counselling will help. Some guys are mentally disturbed in prison – they need help when they come out. Some people are very angry when they come out.*
- *They need encouragement and employment.*
- *People need to be encouraged. The programmes helped, they made me think.*
- *People need assistance to stay out of trouble – they need encouragement and support.*
- *Give love and respect to people when they come out. Don't forsake them.*

#### Family support

The importance of family support was raised by a smaller group of respondents, 7 in total, and emphasised two dimensions. Firstly, families of prisoners need to be prepared for the release from prison of a family member. For example, one respondent stated that his family was clearly not prepared for his release and this caused several problems. Secondly, once released, family members need to be able to support that individual in the correct manner. One respondent described it as follows: *“It depends on how you are supported. It is good to talk about things, especially in the family. You need to put the past behind you. You need to learn a ‘different language’.”* The research also established that the overwhelming majority of respondents returned to their families in the same communities they resided in prior to imprisonment. While a released prisoner may have come to a life-changing decision, this does not mean that his family had come through the same cognitive process or received any additional support or interventions to deal with family dysfunctionality. There is indeed a great need to learn more about this aspect of prisoner re-entry.

#### Relationship with DCS

Only 7 respondents made remarks about the relationship with the DCS. These respondents asked that officials should have a positive attitude; they should encourage parolees, and treat them fairly. Only two comments were made in respect of life inside prison and it was remarked that *“people are not treated with respect in prison”* and that *“the officials are not interested in helping prisoners”*. There is little doubt that individuals' experiences of imprisonment will have an impact on their ability to be reintegrated, but this issue was not raised by the respondents during the interviews. The impression was created that respondents prefer to block out the entire imprisonment experience and everything that is associated with it, including the DCS.

## **7. Conclusions**

By way of conclusion key observations are made according to the four dimensions of prisoner re-entry described in the Introduction above.

#### *Issues facing returning prisoners:*

In respect of personal issues and challenges facing prisoners upon release the following are noted:

- Two-thirds of the sample had served one or more prison sentences prior to the one which they had completed in the course of this study. Prior imprisonment remains a very reliable indicator of future imprisonment.<sup>34</sup>
- Nearly half of the respondents were employed prior to their last term of imprisonment and worked predominantly in the construction and maintenance sector. However, very few had employment already secured prior release. For the overwhelming majority the plan was to start looking for employment once they are released.
- The overwhelming majority of the sample (80%) reported a history of substance abuse and the majority of these respondents rated their chances of finding assistance for their problem as 'poor' or 'very poor'.
- Nearly half of the sample belongs to a prison or street gang or both. Respondents were uncertain of how to manage relations with gangs outside of prison.
- Two thirds of respondents have had a family member who has been imprisoned. Having a family member who has been in prison significantly increases an individual's chances of being imprisoned and this study confirmed this conclusion.

On the more positive side, the following findings are noted:

- The majority of respondents participated in one or more programmes while in prison which they rated as 'good or useful'
- All the respondents were able to describe a personal plan prior to their release. Finding employment was regarded as the key priority amongst all respondents and the majority rated their chances of finding employment as 'good' or 'very good'.
- The majority of respondents rated their chances of finding accommodation, access to health care and general assistance with problem solving as 'good'.

*Impact of prisoner reentry on families:*

- Prior to release, the majority of respondents (23/38) described the relationships they have with their families as 'good' or 'very good'. After release, the majority still described family relations as positive but noted a number of problem areas:
  - The inability to contribute to household income due to unemployment
  - Scepticism on the part of family members about their intentions to be law abiding citizens
  - Difficulty in regaining family members' trust
  - Inability to reunite their family (wife or partner and children) due to lack of accommodation and income
- Being out of prison filled most respondents with a sense of relief and optimism. They also expressed great satisfaction at being with their families again.
- Access to some form of personal support (aimed at encouragement, reflection and problem-solving) was regarded as an important aspect of the post-release phase. Some respondents found this type of support in their families but for others it was absent.
- Ensuring that families are prepared for the return of an imprisoned family member and ensuring that the family is able to provide the right support were regarded by the respondents as important features of successful re-entry. Some respondents noted that their families were totally unprepared and this caused problems.

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<sup>34</sup> Langan PA and Levin DJ (2002) *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 1994*, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Report NCJ 193427, p. 2.

*Impact of prisoner reentry on communities:*

- Returning to gang infested communities and communities where former associates reside remains a challenge. One respondent was attacked by rival gang members and nearly killed. Other respondents adopted a strategy of isolation and withdrawal which effectively confines them to their houses. This leads to boredom and frustration.
- Although few respondents specifically mentioned personal safety, it is inferred that this is a significant problem in gang infested communities.
- From a sample of 27 respondents on which information was obtained, 4 were arrested and returned to prison within two months. A further two respondents were also arrested but released on bail. This trend points in the direction of the phenomenon of 'high incarceration communities' which is characterised by instability.
- The majority of respondents reported that in the period after release they had been able to use the skills and insights acquired through the programmes they attended while in prison and in their opinion was able to avoid conflict and other problems.
- A smaller group of respondents with a history of substance of substance abuse have been able to abstain.

*Challenges to prisoner reentry:*

- Respondents were able to identify a much greater quantum of problems they had experienced after release compared to positive aspects. There may indeed be several reasons for this, such as limited self-reflection skills or a realisation that leaving prison is indeed a difficult and demanding process.
- The respondents noted that making the decision to change and starting a different lifestyle is a very personal one and in the absence of such a decision, that other interventions aimed at successful reintegration will have little chance of success.
- A small but not insignificant proportion of respondents identified lack of support in dealing with depression and mental health problems. This was also associated with substance abuse. It was also apparent that mental health is not a priority for the DCS in respect of prisoners or parolees.
- Finding employment was an important challenge to the sample with only 10 respondents having secured employment two months after release. Of these 3 returned to their previous employment, 3 were employed in the family business and 4 found employment in the open market. Other respondents were dependent on family members and friends to provide them with food, cash and accommodation. From the experiences of this sample, there was no evidence to suggest that ex-prisoners and parolees receive any assistance from the DCS (or any other government department) to find employment. There was also no evidence indicating that hard skills acquired while in prison improved the respondents' chances of employment. The respondents who had found employment after release was extremely relieved about this.
- Prisoners and ex-prisoners need assistance to find employment by improving their skills to find employment; training prisoners and ex-prisoners in marketable skills; placing ex-prisoners in employment; assisting people to look for employment more effectively; relaxing parole conditions to enable more effective work-seeking activities, and providing material assistance to released prisoners.
- Of the 16 respondents with a history of substance abuse, 5 relapsed within two months after release. More importantly, respondents were not aware of what resources are available to assist them with substance abuse and where to access such resources.
- Access to health care is problematic and it appears that health problems are not adequately addressed prior to release or when on parole.

- Very few respondents were aware of any community resources available to ex-prisoners or to assist with problems that ex-prisoners may experience. Those who were aware of such resources found it difficult to access as they lacked money for transport.
- The majority of respondents (70%) who were on parole have been able to abide by their parole conditions but several described it as overly restrictive and in fact an encumbrance to finding employment.
- Building a positive relationship with DCS officials and being treated fairly by officials were seen by a smaller group of respondents as important when on parole.

## 8. Recommendations

- Successful re-entry will be improved if a comprehensive case management approach is followed that sees active involvement of the offender/parolee, officials, family members and community structures. Such an approach must be based on continuity in planning and monitoring from well before release until completion of parole/correctional supervision. In qualifying cases, such a release plan needs to be a natural product of the sentence plan.<sup>35</sup>
- The case management plan must identify and address specific risk factors in the individual's life that may place him at risk of re-offending.
- The DCS should develop a detailed data base of community-based resources that may be of assistance to all ex-prisoners. Prisoners who are about to be released should be properly briefed on the nature and locality of such services in their area of residence.
- Families of prisoners need to be prepared for release and made part of the re-entry process.
- A more strategic and active approach needs to be implemented in respect of securing employment for released prisoners. This would address the following: ensuring that prisoners complete primary and secondary education as far as possible; training prisoners in marketable skills; linking (ex-)prisoners with potential employers; training prisoners in searching for employment; linking ex-prisoners with community-based resources that may assist them in finding employment; providing parolees and probationers with active support in securing employment, and assisting parolees and probationers with transport in their employment seeking efforts.
- Mental health assessments should be done during imprisonment and specifically prior to release. Prisoners should be made aware of symptoms of mental health problems and informed of available resources that are able to offer assistance.
- Substance abuse treatment must start prior to release and link individuals to community-based resources on an individual basis.
- Prisoners who are about to be released must undergo a thorough medical examination and receive the necessary services prior to release or be linked with the appropriate public health care services closest to them.
- Prior to release, it should be ensured that prisoners have an identity document. It should similarly be ensured that the prisoner and his family have access to social security benefits if they qualify.
- Parolees and probationers need to be properly educated about their community corrections conditions as well as problem-solving in this regard.
- A review of community corrections monitoring is required to investigate measures to remove hurdles to securing employment.

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<sup>35</sup> The Correctional Services Amendment Bill proposes that only prisoners who are serving a sentence of 24 months or longer will have a sentence plan. Prior to the amendment prisoners serving a sentence of 12 months or longer qualified for a sentence plan.

- Parolees and probationers should be compelled to participate in regular community-based support and development activities with a view to develop pro-social networks and access assistance.

\* \* \*

**Appendix 1**

CONSENT FORM  
University of the Western Cape –  
Community Law Centre

I, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby agree to participate in the research conducted by the Community Law Centre entitled “Immediate post-imprisonment experiences of released inmates in the Western Cape”.

I have received a briefing on the project and understand the purposes and methods of the research.

I have been given the opportunity to ask any questions regarding the project before consenting to it.

I agree to participate in three interviews with the researcher.

I reserve the right to withdraw from the project at any stage.

I was given the assurance that my identity will be protected and not made public without my consent in writing.

I do not expect any form of payment or other direct benefit from my participation in this project.

I have been provided with the contact details of the Director of the Community Law Centre in the event that I wish to lodge a complaint or raise any other matter related to the way in which the research is conducted.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ 2007  
Date

## Appendix 2 Interview data on employment

Resp. no.	1 <sup>st</sup> post release interview		2 <sup>nd</sup> post-release interview	
	Employed	Unemployed	Employed	Unemployed
4		Unemployed – ‘skarrel’ <sup>36</sup> . Wife works two days per week. Don’t have ID and need it to look for work.		Unemployed. Depend on friends and family.
5	Had employment but lost it due to employer relocating. Started own business (maintenance) with brother and father. Receiving little income.		Continuing own business doing maintenance and repairs. Has earned R2500 in three months.	
7		Unemployed. Have earned R240 with casual jobs since release 44 days earlier.	<i>No interview</i>	<i>No interview</i>
8		No employment.	Found employment as casual shelf-packer at large retail chain. Earn R350 per week.	
9		No employment, do small jobs in neighbourhood and earn on average R15.00 per day.	Found full time employment as ‘handlanger’ setting up Wendy Houses. Earn R400 per week.	
10		No employment. Opportunity may arise from father’s new business.		No employment. Opportunity in father’s business had not materialised.
12		No employment.		Unemployed. Did some casual work previous month and earned R1200.
14	Self employed. Installing home theatre system. Was in this type of work prior to imprisonment. Earning approximately R3000 per month		<i>No interview</i>	<i>No interview</i>
16	<i>No interview</i>	<i>No interview</i>	Employed in family business; home shop.	
17	Employed. Was able to return to employment prior to imprisonment. Earning R4000 per		Employed. Same position.	

<sup>36</sup> The word ‘skarrel’ translates directly to English as ‘scuttle’ and refers to looking around for money and food from family and friends.

Resp. no.	1 <sup>st</sup> post release interview		2 <sup>nd</sup> post-release interview	
	Employed	Unemployed	Employed	Unemployed
	month.			
18		No employment and no income since release 31 days earlier.		No employment. Have earned R400 by doing casual jobs.
19	Employed. Selling software on basic of R2500 per month plus commission.		Employed. Resigned from first job and starting with new job that is more fixed and better salary.	
20	Doing casual jobs 2 days per week at R150 per day.		Doing casual work (mowing lawns) for two days per week that is fixed	
22		No employment. Earned R150 since release 29 days earlier. Wife also unemployed.		No employment. Doing casual work. Receiving UIF and wife will also soon receive UIF.
23	Found employment as driver after three weeks. Earning R2100 per month.		<i>No interview</i>	<i>No interview</i>
24	Found employment as security guard at R1600 per month.			No employment. Lost work as security guard after he was hospitalised following stabbing in gang attack.
25	<i>No interview</i>	<i>No interview</i>	Employed. Returned to previous employer and was re-employed.	
27		No employment but position as painter secured and to start in three weeks. No other income in		Unemployed. Declined offer to work for R400 per week.
29	Employed. Found work with previous employer in Atlantis. Had to borrow R1300 from employer until first paycheque.		Employed. Same position.	
32	Working in father's business (panel beating). Not earning a lot.		Employed. Same position.	
33		No employment. Has sent in two applications, waiting for response.		Unemployed. Has done two days of casual work and earned R200.
34		No employment. Collect items for recycling	<i>No interview</i>	<i>No interview</i>
35		No employment. Supported by family.		
37	<i>No interview</i>	<i>No interview</i>		Unemployed. Not even casual work.