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THE ROLE OF COUNSELLING IN SOCIAL INTEGRATION AMONG EX-CONVICTS IN TIGANIA WEST SUB-COUNTY

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ABSTRACT

Counselling plays an important role in re-integration process of ex-convicts after serving their jail terms. They are, however; faced with various challenges that make part of their release hard, therefore, find solace at prisons leading them to re-offending, and subsequent re-conviction. The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of counselling in social integration among ex-convicts in Tigania West. The study was conducted using a census survey design. The target population was 7 probation officers and 40 volunteer probation officers at Tigania Probation Station, and 10 ex-convicts. Primary data was collected using a questionnaire for the probation and volunteer probation officers. All the tools were piloted to ensure appropriate validity and reliability. A pretest of data collection instruments was done on a nearby Meru Central Sub-County that has similar attributes with Tigania West Sub-county. Both qualitative and quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 22. The results were presented using frequency tables, percentages and charts. The study revealed that counselling services were available at the Tigania Probation Station. Furthermore, the study revealed that the types of services offered to the ex-convicts included guidance and counselling services, rehabilitation counselling, mental health counselling services and also substance abuse counselling. The study recommend that additional resources need to be set aside by the national, and county governments towards the rolling out of re-integration programmes of ex-convicts so that they can be properly re-integrated into the society, and that community policing should be strengthened alongside the existing volunteer probation officers' intervention, as this will provide the necessary social support for rehabilitation, reintegration and resettlement.

Key words: Ex-convicts, Jailbirds, Social integration, Re-integration, Re-conviction, Probation Centre, Recidivism.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

According to Roman, Brooks, Lagerson, Chalfin & Tereshchenko (2007), an ex-convict is a person who has been convicted of a criminal offence, and has completed the sentence either in prison or in the community. Home Office figures in the USA show that by the age of 30, one in three men have a criminal record for offences other than those connected with motoring. Having a criminal record can undermine employment prospects so that ex-convicts are often doubly penalized - first by the courts and later in the labour market. Yet, having a job is widely recognized by ex-convicts and those that work with them as the single most important factor in their resettlement and in preventing re-conviction. At the local level, there are a plethora of initiatives, involving a range of statutory and voluntary organizations, addressing the disadvantages faced by ex-convicts in the labour market. This research is designed to support local initiatives by identifying the role played by counselling in re-integration of ex-convicts (MacKenzie, 2012).

It has been estimated that ex-convicts constitute up to one-third of the working population. In addition, approximately 100,000 persons leave prison each year in the United Kingdom. At least 90% of those leaving prisons enter unemployment and they comprise between two and three percent of the average monthly in-flow to the unemployment pool. Ex-convicts are substantially more likely to remain unemployed in the long term rather than taking a number of short-term jobs. For example, an Association of Chief Officers of Probation (ACOP) survey showed that in the first six months of 1997 around 60% of the people under the supervision of the Probation Services were unemployed (Nilsson, 2013).

Ex-convicts confront a range of barriers in the work showcase, commonplace of numerous other impeded jobseekers - poor essential aptitudes, low confidence, now and then conduct and medical issues. Absence of late work experience will aggravate these hindrances for those leaving jail and business separation is regularly detailed. This raises the issue of how to uncover a criminal record to businesses as helpfully as could be allowed. The idea of neighborhood arrangement for ex-convicts bears huge numbers of the signs of the more extensive United Kingdom focal point of dynamic work advertise strategy with its accentuation on the fast re-work of advantage petitioners. All ventures speak to supply-side reactions to work showcase re-coordination, organizing professional direction and help with quest for new employment. In addition, numerous tasks have been built up for under two years and include unassuming levels of aggregate contact time with members (Roman *et al.*, 2007).

Fruitful wrongdoing avoidance procedures must deliver factors adding to the extensive number of violations that are conferred by people who have served a term of detainment and fizzled, upon their discharge, to incorporate into the network as well behaved nationals (Rakis, 2005). Without material, mental, and social help at the season of their discharge, convicts may have an exceptionally troublesome time breaking the cycle of discharge and re-capture. Here and now jail terms and expanded terms of remand in guardianship give constrained chances to effective treatment and intercessions to counteract future re-affronting.

Weaver (2014) opined that lion's share of sentenced convicts have something like one earlier conviction, either in youth or grown-up court and among re-convicts, almost 33% have an earlier conviction and about 75% have various earlier feelings. Network wellbeing makes it basic that administrations and networks create powerful mediations that will help ex-detainees to effectively re-coordinate into the network and stay away from advance culpability. Overseen convict reentry procedures and projects are picking up acknowledgment and may offer a financially savvy method for counteracting wrongdoing. There is, thusly, an expanding center among strategy creators and professionals on recognizing projects and systems that will help detainees effectively reintegrate over into their networks without re-offending.

There is no accord with respect to whether ex-convict reentry bolster programs are viable in helping reintegration and decreasing the rates of re-culpable as the projects are not normally assessed with regards to the results of the individuals who go through the projects and accordingly, there is no confirmation as to their reasonableness or something else. To date, there have been couple of assessments of existing projects (Visher, 2017). Huge numbers of the present activities were produced based on to some degree clashing project assessment discoveries in related restorative zones, for example, the effect of medication treatment, business preparing, advising, and network supervision. While there is a bounty of thoughts about what, in principle, should work, the discoveries of program assessments are frequently vexing. Further, the larger part of re-coordination programs have not been subjected to controlled assessments and fruitful methodologies stay to be recognized and enunciated. Frequently, research and practice appear to proceed onward isolate tracks (Bonta, Wallace-Capretta, Rooney, 2010).

There is some confirmation that constructive re-integration results are accomplished when factors inclining a man to criminal conduct are tended to in a comprehensive form and when the physical and social needs of convicts are bolstered both inside the jail and after the convicts' discharge (Gray et al., 2012). By the by, encouraging convict reintegration is an unpredictable assignment and the effect of particular intercessions is regularly hard to quantify. The wrongdoing avoidance objective of these projects is estimated as far as ex-convict's re-affronting, a measure that is, in itself, risky. Evaluating re-affronting rates are affected by how and when reoffending is estimated. Also, re-culpable might be estimated at various purposes of a known convict's contacts with the criminal equity framework (Taylor, 2013).

Marlowe (2011) explained that counselling or other assistance should form part of a more general programme to monitor and evaluate changes in the attitude, behaviour and environment of the ex-convict. Full consideration should be given to the security requirements of all those involved in delivering the reintegration, and after-care programme due to the fact that the ex-convicts may see the probation officers as an extension of the officers who looked after them, while in jail and thus can easily harm the probation officer if he/she is angered by their action or comments. This can be achieved by ensuring that the former convicts are kept engaged in constructive activities so that they do not return to their old ways. The outcomes are more positive when people are occupied in the middle, associated with instruction courses and professional preparing, religious and mental sessions,

sports exercises and different services. Governments are the primary on-screen characters and in the long haul, have the obligation to lead the restoration and re-reconciliation forms at the key level.

Governments have the obligation to guarantee a legitimate lawful structure to control and direct the plan and usage of re-integration and aftercare programs, including the work and duties of all partners included. Governments must guarantee great administration and the insurance of human rights, and, an empowering domain to encourage reintegration endeavors, particularly in the post-discharge period. Governments ought to distinguish existing practices and procedures that might be adjusted to manage fierce radical convicts, and, think about new measures. The lead government office in the re-joining project ought to have a reasonable order, set destinations, specialist and assets important to accomplish them. Its objectives ought to be reasonable and proper (Taylor, 2013).

Finn and Willoughby (1999) as cited by Lior (2010) saw that administrations are in charge of planning and scattering the fundamental arrangements, and in addition, for guaranteeing the right use of the instruments anticipated. Re-incorporation programs must be arranged with a dream and be very much verbalized ahead of time, contemplating short and long haul destinations, the system and instruments considered, and the obligations and obligations of single performers. Every one of these components must be characterized and imparted unmistakably to all accomplices and partners included, including the general population on the loose. In the plan stage, it is essential to guarantee the accessibility of enough alternatives and instruments to effectively deliver and react to the necessities emerging from singular appraisals. Projects ought to be sufficiently adaptable to permit the fortification of the best highlights and the change of those that are minimum viable.

Families are imperative partners in the re-coordination and aftercare process and it is of basic significance to include them from the earliest starting point of the program, even before the arrival of the ex-convict. Families can likewise be favored conversationalists between specialists, networks and recipients and could play essential checking capacities after discharge. In the dominant part of cases, the family, after the discharge, will assume the liability for recovering the recipient into standard society (Smith, 2007).

Frequently, the family's standard and elements have likely changed while the prisoner was in jail, particularly if the detainee was the main provider. In these cases the family can wind up powerless and money related help might be required. Families may likewise be threatened by radical developments and some assurance measures ought to be arranged. Now and again, the family can be a piece of the issue, for instance, relatives can decline to participate or thwart the program's effect as they could bolster vicious fanatic developments and significantly exchange to them the budgetary guide got. Moreover, the previous prisoner might be viewed as a saint or then again, be dismissed for example, through demonization and shame. In these cases, it is significantly more basic to include and connect with the family in the re-coordination program as right on time as could be expected under the circumstances (Belenko, 2008).

Altschuler, Armstrong and MacKenzie (2009), clarified that detainees encounter self-criticism, and see themselves as indicated by how they think they are seen and treated by the

legislature and alternate partners who connect with them amid the confinement and post-discharge period. The part of networks, fruitful organizations among government and the network for the usage of reintegration and aftercare projects can prompt a superior comprehension between them, over a scope of different issues that may decrease the defenselessness of different individuals from the network to rough radicalism. The administration should look to include all parts of the network with a specific end goal to use every single potential impact. Ronzema and Mayo (2013), declare that the acknowledgment of the program by the recipient is the principle marker of potential re-coordination. At times, checking may proceed for a broadened period after discharge and may include religious and mental advising sessions for both the recipients and their families. In any case, the commitment and the help of the program may proceed until the ex-convict can be autonomous.

It is important to note that no research information is available on the situation in Tigania West Sub-County, yet cases of re-conviction are on the rise according to a report by the Probation, and Aftercare Service under the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government, which shows that there was an increase in reconviction rate of 8% in Tigania West Sub County, against a national average of 4.3% (Onyango, 2013). This makes the location of this study in the county very valuable to the ex-convicts, the community and the Government.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The background literature has elucidated that ex-convicts are in dire need of help in their pursuit to re-integrate. Several institutions such as governments, families and non-governmental organizations have been sighted as players in the aid of ex-convicts to re-integrate. All the players in this noble activity commit many resources to see a smooth transition of ex-convicts from the prison to the society. Counselling has been widely mentioned as a factor most adopted by all the players during the prison term of the convicts and re-integration of the ex-convicts to the society. However, the cases of re-offending have also been cited. This is an indicator that there is a shortfall in achievement of the goals of counselling programmes adopted by all the parties in re-integration of ex-convicts. Most of the studies available and documented are those from western countries. The information on the local sphere is scanty, and therefore, there was a need for a study to bridge these gaps.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of counselling on social integration of ex-convicts in Tigania West Sub-County, Meru County.

1.4 Objective of the Study

To investigate the role of counselling in social integration among ex-convicts in Tigania West Sub-County.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study was carried out to investigate the role of counselling in re-integration of ex-convicts in Tigania West Sub-County. Only the probation officers and volunteer probation

officers based at the Tigania Probation Station took part in the study and excluded probation and volunteer probation officers based in other probation stations within Meru County.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Concept of Counselling

According to the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2008), counselling is described as the job or process of listening to someone and giving them advice about their problems. Counselling is a process between a counsellor and a client that focuses on enhancing the psychological well-being of a client. It takes place when the counselee seeks for counselling and the counsellor, after a careful analysis, applies proper techniques in the counselling process. Consequently, some positive outcomes can be achieved by any counsellor, though not all. It is important to understand that, people handle difficult situations differently and not all members of a community will cope in the same way.

People will experience a wide range of reactions when exposed to stressful events, ranging from mild to the severe events. Some can be amazingly resilient. When a group of people shares a difficult experience, some are able to work through it and move on with their lives, while others require more support.

There are many definitions of the term 'counselling' by different experts in the field, including offering advice and encouragement, sharing wisdom and skills, setting goals and resolving the conflict. According to Feltham (2009), counselling may be considered quite obvious as the form of help for people who need it. Counselling usually involves two people discussing the problems or concerns that one of them has and the other is willing to listen. Another definition of the term is that counselling denotes a professional relationship between a trained counsellor and a client. This relationship is usually person-to-person, although it may sometimes involve more than two people. It is designed to help clients to understand and clarify their views of their living space, and to learn to reach their self-determined goals through meaningful, well-informed choices and through the resolution of problems of an emotional or interpersonal nature.

There are different kinds of counselling and different theories about why and how counselling works. Cognitive behavioural counselling will be used here as an example as the ex-convicts experience a wide range of emotions and thoughts while in jail and even after they are set free. This type of counselling is founded on the belief that in any given situation our thoughts (negative or positive) create our emotions (feelings) and it is due to these feelings that people behave or react in a certain way. Therefore, for behavioural change, one needs to modify one's thoughts and emotions (Gaudiano, 2008).

Counselling can also be defined as a process, organized in a series of steps, which aims to help people cope (deal with or adapt to) better with situations they are facing. This involves helping the individual to understand their emotions and feelings and to help them make positive choices and decisions. Counselling is an approach for assisting people to reduce

initial distress resulting from a difficult situation, to encourage short and long-term adaptive functioning (positive coping), to assist clients in exploring their problems and guide them to solutions and to have clients become aware of the consequences of the experiences and situations they have been/are going through. Counselling is also an approach to assist a person to reduce worry, anxiety or any other negative emotions and to guide clients in their recovery from, and adaptation to, difficult circumstances (Spellings, 2005).

According to International Organization for Migration (IOM), counselling aims at helping people cope better with situations they are facing. This involves helping the individual to cope with their emotions and feelings and to help them make positive choices and decisions. It is an approach to assisting people during and in the immediate aftermath of a pandemic, to reduce initial distress, and to encourage short and long-term adaptive functioning. More importantly, counselling does not assume that all clients will develop severe problems or long-term difficulties in recovery. Instead, it is based on an understanding that pandemic clients and others affected by such events will experience a broad range of early reactions (physical, psychological, behavioral and spiritual). Some of these reactions will cause enough distress to interfere with adjustment to the situation, and recovery may be helped by support from compassionate and caring humanitarian responders. The main aim of counselling is to ease distress, assist with current needs and promote coping skills, not to extract details of difficult experiences and losses (IOM, 2009).

2.2 Need for Counselling

The significance of counselling might be attributed to the mental and social ills emerging from the worry of present day living and demands of society. Regular day to day existence can be testing and unpleasant for even the strongest of kids. Rivalry, harassing, bigotry, family emergencies, scholastic underachievement, peer weight, substance manhandle, packs, suicide and viciousness are nevertheless a couple of the issues looked by understudies. To adapt to these issues, people have swung to instructors and therapists. Directing as a calling is currently better oversaw and controlled and there is an enhanced comprehension of the advantages and breaking points of guiding practice (Rakis, 2005).

Behaviorally-oriented instructors push the requirement for adjustment of conduct, for instance, evacuation of unfortunate conduct or activity or decrease of a disturbing manifestation to such an extent that the individual accomplishes fulfillment and viability (Nilson, 2013). Development situated guides weight on the advancement of possibilities inside the person. Existentially-arranged instructors stretch self-upgrade and self-satisfaction. Clearly, the last can't be acknowledged without first anchoring the previous, in particular, manifestations expulsion or decrease as a fundamental pre-condition for individual viability. MacKenzie (2007) expressed that guiding guides the counselee to achieve emotional wellness. It is recognized as a vital objective of advising by a few people who assert that when one achieves constructive psychological wellness one figures out how to modify and react all the more emphatically to individuals and circumstances. Mueller and Kelly (1962) hold that the advancement and improvement of sentiments of being loved, offering to, and accepting and giving association rewards from other individuals is the real objective of

guiding. Krumboltz, (2015) opined that another objective of guiding is the settling of the issue conveyed to the advisor. This, fundamentally, is a result of the previous objective and suggests positive psychological well-being. In conduct terms, three classes of social objectives can be distinguished, to be specific, changing maladaptive conduct, taking in the choice – making process and avoiding issues.

As indicated by Cardoso (2016), directing is an imperative instrument for enhancing individual adequacy. This is firmly identified with the protection of good psychological wellness and anchoring attractive conduct changes. He additionally included two different objectives of directing, that is, augmentation of individual flexibility to pick and act inside the conditions forced by the earth and increment in the adequacy of the individual reactions developed by nature. The objective of directing is to center around the component of progress and that the counselee ought to be helped during the time spent 'getting to be' – the change which overruns the time of youth through early adulthood amid which the individual is helped to realize his potential (Tiedeman, 2011). In connection to this, Nemali and Reaves (2015) declare that advising should empower the counselee to decide. It is through the way toward settling on basic choices that self-awareness is cultivated. Moreover, they bring up that the essential target of guiding is that of invigorating the people to assess, make, acknowledge and follow up on their decisions. Here and there the counselees have objectives which are obscure and their suggestions are not completely valued. It is maybe one of the essential elements of a guide to help clear up the counselee's objective (Nemali & Reaves, 2015).

2.3 Counselling and Convicts behaviour

Lynch and Sabol (2001), opined that counselling and psychological therapy have a significant role to play in addressing the complex needs of convicts, ex-convicts, and other groups within the Criminal Justice System, particularly, in terms of non –pharmacological interventions. The emotional needs and the existence of pre-existing undiagnosed mental illness and imported distress appear to be frequently unrecognized, under-researched, and often under-reported by prisoners and consequently, often go untreated. This is particularly so within the context of the Criminal Justice System.

Lynch and Sabol (2001) have continued on to explain that, current evidence as to how these prisoners engage with professional staff in custodial settings prior to and following disclosure of pre-existing undiagnosed mental illness or trauma; such as, abuse as a child or having been raped as an adult was scant and required further study. Counselling is an important part of the criminal justice system both as part of a pre-trial condition to get a case dismissed and as part of probation following a criminal conviction. It is also used in mental health courts to help people with mental illness that might find them getting into repeated legal troubles without intervention. Most counsellors or psychotherapists work with clients who may have been touched by the criminal justice system as victims or witnesses (Lynch & Sabol, 2001).

2.4 Ex-convicts counselling for social integration

MacKenzie (2007) elucidated that people tend to have an internal narrative, and engage in self-talk that is not always healthy. When alone or even among others, a person may think, "I'm a loser," or "I can't do anything right." They may also have anxiety over an upcoming event, such as a job interview and think things such as; "I'll say something stupid for sure," which only heightens their anxiety.

The process of transitioning from prison or jail, back to the community has been termed prisoner re-entry, and this construct has received increased attention both in the professional literature and in the popular media (Cose, 2006). Policymakers recently have identified the key challenges surrounding prisoner re-entry, which include ex-convict substance abuse, physical and mental health, employability and workforce participation, housing, and the interrelationships among these factors (Travis et al., 2001). A few counselling professionals have considered the convict population in the design and the delivery of career development interventions (Garrison et al., 2007).

However, research efforts are limited in the counselling literature. Buboltz (2010), for example, reported that inmates or juvenile delinquents comprised the sample of interest in only 0.4% of *Journal of Counselling Psychology* publications during the years 1973–1998. The lack of available career development interventions for ex-convicts seems particularly striking, given counselling psychologists' specific expertise in career development and transition, as well as, in personal and work-related adjustment (Vernick & Reardon, 2001). The field's alignment with multicultural concerns also could be seen as an asset in working with a population that is highly diverse in which nearly half of ex-convicts are African American, whereas one fifth is Latino or Asian. Finally, counselling professionals who endorse social justice may well find that they can provide valuable services in local, state, or federal correctional systems or conduct research that could impact on policy (Holzer et al., 2003).

As with any group, there is considerable variability in ex-convicts' work histories, occupational attainment, and career development needs. Ex-convicts, however, may differ from the modal counselling client in that they may only have had limited exposure to the legitimate labour market, and their work histories can be marked by impulsive resignations, interpersonal difficulties, and employer-initiated job terminations (Lynch & Sabol, 2001). The types of jobs that ex-convicts obtain are often the same, characterized by low-wages, and low-skill jobs that disappear during times of economic downturn (Smith & Woodbury, 1999). By most estimates, about one-third of ex-convicts were unemployed prior to their prison entry, and only about 60% of convicts held either a high school diploma or had attained a general education development qualification prior to incarceration (Lynch & Sabol, 2001).

The issue of helping the disadvantaged has been a major concern to educationists. Yet prisoners who belong to this category are not given the attention they deserve in terms of education and counselling, rehabilitation and integration. There is usually a high appreciation to the legal institution annually when amnesty is granted to prisoners and convicts remanded

in police custody. The issue of education, counselling, rehabilitation and the integration of this group has not been given the necessary attention it deserves. Prisoners' rehabilitation, according to Nkiruka, Olubunmi & Olaore (2017), is a politically unpopular cause. Ex-prisoners have the strong incentive to commit crimes to survive and are threats to the peace of the society. He further asserts that concerned people have many opportunities to try a variety of rehabilitative strategies, such as counselling, job training and helping ex-prisoners to receive support. The issue of re-integrating ex-convicts back into society is a complex issue that is multi-faceted and counselling is one of the approaches that are employed to achieve re-integration. While the ex-convicts receive counselling during, and after their jail terms, the counselling is at times inadequate to help them to fully re-integrate into society. This is because of stigmatization, lack of family support is an aspect that is not addressed properly in that, the ex-convicts may not recognize the society that they have been set free to try and rejoin, especially for those who have been in jail for prolonged periods of time. Such individuals find that they cannot adapt to the new society they find and counselling simply reinforces their concerns as to how they can successfully re-integrate back into society.

It is worthy to note that some of the inmates were innocent of the crime they were accused of. Denying them the opportunity to live a normal life after serving for the required period, is another level of inhumanity. With more prisons being renovated and new ones erected to accommodate convicts, the efficacious role of prison education now becomes very imperative. Prison education has the primary task of increasing the chance of employment for ex-convicts. This will help in reducing crime rates in the country. In other words, ex-convicts will continue to re-offend unless they are given more vocational training and formal education (Taylor, Fatima & Navaratnam Lakshman, 2017). Stories relayed on the popular programme, "Crime Fighters", on the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) reveal this fact. Most of the criminals interviewed confessed that they had no educational qualification and no jobs. Many of them exhibited low levels of literacy and numeracy and have been in and out of the prisons severally. There is a dearth of training programmes, research and literature in the area of correctional counselling for prisoners. Job training would provide opportunities for the healthy development of the positive potentials in the inmates. In Tigania West, the convicts receive job training and classes while they are still incarcerated, and upon their release, the ex-convicts who took up the training opportunities are better placed to integrate into the society as they can play a part in building the society. The purpose of this research, therefore, is to investigate the role of counselling in re-integration of ex-convicts in Tigania West Sub-County, Meru County.

3.0 Research Design

This research project adopted a descriptive survey design to investigate the role of counselling in the reintegration of ex-convicts in Tigania West Sub-County. Descriptive survey design is a method of collecting data by interviewing and administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals (Orodho, 2003). This design was deemed good for this study because it allows an in-depth study of the events, phenomenon or any topic under the focus. Furthermore, this design was appropriate as the subjects or participants are

observed in a natural and unchanged environment. The design was also appropriate as the finding(s) may point the researcher to specific variables that may be impacting on the re-integration of ex-convicts that may warrant further study.

4.0 Findings

4.1 Social integration

The study sought to investigate the role of counselling in social integration among ex-convicts in Tigania West Sub-county.

4.1.1 Cut from community

The respondents were asked to state whether they had encountered ex-convicts who had been cut out from the community. Thirty-four (85%) of the probation officers indicated “YES” they had encountered ex-convicts who had been cut out from the community, while 6 (15%) indicated “NO”. These results could be attributed to the fact that there was a widespread stigmatization of ex-convicts and upon release, majority were not readily accepted back to the community and were unknowingly banished.

4.1.2 Reasons for being excluded from the community

The respondents were asked to state what they thought were the reasons for exclusion/being cut out, of ex-convicts by the Tigania West community. The results are captured in Table 1

Table 1

Reasons for Exclusion

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Stigma	24	60
Cultural & Social Beliefs	11	27.5
Instructions from community leaders	5	12.5
Total	40	100

Results from Table 1 showed that the major reason for exclusion of the ex-convicts was due to stigma associated with ex-conviction (60%), followed by the cultural and social beliefs (27.5%) and finally instructions from community leaders (12.5%). The researcher could not get the respondents to elaborate which leaders within the community might have issued instructions as to excluding members as they were not comfortable discussing the matter with the researcher. It can however, be assumed that such an instruction could come from influential leaders, such as, village elders, church leaders, or even influential individuals within the community, who felt that it was time for the ex-convicts to no longer be welcome within the community and majority of the community members agreed with these community and church leaders.

4.1.3 How to reduce isolation

The respondents were asked what measures had been put in place in the counselling programmes to avert instances of isolation of ex-convicts. Results to the responses given are indicated in Table 2

Table 2 *Measures to Reduce Isolation*

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Community Outreach	31	77.5
Sensitization	0	0
Reconciliation	9	22.5
Total	50	100

The results showed that majority (77.5%) of the respondents agreed that community outreach was the best way to counter isolation of ex-convicts from the community, while (22.5%) said that reconciliation was the best way to reduce instances of isolation of the ex-convicts within the community. No respondent indicated sensitization as a measure to reduce isolation of convicts by the community members.

4.1.3 The role of counselling in social integration among ex-convicts

The examination demonstrated that majority of the ex-convicts had been removed from their separate networks in view of their conviction, and nearly no one needed to be related with them, and in some extraordinary cases even their close relatives cut all connections with them. The purposes behind the rejection of ex-convicts shifted however the significant reasons were general shame related with ex-convicts, and, social and social convictions of ex-convicts being pariahs who ought not be permitted over into the network. In outrageous cases, network pioneers supported for the rejection of the ex-convicts from the network, and this was exceptionally unjustifiable in light of the fact that anyone can get himself/herself detained, even the network pioneers themselves who advocate for avoidance of ex-guilty parties.

It was, largely, agreed that community outreach was the best way to reduce exclusion and promote the social integration of ex-convicts within communities. While a number of respondents stated that reconciliation was a way of fostering integration, this was viewed not to be the best approach, especially for crimes that were violent or lead to death, where the community members may not be willing to easily forgive and forget. In some instances, some members of the community may even plot how to revenge on the ex-convicts. This exposes the ex-convict to a possibility of suffering for their actions and this isn't what is advocated for as the courts had already passed judgment and convicted the offender.

It is very clear that counselling plays an important role in the re-integration of ex-convicts back to the society and thus should be strengthened in order to ensure that the ex-convicts are able to be truly fully integrated back into the society upon their release after serving their jail terms.

5.0 Summary of the Findings

It was found that the availability of the counselling services went a long way in helping the ex-convicts in re-integrating into the society, which by default was very hostile to ex-convicts. The researcher felt that the availability of not only probation services, but also counselling services made the ex-convicts be at ease with visiting the probation station as they felt that they were not going to the probation station just to satisfy their probation requirements but can also seek counselling services.

The study also found that some of the services offered included guidance and counselling services, rehabilitation counselling, mental health counselling, and substance abuse counselling from the probation stations. Other services included voluntary counselling, testing (VCT) services especially for those who may have experienced sexual abuse, and sought the services, which at the time of the study were not on offer at the centers. But upon enquiry, the researcher was informed that the services were in the process of being rolled out, but due to the fact that there are third parties involved, such as NGO's, who had their own set of operational directions that needed to be incorporated.

The researcher additionally tried to see if reconviction was an aftereffect of non-successful counselling projects, and majority of the respondents concurred that non-compelling advising programs assumed a part in the re-conviction of ex-convicts. This was demonstrated while they worked inside the current policy guidelines, they were not happy with the results, which at times prompted the re-conviction of generally ex-offenders. This discredited the entire quintessence of having an advising program for the ex-convicts, whose real point was to lessen occasions of reconviction. When the ex-convicts were asked how counselling had helped them, all the ex-convicts, said that counselling had helped them by building their self-esteem, learning new ideas and methods to cope with life, stress/depression and coping with stigmatization.

These results are in line with a study carried out by Muiruri (2005), who found that needed life enrichment programmes such as personal/character development, stress/anger management, value clarifications, avoidance of domestic violence, leadership skills, conflict resolution strategies, reality therapy, self-concept, depression, self-directed job search skills. The researcher felt that there was need to enhance counselling to allow the ex-convicts benefit more from the services, so that they do not feel neglected by the society..

5.1 Conclusion on the Findings

The study concludes that counselling allows ex-convicts to integrate into society, as they are guided on what to expect after their release, how to carry themselves within the society as ex-convicts, and how one can become a productive member of the society and for the betterment of oneself.

The study further concluded that there needs to be renewed efforts to properly re-integrate ex-convicts into societies. a number of steps have been taken, especially by the National

Government in terms of building probation centers, and providing personnel, so that the ex-convicts can have access to the counselling services that are offered at the probation stations.

Moreover, the research concluded that there is requirement for more private sector players, and NGO's to come on board, and supplement government efforts at re-integrating the ex-convicts with the goal that they are not let alone without getting support to change their ways and getting to be beneficial individual from the networks they live in, and the general public. This thus will decrease instances of re-conviction of individuals from society who may feel that they are better of carrying out another wrongdoing so they are sent back to jail, where they may have turned out to be standardized by the prison life, and feel that they are superior when they are detained. At last, the examination reasoned that the achievement in restoring, reintegrating and resettlement of wrongdoers largely relies upon the co-task of the network.

5.2 Recommendations of the Findings

Based on the results obtained in this study there is need to have counsellors availed in all the prisons so that they can interact with the convicts before their release so that they can be prepared psychologically for what awaits them upon release, as this will build their self-esteem even before their release. There needs to be enhanced outreach programmes so that ex-convicts can get to integrate back into society successfully, as this in the long run would lead to fewer cases of re-conviction. There is need for continued community sensitization for the dual benefit of reintegration and resettlement of ex-convicts.

5.3 Recommendation for Further Research

The results from the study pointed out a number of opportunities for further research; A study should be carried out to ascertain the outcomes of the ex-convicts who are able to secure jobs after their release and counselling at the Probation Station. Furthermore, the researcher recommends that another study should be carried out in a different sub-county to see if the situation in other counties in Meru mirrors the situation in Tigania West.

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