

**RECIDIVISM AMONGST JUVENILE OFFENDERS IN THE
KROONSTAD YOUTH CENTRE: IMPLICATIONS FOR
SOCIAL WORK SERVICES**

BY

LINDIWE PATIENCE JANUARY

(B.Soc.Sc)

A manuscript submitted for the degree

MAGISTER ARTIUM

in

SOCIAL WORK

in the

FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

of the

NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY

(POTCHEFSTROOM CAMPUS)

Research Supervisor: Professor P Rankin

Potchefstroom 2007

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are several individuals whom I feel are worth mentioning for their important contribution in many ways than one.

I give my heart felt thanks to my grandmother Mabel Koloji, who encouraged and motivated me to study further. Her prayers gave me strength when I wanted to give up studying further. Her love and support gave me courage to complete this degree.

I also love to thank my daughter Chule -Zoe for the time she afforded me to study and complete this degree, her love and care assured me that the dream and goals are at hand.

I would to thank my brothers Sylvester, Kenneth-David and Ian Sean for their constant support through the years of my studies. They motivated me to forge on and attain my goal and dreams.

I would also like to thank my Uncle Dr Guy Roger Mihindou and my Aunt Mrs Piekielele Mihindou for the assistance they gave and the information they helped me gather for the report to be completed.

A special thanks to Mr Mokotedi, Mr Tshepo Kola and Mr Ndumela for believing in me and the potential I have to complete the report. I felt wonderful to share my ideas with them and they supplied me with internet articles that helped in giving structure to the report.

A word of appreciation to all my friends Nthatisi, Tibi, Salome, Malebo, Ntebo, and Nthabiseng, who afforded me the time to study, do my assignment and my research report. I thank my spiritual mother Mrs Moloji for her prayers that meant a lot to me because she had faith in me in completing this report.

Finally, I also thank Prof P Rankin a deep rooted heart felt thank you for his guidance, support and patience because he showed me that I can deliver quality work in this report.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	I
TABLE OF CONTENTS	II
ABSTRACT	III
OPSOMMING	IV
THE PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS	V
INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS: SOCIAL WORK AND MAATSKAPLIKE WERK	VI
RECIDIVISM AMONGST JUVENILE OFFENDERS IN THE KROONSTAD YOUTH CENTRE: IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK SERVICES	1
1. PROBLEM STATEMENT	1
2. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES	3
3. CENTRAL THEORETICAL ASSUMPTION	3
4. DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY	4
5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	4
5.1 RESEARCH DESIGN.....	4
5.2 RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS.....	4
5.3 MEASURING INSTRUMENTS.....	4
5.3.1 <i>Research procedures</i>	4
5.3.2 <i>Data Analysis</i>	5
5.3.3 <i>Ethical considerations</i>	5
6. LITERATURE REVIEW	6
6.1 RECIDIVISM AND THE RECIDIVIST.....	6
6.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF RECIDIVISTS.....	7
6.3 REHABILITATION OF THE RECIDIVIST.....	11
7. PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL WORK SERVICES IN THE KROONSTAD YOUTH CENTRE	19
8. THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION	26
8.1 FOCUS GROUP SESSION.....	26
8.2 PRESENTATION OF EMPIRICAL DATA.....	26
9. CONCLUSIONS	31
10. RECOMMENDATIONS	32
APPENDIX	34
BIBLIOGRAPHY	35

ABSTRACT

Key words: Young offenders, recidivism, rehabilitation.

A certain percentage of young offenders are re-incarcerated after their first offence and they land back in jail to serve a further sentence. This implies that they could not find their feet back in society once they have been released and it signifies failure on the part of the correctional authorities to rehabilitate the young offenders successfully. Recidivism is a complicated phenomenon which is not easy to deal with as the correctional institutions often have no control over the circumstances outside the prison walls affecting the young offender.

The overall goal of this research was to establish the circumstances leading to the re-arrest of the young offender in the Kroonstad Youth Centre in order to adjust the rehabilitation programmes if necessary.

The data was collected by means of a focus group consisting of young offenders who have been re-arrested after the first offence.

The young offenders could not accurately identify the circumstances leading to their re-arrests, but they could give an indication of the family and community circumstances under which they must live. This ranged from unstable family life to community conditions not conducive to their adjustment. It was also found that the lack of support in the form of outside NGO's to assist them with their adjustment once they left prison was a serious shortcoming.

It was recommended that intervention with the youth offenders should be focused on teaching skills that will help them to adjust in the community after their release.

It was also recommended that families be trained on how to deal with the behaviour of the youths who has violated the law.

OPSOMMING

Sleutelwoorde: Jong oortreders, residivisme, rehabilitasie

'n Sekere persentasie jong oortreders beland weer in die gevangenis na hulle eerste oortreding, waar hulle 'n verdere vonnis moet uitdien. Dit impliseer dat hulle nie hulle voete kon vind in die gemeenskap na hulle vrylating nie en dat dit ook beteken dat die korrektiewe owerhede nie daarin kon slaag om hulle suksesvol te rehabiliteer nie.

Residivisme is 'n komplekse verskynsel wat nie maklik is om te hanteer nie omdat gevangenisowerhede geen beheer het oor toestande buite die mure van die gevangenis wat die jong oortreder beïnvloed nie.

Die oorhoofse doel van die navorsing was om vas te stel wat die omstandighede was wat daartoe gelei het dat die jong oortreder in die Kroonstad Jeugsentrum weer gearresteer was, ten einde aanpassings in die rehabilitasieprogram te maak as dit nodig is.

Die data is by wyse van 'n fokusgroep, wat bestaan het uit jong oortreders wat vir die tweede keer gearresteer was, versamel

Die jong oortreders kon nie die omstandighede wat tot hulle herinhegtenisneming gelei het, korrek identifiseer nie, maar kon wel 'n aanduiding gee van die gesins- en gemeenskapsomstandighede waaronder hulle moes lewe. Dit het gewissel vanaf 'n onstabiele gesinslewe tot gemeenskapsomstandighede wat nie bevorderlik was vir hulle aanpassing nie. Dit is ook gevind dat die gebrek aan ondersteuning deur NPO's buite in die gemeenskap, 'n ernstige leemte was.

Dit word aanbeveel dat intervensie met jong oortreders gefokus moet word op die aanleer van vaardighede wat hulle kan help om in die gemeenskap aan te pas na hulle vrylating. Dit word ook aanbeveel dat hulle gesinne betrek word om opgelei te word hoe om die jeugoortreder te hanteer.

THE PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

*The presentation of the research results will be done in article format as specified in Rules A.11.5.3 and A.11.5.4 of the Yearbook of the Potchefstroom University for CHE (2002:17). In formulating the articles, the content and technical requirements of the South African journal *Maatskaplike Werk and Social Work* (see Appendix 7) were used as basis. The articles will, however, be shortened before submission in order to comply with the journal's length requirements.*

INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS: Social Work/ Maatskaplike Werk

Die Suid-Afrikaanse tydskrif vir maatskaplike werk "*Social Work/ Maatskaplike Werk*" (ISSN – 0037-8054) voorsien die volgende instruksies aan outeurs:

INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS

The Journal publishes articles, short communications, book reviews and commentary on articles already published from any field of social work. Contributions relevant to social work from other disciplines will also be considered. Contributions may be written in English or Afrikaans. All contributions will be critically reviewed by at least two referees on whose advice contributions will be accepted or rejected by the editorial committee. All refereeing is strictly confidential. Manuscripts may be returned to the authors if extensive revision is required or if the style or presentation does not conform to the Journal practice. Commentary on articles already published in the Journal must be submitted with appropriate captions, the name(s) and addressee(s) of the author(s) and preferably not exceed 5 pages. The whole manuscript plus one clear copy as well as a diskette with all the text, preferably in MS Windows (Word or WordPerfect) or ASCII must be submitted. Manuscripts must be typed double spaced on one side of A4 paper only. Use the Harvard system for references. Short references in the text: When word-for-word quotations, facts or arguments from other sources are cited, the surname(s) of the author(s), year of publication and page number(s) must appear in parenthesis in the text, e.g. "... (Berger 1967:12). More details about sources referred to in the text should appear at the end of the manuscript under the caption "References". The sources must be arranged alphabetically according to the surnames of the authors. Note the use of capitals and punctuation marks in the following examples.

VOORSKRIFTE AAN OUTEURS

Die Tydskrif publiseer artikels, kort mededelings, boekbesprekings en kommentaar op reeds gepubliseerde artikels uit enige gebied van die maatskaplike werk asook relevante bydraes uit ander dissiplines. Bydraes mag in Afrikaans of Engels geskryf word. Artikels in Afrikaans moet vergesel wees van 'n Engelse opsomming van ongeveer 200 woorde. Alle bydraes sal krities deur ten minste twee keurders beoordeel word. Beoordeling is streng vertroulik. Manuskripte sal na die outeurs teruggestuur word indien ingrypende hersiening vereis word of indien die styl nie ooreenstem met die tydskrif se standaard nie. Kommentaar op artikels wat in die Tydskrif gepubliseer is, moet van toepaslike titels, die naam(name) en adres(se) van die outeur(s) voorsien wees en verkieslik nie langer as 5 bladsye wees nie. 'n Disket met die hele teks, verkieslik in MS Windows of ASCII moet die hele manuskrip en een duidelike kopie daarvan vergesel. Manuskripte moet slegs op een kant van die bladsy in dubbelspasiëring getik word. Verwysings moet volgens die Harvard-stelsel geskied. Verwysings in die teks: Wanneer woordelike sitate, feite of argumente uit ander bronne gesitater word, moet die van(ne) van die outeur(s), jaar van publikasie, en bladsynommers tussen hakies in die teks verskyn, bv. "... (Berger, 1967:12). Meer besonderhede omtrent bronne moet alfabeties volgens die vanne van die outeurs aan die einde van die manuskrip onder die opskrif "Bibliografie" verskyn. Let op die gebruik van hoofletters en leestekens by die volgende voorbeelde.

TWO AUTHORS and TWEE OUTEURS: SHEAFOR, BW & JENKINS, LE 1982. Quality field instruction in social work. **Program Development and Maintenance.** New York: Longman.

COLLECTION and BUNDEL ARTIKELS: MIDDLEMAN, RR & RHODES, GB (eds) 1985. Competent supervision, making imaginative judgements. **New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.**

ARTICLE IN COLLECTION and ARTIKEL IN BUNDEL: DURKHEIM, E 1977. On education and society. In: **KARARABEL, J & HALSEY, AH (eds)** Power and ideology in education. **New York: Oxford University Press.)**

JOURNAL ARTICLE and ARTIKEL IN TYDSKRIF: BERNSTEIN, A 1991. Social work and a new South Africa: Can social workers meet the challenge? *Social Work and Maatskaplike Werk*, 27(3 and 4):222-231.

THESIS and TESIS: EHLERS, DMM 1987. Die gebruik van statistiese tegnieke vir die ontleding van gegewens in maatskaplikewerk-navorsing. **Pretoria: Universiteit van Pretoria. (M tesis)**

MINISTRY FOR WELFARE AND POPULATION DEVELOPMENT 1995. Draft White Paper for Social Welfare. *Government Gazette, Vol. 368, No. 16943 (2 February).* Pretoria: Government Printer.

NEWSPAPER REPORT and KOERANTBERIG: MBEKI, T 1998. Fiddling while the AIDS crisis gets out of control. *Sunday Times*, 8 March, 18.

RECIDIVISM AMONGST JUVENILE OFFENDERS IN THE KROONSTAD YOUTH CENTRE: IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

L January

Department of Correctional Services

P Rankin

North-West University

(Potchefstroom Campus)

Key words: Recidivism, youth centre, juvenile offender, re-offending, reconviction, re-incarceration

1. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The researcher is employed as a social worker at the Kroonstad Youth Centre where she is responsible to assist in the rehabilitation of convicted juvenile offenders. It is the researcher's experience that many of the juveniles in custody often have to return to prison as re-offenders, or because of parole or correctional supervision conditions that have been broken.

Furthermore some youths comes from dysfunctional families that also provide fertile ground for acts of criminality. Lack of delivery of basic socio-economic needs, such as employment public infrastructure, social recreational infrastructure and poverty, combined with dysfunctional families also provide the basis that put the youth at risk. Dysfunctional families also provide the circumstances for young ex-offenders to relapse to a life of crime.

A complicating factor in the occurrence of re-offending is the fact that the juvenile offender often has to go back to the same community and family circumstances where he was before his incarceration; neutralising all possible positive effects the rehabilitation programmes in the correctional centre may have had on him. A valid concern is that a pattern of re-offending starting at such a relatively youthful age may be the onset of a life-long pattern of crime with all its consequences for a future family (Correctional Services of Canada).

According to Reichel (1994:385) recidivism can be seen as falling back to crime after

methods of deterrence, retribution or correction has been applied. Bedell, Challis, Cilliers, Cole, Corry, Nieuwoudt, Phayane and Zachariades (1998:5) observe that it is difficult to define recidivism because it can be approached from different points of view. The United States Bureau of Justice Assistance of the USA defines recidivism as "...the repetition of criminal or delinquent behaviour." A definition by an unidentified source reads as follows: "new conviction for an offender previously convicted of another crime resulting in a return to a correctional facility or to probation supervision" (Maryland General Assembly, 1998).

The Florida Department of Corrections (2003) defines recidivism as "... the reoccurrence of criminal behaviour by offenders after intervention by the criminal justice system." They elaborate by observing that "...studies of criminal behaviour consistently show that some offenders return to crime after arrests, convictions, punishments, and correctional program participation. Those who work in and study the justice system analyze recidivism to understand why the system sometimes does not prevent or reduce subsequent crime."

After a conceptual analysis of recidivism, Prinsloo (1996: 41) identified four main themes which are generally applied to define and operationalise recidivism:

- An unconditional repetition of criminal conduct
- Unconditional re-incarceration as a result of continuous criminal behaviour and/or bureaucratic considerations which are condition to a previous sentence or release
- Officially established (judicial findings) repetitive criminal behaviour
- Habitual and/or professional criminals.

Prinsloo (1996: 41) then concludes in general terms that a recidivist is "... a person who is convicted of the repetition of criminal behaviour, which, from a social point of view, is of a serious nature, after he/she was previously convicted and subjected to judicial intervention in his/her personal circumstances in order to punish him/her, to make him/her refrain from further criminal conduct and in doing so to prevent further crime."

According to Prinsloo (1996:41) the definition of controversial concepts like recidivism will never go unchallenged. They create a conceptual dilemma for the researcher and an operational one as well. This caution was observed in the formulation of the definition for the purpose of this study. In this study, recidivism means a commission of a crime of a similar or different nature within 36 months after release and recidivists are people who

return to the correctional centre after release. Recidivism and recidivists will further be conceptualised in paragraphs based on the literature study.

Recidivism can thus be viewed as the phenomenon of re-incarceration of a person as the result of repeated criminal behaviour which persists regardless of arrests, punishment and efforts to rehabilitation. The return of young offenders to prison signifies the failure of such young offenders (person) to adjust in the community after release.

In view of the expectation that rehabilitation programmes for youths should succeed in changing their behaviour, it is imperative that the factors associated with recidivism be investigated and that the findings be applied in improved rehabilitation programmes. To this end, the following research questions should be answered:

- What are the social circumstances of the re-offenders detained in this centre?
- What were the circumstances leading to re-arrests of the re-offender at the centre?
- What are the implications of this for social work services in the Kroonstad Youth Centre?

2. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals: The overall goal of this study is to explore the circumstances leading to re-offending of the youth in Kroonstad Youth Centre.

Objectives: The objectives emanating from the above goal are as follows:

To record the circumstances leading to re-offending of selected youths in the Kroonstad Youth Centre.

- To explore the circumstances leading to the re-arrests of youths in the Kroonstad Youth Centre.
- To explore the implications of this for the planning of social work services to the youth in the Kroonstad Youth Centre.

3. CENTRAL THEORETICAL ASSUMPTION

The establishment of the circumstances associated with re-offenders will help to improve the rehabilitation programmes for young offenders.

4. DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY

Physically, the study was limited to the Kroonstad Youth Centre and contextually to the phenomenon of recidivism.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

A phenomenological, qualitative research design (Fouché, 2002:270) was used which was regarded as suitable to achieve the aims of the study. Relatively little is known about the circumstances associated with recidivism under the youth offenders of the Kroonstad Youth Centre and as such, it had to be investigated. The researcher also wanted to establish how the youths experience their present circumstances, making a phenomenological approach the most suitable one.

The goals and objectives of the research required an understanding of the situation surrounding recidivism in the Kroonstad Youth Centre which leads to the decision to do a qualitative study.

5.2 RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Non-probability sampling (Babbie, 2007:183) was used to identify the research participants and it was decided to include male and female youths who made them guilty of re-offending over the last two years immediately preceding the study.

5.3 DISCUSSION FRAMEWORK

Considering the qualitative nature of the study, use was made of focus groups (Greeff, 2005:304) to collect the needed information. A discussion framework was developed as a guideline for the focus group discussions.

5.3.1 Research procedures

- A pilot study (Neuman, 2003:181) was done by having discussions with a group of re-offending youths in an effort to do a preliminary exploration of the research topic, and to identify the relevant issues related to re-offending. The latter was to be used in the discussion framework for the focus group discussions.

- The members of the focus groups were identified by making use of the records of the Youth Centre. A focus group can be particularly useful in designing stage of a program evaluation or needs assessment. In this regard it will assist in finding ways on how to improve social work services in the Kroonstad Youth Centre.
- The group members were prepared for the group discussions and the time and venue was decided upon.
- The group members were reminded of the meetings shortly before they commenced.
- The group discussions were facilitated by the researcher by making use of social group work skills and techniques.
- Notes were taken of the responses of the members and classified and ordered thematically after the group sessions.

5.3.2 Data Analysis

The data obtained during the group sessions were processed after the focus group meetings through classification and systematisation (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit: 2004:127).

5.3.3 Ethical considerations

All ethical considerations (cf. Gilchrist & Schinke, 2001:55) pertaining to the study were observed. The group members were informed about the nature and purpose of the investigation and about their role in the data collection process. It was made clear to them that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw if they wanted to. Confidentiality and anonymity was ensured to the client in order to protect their identity, and the Department of Correctional Services was also strict on keeping the identity of the young offenders confidential. As a result, false identity had to be used to protect the clients' right to confidentiality. The researcher was prepared to render debriefing assistance if it would become necessary but not anyone needed it, for this was observed already. The project was also approved by the Ethics Committee of the Potchefstroom Campus of North-West University (Project Number 06K14)

6. LITERATURE REVIEW

6.1 RECIDIVISM AND THE RECIDIVIST

Recidivism should be understood within the context of the life stage referred to as youth. When looking at crime statistics in South Africa, and the ages of the perpetrators, offending behaviour seem mostly prevalent among older adolescent and young adults of 18 and 25 years of age (Tshiwula, 1998). The interpretation of these statistics indicates that the majority of offenders seemed wedged between the sixth and seventh stages of development which, among other reasons led to incarceration.

The National Youth Policy document defines youth as any persons between the ages of 14 and 35 years. This is a very broad definition of youth. It is a definition with varied categories of youths, who have been exposed to different socio- political and historical experiences. A 35 year old youth lived during a period of heightened political conflicts, when he or she was a learner in school, while a 14 year old youth is growing up in an environment when many of the new reforms and achievements of the struggles are being realized (National Youth Policy 2000). The Department of Correctional Services regards a person between the ages of 14 and 25 years as a youth

Many of these youths form sub-cultures, with no discernable livelihood to turn to, and have resorted to violence and crime for survival. Violence and crime in South Africa has emerged as a major national issue of concern. A number of communities are becoming increasingly criminalized because of the youth gangs proliferating in this country. South Africa is therefore faced with the spectre of a disempowered, anomic youth lumpen - proletariat, which is increasingly beginning to undermine the urban economy and society at large. Many of these youths are alienated by mainstream society and are becoming criminalized (Tshiwula, 2001: 24).

However, irrespective of the age differences the commonality among the 14 to 35 years olds is that they are all perceived as in transition into independent adulthood, such as being employed, taking responsibility for family life, participating in community decision making processes, and owning property. Many young people however, experience being labelled youth for extended periods and many more never graduate into adulthood. The concept

youth remains controversial. It is on the whole a social construction, portraying different meanings to different segments of the population. For some people it portrays a violent undisciplined criminal element in society, for others, it connotes an excluded marginalized segment of the population (Tshiwula, 2001: 26).

In our societies we are brought up with a set of values, norms, traditions and customs. The fact that black children are not allowed to make eye contact with their elders, is an example of these traditions and customs. If this should happen, it is a sign of disrespect, whereas in the white culture, you must keep eye contact, because if you do not, you might have something to hide. In some cultures, children are supposed to be seen but not heard. Hence, in multi-racial schools, this may be a problem.

6.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF RECIDIVISTS

Because of the negative consequences connected with dysfunctional families, the roles of other social institutions and individuals in society become very important. These other social institutions and individuals, like teachers, religious leaders, sports role models, cultural leaders and female leaders are required to supplement the role of parents in shaping the values and life style choices of all children and youth. It is in the context of dysfunctional families that the role of the state, through its various government departments and communities, with all its social institutions takes on a significant importance in the development of a correcting environment for children and the youth (Department of Correctional Services, 2005:35).

Certain characteristics associated with recidivism have been identified in several studies which will be discussed below.

Peersen, Sigurdsson, Gudjonsson and Gretarsson (2004:128) concluded that the basic assumption underlying prediction of offending behaviour is that persistent offenders have similar characteristics such as antisocial personality features, which have different behavioural manifestations at different age levels and that the most serious delinquents become the most serious adult offenders.

They furthermore concluded that the majority of adult offenders have a juvenile criminal record. Thus, for some offenders there is continuity of delinquency into adult criminal behaviour. Peersen *et al.* (2004: 200) also observed that distribution curves of offending consistently show a rise in delinquency from age 10 to a peak between 15 and 18, followed

by a moderate decline after the age of 21. It is suggested that a contemporary maturity gap encourages teens to mimic anti-social behaviour in ways that are normative and adjusting. The majority of juveniles refrain from further offending by the age of 18 – 21.

Grubin and Wingate (1996:349) make the observation that it is often said that the best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour. After studying the results of various studies, they noted that recidivism rates in first offenders range from 10% to 21% compared with rates of 33% to 71% in those with past convictions. This implies that once a person has committed a crime, the higher the chance that the criminal behaviour will be repeated. They observed that a follow-up study (1994: 350) of nearly 13 000 offenders of all types released from prison in England and Wales In 1987, for example, found that men with a history of sex offences were more likely to be convicted of a sex offence over the next four years than those with no history of sexual offending. 7% of released offenders with such a history were responsible for 31% of the subsequent sex offence convictions, which was highly significant finding.

The practical importance of this finding in terms of actual numbers, however, is less impressive than the statistical significance would suggest. Of the 926 men with a history of sex offending, just 61 (7%) were actually convicted of another sex offence, and though only 1% of the remaining sample were convicted of a sex offence, in real terms the latter 136 men represented twice as many future sex offenders.

The relationship between illiteracy and criminal behaviour was established long before the Walnut Street Jail opened in Philadelphia in 1790 and remains as one of the major issues in corrections today. Jenkins (1994:132) found that 85% of the incarcerated population did not graduate from high school, and statistics from the US Dept. of Education indicate that 65% of inmates are illiterate.

Fifteen percent of prison inmates score below 75 on the Wechsler Scale of Adult Intelligence (revised), indicating a substantially higher than average rate of mental retardation; and 70% have no skill or trade education. Recidivism is also disproportionately committed by people from socially excluded backgrounds. According to the Offender Profile Development Manual (Department of Correctional Services, 2004:33) social exclusion is what happens to people as a result of the combination of linked problems such as unemployment, discrimination, poor skills, low income, family background, and other social disadvantages.

According to Du Preez (2000:38) the profile of the recidivist demands different development methods in dealing with recidivism. For correction to be effective, therefore, it must be induced on the basis of knowledge about this uniqueness, particularly the motivators of the recidivating behaviour and the environment that encourages it.

The relationship between age and crime has been the subject of considerable criminological analysis. It has been suggested that "... probably the most important single factor about crime is that it is committed mainly by teenagers and young adults. According to a National Institute for Justice Paper which was done on violent crime by young people,

"age is so fundamental to crime rates that its relationship to the offending is usually designed as the "age of crime" (Reichel, 1994:6).

The curve, which for individual typically peaks in the late teen years, highlights the tendency for crime to be committed during the offender's younger years and to decline as the age advances

Most criminologist concur that there is a direct relationship between age and the propensity to commit crime. Herrnstein (1995), for example, argues that "the typical offender is a young male probably between the age of fifteen and twenty-four." Conviction, offending, re-offending and arrest rates, as well as other information on criminal offenders, show that juveniles throughout the world tend to commit crimes far in excess of their proportion of the general population. That is, in most countries teenagers and young adults are considerably more likely to engage in criminal activities than adults and children.

In 1993, the Institute for Criminology at the University of South Africa (UNISA) analyzed a random sample of criminal records of some 4 800 offenders who were previously convicted and were again convicted again during 1993. Eighteen (18) of the sampled offenders, most were first convicted while they were in the age group between seventeen and nineteen. This was the case for all race groups except for white youths who were the most likely to receive their first conviction aged 20 - 22.

Most of the recidivists in the Kroonstad Correctional Centre come from poor socioeconomic conditions such as poor educational and career training, poor housing, overpopulation, slum or shack dwellings, poverty, unemployment and functionally inadequate families can lead to deficient socialization, poor interpersonal relationships and inadequate internalization of social norms and values, which can contribute to a criminal behaviour pattern (Department

of Correctional Services, 2006).

Naude and Stevens (1988:10) stated that the criminological point of view concentrates on a variety of deviant social conditions associated with crime. Its basic premise is that certain socio-pathological facets of the environment of the offender contribute towards his criminal behavior. The sociological approach focuses in particular on the following factors:

- Functionally inadequate families- in particular with reference to criminality of family members;
- Alcohol and drugs abuse;
- Absence of parents as a results of desertion, divorce or death;
- Inadequate parental control and discipline;
- Family disunity which is characterized by excessive strictness, domination, neglect and over- protection;
- Economic pressure such as a low income and unemployment;
- Family size;
- Cultural or religious differences;
- Child training practices concerning socialization,
- Teaching of moral values and emotional control
- Poverty
- Poor accommodation
- Lack of recreational facilities for young people
- Inadequate educational and career training
- Social inequality
- High mobility and rapid social change

- Learning of antisocial and criminal behaviour as a normal pattern of behaviour

The average prison recidivist:

- Is functionally illiterate;
- Is probably learning disabled;
- Never had a steady job;
- Was a juvenile delinquent;
- Abused substances;
- Came from a dysfunctional home with a history of abuse;
- Has not gone beyond the 10th grade, and
- Has an average IQ one standard deviation below the mean.

The conditions listed above give the profile of people who are or have been seriously disadvantaged and not equipped with the skills to have a healthy or normal psychosocial functioning. They did not have the opportunity or the resources to become empowered to face life's challenges. It may also be assumed that they had negative self-images with the result that they did not have access to their own strengths. An analysis of factors such as poverty, community functioning, family relationship, social interaction, personal orientation, alcohol or other substance abuse and general attitude could thus help determine the risk of recidivism.

Related variables such as institutional adjustments, escape risk and treatment program participation could play a further role in determining whether the inmate is at risk of re-offending soon after release. The bottom line is that it must be a goal to change the behaviour of the offender to such an extent that the particular offender does not become another recidivism statistic (Brentro, Brokenleg & Van Bockern, 1992: 45).

6.3 REHABILITATION OF THE RECIDIVIST

The purpose of this article is not to discuss the total rehabilitation programmes of the young recidivist, but to describe the rehabilitative function of youth prisons in general as the

context of the role of the social worker.

One of the purposes of treatment of inmates during imprisonment should be to prevent recidivism. In a broad sense, measurement of recidivism rates relies heavily on the same system. Although treatment ideology looks beyond the young offender's crime to the whole personality, successes of treatment are mostly measured against the single factor of an absence of reconviction for criminal acts. The main reason for this is that the Youth Centre in Kroonstad does not have the facilities of surveillance to monitor the adjustment of the young person once he has been released (Redding, 2000: 132).

As far as the potential of intervention in the life of an inmate is concerned, the question arises whether it is not advisable that the risk of recidivism should be determined while the prisoner is still serving his or her sentence. By doing so, one can direct the training, development and treatment program to reduce the determined risk of recidivism. In addition, it becomes easier to determine which inmate should be released on parole and which inmate need extra effort to be rehabilitated.

Virtually every inmate will be released back into the community. It is here where the question of recidivism arises, what contribution will the centre have made to the success or failure of the inmates after his or her release.

It is important to manage the young offender's time during the sentence. A very important factor, but unfortunately a neglected one is measuring of the risk of recidivism. An analysis should be made of criminal tendencies and behaviour on release and other projects/programmes. Aspects such as the seriousness of the offence, time between offences and an increase in the seriousness of offences should be considered for this purpose (Tshiwula, 1992: 67).

It is the opinion of the researcher that the young offenders has to be made aware of the harm they have inflicted upon the community and attention needs to be paid to controlling crime and the prevention of recidivism after the intervention by the criminal law system and the meting out of punishment. Programmes focusing on the young offender aimed at rehabilitation and career path for offender will serve as a deterrent.

According to Vacca (2004:297) offenders who attend education programmes while they are incarcerated are less likely to return to prison following their release. Since 1990, literature examining the return rates of offenders, or recidivism, has shown that educated offenders

are less likely to find themselves back in prison a second time if they complete an educational program and are taught skills to successfully read and write. Bedell et al. (1998:7) stress that the design of effective treatment programmes is highly dependent on knowledge of the predictors of recidivism.

The reoccurrence of criminal behaviour manifest in young offenders means that the rehabilitation programmes are inadequate and needs revision or adjustment. It is assumed that certain prevailing family and community circumstances contribute to behaviour causing the juvenile offender to land back in prison, but it is difficult for prison social workers to assist them in dealing with these circumstances because rehabilitation programmers do not extend beyond the prison walls. It is thus important that rehabilitation programmes in correctional facilities be used to the maximum in order to prevent recidivism. Katsiyannis and Archwamety (1997:44 - 45) remark that generally, programmes administered by the juvenile justice bureaucracies have been criticized for being largely ineffective. They further stress that achieving successful rates of rehabilitation requires the investigation of factors which differentiate recidivists from non recidivists. They also observed that identifying the variables which account for recidivism, however, has been an elusive task.

Juveniles are arrested, convicted and sentenced because they have broken the law. Any correctional institution has two main functions regarding custody and rehabilitation. Offenders are placed in custody to protect society against their behaviour and to make the meting out of justice visible to society. Imprisonment also deprives offenders of their freedom and some of their rights and the assumption is that this may force them to contemplate and correct their behaviour that landed them in the correctional institution. In contemporary society rehabilitation of the offender is an accepted and recognized intervention which goal is to influence the offender to change his ways and to lead a better life. In ecosystems language the goal of rehabilitation can be regarded as an effort to improve the goodness-of-fit between the offender and his environment. The expectation is that he will be a better adjusted individual once he is released into society again Katsiyannis and Archwamety (1997:47).

The Department of Correctional Services is responsible for detention, treatment and development of sentenced juveniles (South Africa Yearbook 2002/03). The Department has a youth policy in place which is aimed at service delivery and the correction of young offenders aged between 18 and 25. This is the category of the South African incarcerated population that has been growing rapidly in the first decade of democratic South Africa.

Young offenders fall into a category of people who, even after serving a lengthy sentence, still have the chance to make something of their lives. Provision of rehabilitation/ correction service delivery focusing on human development and education and training for the young offenders is the key to the prevention of recidivism (Department of Correctional Services, 2005: 23).

The core business of Correctional Services is to correct the offending behavior and to put rehabilitation at the centre. Rehabilitation is a process that has to address the specific history of the young offender concerned in order to be successful. It also requires the determination, positive commitment and voluntary participation of the young offender. This serves to reduce repeat offending and the prevention of crime, the aim of need-based rehabilitation is to influence the offender to adopt a positive and appropriate norms and values and live a moral life.

On the rehabilitation of offenders in correctional centres, The United Nations, Rule 66(1) of the Standard Minimum Rule prescribes, "To these ends, all appropriate means shall be used, including religious care in the countries where this is possible, education, vocational guidance and training, social work services, employment, counselling physical development and strengthening of moral character, in accordance with the individual needs of each offender, taking account of his(her) social and criminal history, his(her) physical and mental capacities and aptitudes, his personal temperament, the length of his(or her) sentence and his(or her) prospects after release."

Development can play an important role by influencing the behaviour of recidivists or ameliorating those needs and influences that maintain recidivating behaviour. Development programmes are aimed at treating various problems that interfere with the ability of an offender to function acceptably in society, e.g. many offenders failed to learn appropriate social behavior when they were growing up. As adults, they faced with such basic need as to learn how to get along with people and how to maintain relations in their lives. Many offenders lack educational skills, troubled family background can distort perceptions of the world and create negative feeling towards others. Drugs abuse interferes with motivation and increase exposure to criminal lifestyles.

According to Alleman and Gido (1998: 22) criminality is seen as a by-product of social and personal conditioning. Criminals are described as people who have been unduly exposed to and influenced by adverse social conditions. Once the cause is removed or eliminated, the

consequences (criminal behaviour) will also be eliminated.

There is a lot of inequality in South Africa, a glaring lack of social policies to deal with unemployment, inadequate health care and substandard housing, Currie (1985: 225-226). states, "we must built a society that is less unequal, less depriving, less insecure, less disruptive of family and community ties, less corrosive of cooperative values...we know that many of the conditions that generate criminal violence are capable of alteration, other countries have done so"

Adults and parents can subtly influence not only law-abiding behaviour but also law violating behaviour. It is one thing for adults to bemoan the fact that adolescents are committing all forms of crime, but then again these same adolescents are confronted with endless examples in their daily news of bank fraud, income tax cheating, embezzlement, political corruption, savings and loan scandal, inside trading, property crime and conceivable form of violence against persons. If parents and adults can dabble in criminal activities, why can't adolescents?

Goode (1989:73-74) has noted that there is a generational continuity to drug use. He states: "parents who use legal drugs (alcohol, tobacco and prescription drugs) are more likely to raise children who both drink hard liquor and use illegal drugs than parents who abstain from drugs."

Historically factors like poverty and underdevelopment also plays a part in the criminal behaviour and increasing the rate of recidivism because when they are released, they are being faced with the same situation as before. By viewing criminality in terms of cause and effect development programmes must be planned and designed for each individual offender. Poverty alone does not directly lead to higher crime levels. However, together with a range of other social, political and cultural factors and the social wealth differential contributes to conditions conducive to an increased in crime and growth in criminal syndicates (Whitepaper on Corrections in South Africa 2005).

The youth has always being marginalized in this country. According to Brentro et al. (1992: 45) this combined with the slow growth in the job market, have contributed to the creation of a large pool of young people who are labelled to be "at risk". The absence of positive role models for the young people combined with substance abuse, gender violence and immorality amongst youths have a significant impact on crime amongst our younger

generation.

Research by one correctional service of Canada has shown one effective correctional treatment requires careful match between one need of offenders and programmes to address these specific needs. Programmes aimed at teaching behavioural skills are most effective. Treatment that met offender's needs and the use of behavioural training, the get tough program does have a good success rate. Its reliance primarily on incarceration has not produced reduction on re-offending (Correctional Service of Canada 1998).

The President's Award Programme

The Department of Correctional Services endorsed the program of The President's Award which forms part of the Rehabilitation process. Social workers, educationist and correctional officials were trained to take the mandate of this program forward. In terms of the incarcerated youth, the Award program is run within the Department of Correctional Services structure with the aim to empower youths and thereby play a significant role in their rehabilitation (Zana, 2004: 32).

At present the Award is operational in 32 youth centres and in six of the nine provinces and Kroonstad youth centre is also included. Ideally it is a vision to see all young offenders to be involved in the program so that they find activity in their life again. The President's Award program is a holistic program that aims at promoting the social, psychological, and physical well being of young people in South Africa between the ages of 14 and 25. It is a member of the Duke of Edinburgh Award International Association. In South Africa the former South African president, Mr. Nelson Mandela is the Patron -in- Chief.

In Correctional Services the READY program was introduced under The President's Award Programme and in the community schools Learning for Life was introduced. The READY stands for REINTEGRATION AND DIVERSION FOR YOUTH. The methods and projects to assist young offenders and youths at risk with the process of reintegration once they leave a facility, are important for several reasons. Research has shown how complex and difficult it can be for a young person returning to the same community, same family life and conditions as before they were incarcerated. It is therefore essential that we assist with the reintegration process which was begun while incarcerated once the person return to their community.

The READY program aims are to continue to strive to make a positive difference in order to

increase the quality of life of young people who are amongst our future leaders, to support and positively contribute towards those who work with these young people and furthermore to increase the quality of life for all people in South Africa, where crime and disempowerment are viewed as two of the most problematic areas in our country.

The President Award program aims to develop methods and approaches to enable the reliable and valid assessment and evaluation of recidivism rates and recidivism factors concerning The Presidents Award participants. The mission of the program is through appropriate learning and educational experiences. It further states that it enables young men and women and youth organizations, especially marginalized in our society, to significantly increase their performance capability in order to achieve a culture of industry and a real sense of self-worth. The strategic intent of the program of TPA is for YOUTH

According to Nampala (2005: 36), an educationist at Upington Correctional Centre, the programme develops participants to perform in the areas of sports, skills, adventurous journey, and community service. De Sousa (2005: 76), coordinator for the President Awards Programme, further states that the programme aims to develop qualities including leadership, teamwork, self-worth, initiative, self-discipline, and entrepreneurship in offenders.

According to De Sousa (2005: 77), very few offenders who participated in the programme and have been released since 2000 have returned to prison. He further states that the programme has been instrumental in assisting the Department of Correctional Services to develop a more corrective approach to the incarceration of young offenders.

In an evaluation study conducted by an independent service provider in 2004, it was generally agreed at all levels of management in the Department of Correctional Services as well as by offenders that the programmes has achieved the desired outcomes (De Sousa, 2005:76).

Are You Tough Enough Programme

The reintegration programme Are You Tough Enough is presented at Springbok Correctional Centre. This is a 9 - 12 months programme that challenges offenders to take responsibility for their actions and to holds them accountable for their future and that of their families. The offender enters into a contract with National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration, which details the services, commitment, and the duration of the programme.

The programme consists of three phases. The first phase is assessment and setting challenges. The second phase is about facing the challenges and overcoming them. The last phase of the programme involves staying out as well as tracking. Upon release, the offender is supported for a period of 6 - 9 months depending on the progress made.

The department recognized that young people today have many difficulties to face and opportunities for personal achievements are often limited. Parents, schools, voluntary organizations and employers, with their responsibilities towards young people, also have their problems. This program is intended to help the young and those who are concerned for their welfare.

It is designed to serve as an introduction to worthwhile free time and educational and vocational activities, as a challenge to the individual for personal achievement and as a guide for those who want to help with the development of young people. The program comprises of four components namely Community service, Skills, Sports and Recreation and Expedition and Exploration. Participants can either enrol in Bronze,¹ Silver or Gold programmes, the basic different levels is the length of the time that they participate in each phase and the extent of the challenges that they face. The overall goal of the Young Offender Program is to facilitate the rehabilitation and reintegration of young offenders.

The psychological and existential traumas that a person can experience by way of been condemned to a prison are beyond common perception. In particular, the levels of insecurity developed, can drain a person from normal interaction and participation in his/ her community. Moreover, in the case of underprivileged people, the process of interacting with prison does not alter the socio-economic conditions in which they lived before entering prison, and after leaving prison. In this particular aspect, prison can only worsen the existential and material conditions of an ex-offender who comes from an underprivileged background (Tshwiwula, 2001:54)

Therefore, re-integration has been seen as recognizing the need to provide adequate tools, resources and fundamental support to an ex-offender to re-integrate into the community. It reflects the understanding of the state in general, and of certain sectors of civil society, who do care for the well-being of the ex-offender, and who have understood the need to provide a "network of support."

¹ There are three levels of the President's Award programme, namely; the bronze, silver, and gold awards. The bronze takes six to twelve months to complete. The silver takes twelve to eighteen months to complete, and the gold award about twenty-four months.

The National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration

It was mentioned earlier that rehabilitation of the offender does not extend beyond the prison walls, often leaving the prisoner without support once he has been released. The only NGO specialising in service rendering to released prisoners and their families, is the National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration (NICRO). To do justice to this organisation, it is regarded as necessary to describe some of the programmes of this organisation. NICRO is a non-governmental organization with a purpose to support offenders as they return to society. According to Tshiwula (2001:136) this organization provides a process through which individuals who, through commission of crime, have found themselves at odds with their families and communities are enabled to come back and function as constructive citizens. It has established a bursary fund in the 1990's for offenders who want to continue their studies through distance education (Zana, 2004: 31). Part of the bursary is aimed at supporting the families of those in prison.

Currently, the support that the NICRO is offering in the Northern Cape Province is involvement in the Creative Arts Competitions (consider paragraph 5.7.2.4 for the discussion the creative skills development programme) and other reintegration programmes.

7. PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL WORK SERVICES IN THE KROONSTAD YOUTH CENTRE

Social workers employed in Correctional Centres should continually ask themselves the importance and significance of their work, and how they do it in the best possible way. For various reasons it is not always easy to answer that question. Correctional Centres are in the first place secondary or host settings for the practice of social work. In these setting social work services has an auxiliary role, which means that it is only supporting the goals of the institution, and does not determine its goals. This confronts social workers with the task of making their work meaningful to the institution, especially if the prevailing values of the Correctional Services diverge from that of social work.

Social workers can only function successfully as professional person in a host environment if the people in charge acknowledge its role. In the correctional centre, the role of the social worker is to enhance and promote the rehabilitation of young offenders in the youth centre and contribute towards their optimal social functioning as human beings.

The primary objective for youths to be incarcerated is to understand and interrupt patterns of criminal behaviour. In this regard, social workers provide a range of services, including but not limited to individualized assessments, group work, and family consultation and after care (Sickmund, 2002).

In part, the findings indicate that risk factors differ for male and female offenders and that the provision of aftercare services significantly reduces the risks of recidivism. These studies are important contributions in the profession's commitment to advance intervention knowledge and understanding of the treatment mechanisms associated with long term success (Ryan, Davids, and Yang, 2001: 36).

A relationship should exist between the social work intervention actions and the problem the intervention is to address. This relationship is based on assumptions about the causes of problems (Martin and Kettner, 1996: 113). With regard to the present study, a relationship should exist between treatment activities with family members and the reduction in the likelihood of delinquent behaviour and reduction of recidivism.

The researcher has observed that young offenders who have less family contact are the ones who re-offend. The circumstances of the family does often not allow the family to stay in contact with the offender. In part, family relationships and parenting practices explain the variable levels of control. When an individual's bond with society in general and family specifically is weak the likelihood of delinquency and re-offending can increase. Attachment, commitment, involvement and the beliefs are the primary components of the social bond (Brentro, *et al.*, 1992: 132).

Social workers has a great responsibility of teaching family members to treat the youth with respect, love, give them a sense of belonging, self determination and dignity. If a youth is maltreated there is a greater risk of re-offending than a youth who is not maltreated. It is possible that maltreated young offenders are at an increased risk of re-offending and the lack of family participation in the treatment process explains a significant proportion of this discrepancy.

The present study provides empirical evidence that specific types of family contact reduces the risk of recidivism. These findings are important as the social work profession continues to advocate for the use of best evidence when making decision about the care of clients. Only by systematically investigating the components that comprise effective interventions can social workers advance interventions knowledge and improve the long term outcomes

for young offenders and families.

According to Andrews, Gendreau and Bonta as quoted by Howells and Day (1999:56), the most effective programmes target factors which are both amenable to change and directly related to the offending itself, include: anti-social attitude and feelings, self control and problem solving skills and substance abuse- known as " criminogenic needs." They point out that there has been an increase in the number of rehabilitation programmes for specific offending problems such as sexual offending, violence, and drug alcohol abuse.

Social workers assist the correctional institution to achieve its rehabilitation aims through their intervention activities, which should be aimed at reducing recidivism. Care should be taken that programmes have the qualities to change attitude, behaviour, and affect. Gendreau (1995:76) points out that social learning and cognitive- behavioural approaches are the most commonly used: they rely on modelling, behavioural rehearsal, problem - solving, skill building and cognitive restructuring techniques that explicitly reinforce alternatives to antisocial styles of thinking and acting.

The researcher believes that social worker plays a vital role in the correctional setting, because they possess all the necessary skills for the young offender to identify the need for change. They are trained in important skills in case and group-work and this serves to improve on the treatment techniques, which uniquely qualify them to work with the variety of clients involved in correctional centres.

Handler as quoted by Netherland (1987: 357) stresses the value of certain unique social work skills in the correctional work. Social workers are trained to see clients as part of a total social system and thus emphasize contact with teachers, employers, family members and significant others to identify problems and seek solutions - an ecosystem approach thus.

Emphasis placed on case management (Miley, O'Melia & DuBois, 2004:355) is particularly important in the correctional field, where many disciplines such as teachers, case management official, social workers, spiritual care, medical officer, unit manager and the case officer forms part of the rehabilitation team or presently known as the multi-disciplinary team. Social workers skills in using community resources and making appropriate referrals are also valuable in corrections.

Social workers assist young offender with behavioural change, particularly with the ones

necessary to cope with the daily centre problems like gang violence, sexual and non sexual assault, economic victimization through theft, gambling and protection, psychological and sociological victimization both by inmates and some officials and drug and alcohol abuse.

Social workers can also help young offenders develop learning skills and techniques of problem solving that can be transferred to other areas of life. All young offenders have difficulties in making responsible decisions, and social workers are uniquely qualified to help them look at other alternatives and make better choices that affect their lives.

Rehabilitation can be regarded as a re-socialization process with the aim of improving the behaviour of young offenders in order for them to become productive and law - abiding citizens once they are released from the centre. Several professional and other staff should be involved in rehabilitation programmes, and their efforts should be coordinated to give the kind of outcome expected of correctional services by the outside community.

The function of social workers in Kroonstad is to provide support and linkage. Supportive social work practice is provided in adjunctive fields of mental health, substance abuse, vocational rehabilitation and education. The second function of social work practice in correctional institutions is that of advocacy, brokerage and linkage between incarcerated young offenders and their family ties.

Netherland (1987:357) states that in spite of controversy over the years the role of social work in corrections, and whether the social worker contribute positively to treatment effects, it is generally accepted that social workers can and do play an important role in the rehabilitation or treatment of correctional clients.

According to the researcher, the social worker should have specialized training to work with the juveniles or young offenders and have specialized knowledge of the four spheres they come from. They feel estranged from their family, friends, school and the community or productive work; the seeds of discouragement have been sown in the four worlds of childhood. Young people spend their majority of time between family, friends, school and the community.

The lack of success of the prison, within the logic of Foucault and the dramatic statistics on recidivism, require for the need of a framework that will assist in the process of reintegration. This framework should at least, take into consideration the following factors:

- Psychological considerations, support and therapy for an easier re-integration. This also includes the possibility of provide a "network of support."
- Education and capacity building, in skills that could assist in the process of re-socialization.
- Supervisory and monitoring services provided by the state to assist in the early stage of re-integration.
- Community involvement and participation in the process of re-integration, carefully assisting the person to become a healthy participant in society.
- Formal and informal (although structured) employment so that the person can feel useful in to the society (Sibeko, 1992: 112).

Although the above represent some general principles for successful re-integration, they should be seen as a guideline to provide services and programmes for the young offenders and the ex-young offenders. In addition, it is important to consider that although "safe guards" can be put in place to reduce the risk of recidivism, there is no guarantee that a young ex-offender will not breach the law again. However, the aim should be to bring down, considerably, the dramatic statistics that prevail today thereby improving the lives of the individual young offender and young ex-offender, their families and the community at large.

The Young Offender Program is therefore one aspect of the reintegration process to statistics from the Department of Correctional Services; those that participate in the program have a very low recidivism rate. The program also conforms to many principles which Prendergast (1991, 175) maintains are necessary for a "holistic approach treatment" in the context of intervention programmes for young offenders. These include: social skills training, anger management, relapse prevention and vocational re-education.

The program further aims to improve the social skills of the participants and to help them to manage their anger more constructively, primarily through its emphasis on the team approach. Participants are required to work together as a team in all aspects of the program. This forces the young offender to develop appropriate social skills in order to be able to work effectively with one another. Inevitably one of these social skills is learning how to control one's anger.

The researcher made some observations in this program which attempts to prevent relapse

on the young offender through vocational re-education. This is most evident in the practical skills training the young offender receives. The skills training empowers the participants both physical and emotionally: physically in that they learn new skills which will equip them in practical ways, and emotionally in that the skills give the participants a sense of meaning and purpose to their lives, as well as the confidence in themselves and their abilities. This is a holistic approach which increases the resources available to the young offender.

Rehabilitating the young offender participate is a fundamental motive of the Young Offender Programme. All the components of the program indicate a focus on building the capacity of the participants so that they can create better lives for themselves and it is not an alternative. The program attempts to challenge the young offender's perception of themselves and their capabilities, by equipping them with practical and emotional life-skills, and improving the resources they need to make informed and responsible decisions about their lives. These are characteristics of rehabilitation.

In Correctional Centres social workers work hand in hand with educationists, some programmes interlink into one another such as life-skills and some other skills that are developmental and empowering in nature. During orientation sessions all the disciplines are present to make a presentation to the young offenders.

During rehabilitation programmes young offender go through a skills audit to find out who can read and write and those who can not read and write are enrolled in the education section and they are encouraged and motivated to learn how to read and write. It is evident in Kroonstad Youth Centre that the youths are enrolled in school, N1-N6 Course and some are enrolled with tertiary institutions and this also serves to curb or reduce recidivism because they have gain skills in rehabilitation programmes and also obtained certificates for passing their courses.

Furthermore, the literature shows that in Ohio, while the overall recidivism rate was 40 percent, the recidivism rate for inmates enrolled in the college program was 18 percent. In addition, Ohio statistics show that inmates graduating from the college program reduced the rate of recidivism by 72 percent when compared with inmates not participating in any education program (Batiuk, 1997: 54).

Canadian statistics supported this result by showing that inmates who completed at least two college courses had 50 percent lower recidivism rate than the norm (Duguid, 1995:3). In New York, 26.4 percent of the inmates who earned a college degree returned to prison

compared to 44.6 percent of the inmates who participated in college education programmes, but did not graduate (Clark, 1991: 65).

Ripley (1993: 78) believed that recidivism rates drop when the education programmes are designed to help prisoners with their social skills, artistic development and techniques and strategies to help them deal with their emotions. Ripley further stressed the importance of teaching moral education as well as critical thinking and problem solving skills. The work of Harold Herber and Benjamin Bloom (reference) has fostered the importance of teaching critical thinking and reasoning skills to all learners, especially those that are considered to be at risk.

Gerber and Fritsch (1993: 42) evaluated the outcomes of the adult education programmes in prison. They distinguished among academic, vocational and social education and concluded that prison education programmes lead to a reduction of criminal behaviour, continued education after release from prison and fewer disciplinary problems in the prison setting. In addition, inmates who choose to participate in these programmes have lower recidivism rates than those who do not participate.

In 1994, this educational research project examined more than sixty studies on prison education. The project focused on the relationship between prison education and offender behaviour, the effects of prison control strategies on prison education programmes and the effects of academic and vocational program participation on inmate misconduct and re-incarceration.

Finally, the literature points to some difficulty with the use of recidivism as an outcome measure (Kerka, 1995). The problem include the following: (1) a universal definition is lacking; (2) it is indirect and measures law enforcement activity and not education; and (3) it is too simplistic, similar to using retention as the outcome for success in Adult Basic Education Programmes.

In the researcher's point of view it is evident that the social workers working with young offenders should work in a team with other disciplines to achieve the goals of the rehabilitation process. The social worker should be able to encourage and motivate the youth to participate in all activities present in the centre so that he gains knowledge and skills. This will serve a purpose upon his release in order for him not to return to the centre.

8. THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

8.1 FOCUS GROUP SESSION

Six members were prepared to take part in the research. The researcher confirmed the location of the group session which was held in the social work session on 2006-06-18. She prepared the room by arranging chairs, the tape recorder to tape the conversations during the sessions. She also organized refreshments for the group members. A flipchart and flip board was also arranged to create a supportive climate and enhance group cohesion. The researcher had to evaluate her own feelings and attitude about the group to start with the right attitude. She also had to anticipate obstacles and address them in advance.

It was the researcher's task to create a friendly and an open atmosphere by sitting in the circle with the group members and display a friendly positive attitude' positive body language to enhance acceptance and trust. The researcher had to be sensitive to any nervousness, anxiety and discomfort of members and put them at ease.

The researcher had to explain the objectives of the group session, the goals and the expectations of the group members. The issue of confidentiality, mutual respect and punctuality was brought so that group members can feel free to discuss issues that concern them. It was also vital to give the group members an opportunity to express their goals, dreams, visions after their release and to make a pact with themselves of not to the return to the life of crime.

A discussion framework (Appendix A) was used to conduct the focus group interviews in an orderly fashion.

8.2 PRESENTATION OF EMPIRICAL DATA

The picture painted by the research participants about themselves, their families and the communities they came from was not a very encouraging one. The first question used to get the discussion going was what the contributing factors were to cause the group members to re-offend. They did not distinguish very clearly between factors contributing to their first offence and the re-offence and the researcher got the impression that they did not have the ability to do so. The conclusion drawn was that most of the respondents continued with their criminal activities after their first incarceration and that they could not identify the particular circumstances leading to their re-offences. The overall picture emerging during

the event of the group session was very similar to the conditions related to recidivism described in the literature.

The responses of the group members are given as they were relayed to the researcher and comparisons and categorizations are made afterwards.

The first question asked were what the contributing factors were to re-offending of the youth in Kroonstad Youth Centre

Responses of the participants

Kaelo

Kaelo was arrested for house breaking and theft and spent six months in the centre. While he was on parole he was arrested for the second for common assault which was done under the influence of alcohol. He reported that he comes from a poor background and conditions at home have not improved since his arrest. He reported that he was trying to escape from his problems because his mother is a single parent and she does part time work. They live in a shanty dwelling. He reported that he has no knowledge of his father's whereabouts. He disappeared when he was a toddler. He never had a positive role model for a man because his uncles were being to prison since he was young.

Thuso and Thapelo

The two brothers' have committed the first crime together with other accomplices, they committed housebreaking and theft. They were again arrested for raping a girl. They live with their mother and grandparent's on a farm owned by a farmer. They committed the first crimes because of peer pressure.

Modise, Thabang and Puso

They are life time friends and they have committed numerous crimes together ranging from housebreaking and theft, robbery, car theft, trafficking drugs assault and rape. They have served three different sentences together ranging from 12 months to 10 years. Some of the sentences had not expired and the parole conditions were broken.

Discussion of the responses

The crimes of the offenders varied from what would be called petty crimes to more serious

crimes like robberies, car theft, drug-related offences, common assault and the more serious sexual assault. What is significant are the role alcohol and peer groups played in the offences they committed. Their support groups were negative, influencing them destructively. Several of the types of offences committed were economic in nature and could be associated with poverty and a lack of respect for the rights of others, with nobody to make them aware of their strengths. This could be understood, considering the broken homes they came from where the father figure was absent and the male models were criminals.

The second question asked was what the social conditions were of the re-offenders detained in this centre?

Responses of the participants

The respondents cited the same social conditions which prevailed in their communities.

The communities are living under poor conditions. Some are shack dwellers; unemployment rate is very high, most parents are single parents, and some of the young offenders were raised by grandparents. Some were abandoned by their parents so they had to learn to fend for themselves from an early age, without a positive role model.

In dysfunctional homes lack of communication is ever present. The support system is weak hence they seek out friends who will give them a sense of belonging.

No recreational facilities where young people can learn skills to alleviate boredom are available, therefore, idle minds create havoc.

Respondents complained about a lack of teaching of moral values and emotional control because most of them did not have either mother or father to teach them proper discipline.

Inadequate educational and career training were mentioned by the respondents. Most of the young offender have not even reached grade 10, some are dyslexic, therefore reading and writing are difficult for them and they still refuse to attend school in the centre, the reason being they fear to be laughed at by their peers.

Learning of anti - social and criminal behaviour patterns as normal patterns of behaviour were indicated by respondents and since the circumstances do not change they fend for themselves to survive in the communities.

The communities are riddled with criminal element and gangsters are ever present. Drugs and alcohol are readily available.

Peer pressure is on the rise and in school this is a common phenomenon because peers provide one with a sense of belonging

Discussion of the responses

Apart from referring to the social environments in which they grew up, respondents again reported dysfunctional family life characterized by a lack of communication, being raised by their grandparents and abandoned by their real parents; causing them to fend for themselves from a stage when they were not ready to be young adults. Their membership of peer groups was an effort to seek friends who will provide them with a sense of belonging.

The communities they came from were environments polluted by poverty, bad housing conditions, unemployment, crime, gangsters, anti-social behaviour and easy access to alcohol and drugs. Their communities were furthermore characterized by a lack of recreational and educational resources, depriving them of the very necessary skills to cope in life.

The third question was about the circumstances which lead to re-arrests of the re-offender in the centre.

Responses of the participants

Kaelo

Kaelo stated that since his first arrest he had become negative and distant because he received no support from his family and he had to work in the centre to buy cosmetics for himself. Though he knew the conditions at home he felt forgotten by his family. He craved for family visits like other young offenders but received none. He had decided to commit the second crime out of anger and resentment. He received no love or acceptance and that made him feel like an outsider in his own home. If he requested something he was always given a mountain of excuses.

Thuso and Thapelo

The two brothers were always in the company of their peers and they had low self esteem. They left school in grade 6 and had to assist the family in working on the farms to help to provide for the family. When they visited families in the township, they explored their youthfulness, and started getting involved with alcohol and drugs and that is when they were arrested for the second crime after raping a girl while being under the influence of alcohol and drugs. According to them they had an agreement with the girl but she later reported the matter to the parent who in turn reported the incident to the police. They were arrested, put on trial and received a sentence. They feel remorseful because now everyone labels them as rapists. They have attended programmes and feel that the programmes assisted them to be positive. They apologised to the victim.

Modise, Thabang and Puso

The three friends have been active in crime since the age of thirteen, and believe that it is time to change for the better because they have attended numerous programmes that made them see the light. They stated that they had no fear when they committed the crimes. It was exciting for them because they were always in the company of older criminals and they had learned over the years how to refine the art of crime. They had learned how to open a car with a piece of wire, find the alarm system and disconnect it.

They had stolen cars and cell-phones, rewired them and sell them again to the unsuspecting victims. They attempted many robberies and succeeded in the end. They would hold parties with the money gained and buy expensive clothing material for themselves. They also smoked drugs and abused alcohol. When they did housebreaking they would go for jewellery, money, guns, DVD's, video machines, sound systems, and clothing.

The three friends live life in the fast lane and attracted lots of girls. Hence they ended up assaulting and raping their victims. They stated that they felt like they possessed so much power and felt untouchable. They stated that their lives were doomed because while growing up they had no positive role models and the moral fibre of the community are weak, decaying and also a breathing ground for young people to get attracted to criminal activities.

They craved love, acceptance, support, encouragement and motivation but instead they felt neglected, abandoned, ill treated, had no sense of self or a sense of belonging. No one has time to listen to them; their feelings and pleas are being ignored. They were yearning for approval from parents and affirmation of their feelings but all that their parents did was to go

about their own businesses and ignore the rest.

Discussion of the responses

Only three of the six respondents could identify clearly why they committed their second set of crimes.

Kaelo

Kaelo felt alienated from his family after his first arrest because of a lack of support from his family. He felt rejected because he received no visits from his family while some of the other offenders did. He reported that the lack of love and acceptance made him feel unwelcome in his own home and had committed the second crime out of resentment and anger.

Thuso and Thapelo

Thuso and Thapelo got arrested for the rape of a girl while under the influence of drugs and alcohol. They reported the influence of negative peers in the 'township' which they apparently were not exposed to while living on the farm where they stayed. They seemed to have gone 'astray' when exploring their youthfulness in the company of youths from the township, and landed in trouble because of that.

9. CONCLUSIONS

- Recidivism seems to be caused by a variety of factors ranging from unstable family life to unsavoury community conditions.
- Young offenders are exposed to negative examples at home and in the community and do not enjoy positive role models.
- Young offenders land back in jail in reaction to the home and community circumstances they are exposed to.
- The research participants were unclear about the exact conditions which lead to their re-arrests.
- Negative peer groups have a strong influence on the behaviour of recidivists.

- Once they are released recidivists are exposed to the same circumstances that influenced them at the time of their first offence.
- A lack of support in the community to help the young offender find his feet again once he is released, is a serious shortcoming.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- The focus of social work services delivery should be on quality rather than quantity- this implies a total re-engineering of the strategic objectives and intervention methods of social work service delivery to the young offender in the Kroonstad Youth Centre.
- The social work establishment needs to be more expanded in order to more effectively treat/rehabilitate the young offender. Furthermore the social work policy process needs to be re-visited taking cognizance of current research process and findings, e.g. evaluation of treatment programmes and services.
- Social workers dealing with young offenders need intense training on sexual offence, aggressive offenders and juveniles offenders because their case loads are increasing yearly. Universities have to include that in their curricula when training students. The academic courses offered by universities need to take the specialized nature of the correctional field into account.
- The serious shortage of social workers in an over populated prison environment needs to be addressed.
- Young offenders should be taught the kind of skills necessary to help them survive and cope in the impoverished communities they often come from.
- Social workers can workshop the parents on parenting interventions for the bond to be established. Young offenders are attracted to the society because the society has a lot to offer though in a negative manner in most cases. Attachment, commitment, involvement and beliefs are primary components of the social bond. Parents need to get involved in their children's lives and encourage them to make good sound decisions.
- Therapeutic programmes should be focused on those aspects of behaviour that can be changed.

- Outreach programmes into the community should be launched to find support for young offenders once they are released.

APPENDIX: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION FRAMEWORK

1. What were the contributing factors to re-offending of the youth in Kroonstad Youth Centre
2. What were the social circumstances of the re-offenders detained in this centre?
3. What was the circumstances which lead to re-arrests

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ALLEMAN, T & GIDO, R.L. (Eds.) 1998. The Evolution of the Concepts Correctional Organization: Editorial introduction. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*. 9: 5-11. [Web:] cjp.sagepub.com/cgi/content/refs/9/1/5
- BABBIE, E. 2007. The practice of social research. 11th ed. Australia: Thompson Publishers
- BATIUK, M. The State of Post secondary Correctional Education in Ohio. *Journal of Correctional Education* 48(2), 70-72. (EJ 550286).
- BEDELL, B., CHALLIS, N., CILLIERS, C., COLE, J., CORRY, W., NIEUWOUDT, J., PHAYANE, O. & ZACHARIADES, F. 1998. Exploring recidivism in the South African context. (group project of MA students in Research Psychology) University of South Africa: Pretoria.
- BRENTRO, L. K.; BROKENLEG, M.; VAN BOCKERN, S. 1992 Reclaiming Youth At Risk: Our Hope for the Future. Indiana: National Educational Service
- BURGER, D. 2002. South African Yearbook. Houghton: STE Publishers
- CORRECTIONAL SERVICES OF CANADA. The Life Span of Criminal Behaviour; what do we know. [Web:] http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/pblct/forum/e053/e053b_e.shtml [Date of use: 20/04/06]
- CLARK, D. 1991. Analysis of Return Rates of Inmate College Program Participants. New York State Unpublished Study.
- CURRIE, E. 1985, Confronting Crime. An American Challenge, Pantheon Books, New York.
- DE SOUSA. E. 2005. Horizons: The Presidents Award for Youth Empowerment. Grahamstown.
- DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES see SOUTH AFRICA
- DUIGUIDS, S (1995). Using Recidivism to Evaluate Effectiveness in Prison Education Programs. *Journal of Correctional Education* 46(4), 141-145

DU PREEZ, N.J. 2000. Onderrig en ontwikkeling in gevangenis. M Tech Dissertation, Technikon SA, Florida.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS. 2003. Recidivism report. [Web:] <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/pub/recidivism/2003/intro.html>. Date of use: 24/08/05

FOUCHÉ, C.B. 2002. Qualitative research designs. In De Vos, A.S. (Ed) 2007. Research at grassroots: For the social sciences and human science professions. 2nd edition. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers. 267 – 273

GENDREAU, P. 1995. Rehabilitation of criminal offenders. In: Turner, J.B. (1995) Encyclopedia of Social Work, 19th edition. NASW: New York record 33459-59306

GERBER, J., & FRITSCH, E. J. 1993. Prison education and offender behavior: A review of the scientific literature (Prison Education Research Project: Report 1). Huntsville, TX: Sam Houston State University, Criminal Justice Center. [EDRS No. 369677].

GILCHRIST, D.L. & SCHINKE, P. 2001. Research ethics, In Grinnel, R.M. Social work research and evaluation. 6th ed. United States: Peacock Publishers. 55 – 69.

GREEF, M. 2005. Information collection; interviewing. In De Vos, *et al.* Research at grass roots for the social sciences and human service professions. 3rd. ed. Pretoria; Van Schaik Publishers. 286 – 313.

GRUBIN, D & WINGATE, S. 1996. Sexual Offence Recidivism Prediction versus Understanding. *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health*, 6: 349-359.

HENNING, E., VAN RENSBURG, W. & SMIT, B. 2004. Finding your way in qualitative research. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

HERRNSTEIN, R.J.C. 1995. Theories of criminals.
<http://www.lotsofessays.com/viewpaper/1712235.html>. [web:] Date of use: 22/11/2007

HOWELLS, K. & DAY, A. 1999. The Rehabilitation of Offenders: International Perspectives Applied to Australian Correctional Systems. Australian Institute of Criminology

JENKINS, H.D. 1994. Mandatory Education. *Journal of Correctional Education* 45(1), 26-29.

KATSIYANNIS, A & ARCHWAMETY, T. 1997. Factors Related to Recidivism Among Delinquent Youths in a State Correctional Facility. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*,

6(1):43-55.

KERKA, S. 1995. Prison Literacy Programs. Publisher. (ED383859)

KROONSTAD CORRECTIONAL CENTRE. 2006. Offender profile.

MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY. 1998 LEGISLATIVE HANDBOOK SERIES (GLOSSARY).

mlis.state.md.us/other/Legislative_Handbooks/Volume%20IX/Glossary.htm [Web:] [Date of use: 28 August 2005]

MILEY, K.M., O'MELIA, M., DUBOIS, B. 2004. Generalist social work practice: an empowering approach. Boston: Pearson Education.

NAMPALA, J.K. 2005. In Horizons: The President's Award for Youth Empowerment. Grahamstown

NAUDE, C.M.B. AND STEVENS, R. (eds) 1988. Crime Prevention Strategies. Pretoria: HAUM Educational Publishers.

NETHERLAND, W. 1987. Corrections System: Adult. In Minahan, A (1987) (editor -in- chief) Encyclopaedia of Social Work, 18th edition. Silver Springs: NASW.

NEUMAN, W.L. 2003. Social research methods: qualitative and quantitative approaches. 5th ed. Boston: Mass.

PEERSEN, M, SIGURDSSON, J.F., GUDJONSSON, G.H. & GRETARSSON, S.J. 2004. Predicting re-offending: A Five-year prospective study of Icelandic prison inmates. *Psychology, Crime & Law*, June 2004, Vol. 10(2): 197 -/204.

PRENDERGAST, W.E. 1991. Treating sex offenders in correctional institutions and out-patients clinic – a guide to clinical practice. New York: The Haworth Press.

PRINSLOO, J.H. 1996. An exploration of recidivism in South Africa. *Acta Criminologica*, 9(1): 40-57.

REDDING, R.E. (2000) Characteristics of effective treatments and interventions for juvenile offenders [Juvenile Justice Fact Sheet] Charlottesville, VA: Institute of Law, Psychiatry, &

Public Policy, University of Virginia.

REICHEL, P.L. 1994. *Comparative Criminal Justice Systems: A Topical Approach*. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall.

RIPLEY, P. 1993. *Prison Education Role in Challenging Offending Behaviour*. Mendip Papers MP 047. (ED 379405)

RYAN, J.P., DAVIDS, R., & YANG, H. 2001. Reintegration services and the likelihood of adult imprisonment: A longitudinal study of adjudicated delinquent. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 11 321-337

SICKMUND, M. (2002). *Juvenile offenders in residential placement: 1997-1999 [OJJDP Fact Sheet]*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice.

SOUTH AFRICA. Department of Correctional Services. 2005. *White paper on Corrections*.

SOUTH AFRICA. DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES. 2005. *White paper on Corrections in South Africa*.

SOUTH AFRICA. DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES. 2004. *Offender Profile Development Manual*.

SOUTH AFRICA. DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES. 2006. *Offender Profile*.

SOUTH AFRICAN YOUTH COMMISSION. 2000. *National Youth Policy*.

TSHIWULA, L. 2002. *Developing Citizenship Amongst Urban Youth in Conflict with the Law in Africa*. International Conference, Port Elizabeth, South Africa, June 17-19 2002.

TSHIWULA, L. 2001. *Crime and Delinquency*. Pretoria: Kagiso Publishers.

UNITED NATIONS. *Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of prisoners*. [Web:] www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/h_comp34.htm - 55k. Date of use: 21 October 2007

UNITED STATES BUREAU OF JUSTICE ASSISTANCE. (undated) *Centre for Program Evaluation Glossary*. [Web:] http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/evaluation/glossary/glossary_r.htm [Date of use: 24 August 2005].

UNITED STATES BUREAU OF JUSTICE ASSISTANCE OF THE USA. 1998. *Maryland*

General Assembly,

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA. 1993. Institute for Criminology.

VACCA, J.S. 2004. Educated offenders are less likely to return to prison. *The Journal of Correctional Education*. 55(4):297 - 305.

WHITE PAPER ON CORRECTIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA (2005) Department: Correctional Services: Republic of South Africa

YOUTH POLICY (2005) Department of Correctional Services: Republic of South Africa

ZANA, J. (2004). In Horizons: The President's Award for Youth Empowerment. Grahamstown.