

REDUCING RE-OFFENDING THROUGH HABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION IN NAMIBIA

Topic	Summary
<p>1. Background on rehabilitation in the Namibian Correctional Service</p>	<p>Before adopting its current mandate, the Namibian Correctional Service, then referred to as the Namibian Prison Service, was essentially a punitive system concerned only with incapacitation. The majority of its facilities were old prisons that were constructed to serve the specific needs of the colonial apartheid ideology, which was custody oriented and not suitable for rehabilitation.</p> <p>There was no methodical way of processing newly sentenced inmates: The intake process of inmates into the system primarily focused on the verification of police and court documents to ensure their legal detention. Inmates were primarily understood or managed on the basis of how they behaved outwardly while under detention, and not on the basis of any consideration of the factors that have influenced their offending. Furthermore, Namibia had no formal procedure of preparing inmates for release. Releases of inmates were unplanned and release preparation only commenced a number of hours prior to the actual release of an inmate.</p> <p>In 2010 the Namibian Correctional Service transformed into being a professionalised correctional service aiming to effectively rehabilitate and reintegrate offenders through targeting factors that have contributed to offending behaviour. It introduced the Offender Risk Management Correctional (ORMCS), which is an evidence-based rehabilitative approach guiding the management and treatment of offenders in terms of their individual risks and needs. The strategy provides a framework for structuring the various elements that interplay in the rehabilitation of inmates and aligns the roles of correctional officers to function as active team-members of the rehabilitation process of inmates.</p> <p>With the implementation of the ORMCS, the Namibian Correctional Service introduced a formalised and organised way of processing newly sentenced inmates. Differently now, there is a systematic process that is</p>

	<p>followed by trained Case Management Officers to assess inmates' criminogenic needs and, subsequently, develop a treatment plan outlining how the identified risks/needs will be addressed during the period of incarceration.</p> <p>Also, unlike in the past when there was no systematic way of monitoring the progress of an offender, other than through a yearly review done by the Institutional Release Committee, which mainly focused on assessing an inmate's institutional conduct without considering their risk of re-offending, the Namibian Correctional Service now makes use of structured security classification instruments that are standardised to suit the Namibian context. A Structured Case Management Progress Report is now prepared for each inmate based at a correctional facility where the ORMCS has been implemented every 60 days, which provides a comprehensive summary of the offender's use of time, leisure activities, the contact they have with family, participation in any available programmes, and their general behaviour and attitudes towards staff and other offenders.</p> <p>The implementation of the ORMCS has led to the expansion of existing roles and responsibilities for correctional officers as well as the establishment of new ones. This necessitated the development of a new organisational and salary structure. The new organisational and salary structure allowed the Namibian Correctional Service to compete with other reputable organisations in the recruitment and retention of qualified and experienced professional staff that are essential in the provision of evidence-based rehabilitation approaches to inmates.</p>
2. Legislation	<p>The Namibian Correctional Service draws its mandate to rehabilitate and reintegrate offenders from the Correctional Services Act, 2012 (Act 9 of 2012), which directs the Namibian Correctional Service to provide, to sentenced inmates, rehabilitation programmes and other meaningful and constructive activities that contribute to their rehabilitation and successful re-integration into community as law-abiding citizens. Furthermore, various Regulations, Standard Operating Procedures, Policies and Directives were developed to ensure effective implementation of the correctional strategy.</p>
3. National strategies	<p>The rehabilitation strategy implemented by the Namibian Correctional Service contributes towards Namibia's Vision 2030, which is a national framework to transform the country's political and economic</p>

	<p>landscape in a host of areas, in so far as it is one of the instruments that can help bring into fruition the country’s plan of attaining peace, harmony and political stability by the year 2030.</p> <p>Additionally, rehabilitation and reintegration efforts of the Namibian Correctional Service are aligned to the quest to deliver quality services and be prepared to respond to domestic socioeconomic challenges as per the country’s Harambee Prosperity Plan, which is a Namibian Government Action Plan towards prosperity for all.</p>
<p>4. Evidence-based approaches aimed at reducing reoffending</p>	<p>The approach adopted by the Namibian Correctional Service to reduce re-offending, the ORMCS, is founded on the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) principle, which is currently amongst the leading theories underpinning modern rehabilitation interventions for inmates. Essentially, the RNR principle directs that inmates should be treated in accordance to their level of security risk and in accordance with the criminogenic factors that they possess. It also directs that rehabilitation programmes provided to inmates should aim to respond to their level of motivation, cognitive ability, learning style, as well as their strengths.</p> <p>The ORMCS has multiple and mutually interacting components designed to work towards a common goal, which is to manage, control, rehabilitate and successfully reintegrate inmates into the community. The following are components of the ORMCS:</p> <p><i>i. Unit Management</i></p> <p>The Unit Management principle has been implemented in a number of our correctional facilities. This principle aims to cluster inmates into smaller manageable groups consisting of about 80-120 inmates to allow for the effective deployment of both active and dynamic security. Unit Management is based on the premise that the control of inmates is better achieved through a normalized regime of ‘interaction’ between correctional officers and inmates that allows direct supervision of inmates on a human-to-human level rather than simply the ‘guarding and disciplining’ of incarcerated inmates through the exercise of coercive power and domination. Unit Management works more effectively within an ideal architectural and physical structure designed to accommodate it. Therefore, with the implementation of the ORMCS, the NCS has made effort to construct and renovate old infrastructure to fit the rehabilitation philosophy. This effort has,</p>

however, been adversely impacted by limited resources. Consequently, not all correctional facilities that have adopted the ORMCS abide to the principle of Unit Management.

ii. Reception and Initial Offender Assessment

This component contributes towards the ORMCS by facilitating an organised and methodical approach of admitting newly sentenced inmates in the correctional facility. It provides a smooth and effective introduction of inmates to the correctional system and enables the timely assessment of their immediate needs and concerns, including those of a physical and mental health nature. In addition, this component also involves the orientation of inmates to the rules, conditions and entitlements within the correctional system, the general procedures that the NCS follows, the services they can access, and the expectations of appropriate behaviour that will be enforced by correctional staff.

iii. Objective Security Classification and Re-Classification of Offenders

Actuarial-based assessment instruments were introduced in the NCS to offer a prediction of the security risk of inmates. With the use of structured assessment instruments, the NCS is able to determine the initial placement of an inmate in the correctional facility based on their initial security classification, while subsequent security levels are based on structured security reclassification assessments. The reclassification process facilitates the physical movement of inmates from one security level to another. Attached to the security classification is a privilege system that serves as an incentive for inmates to progress from one security level to another and to encourage inmates to behave pro-socially.

iv. Assessment of Risk and Needs of Offenders and Correctional Treatment Planning

The assessment of risk/needs is essential for the proper identification of inmates' risks and criminogenic needs. This assessment serves as the engine for proper case management to assist inmates in their successful reintegration back into society. The identified needs and reintegration concerns are translated into individualised Correctional Treatment Plans for inmates, which direct how inmates are to be managed and serviced in their preparation for eventual release.

v. Case Management

The Case Management process assists inmates to address their criminogenic needs. The process involves conducting evidence-based assessments to determine the appropriate Correctional Treatment Plan of inmates. It also involves observing and analysing the behaviour of inmates on an ongoing basis, amongst other functions. Case Management functions are assigned to Case Management Officers, although other correctional officers may also assist in executing some case management. Case Management Officers have educational qualification in social work or psychology.

vi. Delivery of Risk/Needs-based and Support Rehabilitation Programmes

The delivery of evidence-based programmes to address specific criminogenic needs is a central component of the ORMCS model. Aside from addressing criminogenic needs, rehabilitation programmes delivered to inmates in the NCS also aim to support inmates with various concerns relating to adjustment and reintegration. The NCS also recognises the importance of having rehabilitation interventions that responds to the specific criminogenic needs of female inmates. As a result, the NCS has acquired a rehabilitation programme that aims to address factors associated with female criminality. The programme is envisioned for implementation during the 2023/24 Financial Year.

vii. Pre-release Preparation

Rehabilitation efforts become futile if the reintegration needs and concerns of inmates are not effectively managed. Preparing inmates for release is, thus, important to promote desistance. The NCS has developed a Pre-release phase to prepare inmates for successful re-entry into society by providing reintegration focused activities and services that support their smooth transition from the correctional facility into the community. Although yet to be implemented, preparatory work to introduce the Pre-release phase is at an advanced stage with a Standard Operating Practices on Pre-release already having been developed.

viii. Community Supervision

Community Supervision is the end line of a correctional process that concerns assisting offenders released conditionally on parole or remission to navigate their reintegration from incarceration into the society to,

with the end goal of supporting desistance by guiding and supporting inmates to lead productive lives in the community.

The principles of the ORMCS are carried over into Community Supervision, where risk management in the community is measured through the supervision of offenders' compliance with their conditions of release. The role of managing the risk of offenders in the community is assigned to Community Supervision Officers, who have the responsibility to contribute to public safety through the continued assessment and management of offenders' risk by encouraging and assisting them to become successfully reintegrated as law-abiding citizens in the community.

The function of actively supervising offenders following conditional release was introduced in Namibia in December 2016. Since inception, 9613 inmates were supervised under Community Supervision following their conditional releases from incarceration. Of this number, 259 inmates have reoffended while on Community Supervision, representing 2.7% of that population group.

ix. Community Service Orders

In further response to the guidance of the Risk-Need-Responsivity principle to map interventions offered to offenders to their level of risk, Namibian Correctional Service officers are actively involved in the processes concerning the issuing and supervising of offenders sentenced to serve Community Service Orders. A Community Service Order is an order of the court/ a sentencing option, obligating a deserving offender who is not posing a risk to society to perform a number of hours of constructive unpaid work for the benefit of the community as an alternative to imposing stricter sanctions like incarceration. Great strides have been made in the implementation of Community Service Orders in Namibia as the programme is currently rolled out to 34 courts countrywide. Community Service Orders Officers assigned to these respective courts are entrusted with the responsibility to ensure that offenders sentenced to Community Service Orders comply with their sentencing conditions.

<p>5. Programmes aimed at reducing reoffending</p>	<p>With the implementation of the ORMCS, the NCS has introduced a number of rehabilitation programmes responding to the different types of criminogenic factors presenting in its inmate population.</p> <p>Amongst the programmes offered are cognitive-behavioural based programmes designed to address criminogenic factors relating to problematic cognitive patterns that support criminal thinking and behaviour and replace them with cognitive skills that stimulate pro-social cognitive behaviours. These programmes are regarded as risk/need based rehabilitation programmes and are referred to as core psycho-social rehabilitation programmes. Various support psycho-social rehabilitation programmes have also been introduced to cater to the needs of inmates who do not require intensive interventions (low risk inmates) or to serve as primers to motivate high risk inmates to participate in rehabilitation programmes designed to address their specific criminogenic needs. Both the risk/needs based and support psycho-social rehabilitation programmes are offered at all of the eight correctional facilities that have implemented the ORMCS. On the other hand, only support psycho-social rehabilitation programmes are offered at facilities without the ORMCS.</p> <p>Educational programmes are also offered, targeting inmates with limited education with the aim of increasing their responsiveness to other rehabilitation programmes and services available in the correctional facility. In addition, the NCS facilitates the enrolment of inmates into secondary education programmes as well as enrolment into tertiary education institutions as a means of increasing opportunity for employment as well as enhance their level of function within the community post release from custody.</p> <p>Vocational education skills programmes are also offered for inmates with employability as a criminogenic factor. This is also done with the aim to empower inmates with vocational trade skills to increase their likelihood of employment after release from incarceration.</p> <p>The risk/needs based rehabilitation and support programmes are facilitated by appropriately trained, supervised and competent Programme Officers, Rehabilitation Coordinators, Education Officers, Religious Care Officers and Vocational Instructors.</p>
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