

Using Interactive ICT to Support the Rehabilitation of Juvenile ex-Convicts in South Africa

IT Department, Faculty of Informatics and Design (FID),
Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT)

Lubabalo Ntsokolo
209219165@cput.ac.za

Nhlanhla Mlitwa
Mlitwan@cput.ac.za

Abstract: Policing, prison and prisoner rehabilitation processes play a significant role in both the control of crime and in boosting public confidence in the criminal justice system of a country. An increasing number of repeat criminal offenders in post-apartheid South Africa questions the efficacy of law enforcement and prisoner rehabilitation processes in the country. Mobile communication technologies offer interactive communication solutions that can be used by the rehabilitation system to reach juvenile ex-convicts. This paper investigates the potential of these interactive mobile technology solutions to supplement the rehabilitation processes of juvenile ex-convicts in South Africa. Ten juvenile ex-convicts, one counsellor, the head of the juvenile section of Pollsmoor Maximum Security Prison in Cape Town and ten members of the community (Khayelitsha location) were interviewed as the main participants for this study. The participants can clearly recognise the need for these services regardless of their availability, especially for juvenile convicts and ex-convicts. They strongly believe that with the assistance of multi-media solutions in mobile technologies, the availability of these services could be increased. This should hopefully contribute towards a more effective rehabilitation process and, ultimately, a reduction in repeat offences.

Key Words: Juvenile ex-convicts; Mobile technologies; Multi-media solutions; Repeat offenders; ex-convicts rehabilitation

1. Introduction

Alongside the high rate of poverty and declining moral fibre in South African society are signs of a rising level of crime. While the causes and, ultimately, the ways to redress the problem are numerous, an efficiently planned and managed law enforcement system plays a major role in combating crime. Policing, prison and prisoner rehabilitation processes, for example, play a significant role in both the control of the problem and in boosting public confidence in the criminal justice system of a country.

An increasing number of new and repeat criminal offenders in post-apartheid South Africa questions the efficacy of law enforcement and prisoner rehabilitation processes in the country. Mobile communication technologies offer interactive communication solutions that can be used by the rehabilitation system to reach juvenile ex-convicts. This paper investigates the potential of these technologies to supplement rehabilitation for juvenile ex-convicts in South Africa.

The paper is structured into six sections, starting with a research problem, a research objective and research questions. A research methodology is presented later, followed by the literature review, a discussion of findings, the conclusion and the limitations of the study.

Research Problem

The juvenile prisoner rehabilitation process does not seem to be functioning efficiently and successfully in South Africa. As a result convicts seem to learn more criminal skills in prisons which they demonstrate upon release, with a high rate of repeated offences and repeated imprisonments.

Research Objective

Acknowledging limitations in the prisoner rehabilitation system in South Africa, this study explores the potential of interactive multi-media solutions (as knowledge and counselling tools) to support the rehabilitation of juvenile criminal offenders upon release from prisons. The goal is to contribute in limiting repeat criminal offences and the

transformation of the lives of juvenile ex-convicts while contributing towards a crime-free society in South Africa. To achieve this object, a research question to drive the investigation is raised below. To achieve this object, a research question to drive the investigation is raised in section 1.3

Research Question

In line with the research objective, this study investigates how multi-media solutions in mobile technologies, such as cell-phones, can be used in the prisoner rehabilitation process to inform, counsel and educate juvenile ex-convicts upon release from prisons.

Conceptualising the Key Terms of a Research Question

- **Multi-Media Solutions** – Multi-media denotes a section of the media specifically designed to reach a very large audience such as the population of a nation state. The term was coined in the 1920s with the advent of nationwide radio networks, mass-circulation newspapers and magazines. This refers to the mass media that most teenagers spend most of their time engaging with. This media enables them to have access to information that could empower them with useful skills such as practical self-care skills, livelihood skills and life skills, e.g. the Internet, cell-phones, television, videos/movies, radio, magazines, newspapers, live theatre etc.
- **Mobile technologies** - refers to the electronic tools and media devices that use mobile devices and wireless transmissions across electronic networks, e.g. PDAs, cell-phones/smart phones, PC tablets, hand-held computers, wearable computer devices etc. which allow for connection to Internet-based learning and training resources as well as other people.
- **Inform, counsel, educate** - Multi-media solutions, together with the encouragement of positive adult-youth relationships, can be used to open up ways of efficient communication between ex-convicts of all ages, integrating them and building meaningful participation in safe and supportive peer groups, schools and communities. These solutions could help ex-convicts talk and share experiences with each other and with professionals so as to enable effective rehabilitation which would produce individuals capable of successful reintegration

into their communities as law abiding citizens. These multi-media solutions could help to ensure that effective learning takes place so that these youngsters are socially and intellectually prepared to become responsible adults who actively participate in, and make a positive contribution to, the society and the economy.

- **Juvenile ex-convicts** refers to people under the age of eighteen who have committed a criminal offence and who have been sentenced to serve time in prison as a way of rehabilitating them.

In this investigation focus was placed firstly on understanding what juveniles feel they should do with their lives after being released from prison, and on how they should start their new lives. This question extends to the sources of guidance, counselling and education on the necessary life skills and ways to avoid criminal activity. To understand the current measures that are in place for rehabilitation, the study also focuses on understanding the status of existing rehabilitation initiatives and their levels of efficacy in transforming juvenile ex-convicts. The second part of the investigation looks at the potential capabilities of communication technologies when used as counselling, guidance and educational mediums to facilitate the rehabilitation of juvenile ex-convicts.

A research methodology to address the research problem and question is outlined in the section below.

Methodology

Distinction is drawn between the positivist (using mostly quantitative methods associated with natural sciences), critical and interpretive approaches (Babbie & Mouton, 2004) in information systems research. Under the positivist tradition the researcher, the subject and the context are treated as separate phenomena that can only be observed independently (Krauss, 2005). Given the significance of understanding the subjects and their contexts in this study, the positivist approach seemed inappropriate, and was avoided in this study. The interpretive approach on the other hand, acknowledges the context and allows subjective interpretation of data. It accommodates data collection techniques such as the observation of documents and texts, participant observation, depth interviews and focus

group interviews with or without questionnaires (Babbie & Mouton, 2004).

The interpretive exploratory approach was adopted in this study.

Exploratory research has an objective of collating initial information that will facilitate the clarification of a problem that is less understood, and has very little if any insight written on it. It is used as a basis upon which hypothesis for further research can be formulated (Kotler, 2006).

The following passage discusses the sampling, data collection, and data analysis techniques followed in this study.

Sampling

Sampling refers to the practice used to choose a segment of the population for a study representative of the population and whose findings can tell more about the population in general (Maree, 2007). There is a variety of sampling strategies, grouped into two sampling methods:

- Probability sampling (simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling, cluster sampling)
- Non-probability sampling (convenience sampling, quota sampling, snowball sampling, purposive sampling) (Maree, 2007.).

Purposive population sampling technique was used in this study. Purposive sampling is used to select a small representative subset (Singleton & Straits, 2005) of a larger research population - from which generalisations can be made (Babbie & Mouton, 2004). A researcher only approaches members of a research population that that are most likely and willing to supply information about the rest of the population studied (Kumar, 2005). Guided by the objective of the study, Participants who have defining characteristics of the problem at hand, and are holders of the data needed, were required in the current study, hence the purposive sample was deemed appropriate.

Table 1 presents the sampling process followed, and a summary or questions asked to each unit of observation in the study.

Table 1: The Sampling Process

Questions	Data source	Tools	Units of observation	Number of participants
The effectiveness, need and availability of counselling and rehabilitation programs	Individuals	Interviews	Juvenile ex-convicts	10
Availability of counselling and rehabilitation services	Literature, Individuals	Interviews, Reading Analysing	Head of the juvenile convicts' section of Polls-moor prison	1
The effectiveness and need for these counselling and rehabilitation services	Individuals	Interviews	The counsellor (Cecilia Dawson) who is the deputy executive director of NICRO	1
Community perspectives on teenage ex-convicts' counselling and rehabilitation services	Individuals	Questionnaires	the community residing in Khayelitsha location	10

Table 1 outlines sample selection (data sources) used in this study:

- Ten juvenile ex-convicts based at the National Institute for Crime and Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO) centre at Harrington Street in Cape Town were interviewed to establish the need, availability and effectiveness of counselling and of the rehabilitation programmes offered to them after serving their sentences in prison.
- The head of the department of the juvenile convicts section of Pollsmoor Maximum Security Prison in Cape Town was interviewed using a structured interview to establish the extent and availability (if any) of counselling and of rehabilitation programmes. The availability of any multi-media solutions that these juvenile convicts are exposed to during their sentences in prison was determined in this interview.
- Cecilia Dawson, the deputy executive director and counsellor at NICRO, and Rosanne Baily, the researcher at the Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR) in prisons, were also interviewed. Ms Dawson is based at the main offices of NICRO in Harrington Street in Cape Town.

- Ten members of the Khayelitsha¹ community were also given questionnaires. These helped to share insight into the effectiveness, need and availability of the counselling and rehabilitation programmes for juvenile ex-convicts.

Data Sources and Method of Analysis

There are five data analysis strategies. These are hermeneutics analysis, content analysis, conversation analysis, discourse analysis and narrative analysis (Maree, 2007). Content analysis was used in this study.

Content analysis is a systematic approach to qualitative data analysis that identifies and summarizes message content. It is a process of looking at data from different angles with a view to identifying key pieces of information in the text, thereby helping to understand and interpret raw data (Maree, 2007.). Content analysis was considered the most appropriate analytical method for this study in that it enables a detailed analysis of such things as books, brochures, written documents, transcripts, news reports and visual media – which were the central sources of data in this study.

How data was analyzed

In each of the questions, key information was categorized into separate themes. Themes were drafted in tabular format. Emergent insight in the interview transcripts were colour-coded, with similar themes placed together, and interpreted. Most of the data were clear statements that required non-sophisticated effort to interpret. For example, the head of the juvenile-convicts section gave basic description of the current counseling and rehabilitation process at Pollsmoor prison, and gave his perceptions on its adequacy/inadequacy. Similarly, the government official (NICRO officer) was asked to describe existing counseling and rehabilitation programs, and to evaluate its level of effectiveness, highlighting weak-points as well as to highlight possible causes and ultimately, the role that ICT could play towards finding a solution. The use of themes became more handy in the analysis of data from the members of the Khayelitsha community, who gave a number of responses to one set of questions. Basically, a general agreement among all research subjects is that the counseling process, and the

¹ Khayelitsha Township was chosen on the basis of its highest statistics of criminal activities that are committed by youngsters in the Western Cape.

actual rehabilitation process of the juvenile ex-convicts is inadequate, and that ICT can make a useful contribution.

Literature Review

Crime is of an escalating fear to South Africa's community and supervision. Even though the seriousness of this threat requires to almost all areas of public life, and therefore requiring immediate redress, statistics show the problem to be upward spiralling, at an increasing scale in South Africa.

Robberies at residential premises (house robbery) have been increasing on a year-on-year basis since it was first recorded in 2002/03 (Crime Statistics in Perspectives, 2008). Between 2002/03 and 2007/08 it increased from 9 063 to 14 481 incidents, nationally with almost 11 000 of these incidents happening in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal. A disturbing statistic is that violent crimes such as carjacking increased, bank robbery and robberies at business premises increased by 4,4%; 11,6% and 47, 4% respectively (Crime Statistics in Perspectives, 2008).

The Western Cape Province is one of the hotspots of violent crime, with the highest incidents of both murder and drug-related crime in the country (City of Cape Town, 2006). The sad thing is that whilst teenagers and youth are supposed to be the future of the country, are the most cited offenders in violent criminal activities in the country, with almost half of the prison population being under 24 years old (Robson, 2008). According to the Department of Correctional Services, there were 2,182 children under the age of 18 currently incarcerated in the South African prison system – 1,109 awaiting trial and 1,073 serving sentences by the end of September 2006. Cases of youngsters killing one another have tripled in three years since 2006 (Randeree, 2009). Worst still, is that 90% of the youth offenders tend to return to prisons as repeat offenders, within five years of their release (Robson, 2008), the trend which raises questions about the effectiveness of the role a prison both as a punishment and rehabilitation process in South Africa.

Being in prison, currently, according to a prison researcher, Bailey (2008: pg 2), "doesn't do anything in terms of rehab, as the prison system operates in such a way as to make mental healthcare and rehabilitation impossible to carry out". The aspect of rehabilitation does not seem to meet the intended objective for children. Children in prison for

example, adds Baily, are highly traumatized, psychologically unsteady, and miserable by the location they find themselves in, in spite of gaining any sort of rehabilitation.

About Prisoner Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation is a management designed cure to assist the improvement of recovery from manners, grievance, disease, or sickness to as typical a state as possible (Milto, 2009). Traditionally, in prison, the rehabilitation process is a way of empowering criminal offenders to grow to be law compliant citizens by training them on how to continue to live consistent and productive lives (James, 2002).

There must be three parties working together towards a prisoner's rehabilitation process. The criminal offender who needs to be rehabilitated, the Department of Correctional Services, whose staff should oversee and conduct the course of action, and last but not least, the society where this criminal offender will go to reside once he or she has finished the prison sentence. The society with all its members must consequently maintain the efforts for rehabilitation and counselling services occurring within and outside the prison, which is like preparing for when the offender comes back to live with them.

For example, there is only one social worker in Pollsmoor Prison to take care of all the imprisoned juvenile prisoners within the prison premises in a limited space of six hours (from 8h00am to 14h00pm). The Department of Correctional Services further involves its entire staff, where prison officers who hardly believe in rehabilitation are asked to rehabilitate offenders often without having received any training (Baily, 2008). To cope with the overload, these counsellors often ignore those in short term and long term sentences, and try to deal with the juveniles in medium term sentences. Those who ignored thus, are not rehabilitated, which means they remain a negative influence on those who are being rehabilitated, and are a liability to the success of the already under-strength rehabilitation process (Baily, 2008). Further, though the Correctional Service Act specifies that every prisoner, regardless of his or her own status is allowed a minimum of one hour of outside exercise per day, this bare minimum is often not met in overcrowded prisons. Due to shortages of staff, the inmates are generally locked in these cells between 15h00pm and 7h00am the next morning, and longer over the weekends, meaning that requirements for prisoners to spend as much time out of their cells engaging in constructive and recreational activities is compromised (Muntingh,

2008). During lock-up periods there is minimal or no supervision, which means that the cells are run by the gangs (Iwu, 2008). In this process, juvenile prisoners hardly receive sufficient mental health care (Baily 2008).

Prisons are struggling to function optimally, because of large numbers of prisoners who come in and out of prisons as repeat offenders, shortly after their release. This situation creates the impression that, rather than rehabilitating offenders, prisons instead facilitate the right of passage to a criminal career (Sekhonyane, 2002).

One of the most continual individuality in thinking around crime and safety is the belief that just imprisonment on its own can reduce crime. This belief is shared by the magistrates, ordinary citizens, and politicians. It is merely a 'belief' as there is little (if any) evidence to support the idea on any significant scale anywhere in the world (Muntingh, 2008). Inmate rehabilitation channel is one sure means of realising the objectives of the prisons. A collaboration of proper counselling methodologies with prison management attempts to ensure that prisoners get rehabilitated during their time in jail (Iwu, 2008). More particularly, because freed offenders without rehabilitation would be subjected to conditions that may condemn them to re-offend (Muntingh, 2008).

Given increased repeat criminal offences by juvenile ex-convicts in South Africa, the adequacy of the prisoner rehabilitation processes is subject to investigation in this study.

The Potential of Interactive Multi-Media Tools

Multi media technologies refer to the computer based, interactive applications that have various media elements, including text, graphics, animations, video, and sound. These applications could refer to both the hardware and software used to run such systems. There are various types of these applications used for means of communication and learning programs, such as the internet, cell phones, television, videos/movies and radio

The idea with some of these multi-media communication tools e.g. electronic mails, discussion boards using applications like face book by means of the internet, using computers or cell phones, is that participants may engage with them on constructive and recreational purposes even when there is no second or third-party involvement at the same time, which offers an extended level of independence. Some of these tools could also be used to engage individuals in activities to exchange rehabilitating ideas and information with one or more participants at the same time using applications like mix-it

and face book via the cell phones or computers. Multi-media technologies thus, could enhance collaborative learning amongst the juvenile ex-convicts, whilst enhancing interactions between them and the professionals in counselling, rehabilitation services, the community and the prison authorities. Since the youngsters are the leading users of these multi-media tools, interactive mobile technologies therefore, could be used as a catalyst for improved rehabilitation of the juvenile ex-convicts in South Africa. Section 4 discusses the findings on interviews held with various stakeholders on the challenges of repeat crime offences relative to the current prisoner rehabilitation process, and the potential of interactive mobile technology tools to support the rehabilitation process in the country.

Crime, and the fear of it, is widespread in South Africa. This threat extends to almost all areas of public life and requires immediate redress. Statistics show the problem to be spiralling out of control at an increasing rate.

Robberies at residential premises (house robbery) have been increasing on a year-on-year basis since they were first recorded in 2002/03 (Crime Statistics in Perspectives, 2008). Between 2002/03 and 2007/08 this crime increased from 9 063 to 14 481 incidents nationally, with almost 11 000 taking place in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal. A disturbing statistic is that violent crimes have increased. Carjackings, bank robberies and robberies at business premises increased by 4,4 per cent, 11,6 per cent and 47,4 per cent respectively (Crime Statistics in Perspectives, 2008).

The Western Cape Province is one of the hotspots of violent crime, with the highest incidents of both murder and drug-related crimes in the country (City of Cape Town, 2007). The sad thing is that while teenagers and youths are supposed to be the future of the country, they are the most cited offenders in violent criminal activities in the country, with almost half of the prison population being under 24 years old (Robson, 2008). According to the Department of Correctional Services, by the end of September 2006 there were 2 182 children under the age of eighteen incarcerated in the South African prison system – 1 109 awaiting trial and 1 073 serving sentences. Cases of youngsters killing one another have tripled in three years since 2006 (Randeree, 2008). Worse still, 90 per cent of youth offenders tend to return to prisons as repeat offenders within five years of their release (Robson, 2008). This trend raises questions about the effectiveness of the role of a prison both as a place of punishment and of rehabilitation in South Africa.

According to a prison researcher (Baily, 2009), being in prison currently does not do anything in terms of rehabilitation, as the prison system operates in such a way as to make mental healthcare and rehabilitation impossible to carry out. The reforming aspect of rehabilitation does not seem to meet the intended objective for children. Baily continues that children in prison are highly traumatised, psychologically unsteady and made miserable by the location they find themselves in, and do not gain any sort of rehabilitation while there.

About prisoner rehabilitation

Rehabilitation is a type of cure management designed to assist in the improvement of manners and the returning from grievances, disease or sickness to as typical a state as possible (De Milto, 2008). Traditionally, in prison the rehabilitation process is a way of empowering criminal offenders to grow to be law-compliant citizens by training them to live consistent and productive lives (James, 2002).

There must be three parties working together towards a prisoner's rehabilitation:

- the criminal offender, who needs to be rehabilitated;
- the Department of Correctional Services, whose staff should oversee and conduct the course of action; and
- the society where the criminal offender will reside once he/she has finished the prison sentence.

For example, there is only one social worker in Pollsmoor Prison to take care of all the imprisoned juvenile prisoners within the prison premises and in a limited space of six hours (from 08h00 to 14h00). The Department of Correctional Services further involves its entire staff, whereby prison officers who hardly believe in rehabilitation are asked to rehabilitate offenders, often without having received any training (Baily, 2009). To cope with the overload, these councillors often ignore those serving short-term and long-term sentences and try to deal with juveniles serving medium-term sentences. Those who are ignored are thus not rehabilitated, which means they remain a negative influence on those who are being rehabilitated and are a liability to the success of the already under-strength rehabilitation process (Baily, 2009). Further, though the Correctional Service Act specifies that every prisoner, regardless of his or her own status, is allowed a minimum of one hour of outside exercise per day, this bare minimum is often not met in

overcrowded prisons. Due to shortages of staff, the inmates are generally locked in their cells between the hours of 15h00 and 07h00, and for longer periods over weekends. This means that requirements for prisoners to spend as much time as possible out of their cells engaging in constructive and recreational activities are compromised (Muntingh, 2008). During lock-up periods there is minimal or no supervision, which means that the cells are run by prison gangs (Iwu, 2008). In this process, juvenile prisoners hardly receive sufficient mental health care (Baily, 2009).

Prisons are struggling to function optimally because of large numbers of prisoners returning as repeat offenders shortly after their release. This situation creates the impression that, rather than rehabilitating offenders, prisons instead facilitate the right of passage to a criminal career (Sekhonyane, 2007).

Regarding crime and safety issues, it is commonly believed that imprisonment alone can reduce crime. This belief is shared by magistrates, ordinary citizens and politicians. It is merely a belief as there is little (if any) evidence to support the idea on any significant scale anywhere in the world (Muntingh, 2008). Inmate rehabilitation channelling is one sure means of realising the objectives of prisons. A collaboration of proper counselling methodologies with prison management strives to ensure that prisoners are rehabilitated during their time in jail (Iwu, 2008). This is so because freed offenders (without rehabilitation) would be subjected to conditions that may condemn them to re-offend (Muntingh, 2008).

Given increasing repeat criminal offences by juvenile ex-convicts in South Africa, the adequacy of the prisoner rehabilitation processes is subject to investigation in this study.

The potential of interactive multi-media tools

Multi-media technologies refer to computer-based, interactive applications that have various media elements, including text, graphics, animations, video and sound. This could refer to both the hardware and software used to run such systems. There are various multi-media communication tools used for communication and learning, such as the Internet, cellphones, television, videos/movies and radio

The idea behind some of these multi-media communication tools – computers or cellphones, e-mail, discussion boards and applications such as Facebook – is that

participants may engage with them for constructive and recreational purposes, even when there is no second- or third-party involvement. This offers an extended level of independence. Some of these tools could also be used to engage individuals in activities to exchange ideas concerning rehabilitation and information with one or more participants, while using applications like Mxit and Facebook via cellphones or computers. Multi-media technologies, therefore, could enhance collaborative learning among juvenile ex-convicts, while enhancing interactions between them and the professionals in counselling and rehabilitation services, as well as the community and prison authorities. Since youngsters are the leading users of these multi-media tools, interactive mobile technologies could be used as a catalyst for improving the rehabilitation of juvenile ex-convicts in South Africa. The section below discusses the findings of interviews held with various stakeholders on the challenges of repeat crime offences relative to the current prisoner rehabilitation process, and the potential of interactive mobile technology tools to support the rehabilitation process in the country.

Findings

According to the juvenile ex-convicts interviewed, the chances of receiving rehabilitation and counselling services that could help them build constructive and productive lives are very rare. Juvenile ex-convicts interviewed in this study have been in and out of prison more than twice, yet they have not received any sort of rehabilitation or counselling. The rehabilitation and counselling programmes that were offered to them by the National Institute for Crime and Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO) have been helpful in that they have gained skills. These skills enable them to rebuild their lives in a constructive manner. The availability of mobile technologies is still a problem because some of these tools are very expensive and young people living in rural areas are not familiar with them, e.g. the Internet and cellphones. However, they do feel that these can be very helpful in enabling them to share the knowledge and skills they have gained with other ex-convicts all over the country.

According to Cecilia Dawson (a counsellor at NICRO) being in prison does not do much (if anything at all) to rehabilitate and counsel prisoners. In effect, the prison system operates in such a way that it makes these services very difficult to carry out. Dawson strongly argues that illegal behaviour among young people can be treated to a certain degree, but access to our country's public mental healthcare systems is all but non-existent for young people (Dawson, 2009). For some reason, the youth seems very

much at ease with the new multimedia technologies such as mobile phones, computers and televisions (Mlitwa, et al, 2009). The use of mobile technologies therefore, could be a very helpful way of reaching the younger generation. Making the counselling and rehabilitation services available for these young people, from television talk shows to the most commonly-used multi-media communication tools such as Facebook, MXit and radios could be a useful strategy. In particular, integrating a specific software program with their mobile phones could be integrated with formal procedures of prison release and rehabilitation processes.

The head of the juvenile convicts section of Pollsmoor Maximum Security Prison, Mr L. Helesi, confirms that only those juvenile prisoners serving between three- to eight-year sentences are able to access these services due to overcrowding and under-staffing in prisons, and the number of untrained officers who must carry out these services in prisons. The only multi-media solution that is available to prisoners while serving their sentences is television and they may only watch it once a week as it has to rotate daily among each and every cell in the section.

Communities encourage the idea that these services should be used to target these youngsters and to slow the rate at which they become professional criminals. They also feel that these juveniles are being misled by older ex-convicts who tell them they can only earn respect from their communities once they have been in prison and by being a member of a notorious gang. Whilst ICT and interactive multimedia are by no means a panacea in this respect, they can certainly be used to make a substantial contribution. Communities thus insist that multi-media solutions be used to reach juvenile ex-convicts if we are to stand a chance of suppressing the ever-increasing appetite for crime in our country.

Conclusion

The overall study clearly identifies a vacuum in the current juvenile-prisoner rehabilitation processes in South African prisons. It has also established the essential need for rehabilitation and counselling services for juvenile convicts and ex-convicts, and that efforts should transcend beyond the barriers of distance, limited contact and availability of the support personnel. ICT and multimedia solutions are portable, easy to use, have greater interactive potential, and are the most popular gadgets for the youth. When wisely applied therefore, they offer a potential interface between the prisoner

rehabilitation system and the juvenile ex-convict. The community as a whole needs to be aware of the fact that the imprisonment of criminal offenders on its own does not suppress the rate of crime. In fact, inmate rehabilitation is one sure means of realising the objectives of the prisons but our prison systems operate in such a way that these services are impossible to carry out.

There are various types of multi-media applications used for communication and learning, such as the Internet, cell-phones, television, videos/movies and the radio, all of which communities are exposed to nowadays.

User-created media content is being increasingly shared with the people within these communities. As part of the prison release arrangements and rehabilitation process, relevant content can be designed, programmed, and embedded with and into their multimedia gadgets. In this process, collaboration between prison authorities, social services (social workers) and independent organisations such as mobile phone companies may cooperate towards devising a formalised programme to this effect. In effect, content creation and management can often be seen as a collective effort in which group members participate to create common memories and maintain relationships. Specialised programmes embedded with constructive and rehabilitative messages may be devised and included in the ICT enabled prisoner rehabilitation process.

Limitations of the Study

The problem under investigation is of national magnitude. As such it would have required a much broader or national sample to thoroughly understand the problem of crime and the rehabilitation of released prisoners, as well as the potential of interactive communication solutions in this process. Due to time and resource constraints, however, the study was only conducted in the city of Cape Town. It focused mostly on Khayelitsha, which is one of the hotspots of violent crime (with the highest incidents of both murder and drug-related crime in the country). Future studies should extend the sample nationwide.

7. List of References

- Babbie, E. and Mouton, J. 2004. **The Practice of Social Research**. ISBN: 0 19 571854 2; Oxford University Press, Cape Town, South Africa.
- Crime statistics in perspectives. 2008. www.iss.co.za/index.php?link_id=24 (accessed 1 September 2009).
- De Milto. 2008. Department of Correctional Services 2006. Outline of position on Correctional Services Policy: 22 September 2006 to 4 August 2008 Cape Town. Department of Correctional Services.
- Iwu, J. 2008. Analysis of criminal recidivism. www.blurtit.com/q415229.html (accessed 26 August 2009).
- James, R. 2002. Transformation in South Africa on the World Wide Web. http://ccrweb.ccr.uct.ac.za/archive/two/11_2/rehab.htm (accessed 3 September 2009).
- Kotler, R. 2006. Research methods on the World Wide Web, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exploratory_research (accessed 2 September 2009).
- Kumar, R. 2005. **Research Methodology – A step-by-step Guide for Beginners**. 2nd ed. SAGE Publications Inc. London: California.
- Maree, K. 2007. First steps in research. Van Schaik publishers, Pretoria.
- Muntingh, L. 2008. South Africa. Department of Justice. 2007. Crime and its impact: 22 March 2007 to 23 March 2008. Cape Town. Department of Justice.
- Randeree, B. 2008. Crime is on the rise. www.thoughtleader.co.za/bilalranderee/2008/01/29 (accessed 2 September 2009).
- Robson, M. 2008. Youth re-offence. <http://beehive.govt.nz/speech/> (accessed 4 August 2009).
- Sekhonyane, South Africa. Pretoria 2007. Emergency measures. Early releases to alleviate prison overcrowding, SA Crime: July 2002 to March 2007. Pretoria.
- Singleton, R. A Jr and Straits, B.C. 2005. **Approaches to Social Research**. 4th ed Oxford University Press. Oxford: new York
- South Africa. City of Cape Town 2007. A brief analysis of reported Violent, Property and Drug-related crime in Cape Town: June 2001 to August 2006. City of Cape Town.

Interviews

Baily, R. 2009. 18 May 2009, Cape Town.

Dawson, C. 2009. NICRO, Cape Town.

Helesi, L. 2009. Pollsmoor Maximum Security Prison.