

REPORT

Review of ZPCS's Rehabilitation and Community Reintegration Programme

Province: Mashonaland East

Dates: 11 November 2019



1. Introduction

The Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission continued with the assessment of the impact of the Zimbabwe Prison and Correctional Service Department 's rehabilitation and community reintegration programme for female inmates and ex-convicts. The following report focuses on Mashonaland East Province.

The activity was implemented with support from **the United Nations Development Programme** under the programme **human rights monitoring missions**. The aim is to strengthen the ZPCS rehabilitation and community re-integration programme for inmates during incarceration and post prison life thus contributing to the enjoyment of human rights.

In Mashonaland East, the activity was conducted in Marondera and twelve (12) former female ex-convicts from the province attended. Participants shared their lived experiences during the rehabilitation and community rehabilitation programme.

2. Objectives

- i. To assess the ZPCS's rehabilitation and community reintegration programme in Mashonaland East Province
- ii. To raise awareness to ex-inmates in Mashonaland East Province on the role and mandate of ZHRC
- iii. To document challenges being faced in the rehabilitation and reintegration of female ex-convicts in Mashonaland East with the aim of strengthening the programme
- iv. To produce a report with recommendations on respective issues or concerns on ZPCS rehabilitation and Community reintegration programme to Government and Parliament

3. Methodology

3.1.1. Participatory methodologies- The interactions were participatory in nature with all participants be given time to share their views.

3.1.2. Desk review of rehabilitation and community reintegration in the prison system

3.1.3. Presentations by ZPCS and ZHRC on human rights related issues for inmates and ex inmates, the ZPCS rehabilitation and community re-integration programme in Mashonaland East Province

3.2. National, Regional and International Instruments

- The Constitution of Zimbabwe
- Prisons Act of Zimbabwe
- Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, 1955
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4. Observations and Findings



Fig 1. Participants deliberating on workshop expectations

4.1. ZPCS Rehabilitation and Community Reintegration Programme

The Provincial Rehabilitation Officer outlined the work that ZPCS is doing in the area of rehabilitation and community reintegration in Mashonaland East Province. These consists of following components:

4.1.1. Education and skills development-

- tree cutting and grafting in Mashonaland East-
- 9 females set for 2018 exams and all passed.
- Mashonaland East have a building brigade/ construction group. In 2019, 20 inmates graduated on construction and some are pending for trade testing.
- They also provide agricultural practical skills development

4.1.2. **Counselling services-** there is a counselling room at St Thomas Prison in Marondera

4.1.3. **Creative and performing arts.** They have groups that are hired out and proceeds are ploughed back into the system

4.1.4. Sport and recreational activities

4.1.4 **Home Visits.** The province conducts home visits that aim to prepare relatives for the eventual release and reintegration of an inmate while the follow up visits aims to monitor reintegration process. The programme is however hamstrunged by resource challenges.

Home visits in 2019

Murehwa	4 initial and follow up
Mutoko	2
Marondera	4
Chivhu	2
Goromonzi	1

Family week-targeted at those who do not receive visits from relatives

5. Success Stories

ZPCS reported that Populations of females that go into prisons is limited in Mashonaland East. This impacts success of rehabilitation and reintegration programme as amnesty tend to release all of them back into the community before completion of the programmes. However, the following were noted to be success stories.

- Mashonaland East Province has a number of performing art groups- last they signed a contract with Metro Studios and released an album.
- There is a band that is hired and proceeds assist ZPCS and inmates
- 9 females set for 2018 exams and all passed.
- Mashonaland East have a building brigade/ construction group. In 2019, 20 inmates graduated on construction and some are pending for trade testing
- Partnership with Child line on young offenders. For bail and referral to Hwahwa young offenders
- Pregnant and Nursing mothers are given special care including children of jailed families to reduce pressure and thinking by mothers.
- Star Brite female ex inmate success

6.Challenges

6.1. Correctional facilities not sensitize to the needs of females. St Thomas is undergoing refurbishment of a cell for women. There is need to increase correctional facilities that are sensitize to the needs of females

6.2. Financial Constraints and lack of Sporting Equipment

Financial constraint and the depressed economic environment has resulted in the ZPCs not able to provide sporting equipment and kits for inmates in Mashonaland East Province. It was reported that there is no netball, volleyball and soccer balls for inmates to use.

6.3. Prescribed aid with conditions hindering rehabilitation- organizations and churches donating prescribed aid like DS TVs that play only SDC preaching. There are also Portuguese books that were donated but are not of an assistance.

6.4. Specific Community Service intervention for women who commits crimes. At the moment community service sentences are general and provides for general approach by offenders. There are no female tailored community service activities for those who are sentenced so.

6.5. Amnesty and Staff Shortages

ZPCS noted that the rehabilitation and reintegration unit does not have enough staff. The announced nature of Presidential amnesty also affects reintegration and reintegration activities for those serving sentences as activities abruptly come to an unplanned end

6.6. Staff issues- ZPCS also complained of limited refresher courses for staff to adapt to changing needs of clients and changing times. In one station, Chivhu Prison, there is no rehabilitation staff. There is need to equip the few available with new skills and technology to make their work easy.

7. Plenary Discussions

Participants aired the following issues

- 7.1. Need for comprehensive counselling. One participant cried out through her testimony as she continues to grapple with her traumatic experience
- 7.2. Some were grateful to ZPCS rehabilitation and reintegration programme for
 - 7.2.1. have converted to Christianity
 - 7.2.2. Improvement on dancing and good inter relations with other people. Good agricultural skills/gardening.
 - 7.2.3. Behaviour change
 - 7.2.4. Improvement in knitting
 - 7.2.5. Some were well received while some faced challenges in being accepted back into the community.
 - 7.2.6. Academic achievements

Participants recommended ZHRC to be more visible and raising inmates' human rights issues throughout Zimbabwe. They also urged ZHRC to advocate for more resource allocation to prisons and their activities in order to increase the enjoyment of human rights.

8. Challenges faced by returning citizen from prison

8.1. Limited employment opportunities

Despite attaining five "O" levels, there are limited employment opportunities. For example, the government recruitment process vet all candidates for previous criminal records, thus shutting the door for them.

8.2. Challenges in being accepted back into the community or families

It is important to plan the release of offenders such that they will receive uninterrupted services and support upon their return to the community. This is achieved by prison officials establishing the necessary linkages and collaborating with health agencies and various community-based service providers. Unfortunately, ZPCS is understaffed especially within the rehabilitation and community reintegration programme.

9. CONCLUSION

ZHRC acknowledges the critical work being undertaken by the ZPCS in rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates. However, rehabilitation and reintegration programmes are being short changed by absence of meaningful funding because the ZPCS is channeling most of its resources into the upkeep of inmates. The rehabilitation and reintegration unit does not have a budgetary allocation within the ZPCS. Despite staff shortages, ZPCS will increase efficiency, if the few officers available are capacitated with advanced automation and Information, communication and technologies consistent with their work.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Zimbabwe Prison and Correctional Services

- 10.1.1. To consider a budgetary vote/allocation for the rehabilitation and community re integration unit
- 10.1.2. To expedite automation, mechanization and provision of ICT in rehabilitation and reintegration
- 10.1.3. To initiate strategic partnerships with corporate worlds with a view to improve livelihoods of sentenced females and those who complete their sentences
- 10.1.4. To expedite the construction of Open prison in Mash East
- 10.1.5. To strengthen Community Service strengthening and serving females
- 10.1.6. To consider increasing mobility of rehabilitation of staff by providing **motor bikes** that are less costly on fuel and maintenance.

10.2 Ministry of Finance and Economic Development/ Ministry of Justice, legal and parliamentary Affairs

- 6.1.1.** To increase budgetary allocation for ZPCS to implement re-integration for inmates from the start when an inmate is incarcerated up to discharge. This should facilitate more home visits.

10.3 Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare

- 10.3.1.** To review government recruitment policy especially restriction of employment for those with criminal records. Inmates spent most of their time pursuing academic studies while in prison and some pass the basic 5 'O' level requirement by government. However, such restrictive policies defeat the whole idea of rehabilitation for community reintegration.