



ICPA
International Corrections
& Prisons Association

NEWSLETTER
December 2021

ICPA TASKFORCE

Beyond Prisons:
Women and Community Corrections

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BEYOND PRISONS:

ICPA TASKFORCE ON WOMEN AND COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS NEWSLETTER

MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

It is hard to believe that over 2 years have passed since the inception of the 'Beyond Prison: Women and Community Corrections Taskforce'. It seems like only yesterday, when we held our first meeting in January of 2019 with a small group of like-minded correctional officials, practitioners, directors and academics who came together to discuss how we could best advance and support the serious issues facing women in conflict with the law and set out a path forward for our Taskforce. In addition to Diane Williams and myself, our steering committee members included Rosemary Caruana (Australia), Denise Robinson (United States), Stephen Pitts (United Kingdom), Dr. Melissa Hamilton (United Kingdom), Dr. Kelley Blanchette (Canada) and Mary Mbau (Kenya). We all strongly believe that the community has a central and key role to play in the development of a successful, holistic, women-centred approach and that community alternatives should be ubiquitous and predominant considerations within criminal justice and correctional systems. Our objective was to advocate and move the yardstick further for women in conflict with the law globally in whatever way we could. Knowing that the Taskforce was a time-limited initiative, we worked quickly to establish a way forward. Within months of our first meeting, we conducted a literature review to identify statistical trends, programs, and relevant research. In addition, we consulted over 200 practitioners, corrections officials, and researchers through the ICPA network to ascertain what types of gender responsive programs or policies within prisons and the community are available internationally. We developed a quarterly newsletter and developed a webpage on the ICPA website (<https://icpa.org/projects/taskforces/beyond-prisons-taskforce.html>) so that we could share information about our activities, as well as provide links to international resources and research specific to women. In June of 2020, the Taskforce endorsed the [Sequential Intercept Model \(SIM\)](#) developed by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Gains Centre and expanded it further by developing a holistic, women-centered model where community options are represented as the primary response regardless where a woman is within the criminal justice process. In December 2020, we hosted ICPA's Learning Academy event entitled "Strategies for Women Offenders" with Dr. Loraine Gelsthorpe (Cambridge University), Dr. Chontit Chuenurah (Thailand Institute of Justice) and Emilie Coyle (Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies), and in August of 2020, we presented at the 46th Annual Training Institute by the American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) on effective community based practises for women. The Taskforce's activities were also recently featured in the [7th edition of the Justice Trends Magazine](#).

Our newsletters have been an important mechanism to share information about our activities with ICPA members. In this month's edition, we are very pleased to share a guide that we recently developed in partnership with the Moss Group entitled "*Key Program Indicators and Cost Benefit Analysis Considerations for Decision Makers*". With the use of this Guide, the Taskforce aims to better support gender informed programs through the development of a robust decision framework. The Taskforce is now looking to take this one step further by conducting a pilot this fall with the Kenyan Department of Correctional Services and the Moss Group to work through, in real and practical terms, how these types of decision frameworks can be effectively developed. We anticipate that we will be able to share the results of this pilot early in 2022.

With the conclusion of the Taskforce at the end of this year, its Steering Committee members has provided the ICPA Board with a proposal that includes a number of recommendations for consideration. The recommendations set out a path to enable the continuation of the Taskforce's work by ICPA so that the very important issues affecting women in conflict with the law can continue to be identified and addressed by the international community. So while the Taskforce will officially conclude this year, our work and involvement will continue through the ICPA's important networks, and members. We have felt privileged to be a part of the Taskforce, and while you will learn more about our pilot in the coming months, this will be the last newsletter. We hope you enjoyed the

information that we have provided through these newsletters, including the very interesting articles that we are sharing with you this month.

Taskforce Co-Chairs



Jennifer Oades
Board member, ICPA &
Chairperson,
Parole Board of Canada



Diane Williams
ICPA Treasurer

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- Rosemary Caruana
(Australia)
- Denise Robinson
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- Stephen Pitts
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- Melissa Hamilton
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- Kelley Blanchette
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- Mary Mbau
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SPOTLIGHT FEATURE: STEPPING STONES

By Louise Hopkins, Senior Clinician, Rehabilitation Programs Branch

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Women represent a minority of people incarcerated (Walmsley, 2017), however this number has also grown in recent years (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2020). Stepping Stones is a program developed and run by the South Australian Department for Correctional Services which addresses this need for a new approach to working with women which does not assume that existing men's programs will be a good fit for women.

What sets Stepping Stones apart from the Department's other programs?

Women led the development of Stepping Stones.

In 2018, the South Australian Department for Correctional Services (DCS) convened a Women's Rehabilitation Working Party to guide the development of, a new program to assist women in prison address their offending behaviour. Members of the working party included women in DCS from diverse cultural, clinical and academic backgrounds. These women included an Aboriginal Elder, clinicians, managers, an evaluator, and policy makers. The working party also included the Manager of Integrated Programs, Women's Safety Service, South Australia, a service which supports women and their children who are experiencing domestic and family violence. There were also two men, with roles in program development, support, and evaluation, in the working party.

Consultation with women in prison

A common theme in the feedback received from participants of past programs was a need to talk more about domestic violence. As one participant stated: "There is a little bit on DV, but I think that needs to be a lot bigger as all of us have experienced DV." Many of the women interviewed as part of this consultation found a program that was based on DBT helpful but found an existing program for addressing offending — which was adapted from a program designed for men — unhelpful. Taking such feedback into account, Stepping Stones includes skills taught in DBT and focuses on experiences of trauma and domestic violence.

Gender responsivity and the approach

Many women in prison have complex histories of trauma and victimisation, mental and physical health issues, and substance abuse as features of their pathway into offending. Because these factors are intertwined, treatment of any one of these factors is likely to involve the treatment of others. Stepping Stones is a CBT program which adheres to RNR principles; however, is not limited to countering criminal thought patterns. Rather, this program emphasises the relevance of environmental factors and structural inequalities including how these affect and manifest in women's lives. With this focus, women are encouraged to take ownership of their own choices in a way that contextualises their experiences and offers hope for the future. For example, exploring with participants what they are responsible for and what they are not responsible for (structural factors) and acknowledging the impact of power imbalances – including in a prison setting – to promote empowerment and self-efficacy. Desistance literature is also drawn upon, particularly to avoid delineating between “us” (law-abiding citizens) and “them” (offenders) in support of a re-authoring of a pro-social narrative and robust identity in line with participants' values.

What are we hoping to achieve in the program?

The program's aim is to reduce reoffending. With consideration of intersectional factors, however, such as poverty, racism, and sexism, the program's aims also extend beyond this. Stepping Stones invites women to consider where they are now, where they have been, and where they hope to go, and seeks to empower women to make broader positive and pro-social changes in their lives.

What do the participants say about the program? Possible future developments.

The piloting of the Stepping Stones program has been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, some women have completed the program and offered feedback. Most former participants were positive about the program. The aspects of the program participants identified as being most useful were:

- managing triggers and understanding emotions
- mindfulness and grounding techniques
- goal setting

Some women reported feeling vulnerable talking about their trauma history in the group context as well as addressing this in prison. This gives us reason to consider further how we raise the topic of trauma during the program. Perhaps some aspects of the program would be better facilitated individually.

Most of the women interviewed emphasised their need for further intervention around their drug use, particularly on release. It may be helpful to offer complementary sessions with external agencies that can offer post-release support during the program. Further exploration could include independent accessing of material, perhaps in the form of workbooks. Some women may benefit from fostering a more individual approach.

An additional future direction may be the development of an Aboriginal women's program, in light of the compounding impacts of colonisation, displacement and intergenerational trauma experienced by Aboriginal women.

References

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KEY PROGRAM INDICATORS AND COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS CONSIDERATIONS FOR DECISION MAKERS

The Taskforce is pleased to share a guide recently developed in conjunction with the Moss Group entitled “*Key Program Indicators and Cost-benefit Analysis Considerations for Decision makers*”. This guide was developed as a resource and reference tool for criminal justice policymakers, practitioners, program providers when developing evaluation frameworks grounded in Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) and Cost Effectiveness Analysis (CEA) methodologies. The guide examines high-level methodologies and considerations for those involved in developing gender responsive and community based programs for women. With the current pandemic, and spending levels by all levels of government at record levels, we expect there will be an increased emphasis on cost-effective decision making at every level of the criminal justice system. As such, this guide is intended to be informative, and of assistance to the various decision makers involved.

[Click here for full PDF](#)



FEATURED JURISDICTION: GHANA

Strategic risk communication intervention in the management of covid-19 in ghana prisons service - best practice.

Dr. Lawrence Kofi Acheampong

Deputy Superintendent of Prisons-Medical Director Ghana Prisons Service

INTRODUCTION

The Ghana Prisons Service is a security agency under the Ministry of Interior mandated by the 1992 Constitution of Ghana to provide safe custody, welfare and when practicable reformation and rehabilitation.

The Service is a key stakeholder in the overall security, public safety and also an important player in the Criminal Justice System of Ghana.

The Prisons Service has physical presence in all the regions in Ghana. This is made up of 43 Prison establishments, one (1) Senior Correctional Centre (SCC), one (1) Prison Officers Training School and an Administrative Headquarters in Cantonments, Accra.

The Prisons in Ghana have a total inmate population of 15,528 comprising of 1.2% females, 98.8% males, 7.2% Foreigners and 0.9% juveniles.

The service has not only succeeded in establishing a Health Directorate but has registered the Prison Health System under the Ghana Association of Quasi Health Institution (GAQHI), which is one of the agencies under the Ministry of Health (MOH).

STRATEGIC RISK COMMUNICATION INTERVENTION

Risk communication is an integral component of public health risk management.

It is focused on dialogue with those affected and concerned and strives to ensure communication strategies are evidence based.

After the detailed hygiene protocol implemented in all the prisons in the country, the service seeing the importance for risk communication as a unique and important public health intervention in prisons, formed a RAPID RESPONSE TEAM FOR COVID-19 with a subcommittee on RISK COMMUNICATION.

The strategy of this intervention was a two-prong approach on three thematic areas.

THE TWO PRONG APPROACH:

A. This is aimed at the establishment of a two-level risk communication team comprising of:

1. a subcommittee of Risk Communication at the highest level of the COVID-19 Rapid Response Team at the Prisons Headquarters and
2. establishment of risk communication teams (Officers) in all the 46 prisons establishments.

B. The second arm in this approach is aimed to:

1. to train all Officers and
2. at least all Inmates Leadership

All the members of the two respective teams underwent a trainer-of-trainers seminar from the various Regional Health Directorates with support from their District/Municipal Health Directorate as well as the Ghana Psychological Association (GPA) with sponsorship from the COVID-19 private sector Fund.

The team is made up of Health Professionals, Psychologist, Communication experts, Chaplains and the Operation Officers In Charge.

The teams are to spearhead the effective dissemination of preventive, security and safety information with regards to COVID-19 to reduce the already heightened tensions posed by this novel coronavirus.

This intervention in confined centers is significant to ameliorate any rumors, speculation and misconceptions.

THREE THEMATIC AREAS

The three thematic areas tailored to suit the risk-reductive strategies in the dynamism of Prison management and Infection Control of COVID-19 encompassed:

1. Medical Etiology, transmission, Prevention and disease Surveillance in prisons
2. Information risk assessment and dissemination in prisons and
3. Psychosocial and stigma reduction among Officers and Inmate.

After the formation of the risk communication teams in the various prisons, the subcommittee of the Rapid Response Team on Risk Communication had a virtual prioritization, onsite monitoring and practical trainings on case management approaches at selected volatile prisons based on risk assessments.

All inmates leaders and cell leaders were trained separately by the Risk Communication teams.

Training of Inmates Leadership is a pivotal strategy to promote constant evidenced-based explanations to their fellow prisoners in their cells and blocks to carry on with the education by the local Risk Communication Team with feedback to the COVID-19 information desk.

OUTCOME

This intervention has heightened the culture of hygiene in all prisons in Ghana and has given all health professionals and prisons staff/dependents the opportunity to learn and increase their knowledge in infectious disease prevention in public health emergencies.

Due to the pragmatic nature of the policies put in place, it has prevented the outbreak of the virus in any of the prisons in the country.

CONCLUSION

Aside the preventive protocols put in place, Amnesty granted to over one thousand inmates, pragmatic emergency and contingency plans, disease surveillance and case management protocols, Risk Communication is the unique intervention in prisons public health crisis management that ameliorate any negative impact this pandemic could have generated.

Prison health is seen as helping build a healthier society, as this important contribution reduces the health inequalities and aids in successful resettlement of inmates after they have been discharged.

RESEARCH

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RESOURCES

Crest Consultancy – Report: Counting the Cost of Maternal Imprisonment.
<https://www.crestadvisory.com/post/report-counting-the-cost-of-maternal-imprisonment>

IN THE NEWS

Home Was a Nightmare, Then Home Was Prison. Finally Home Is Now a Refuge.

<https://www.motherjones.com/crime-justice/2021/10/home-was-a-nightmare-then-home-was-prison-finally-home-is-now-a-refuge/>

A radical housing program in the San Francisco Bay is recognizing how women who killed their abusers deserve dignity—and a second chance. (USA)

'Revolving door': Traveller women imprisoned for minor offences such as driving without tax.

<https://www.thejournal.ie/tough-start-pt-4-traveller-children-justice-5577440-Oct2021/>

TRAVELLER WOMEN ARE being imprisoned for minor first time offences such as driving without tax, shoplifting and crimes linked to addiction, an Oireachtas committee has heard. Almost one quarter – 25% – of the women at the Dóchas Centre women's prison were Traveller women, according to a report from the Office of the Inspector of Prisons in 2019, despite adult Travellers making up just 0.5% of the total population of the country. (Ireland)

Jailing of most mothers for non-violent crimes should stop, says report.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/oct/25/jailing-of-most-mothers-for-non-violent-crimes-should-stop-says-report>

UK consultancy also, for first time, uncovers huge cost of putting children in care during sentences. (United Kingdom)

How Education Helps Women Incarcerates Resist 'Inhumanity' of Prison.

<https://thecrimereport.org/2021/10/22/how-education-helps-women-incarcerates-resist-inhumanity-of-prison/>

American prisons are profoundly inhospitable for incarcerated women — but prison education programs can help women on the inside resist the inhumanity of incarceration, say Kathy Boudin and Judith Clark, two formerly incarcerated women advocating for reform. (USA)

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<https://icpa.org/projects/taskforces/beyond-prisons-taskforce.html>