

CHAPTER 7

EMPIRICAL STUDY AND FINDINGS OF THE QUALITATIVE STUDY

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to present the findings of the second phase, namely the qualitative research of this study. The empirical study comprises of data gathered by means of expert interviews with the aim of compiling an inter-disciplinary action plan for the prevention and management of recidivism. The action plan will be presented in Chapter 8.

In this chapter, a brief summary of the research process followed during the quantitative phase of this study will be outlined, followed by the presentation and discussion of the findings of the qualitative study.

7.2 SUMMARY OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As stated in Chapters 1 and 5 a combined quantitative-qualitative approach was utilised for this study by making use of methodological triangulation, specifically Cresswell's two-phase model. By means of the two-phased model this study was divided in to a separate quantitative and qualitative phase. The research methodology of phase one, the quantitative phase of the study was discussed in Chapter 5 (point 5.3). In phase two, the qualitative phase of the study, interviews were conducted with experts in the field of crime prevention and management. These

interviews were based on the profile of the South African recidivist (see Chapter 6) and were aimed at the compilation of an inter-disciplinary action plan for the prevention and management of recidivism. Experts utilised as respondents in this study were identified by making use of the snowball sampling technique. The respondents who agreed to participate in this study completed a consent form whereby the voluntary nature of their participation was confirmed (see Attachment 4).

The interviews were conducted according to a semi-structured interview schedule (see Attachment 2). All interviews were tape recorded by the researcher. Data were transcribed and analysed through the identification of themes that were categorised.

The following experts were included in the study:

Table 21: Respondents for qualitative research

RESPONDENT	ORGANISATION	POSITION	QUALIFICATIONS	YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN CRIME PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT
Mr. Mike Batley	Restorative Justice Centre	Executive Director	BA Social Work	9 years
Dr. W Coetzee	Consultant Previously involved with Department of Correctional Services, Technicon SA and UNISA		DPhil Education	35 years
Prof. J Prinsloo	UNISA - Institute for Criminological Sciences	Head of Division	D Litt et Phil	27 years
Ms. A Hesselink-Louw	UNISA - Institute for Criminological Sciences	Researcher Lecturer	MA criminology	6 years

RESPONDENT	ORGANISATION	POSITION	QUALIFICATIONS	YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN CRIME PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT
Ms. A Smit	NICRO - Gauteng	Provincial Programme Specialist - Diversion	MA social work	6 Years
Dr. C Bezuidenhout	Department Criminology - University of Pretoria	Senior Lecturer	DPhil (Criminology)	11 years
Dr. A van der Westhuizen	SAVF, Department of Correctional Services	Volunteer Researcher	DPhil (Social work)	8 years
Ms. C Domingo-Swarts	CSIR - Crime Prevention Centre	Criminologist	BA(Honours) Criminology	7 years
Ms. M du Plessis	CSIR - Crime Prevention Centre	Criminologist. Project Manager	BA(Honours) Criminology	7 years
Dr. J Coetzee	Department of Correctional Services	Director: Formal Education	D.Phil (Education)	7 Years
Ms. Estelle Matthee	Department of Correctional Services	Assistant Director: Curriculum Administration	TED Education Management	12 Years
Mr. F Strydom	Department of Correctional Services	Deputy Director: Formal Education	Honours: Education Management	21 Years

Subsequently the findings from this phase of the research will be presented and discussed.

7.3 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS OF THE QUALITATIVE PHASE OF THE STUDY

As already indicated this phase of the research study consisted of data accumulation by means of expert interviews. Five themes were identified for discussion during the interviews, namely:

- Respondents perception of recidivism as concept;
- Prevention and management of recidivism from the perspective of the profile of the South African recidivist;
- Assessment of the need for statistics on recidivism;
- Identification of elements that should be part of an inter-disciplinary action plan for recidivism; and
- The identification of role players and partnerships that the inter-disciplinary team should comprise of.

The aim of theme one was to establish a shared cognition regarding the concept recidivism. Theme three was included in the schedule in order to highlight the lack of a statistical record on recidivism as well as to determine if a need for such a statistical record exists. The other themes were explored in order to identify actions, strategies and role players that should be included in an inter-disciplinary action plan for the prevention and management of recidivism. These themes will henceforth be respectively discussed.

7.3.1 The respondents' perception of recidivism as concept

In Chapter 2 it was established that recidivism as concept is characterised by the inconsequent use and dissimilar interpretations thereof. From this perspective the researcher

deemed it necessary to determine the experts understanding of recidivism as concept. However, it should be taken into consideration that recidivism is a relatively unknown field in South Africa. The only expert on recidivism that the researcher is aware of in South Africa is professor Prinsloo who conducted a study on this subject in 1995. The other respondents that were included in this study were therefore not necessary experts in the field of recidivism but rather in the field of crime prevention and management.

Findings indicated that the majority of respondents associated recidivism as concept with re-offending or repetitive offending. It was confirmed by the respondents that uncertainty on the concept recidivist would remain if it was not scientifically addressed and uniformly conceptualised.

With regard to utilising the type of crime and sentence as criteria for conceptualising recidivism, mixed viewpoints were noted. Some of the respondents concurred with the researcher's definition of recidivism, namely that the phenomenon is inclusive of all types of crime whilst others felt that a recidivist is a person who specialises in a specific type of crime. In this regard a need was identified to differentiate between the recidivist, repeat offender, chronic offender and career criminal.

In relation to the type of sentence associated with recidivism as phenomenon the majority of respondents concurred with the

researcher's viewpoint, namely that either a prison or community correction sentence should act as classification criteria for recidivism. Two of the respondents were of the opinion that it would be beneficial for purposes of prevention if an offender's tendency to relapse into criminal behaviour is already documented before the judicial intervention phase commences. In this regard they specifically referred to juveniles that were included in diversion programmes due to criminal offending.

7.3.2 Prevention and management of recidivism

Data indicated that the prevention and management of recidivism could be divided into three phases, namely prevention, intervention and re-integration. The intervention phase refers to actions aimed at therapeutic or developmental growth of the recidivist. For each phase the research respondents identified prevention and management strategies. Each identified phase will subsequently be discussed.

• Prevention

Regarding prevention one of the respondents noted that in itself the rationale behind prevention is flawed. This view is based on the premises that to prevent crime, it must be present in the first place. This respondent furthermore stated that the type of crime would determine the type of prevention strategy required. The general opinion of all the respondents was that prevention of recidivism could be achieved by means of proactive strategies. The aim of these strategies should be to

promote individual and community based moral regeneration. The moral reintegration initiative should commence within the systems where the formation of behaviour patterns is rooted, namely, community, family, church and educational facilities. In this regard one of the respondents emphasised the restoration of the social fabric in the community. He views social fabric as the glue that keeps a community together and refers to interfamilial bonds and relationships as well as the shared responsibility that exist amongst members of a particular community. Linked to this is the general opinion that was noted amongst the respondents, namely the need for moral regeneration in order to prevent crime. The rationale behind moral regeneration, according to the respondents, is rooted in the socialisation of community members in pro-social values and norms (compare White Paper on Social Welfare: 1997:11 & Howes, 1996:37). Based on this perspective the opinion was that change should literally begin with each community member by accepting responsibility for their own behaviour as well as the development of social responsibility. In this regard one respondent stated that social responsibility is a reflection of the humanitarian aspect that is unique to humans and that separates people from animals.

A further aspect that was identified by several of the respondents was the development of infrastructures within communities to facilitate an individual's development. These infrastructures should create an enabling environment to assist the individual to develop holistically on all levels of his/her social

functioning (compare Discussion Paper on Correctional Services in South Africa, 2003:18).

The general consensus amongst respondents was that moral regeneration should start at a young age, for instance in schools. One respondent emphasised the importance of pro-active early intervention initiatives at school. She stated that these initiatives should be aimed at addressing high-risk behaviour as well as the building of personal pro-social moral values. She further emphasised that the focus should also fall on addressing inadequacies within the community, for instance addressing the culture of violence that is currently prevalent in South Africa. Another respondent concurred with these prevention strategies and added that parental guidance skills should also be developed and positive role models should be created within communities. She further emphasised the importance of creating alternatives to delinquent values, stating that the community tend to identify and focus on negative behaviour without highlighting positive alternatives. As an example she mentioned the "Don't do crime" initiative stating that no alternative of what a person should do is indicated. In this regard she suggests that infrastructures should be developed within communities that create opportunities and act as positive alternatives for negative behaviour patterns.

The majority of respondents stated that prevention of recidivism should also take place in the sentencing phase of the judicial process. This view is also in line with the Financial Policy for

Developmental Social Welfare Services (1999:12). In this regard one respondent stated that the retributive approach promotes the victim's role that was identified as being characteristic of the recidivist (compare McGuire, 1995:145). He stated that a sentence is laid down without the offender taking part in this process, thus being denied the opportunity to take responsibility for his/her actions. The majority of the respondents were furthermore of the opinion that the aim of a sentence should be to prevent further offending (compare Discussion Paper on Correctional Services in South Africa, 2003:18). In this regard it was emphasised that a prison sentence could contribute to, or maintain recidivistic behavioural patterns. This point of view is based on the fact that whilst being in prison an offender is further isolated from conventional society and is further subjected to a system where pro-criminal values are prevalent. The respondents therefore concurred that an offender should only be sentenced to imprisonment as a last resort (compare Van Der Westhuizen, 2002).

- **Intervention**

From the purpose of this study intervention refers to actions aimed at addressing inadequacies in the recidivist's social functioning by means of therapeutic and developmental orientated actions and focus on offenders that were classified as recidivists.

The majority of the respondents concurred that the first step in intervention programmes is the assessment of the recidivist. One

of the respondents emphasised the importance of an in-depth assessment in order to determine each offender's unique set of causative factors that his/her recidivistic behavioural patterns are rooted in. Another respondent concurs, stating that this individual assessment should be the point of departure for therapeutic intervention. She was of the opinion that a specific therapeutic programme should be developed based on the profile of the recidivist. This therapeutic programme could be implemented within the method of group work. She was furthermore of the opinion that the programme should be flexible enough to accommodate need-based individual therapy, if required. Irrespective of the method of intervention the respondents concurred that programmes should be client centred and need directed in order to address the offender's recidivistic behaviour patterns.

Respondents were of the opinion that the presentation of programmes should not only be the responsibility of the Department of Correctional Services but should be conducted in partnership with non-governmental and community based organisations such as NICRO and the Restorative Justice Centre (compare Discussion Paper on Correctional Services in South Africa, 2003:18).

Respondents suggested that the following aspects should receive attention in a therapeutic programme for recidivism, namely:

- Reality therapy in order to assist the recidivist to become aware of his/her current situation as well as

behaviour patterns that contribute to his/her backsliding into offending. The aim should furthermore be to address the gap between the reality and the recidivist's unrealistic cognition regarding his/her relationships, abilities and future expectations.

- The role of victim-offender mediation as means to develop empathy was emphasised by one of the respondents. He was of the opinion that it is more difficult for a person to offend once he/she has insight into the impact of the deed on the victim.
- Attention should be given to the rectifying of "thinking errors", as referred to by one of the respondents. The aim of such a programme should be to focus on rectifying pro-criminal cognitions, for example those associated with the offender perceiving him-/herself as a victim in society.
- Emphasis should be placed on the development of the recidivist's emotional intelligence in order to assist him/her to deal with his/her destructive emotions, for example anger, frustration and feelings of isolation. In addition focus should not only be placed on destructive emotions but also on equipping recidivists to experience positive emotions such as love and empathy.
- Life skills and developmental programmes should form part of the programmes which, address recidivism. These programmes should be in touch with the recidivist's behavioural functioning and geared to

develop the necessary skills for the recidivist to cope with and function in conventional society.

- Lastly, emphasis was placed on programmes to gear the recidivist for their reintegration into society. For this purpose one possibility could be where parallel programmes are offered, for instance where NICRO could present a pre-release programme while the recidivist is still in prison. This programme could then continue after his/her placement on parole.
- Respondents indicated that a relapse prevention plan should be part of the pre-release programme. The focus of relapse prevention falls on creating insight within the recidivist with regard to areas in their social functioning that contribute to their re-offending. A programme aimed at behavioural modification to prevent a relapse into criminal behaviour should also be offered.

Even though all the respondents concurred that intervention should not only be the responsibility of the Department of Correctional Services they emphasised the important role that all members in this department play as role models and change agents. According to the respondents, the Department of Correctional Services needs restructuring in order to facilitate rehabilitation and development.

It is apparent that the suggested programmes are directed at the recidivist's offending behaviour as well as the

development of skills in order to cope and function in conventional society. The role of partnerships in order to render these programmes is vital for successful implementation.

- **Reintegration**

The last phase, which was indicated by the respondents as being of importance in the prevention and management of recidivism, is the reintegration phase. Regarding reintegration most of the respondents emphasised the role that stigmatisation plays in the recidivist's reintegration into society. They stated that this could be addressed by sensitising community members towards offenders' reintegration into society as well as the building of partnerships with CBO's and religious organisations to act as support systems in the reintegration process.

The majority of the respondents indicated that an infrastructure should be created which could assist the recidivist in his/her transition from imprisonment to society. Offenders are isolated from society during their imprisonment and when released from prison, they are faced with reintegration into the high tempo demanded from society. It often is the case that recidivists do not have the necessary skills or support systems to be able to cope with this transition. In this regard one of the respondents suggested that community corrections residential centres (CCRC) could provide such a transition facility. She stated

that the aim of these centres would be to meet the recidivist's primary needs in society, such as housing, food as well as assist with finding employment. Services that are rendered in these centres should include monitoring, support and intervention programmes. Alternatively the respondent suggested that recidivists should periodically, as part of pre-release preparation, be placed in a CCRC before his/ her placement on parole. Suggested programmes that should be included in this transition phase are amongst others, life skills programmes and programmes which promote behavioural accountability. Job creation projects should also play an important role in employment training to equip the recidivist for the open labour market.

In summary, findings from the qualitative research on the prevention and management of recidivism indicated that in order to prevent and manage recidivism, prevention and intervention actions as well as effective reintegration of the recidivist into society are vital. These actions can only realise if partnerships are created between governmental, non-governmental and community-based infrastructures.

7.3.3 Assessment of the need for statistics on recidivism

All of the respondents agreed that there is a need in South Africa to keep a statistical record of recidivism figures. The aim of recording recidivism figures should be to measure the effectiveness of prevention and management service

delivery as well as to assist with the development of prevention and management strategies for recidivism. One respondent further indicated that statistics should also sensitise community members to the impact that recidivism has on the crime figures in South Africa as well as act as an agent to activate the community, NGO's, CBO's and policy makers to initiate change.

On the question of whom should take responsibility for the keeping of the statistical records for recidivism, all the respondents indicated it should be a joint effort between the Department of Social Development, the Department of Justice and the Department of Correctional Services who should also act as primary agent. It was furthermore suggested that a central database should be created that could be utilised by relevant role players. The aim of a centralised database on recidivism would be to enable role players to effectively prevent and manage recidivism. In order to reach this aim it is necessary that the statistics on recidivism should be a true reflection of the phenomenon and not be a politicised version of the crime statistics.

In summary, it can be stated that a centralised database on recidivism will play an important role in prevention and management strategies for recidivism. The statistical record on recidivism will reflect the extent of the phenomenon and from this perspective would guide prevention and management strategies.

7.3.4 Identification of strategies that should be part of an inter-disciplinary action plan for recidivism

As in the case with the prevention and management strategies for recidivism, the respondents agreed that an action plan should also be inclusive of phases, which address prevention, intervention and reintegration strategies.

The respondents were of the opinion that prevention strategies should focus on moral regeneration, the restoration of social fabric and the development of social responsibility within the community. Opportunities and infrastructures should be developed in communities to enable and facilitate personal growth and development, for example in the field of adult education and employment related skills. This could be accomplished through the development of partnerships with community-based organisations with a view to create job opportunities and render specialised therapeutic services. In this regard one of the respondents suggested that tax benefits should be granted to organisations that provide employment opportunities to assist with the offender's reintegration into society.

Intervention programmes should focus on the development of skills in order to assist the recidivist to be independent and successfully integrated into society. This is inclusive of social and employment related skills. In this regard, one

respondent emphasised that a balance should be maintained between knowledge, aptitude and skills development. Another respondent emphasised the importance of in-depth assessment as part of the intervention strategy to address recidivism. Re-integration programmes should be need directed and based on characteristics that are unique to the profile of the recidivist. One respondent emphasised that moral redirection should play an important role in prevention and intervention programmes.

Regarding the intervention programmes, the majority of the respondents emphasised the importance of continuous evaluation of these programmes in order to assess its effectiveness. The importance of continued research was also highlighted in order to develop scientifically based intervention programmes and strategies.

The respondents concurred that a reintegration strategy to facilitate the recidivist's reintegration into society should be developed. As part of such a strategy it was suggested that community-based support systems, such as CCRC's, should be developed to assist the recidivist with his/her reintegration into society. Services rendered at such a centre should be inclusive of therapeutic and developmental intervention programmes, support and skills development. One respondent alluded to the fact that it is not only of importance to develop skills but also to create job opportunities. In this regard partnerships should be established with relevant

organisations in the community. Respondents further emphasised the constant monitoring of the recidivist in the community. However, monitoring initiatives should not only be aimed at crime prevention but also on providing support to the recidivist.

Respondents concurred that an action for the prevention and management of recidivism only has value when it is enacted upon and implemented as an intervention strategy. It was furthermore stated that such an intervention strategy should be a long-term strategy that is not bound to political or personal agendas. In this regard two of the respondents referred to the lack of implementation of the national crime prevention strategy. Respondents suggested that an interdisciplinary action plan for the prevention and management of recidivism should create the platform to co-ordinate individual efforts. Networking should take place between role players in order to prevent the fragmentation and duplication of services. This includes the co-ordination of economic efforts.

Role players who implement the action plan for the prevention and management of recidivism should include various professional disciplines (see Point 7.3.5).

Lastly, the importance of continuous evaluation of an action plan was emphasised in order to increase the effectiveness thereof. In conjunction with evaluation activities, continued

research should be conducted in order to explore and develop alternative interventions.

7.3.5 Role players and partnerships involved in the inter- disciplinary action plan

The respondents who participated in this study concurred that the role players involved in an action plan for the prevention and management of recidivism should be inclusive of various professional disciplines as well as volunteers from the community. Social workers, psychologists, educationalists, religious workers and criminologists were mentioned as examples of various disciplines that could be included in the action plan. It was furthermore highlighted that partnerships should be formed between governmental, non-governmental and community based-organisations such as NICRO and churches. One of the respondents particularly highlighted that the criminal justice cluster, namely the Department of Justice, South African Police Service and the Department of Correctional Services should play an important role in this action plan. The Department of Social Development was also mentioned as an important role player.

Regarding the Department of Correctional Services the respondents held the opinion that intervention services should not only be the responsibility of professional councillors and developmental agents but that all members, inclusive of disciplinary members, should act as change agents. The respondents were of the opinion that the

Department of Justice should also play an important role insofar that sentences should be aimed at personal development and growth and not only retribution. In this regard one respondent suggested that restorative justice principles should be integrated into the penal system.

Some of the respondents indicated that training centres should play an important role by means of continuous research, which could facilitate the recidivist's rehabilitation and reintegration into society. Training centres, in collaboration with community-based volunteers could also render valuable services in this regard.

The respondents concurred that the purpose of an inter-disciplinary action plan is to effectively co-ordinate and manage strategies for the prevention and management of recidivism. In this regard one respondent recommended that the MEC of Safety and Liaison could possibly assist with the co-ordination of organisations involved in this action plan in order to prevent fragmentation and duplication of services. A further recommendation by some of the respondents was that standards for good practice should be identified and adhered to.

7.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the findings and interpretation of the qualitative data of the research study. The data were obtained

and analysed from interviews with experts in the field of crime prevention and management.

Based on the research findings from the qualitative study an inter-disciplinary action plan for the prevention and management of recidivism as well as the conclusions and recommendations for the whole study will be presented in Chapter 8.