

## **Adult offenders' perceptions of rehabilitation programs in Africa**

Nomazulu Ngozwana

University of South Africa

---

*This article reflects on adult offenders' perceptions of rehabilitation programs in Africa. It also evaluates whether offenders are consulted when planning rehabilitation programs. Adult education principles were used as a lens to understand offenders' perceptions of rehabilitation programs. Using an interpretive paradigm and qualitative approach, individual interviews, observations and focus group meetings were held with offenders and other participants who were chosen through purposive and snowball sampling. Qualitative data analysis was used to generate the themes from the data. The findings revealed that rehabilitation programs are ineffective and imposed on offenders. Furthermore the data revealed that offenders see themselves as hard- labour while participating in rehabilitation programs. This has an implication for offenders' rehabilitation and reintegration into their societies as transformed citizens.*

**Keywords:** rehabilitation programs, adult offenders, reintegration, ownership, participation, motivation

---

## **Introduction**

Prisons all over the world have been going through improvements and transformations, placing rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders at the centre of correctional facilities (Lauferweiler-Dwyer and McAnelly, 1999). Although rehabilitation programs are offered in most African correctional facilities, there is a shortage of offices and staff, lack of motivation and proper training regarding the rehabilitation and reintegration roles to implement for offenders (Bruyns, 2007; Dissel, 2008; Mokoteli, 2005). Research studies on education in general and rehabilitation programs in particular for the inmates in Lesotho are limited, if not lacking, and there seems no apparent policy on offenders' rehabilitation programs (Tsepa, 2014; Setoi, 2012; Mokoteli, 2005). Moreover, what is lacking in the available literature (Tsepa, 2014; Setoi, 2012; Biswalo, 2011; Bruyns, 2007; Mokoteli, 2005) is whether offenders are consulted in decision-making and planning for the rehabilitation programs that aim to improve and address their needs and interests.

A well planned rehabilitation program would look at the holistic educational needs of offenders, including the resources to learn the skills properly and the life skills that can help them change their behaviour upon their release. The question is what should be the content of a rehabilitation program? The purpose of this article is to reflect on an investigation to answer the research questions on how adult offenders perceive their rehabilitation programs in terms of what is provided, whether they are consulted in planning for their rehabilitation programs and their recommendations for more meaningful programs within Lesotho's correctional institutions.

## **The Lesotho Context**

Lesotho is a small, mountainous country completely surrounded by South Africa. It has a population of 2 million, of whom some 40% are classified as ultra-poor (BBC News, 2016). The Kingdom of Lesotho is made up mostly of highlands where many of the villages can be reached only on horseback, by foot or light aircraft. The source of living is subsistence farming. The major export is water to South Africa. The Constitution of Lesotho as the supreme law provides for the adoption of policies that aim to address education for all citizens under Section 28. The Lesotho Vision 2020, the Education Sector Strategic Plan 2005 – 2015 and the Non-Formal Education in Lesotho

Draft Policy Document of the Ministry of Education and Training also serve as policy frameworks for the provision of education in Lesotho. Lesotho's development priorities is inscribed in Lesotho Vision 2020: National vision for Lesotho (Government of Lesotho 2001); which places emphasis on democracy, good governance, political participation, peace and stability, a strong economy, well established technology infrastructure, environmental management and justice for all. The Vision highlights priorities for national development as: relevant and productive education, lifelong learning, vocational, technical and entrepreneurial education, and food security. However, it is worth mentioning that education in Lesotho is not enforceable by law, meaning that it is not compulsory as citizens including offenders may or may not choose to register and further their studies.

In the first section of this article I review the literature to gain an understanding of rehabilitation programs provided in African countries. Secondly, I provide an outline of adult education principles of learners' centredness and ownership, participation in learning and motivation as a theoretical lens to analyse the data regarding how offenders perceive rehabilitation programs. Thirdly, I present the research design and methodology before the findings section. Finally, I discuss the findings and the concluding comments. The next section discusses rehabilitation programs.

## **Rehabilitation programs**

Rehabilitation aims to be the key function of correctional facilities in African countries, especially in handling offenders (Dissel, 2008). Various approaches are identified in offender rehabilitation (McNeil, 2012) for example psychological, judicial, moral and social rehabilitation. This article, however, argues from an inclusive general meaning that focuses on rehabilitation as any deliberate intervention that facilitates transformation of attitudes, personalities and mentality of offenders regarding acts of law-breaking (Dissel, 2008).

The Kampala Declaration on Prison Conditions in Africa (1996) concurs that rehabilitation facilitates social reintegration through allowing offenders access to education and skills training, which equips them for employment opportunities. Dissel (2008), however, indicates that in Central African Republic, Tanzania and Zimbabwe to mention a few, rehabilitation offices have a shortage of staff while the few available staff members lack proper training regarding the rehabilitation and

reintegration roles to implement for offenders, thus failing to create a conducive environment for rehabilitation.

Nevertheless, Kusada and Gxubane (2014) assert that rehabilitation of offenders encompass various issues such as educational programs, vocational skills training, recreational activities and psychosocial services. It appears that offenders' rehabilitation tends to equip them with vocational skills and educational programs, thus improving their social relationships with their significant others, including facilitating for their socially responsible character.

The Ouagadougou Declaration and Plan of Action on Accelerating Prisons and Penal Reforms in Africa (2002) and the United Nations (UN) Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (1977) commends the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders into their societies by encouraging their social development while still under prison custody. The Plan of Action further recommends that the programs should incorporate the awaiting trial and convicted offenders alike. While some bodies may hold that rehabilitation programs be provided to offenders who are already serving their sentences, the Plan of Action seems to be proactive by advocating the inclusion of awaiting trials in all the programs, seemingly the latter may unintentionally spend many years in prison custody.

In the context of Swaziland, the department of Adult Education at the University of Swaziland in consultation with the prison service, conducted a needs assessment between 1997 and 2009. This was done before developing the educational programs to ensure that the felt needs of the inmates were included and addressed by the educational programs offered, followed by monitoring exercises (Biswalo, 2011; Bruyns, 2007). Biswalo (2011) states that a needs assessment was conducted with the inmates through individual interviews and group discussions. Thereafter, prioritisation of needs took place based on the capability and the potential of the inmates to acquire and secure resources for conducting the programs that could develop into viable businesses after their release from prison (Biswalo, 2011). It shows that in Swaziland the officials work with offenders (Roberst and Stacer, 2016) not on them in order to address their needs.

Additionally, Biswalo (2011) and Bruyns (2007) found that offenders were provided with vocational, agricultural and generic work that included training on HIV/AIDS, day care, substance abuse and

anger management. Again the authors found that the trades and skills obtained from vocational training by Swaziland offenders were credited and certificated in order to obtain a qualification. Additionally the authors indicated that all offenders attended the church, but few inmates enrolled for Adult Basic Education & Training (ABET) educational programs, while the juveniles engaged in school education (Biswalo, 2011; Bruyns, 2007).

Nonetheless, Bruyns (2007) found that rehabilitation programs were not provided in a specialised and integrated manner, affirming that more attention was focused on spiritual care and the provision of employment opportunities, which aimed to prevent offenders from idleness. It can be noted that in some instances, educational programs are meant to keep offenders busy from boredom. However, a major problem with this kind of rehabilitation is that it is not compulsory, therefore, adult offenders may or may not attend the programs. On the other hand, some offenders may simply attend the rehabilitation programs just to impress the correctional officials who may, in return, facilitate for offenders parole, which can shorten their served sentences. In addition, Bruyns stated that very little was done to enhance offenders' educational and vocational skills. On the other hand, it can be argued that Swaziland inmates' contributions to the planning of their rehabilitation programs enhances their ownership to the latter, which also address and meet their learning needs (Biswalo, 2011). This is different from what happens within Lesotho's correctional facilities.

In Lesotho, the Ministry of Justice and Correctional Services offers education and training to the inmates as mechanisms to rehabilitate and reintegrate them with their communities (Setoi, 2012). These education programs are provided as formal literacy classes; basic and continuing education classes that are meant to assist the inmates to acquire qualifications for job opportunities in various correctional facilities. Ngozwana (2016), Setoi (2012) and Tsepa (2014) state that the inmates are further provided with skills training such as carpentry and joinery, stone cutting, building, welding, leatherwork, electrical installation, plumbing, plastering and brick making, upholstery and sewing. The juvenile centre in Maseru provides formal schooling for youth between the ages of 14 and 18 and skills training in building, carpentry, handicrafts, tailoring, horticulture and poultry (Ngozwana, 2016; Tsepa, 2014; Setoi, 2012). These authors indicate that female inmates are trained in skills like sewing, grass weaving, crochet, cookery, recycling of

tins, plastic and paper, hairdressing, housework and poultry. However, it is not stated whether the inmates are involved in planning their educational and rehabilitation programs in order to address their needs and interests.

Similarly Mokoteli (2005), in her study that was conducted in the Lesotho Correctional Services with juveniles at the Juvenile Training Centre (JTC), found that there was shortage of staff in the rehabilitation section, especially qualified social workers, therefore sociologists were employed. Additionally, Mokoteli found that few rehabilitation staff members had opportunities for in-service training, while the security officers were placed in the rehabilitation section to perform the work there (Mokoteli, 2005). From the literature, it can be concluded that rehabilitation in Lesotho is not done like in Swaziland where inmates are involved in program planning.

In South Africa, Mkosi (2013) found that managing a full-time school within the correctional facilities was challenging because education is not respected and not prioritised by correctional facilities management. More focus is on security with activities of lockdowns, head count and handing over all hindering the school learning process (Jules-Macquet, 2014; Mkosi, 2013). Nonetheless correctional education has been suggested as an empowerment tool for rehabilitating and reintegrating offenders into their communities as reformed members of society (Quan-Baffour and Zawada, 2012).

In Zimbabwe, Kusada and Gxubane (2014) found that male offenders participate mostly in agricultural and vocational skills training more than other components of rehabilitation programs. The authors revealed that Zimbabwean inmates are provided with psychosocial therapeutic programs that aim at transforming inmates' behaviours generally. Other programs offered were stated as recreational, vocational, educational and spiritual in nature. However, it is not shown whether these rehabilitation programs are addressing offenders' needs or not, or assisting in their behaviour change.

Research in correctional facilities has tended to focus on rehabilitation, looking at its different components rather than stating how it addresses the needs and interests of offenders. Little is known about whether offenders have a say in what they want to do and learn, which can change their lives, particularly in the context of Lesotho where there is a lack of formalised policy regarding how rehabilitation programs for offenders are provided.

## **Conceptual Framework**

Learner centredness and ownership in learning, participation and motivation to learn are important aspects in adult education. These principles serve as a theoretical lens in which to understand the data regarding offenders' perceptions of being consulted in planning for the rehabilitation programs that aim at addressing their needs and interests in life.

### ***Adult learners' centeredness and ownership in learning***

As adult offenders need to exercise ownership over their learning needs, it is important to involve them when planning for programs that aim at improving their lives as well as allowing for identification of their learning needs (Huang, 2002; Cervero and Wilson, 1999). This concurs with the theory of andragogy by Knowles, particularly where the conditions of learning states that adults need to be involved in planning and evaluating their instruction (Knowles, 1980). The conditions further indicate that adult learners' instruction should be problem-centred rather than content oriented. This is due to their orientation to learning that is for immediate application of knowledge and skills (Knowles, 1980) instead of banking knowledge for future use (Freire, 1993).

In the context of community development, people should understand that they have a need, and do something about their need, in order to own the action (Swanepoel and De Beer, 2011). This suggests that adult offenders may need to have the decision -making power over what they own, while the other role-players can support and assist them in carrying out their responsibilities. Similarly, in rehabilitation programs, people who teach the inmates may only have to facilitate the learning process while the inmates take full responsibility for learning the content that suits and addresses their needs. This is because adult learners participate in various activities for several reasons and purposes, and therefore need to be at the centre of developing activities and programs that address their needs and interests for their success (Huang, 2002).

Huang (2002) states that adult learners know what they want to learn, hence they need to exercise ownership of their learning needs by setting their objectives and evaluating their learning progress. It can be argued that recognising and using adults' past experiences can enable them to choose programs and activities that are of interest, depending on what

they already know, which may improve their learning outcomes and change their behaviour. The next section focuses on participation by learners in a learning situation.

### ***Adult learners' participation in learning***

Adults engage in learning what is of interest to them for a certain reason, hence they voluntarily participate in a learning process. This is seen in Knowles' principle of readiness to learn where adult learners need to know why they need to learn something (Knowles, 1980). Similarly, Freire's theory of critical pedagogy advocates for liberating education based on dialogue between educators and learners, meaning that offenders as adult learners need to become active and creative in their learning and do away with any forms of oppression. However, adult offenders' participation in learning is often a peripheral thing that happens, particularly under the bureaucratic situation within which their learning takes place. Participation of adults in any activity affecting their needs and interests is their democratic right (Swanepoel and De Beer, 2011). This means that the methods and approaches suitable for adult learners need collective participatory decision-making at all costs. Moreover, participation increases sustainability of any program that is meant to improve the future lives of adults. Participation, therefore, involves collaboration, consultation and information sharing (Swanepoel and De Beer, 2011). Likewise, Finn (2011) postulates that most adults participate in adult education programs for reasons such as career advancement and job related opportunities. Therefore it is critical to involve offenders in planning the rehabilitation programs that can crucially meet and address their participation needs and interests.

The lack of participation, as well as centralised decision-making in any program, creates irregular, unpredictable efforts with little or no accountability, to the disadvantage of those who need help (Swanepoel and De Beer, 2011). Moreover, the importance of participation, learning and ownership have to be planned thoughtfully, and appropriate to the needs and interests of those affected by the program to be put in place (Ibid). In the same vein, adult offenders should be engaged in planning their learning programs because of the conditions that are clear and understood by them because they know how best to change their situation. Thus, the extent to which adult inmates in Lesotho, as learners, are consulted in activities that involve them is not known. The issue of adult inmates' consultation regarding their participation in learning is likely to enhance their motivation to learn.



### ***Adult learners' motivation to learn***

One of the principles in Knowles' theory of andragogy that best describes how adults learn is their motivation to learn (Knowles, 1980), which is internal. Adult learners have different motivations for them to develop a drive to learn what is needed for their survival and success in life (Huang, 2002). Often adult learners have a view of practising what they learn when they participate in any educational program of their choice, which shows their successful experience. This means that adult learners are motivated to learn only what is of interest to them, and which they can quickly benefit from, rather than waiting for future results. Adult learners are differently motivated by their individual characters, the perceived value of the learning task and how much experience the adult learner has with the topic or content to be studied (Rogers, 2009).

Since adult learners have different reasons and purposes for learning, it is therefore salient to teach the content that is relevant and central to their needs. This will serve as motivation for their participation in educational programs (Merriam and Brockett, 2007; Finn, 2011; Rogers, 2009), and educators not only have to pay attention to the needs of the learners, but also have to incorporate their experiences into learning. Similarly, adult learners possess a self-directedness approach in pursuing their learning needs and ways of achieving those needs for immediate application (Finn, 2011, Knowles, 1980). Educators of adult learners have to critically recognise and use the experiences possessed by individual inmate learners so as to enhance their motivation to learn. The aim of the investigation is to assess the perceptions of adult offenders on rehabilitation programs and to evaluate whether they are involved in planning these programs that are meant to turn their lives around. The next section discusses the research design and methodology.

### ***Research design and methodology***

An interpretive paradigm using a qualitative approach was followed (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2009) to gain insights into the subjective beliefs and perspectives of the participants. The phenomenon is understood through the perspectives of people who actually live it and make sense of it – those who construct its meaning and interpret it personally (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006; Patton, 2002).

Correctional facilities are highly security-controlled environment, therefore the researcher communicated the research needs to the

management of correctional centres. The latter were requested to select correctional officials who are directly involved in the educational programs of the inmates, then they were approached to ask for their informed consent about whether they wished to participate in the study or not. For this reason, purposive and convenient sampling methods were used to select males, females and youths who participated in educational programs with the help of the correctional officials who served as liaisons officers.

A purposive and snowball sampling was used to select participants from correctional service institutions in Leribe, Botha-Bothe and Maseru Districts (Cohen *et al*, 2009), who participated in semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGD). Fourteen individual interviews were conducted with convicted male offenders in the two centres in Leribe and Botha-Bothe districts. Three focus group discussions were held, comprising eight convicted male offenders at Maseru Central Correctional Institution, six females from Female Correctional Institution and eight youths from the Juvenile Training Centre, making a total of twenty-two. Focus group discussions were preferred because they served as a confirmation technique, which increases the validity and credibility of the data. Three male ex-offenders who had served their sentences at either Maseru, Berea or Botha-Bothe districts also participated in the study through similar individual interviews. Their insights added value to the study because where information was withheld by offenders and officials, the ex-offenders' released status allowed them to participate freely without hindrance or fear of intimidation.

I adhered to the necessary ethical measures - willingness to participate in the investigation and informed consent. Ethical considerations were carefully attended to: informed consent, confidentiality, obtaining the necessary permission, privacy, anonymity and encouraging participants to speak freely without fear of repercussions (Cohen *et al*, 2009). The risk category was low because this research involved human participants directly and the study only caused inconvenience on their side. The research participants were adults who were based in their daily working environment. The other group were low risk security adult inmates who were already in custody in the correctional institutions. Moreover an ethical clearance certificate was issued by the university's ethical committee.

Triangulation by means of focus group discussions, individual

interviews and observations were used to validate the data (Louis *et al.*, 2009). Further interviews for triangulation were held with Lesotho Correctional Service (LCS) officials in the five centres with three LCS officials in Leribe; three in Botha-Bothe and eight LCS officials in Maseru correctional centres, thus making fourteen LCS officers in total. Additionally, convenient and purposive samplings were used to identify twelve service providers (stakeholders) who were interviewed for this study. The entire sample for the study was 65 participants, as reflected in Table 1 below.

***Analysis of the data***

Qualitative data analysis was used to code and analyse data collected through individual interviews and focus group discussions by offenders, correctional officials, service providers and ex-offenders. Additionally, thematic analysis was used to generate the emerging themes, patterns, concepts and insights (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006; Patton, 2002). The process required several readings, initially looking for response patterns which then emerged as themes that were generated from the data. Then supporting quotations were chosen that showed the responses of different participants.

***Table 1: Participants' information***

<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Leribe</b>	<b>Botha-Bothe</b>	<b>Maseru Males</b>	<b>Female Institution</b>	<b>Juvenile Training</b>
<b>Interviews</b>	6	8	0	0	0
<b>FGD</b>	0	0	8	6	8
<b>LCS officials</b>	3	3	4	2	2
<b>Ex-offenders</b>	1	1	1	0	0
<b>Stakeholders</b>	2	2	3	2	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>13</b>

**Findings**

The findings are presented according to the research questions asked and with the inductively derived themes that emanated from the data, showing responses from the adult offenders. Where necessary, adult

offenders' perceptions are validated by responses from LCS officials, stakeholders and the ex-offenders.

### **Question one: What rehabilitation programs are taking place in the correctional facilities?**

Offenders indicated their engagement in rehabilitation programs that are vocational, agricultural, educational, recreational, life skills and spiritual in nature.

#### ***Vocational activities***

The offenders reported that they are involved in programs that are vocational in nature. Female offenders reported that they do not have formal school but are rather engaged in several vocational skills training. For instance, almost all female offenders reported that they participate in non-formal activities such as hair dressing, tailoring (where they sew female uniforms and other private clothes), beauty and manicure, decorating (make decoration materials), cooking and hospitality. The females showed that they are taught everything from the beginning.

On the same note, two male offenders stated that there are those who do woodwork, bricklaying and farming. They are not taught how to perform the activities, but instead do that as part of their daily work. On observation, offenders were seen engaged in woodwork, welding, building, tailoring, plumbing, wiring and papier mâché. Additionally children reported being engaged in activities such as drawing, arts, beads works (making beads), building, gardening, hygiene and cooking.

One ex-offender added:

I was interested in steel work but then that was not safe for my eyes as there were no proper safe equipment. People who did steel works encountered problems with their eyes because there was lack of protective clothing (Ex-offender, Maseru).

The data indicates that the correctional facilities are providing vocational training for offenders in the male, female and juvenile training correctional facilities. This is demonstrated by various vocational projects that offenders seemed to be involved in. However, issues regarding their consultation to engage on these vocational skills training were not particularly prominent in the interview data. Instead some interviewees argued that they were not taught the skills while others indicated that they perform these vocational activities as part of their daily routine work that is assigned to them. These results

suggest that adults are not involved in the planning and evaluation of their rehabilitation programs (Knowles, 1980) hence, their divergent responses where others perceive their participation in rehabilitation programs as equivalent to the daily work assigned to them by the officials. Turning now to agricultural activities that were mentioned.

### ***Agricultural activities***

Male offenders stated that they carry out activities that are agriculturally oriented in nature. These include landscaping, gardening where they plough the land for growing vegetables, looking after animals such as cattle, poultry and piggery projects.

I am involved in landscaping and making lawns. I do this to avoid an idling mind. Otherwise, I am not interested in all other activities because what I like is not provided in this facility (A male offender, Maseru).

Another male offender remarked:

We are engaged in gardening where we grow vegetables for eating, and we feed animals like pigs while a few look after cattle.

Additionally:

Here, we are engage in growing vegetables in the garden, which oftentimes is regarded as teaching us agriculture or farming (Male offender, Maseru).

An LCS official concurred:

Offenders do piggery and poultry for the centre, and these projects do not have any educational value in them. They [offenders] perform these activities as part of their duties assigned to them while serving their sentences.

Female offenders reported that they engage in gardening in their spare time. The data reveal that offenders are engaged in growing vegetables for consumption, including keeping the animals. It is assumed that the latter may be used for their nutrition as well. In addition, it seems as if the correctional facilities use offenders to embark on different activities as part of their work while serving their sentences. Although adult offenders were involved in various agricultural activities, they are nevertheless not involved in planning for such activities. This has been validated by a quotation made by an LCS official, which revealed

that the “projects do not have any educational value.” Interestingly, offenders’ confusion about rehabilitation programs and work assigned to them while serving their sentences was observed. This implies that consultation with adult offenders is a necessity but not actually happening. The significance of consultation would ensure that good rehabilitation programs are implemented, which will address offenders’ needs and facilitate for reintegration into their societies. The section on educational programs is discussed below.

### ***Educational activities***

In spite of the fact that illiteracy is a big challenge for most offenders in the sub-Saharan region (Ngozwana, 2016; Setoi, 2012; Biswalo, 2011; Dissel, 2008) it is not a high priority in the prisons in Lesotho. Very few inmates indicated that they learn how to write, read and compute numbers. This may be due to a lack of motivation as one LCS educator indicated that they provide formal education from Grade 1 up to Grade 7 for interested offenders. However, the LCS educator revealed that the writing of examinations is done within the Juvenile Training Centre (JTC). It became apparent that some adult offenders had no prior schooling at all before their incarceration into correctional custody. They were then placed into basic literacy to learn how to read and write. Therefore JTC is an officially registered formal school within the Ministry of Education and Training, where very few adult offenders who have enrolled for basic formal education are made to join the juveniles during the writing of examinations.

Though, information that was provided by the three ex-offenders counters the claim of provision of educational programs. One of the ex-offenders stated that offenders were educating themselves on many issues except education related information which, he stated, was not taken seriously by the correctional management. Seemingly, adult offenders were engaged in other educational activities that were beyond the scope of this investigations. It was interesting to note that their perception was that correctional management does not take offenders’ education into serious consideration. There could be many reasons for such perceptions. However, this implies that very few adult offenders would participate in educational programs that are meant to address their needs and change their lives, if they view management as having a negative attitude towards their rehabilitation programs. The implication is that there is a likelihood that if offenders are released back to their societies with lack of skills and knowledge to empower them for

employment, chances are high that they might fall into criminality behaviour and re-offending. It was reported that the awaiting trial offenders are not engaged in any educational activities in the facilities, including the ongoing educational programs.

Two male offenders stated that educational programs offered to them were just like *kinder* [children's crèche] because there are limited resources and they are only taught how to read and write. The two female offenders pointed out that there are no educational programs taking place in the facility for females. For the children at JTC, attending school is mandatory. However, the JTC educator stated that the school has shortages of qualified teachers, inadequate materials and that it seems as if the LCS organisation had no clear budget and policy for education as it is faced with overwhelming challenges.

It can be argued that some offenders commit crimes because they lack the skills and knowledge that can facilitate their employment opportunities. The UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (1977) stipulates that further education of all prisoners shall be provided and that education of illiterates and young prisoners shall be compulsory and special attention should be paid to it by the administration. The researcher believes that if functional literacy skills can be provided to adult offenders in all the correctional facilities in Lesotho that can curb the scourge of criminality and re-offending, which result from high unemployment rate in the country.

The awaiting trial offenders are not exposed to any kind of educational programs for the time they spend in custody. This is a concern because some awaiting trial offenders may happen to stay in custody for several years without being tried; hence they are idle and get bored with no activities to embark on. Furthermore, offenders commit crimes if they are idle, thus education can empower all offenders regardless of their status of being awaiting trials or convicted.

### ***Recreational activities***

Some of the offenders revealed that they engage in recreational activities while others mentioned the spiritual aspect. A female offender noted, "We engage in *litolobonya* [traditional dance] for recreational activities." Children, both boys and girls, stated that they play netball, football, and basketball, watch TV, and play snooker. Moreover, an LCS educator reported that Sesotho media occasionally provide educational

programs for children to watch on TV. Male offenders indicated that they played soccer, which is the only sport activity for them.

The data reveal that there are recreational activities that are provided for offenders, albeit very few. It would seem that children have more recreational activities than adult offenders. Recreational activities are important to relieve the stress and tension of being in the correctional facilities, therefore a lot more are needed for offenders. These activities can even unleash the offenders' potential and talent.

### ***Spiritual activities***

On spiritual matters an ex-offender noted:

Religion was provided at the discretion of LCS officers. Some LCS officers were active in religious matters and therefore, that was provided to a certain extent. However, it was bias because only Christianity was allowed while other faiths like Islam and others were not allowed.

Female offenders and children at JTC confirmed that a chaplain usually comes every Sunday. This was the same for male offenders who articulated that a church service was allowed once a week.

It seems that offenders' spiritual needs are met as they attend the church services, however other activities such as participating in church choirs, bible studies or spiritual counselling were not mentioned. The ex-offenders specified that the provision for religion was biased and based on the interest of LCS officials who were on duty.

### ***Life skills***

Offenders mentioned that they are equipped with knowledge about HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis (TB) and cancer, among others. These skills are provided by various stakeholders such as NGOs, LCS officials and other civil society groups.

We sometimes receive information about TB and HIV/AIDS by other people from outside such as health personnel and NGOs (Female offender, Maseru).

Additionally, one LCS official confirmed this, reporting that information such as health talks about TB, HIV/AIDS, cancer is provided in different correctional centres at least once in a quarter for the remote-based centres; and monthly for centres that are based in the urban



periphery. LCS is making a positive effort to enable offenders to receive information about HIV, which is a pandemic in most African countries.

### **Question two: How were offenders consulted in planning their rehabilitation programs?**

Two themes emerged from the second research question, namely imposition of rehabilitation activities, and labour provision.

#### ***Imposition of rehabilitation activities***

In terms of whether offenders were consulted in planning their programs, one convicted male offender lamented, "Rehabilitation work is imposed on us regardless of whether you want to perform it or not." Another convicted offender interjected, "We do not choose for ourselves. Our opinions are not heard by the LCS officials." Still another male offender noted, "We just do the rehabilitative work so that we avoid idling or being punished." These views indicate that rehabilitation activities are imposed upon offenders who have to perform the expected activities. It is interesting to note that offenders were not consulted when the programs were planned that were meant to change their lives. It can be argued that their needs and interests were not addressed. One possible implication is that if offenders were allowed to have a say in the programs offered, there is the likelihood that their needs and interests would be addressed, thus changing their lives for the better.

#### ***Labour provision***

In the same manner most offenders reported that non-formal rehabilitation activities such as building and gardening, form part of their labour work instead of being labelled as educational programs. The lack of educational programs in the Botha-Bothe facility was supported by two ex-offenders and another LCS official. In fact one rehabilitation officer commented that the office of rehabilitation is unstructured and lacked resources to perform effectively, while some of the rehabilitation programs are not linked to parole conditions. It was again reported that rehabilitation programs are not a priority in that facility. Another LCS officer indicated that sports activities for offenders happen on a very small scale. He added that offenders look after pigs and poultry for the centre, and that these projects do not have any educational value for the inmates.

All the male offenders in Maseru central correctional institution complained that the rehabilitation section was ineffective. They

expressed their concern that the rehabilitation officers were humiliating them as they were asked about the crimes that they had committed and how they felt when committing such crimes. They indicated that there is lack of professionalism on how they are handled and that they are not interested in attending rehabilitation sessions at all. The situation seemed different for children because it was mentioned that counselling is provided as pre-release services to children, before they are released to their families.

From the above concerns by offenders in different centres it seems that offenders' needs and interests are not well incorporated into the existing rehabilitation and correctional education programs. Instead, the opposite seems to be happening where offenders are treated as free hard-labour for activities that are performed in different ministries. Nevertheless, the stakeholder observations bear a close resemblance to much of the above interpretations by offenders.

The lack of activities was confirmed by another stakeholder member in Leribe District who remarked that offenders do manual work for other ministries, and that is taken as educational activities, which are non-existent. "There are no manual or vocational activities that the offenders are engaged at", remarked a stakeholder member. It seems that offenders are confused between what constitutes labour and what is labelled as educational programs.

### **Question three: What recommendations can be made that can improve the existing programs?**

The following recommendations were made by the participants of the study based on their experiences: more empowering educational activities, certificated programs, and more recreational programs are needed.

#### ***More empowering educational programs***

Recommendations were made that more projects should be put in place and should be provided in a way that is empowering.

I think more projects are needed because we are many in here. Even then, educators or instructors should teach or impart their knowledge in such a way that each one of us can be able to do the activities on our own (Male offender, Leribe).

We recommend that LCS give offenders the start-up capital when

they are released, so as to empower us (Male offender, Botha-Bothe).

The programs that we do should be taken seriously and be formalised like other educational programs, be allocated enough materials and resources to [enable us to] perform the skill better (Female in Maseru).

The data show that offenders recommend the increase of projects in the correctional facilities. Moreover, some offenders want more empowering projects for them while others requested the capital to start and implement their own small scale businesses upon release.

### ***Certificated programs***

Most offenders, particularly females, asked for accredited and certificated programs.

We would recommend that LCS should issue us with certificates for the vocational skills that we have acquired, so that we can search for jobs when we are released (Female offender, Maseru).

If LCS can consider the vocational trades that we perform here to be important and make them official by arranging for their certification, we would be very thankful (Male offender, Maseru).

It was revealed that the work done by offenders is not accredited therefore certificates are not issued.

### ***More recreational programs***

A few offenders proposed more recreational activities.

We need support for sporting items like jersey and the soccer balls (Male offender, Maseru).

We would like to visit other schools for tournaments including arts and cultural competitions. But we would prefer the high school learners rather than primary schools because we are old and big to be paired with primary schools (Boys at the Juvenile Training Centre).

The data suggest that offenders are keen to have additional forms of recreational activities such as tournaments and competitions with other school going children. It seems that boys at the JTC are ashamed to be paired with primary level children because they are older in age and

appearance than other children from public schools. Therefore they would prefer to be paired with high school children.

## **Discussion and conclusion**

The findings reveal that various rehabilitation programs are taking place within the Lesotho correctional service facilities. The offenders were found to be engaged in the following activities: vocational, agricultural, educational, recreational, spiritual and life skills. These findings support literature by Kusada and Gxubane (2014), Mkosi (2013), Setoi (2012), Biswalo (2011), Bruyns (2007), and Mokoteli (2005) who found that rehabilitation components that are offered to offenders in countries like Swaziland, South Africa, Lesotho and Zimbabwe involve vocational, agricultural, recreational, life skills and spiritual activities.

Similarly, the data established that offenders' needs and interests are not being met; instead the rehabilitation activities are imposed upon them. This counters Knowles' principles of adult learning (Knowles, 1980) and what Swanepoel and De Beer (2011) and Huang (2002) advocate in terms of adult learners' centredness and ownership of the activities they are engaged in. It can be seen that learner-centred practice is not happening with adult offenders who are engaged in rehabilitation activities that are meant to change their lives. Moreover the data reveals that offenders regard their participation in non-formal activities as the provision of free labour, which does not comprise any education element therein. Apparently the data disputes what Finn (2011) and Knowles (1980) proposes in terms of engaging adult inmates in planning for any educational programs that have to address their needs and interests. It can be argued that offenders do not see the importance of participation in rehabilitation programs hence they attach little or no responsibility to such activities.

This study demonstrated that rehabilitation for offenders in Lesotho is not very effective and is provided on a low scale. This is supported by comments made by different offenders that rehabilitation humiliates them because they are asked about the crimes that they have committed and how they felt when committing such crimes. It seems that in Lesotho adult offenders are not motivated to participate meaningfully in rehabilitation programs. The data from this study differ from what Finn (2011), Roger (2009), Merriam and Brockett (2007), Knowles (1980) and Freire (1993) advocate regarding the use of adult offenders' past experiences that serve as motivation to enable their participation in a

learning situation or in any activities that involve them.

In addition, the findings support what Dissel (2008), Mokoteli (2005) and Bruyns (2007) found in terms of shortages of rehabilitation staff who also lack the skills and training to conduct proper rehabilitation for offenders in the context of Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Swaziland. The authors found that the rehabilitation section is manned by security personnel who lack the motivation to carry out the rehabilitation program effectively (Bruyns, 2007; Mokoteli, 2005). Seemingly, the stakeholders and other LCS officers echoed offenders' statements that the rehabilitation section is unstructured and lacks resources to perform rehabilitation programs properly.

The findings have revealed that offenders would like more empowering educational programs that could meaningfully address their needs and interests. The data revealed that offenders want accredited educational programs and additional recreational activities. This is related to findings by Kusada and Gxubane (2014), Bruyns (2007) and Mokoteli (2005) where rehabilitation provision in Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Lesotho focus more on spiritual care and the employment related activities than educational and vocational skills training.

In conclusion, all the research questions were answered in detail and the aim of investigating on how offenders perceive their rehabilitation programs in terms of what is provided and their recommendations for more meaningful programs was achieved. Although the study is based on a small sample of participants, the findings from this study make several contributions to the current literature. First, it proposes that correctional facilities cannot work in isolation, but have to embrace the collaborative holistic approach in consultation with adult offenders in ensuring for their good rehabilitation programs. Second, adult offenders should be incorporated in their learning as well as planning and evaluating their problem-centred instruction as proposed in Knowles' theory of andragogy. Third, various stakeholders are needed to work towards the collective responsibility of reintegrating offenders into their communities. Further research needs to examine more closely the link between staffing and that of education, meaning, how does staffing impact on the ability of the programme to meet the needs of offenders?

## **References**

BBC News (2016) 'Lesotho country profile: Lesotho', <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13728324> Accessed December, 2016.

- Biswalo, P. (2011). 'The role of adult education in the integration of inmates into society after a jail term: practical experiences from Swaziland', in *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 30: 1, 37 – 47.
- Bruyns, H.J. (2007). *The impact of prison reform on the inmate population of Swaziland*, Unpublished PhD thesis, University of South Africa, Pretoria.
- Cervero, R.M. and Wilson, A.L. (1999). *Power in Practice: Adult Education and the struggle for Knowledge and Power in Society*, San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2009). *Research Methods in Education*, New York: Routledge.
- De Vos, A.S., Strydom, H., Fouche, C.B. and Delport, C.S.L. (2002). *Research at Grass Roots*. 2nd ed., Hatfield, Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Dissel, A. (2008). 'Rehabilitation and reintegration in African prisons', In J. Sarkin (ed.) *Human Rights in African Prisons*, Cape Town: HSRC Press, 155-177.
- Finn, D. (2011). 'Principles of Adult Learning: An ESL Context', in *Journal of Adult Education Information Series*, 40: 1, 34-39.
- Freire, P. (1993). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum Books.
- Government of Lesotho (GOL) (2001) *Lesotho Vision 2020: National Vision for Lesotho*, Maseru: Government Printers.
- Huang, H. (2002). 'Toward constructivism for adult learners in online learning environments', in *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 33: 1, 27-37.
- Jules-Macquet, R. (2014). 'The State of South African Prisons', in *NICRO Public Education Series*, 2nd ed. Cape Town: National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Reintegration of Offenders.
- Knowles, M.S. (1980). *The modern practice of adult education: from pedagogy to andragogy*. New York: Cambridge.

- Kusada, J.R. and Gxubane, T. (2014). *The perceptions and experiences of Male Offenders regarding social and rehabilitation services at Chikurubi Farm Prison in Zimbabwe*. Unpublished MA dissertation, University of Cape Town: Cape Town.
- Laufersweiler-Dwyer, D. and McAnelly, B. (1999). 'From phosphate mines to diplomas ... the history of correctional education in Florida: Part 1: 1800-1970', in *Journal of Correctional Education*, 50: 4, 112-122.
- Louis, K.S., Leithwood, K., Wahlstrom, K.L. and Anderson, S.E. (2009). *Learning from Leadership: Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning*. University of Minnesota: The Wallace Foundation.
- McMillan, J.H. and Schumacher, S. (2006). *Research in Education: Evidence-based inquiry*. 6th ed. Cape Town: Pearson.
- McNeil, F. (2012). 'Four forms of offender rehabilitation: Towards an interdisciplinary perspective', in *Legal & Criminological Psychology*, 17, 18 – 36.
- Merriam, S.B. and Brockett, R.G. (2007). *The profession and practice of adult education: An introduction*. San Francisco: John Wiley & Son, Inc.
- Mkosi, N.G. (2013). *Managing a Full-time School within a Correctional Service Environment*. Unpublished MA dissertation. University of Pretoria: Pretoria.
- Mokoteli, M.F. (2005). *Problems facing children in Lesotho Prisons: With Special Reference to the Juvenile Training Centre*. Unpublished MA dissertation. University of KwaZulu-Natal: Pietermaritzburg.
- Ngozwana, N. (2016). 'Exploring Non-Formal Educational Experiences from Adaptive to Transformative Responses', in *The European Conference on Education 2016: Official Conference Proceedings*, IAFOR.

Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods*. 3rd ed. Thousand oaks, CA: Sage.

Quan-Baffour, K.P. and Zawada, B.E. (2012). 'Education Programmes for Prison Inmates: Rewards for Offences or Hope for a Better Life?' in *Journal of Sociology, Social Anthropology*, 3: 2, 73 – 81.

Roberst, M.R. and Stacer, M.J. (2016). 'In their own words: Offenders' perspectives on their participation in a faith-based diversion and re-entry program', in *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 55:7, 466 – 483.

Roger, Jr C. (2009). 'Understanding the Adult Learners' Motivation and Barriers to Learning', in *European Society for Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA) Conference*, 6 -8 November 2009, Thessaloniki, Greece: University of Macedonia.

Setoi, M.S. (2012). *Youth and Adult Learning and Education in Lesotho*. Maseru: Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA).

Swanepoel, H. and De Beer, F. (2011). *Community Development: Breaking the cycle of poverty*, Lansdowne: Juta.

The Kampala Declaration on Prison Conditions in Africa, (1996). *Penal Reform International*, Adopted at the Kampala Seminar in September 1996.

The Ouagadougou Declaration and Plan of Action on Accelerating Prisons and Penal Reforms in Africa (2002). *Promoting fair and effective criminal justice*, viewed 21 May 2016, <https://www.penalreform.org/resource/ouagadougou-declaration-accelerating-prison-penal-reform-africa/>

Tsepa, M. (2014). *An investigative study on the causes of recidivism/ reoffending among inmates in Lesotho: The case of Maseru Central Correctional Institution*. Unpublished B.Ed. in Adult Education Department. University of Lesotho, IEMS: Maseru.

*United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (SMR)*, (1977). New York: United Nations.



## **About the Author**

**Nomazulu Ngozwana** holds a PhD from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus in South Africa. She works as a Postdoctoral Fellow in the College of Education based in ABET and Youth Development Department of the University of South Africa. Her research interests are in democracy, human rights, citizenship, correctional education and civic education.

## **Contact Details**

*Dr Nomazulu Ngozwana  
Justice Mahomed Street  
Pretoria, GAUTENG 003  
South Africa*

*Email: [nomazulungozwana@gmail.com](mailto:nomazulungozwana@gmail.com)*