

Evening Seminar

‘Cooperating Out of Crime?’

What can cooperatives bring to prisoner rehabilitation?

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Academy for Justice Commissioning

Background to the Academy

- **The Academy's mission** is to bring people together to share knowledge, skills and practice and **to promote excellence in social justice commissioning**
- The Academy was **created in 2007** and now has over **3700 cross sector members**
- **Services** are designed to **support the development of social justice commissioning** and include nationwide events, eLearning, commissioning themed learning groups and a website offering commissioning information

Cooperatives and Social Justice

“The evils which cooperation is intended to combat are some of the greatest to which men are liable, viz. the great and increasing difficulties of providing for our families, and the proportionate danger of our falling into pauperism and crime”

Dr William King
The Cooperator, Issue 1
1st May 1828

Cooperating out of Poverty and Crime

Cooperatives and Mutuels

- Co-operatives and mutuels are independent businesses that exist to meet and fulfil the needs of their members
- Economic needs and social needs...employment and mutual support
- They provide flexible models based on member ownership, control and self determination that are used to deliver a wide range of products and services
- They are the most distinct and long-established form of social enterprise, owned by their members and operating on a democratic basis of one member, one vote rather than an investor model of one pound, one vote.

Reinforcing Desistance

- Cooperative and mutual structures of employment and service delivery foster the development of systems of mutual social and economic support which reinforce desistance from crime
- This should begin in cooperative and mutual employment in prison and then continue 'through the gate' in mutual support and employment in the community

Co-Producing Desistance

Desistance is not simply about individual offenders stopping offending. It's much more about *relationships*, building and re-building the positive pro-social relationships that will nurture and sustain a law-abiding lifestyle - relationships with prison staff, prisoners' family and friends, employers, and the communities to which they will return when they are released. In co-producing desistance we really are 'all in it together'

Co-Production

- **Co-production** is a practice in the delivery of public services in which service users are involved in the creation of public policies and services
- It is contrasted with a transaction based method of service delivery in which service users consume public services which are conceived of and provided by governments and other providers
- Co-production is possible in the private and non-profit sectors in addition to the public sector
- In contrast with traditional service user involvement, service users are not only consulted, but are part of the conception, design, steering, management and ownership of services.

COOPERATIVES AND MUTUALS ARE THE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS
FOR CO-PRODUCTION

Coproducing Desistance through Rehabilitation Services in Prison

Individual services

Group services

Collective services

Individual Services

Ensuring the quality of relationships between all prison staff and prisoners. The motivation for prisoners to change emerges in, and from, collaborative relationships with staff; people they can get on with and respect; who treat them as individuals; are genuinely caring; who place them at the centre of the change process, identifying jointly what's needed to change and how, rather than just seeking responses to staff-defined problems.

Group Services (1)

- Bringing prisoners together to shape and deliver their own prison rehabilitation services
- Current approaches to group work in prison focus on cognitive behaviour therapy addressing individual 'criminogenic needs'
- Rehabilitation requires the development of new supportive social networks as well

Group Services (2)

- Mutual aid groups are of particular importance
- The addictions recovery movement (Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous are notable examples) and recovery in a mental health context
- Given the prevalence of mental ill-health and addiction in the prison population, prisons should actively support the co-design and co-delivery of such mutual aid-based services in order to deliver effective rehabilitation services

Collective Services

- Practices, strategies and services that involve and produce outcomes that benefit whole communities, rather than just individuals or groups of prisoners who come from those communities
- Prisons playing their part in ensuring that prisoners and the communities to which they will return have access to sustainable and good quality employment and accommodation - two of the key drivers of sustained desistance

Transforming Rehabilitation

...through the development of 'through the prison gate' offender cooperatives providing employment, resettlement and individual, group and collective rehabilitation services to their members in prison and on release.

Role and prospects for prison cooperatives

The Cooperative sector argument is that it is cooperative forms of governance and service delivery that best facilitate these individual, group and collective co-productive approaches to desistance and rehabilitation and that this is demonstrated particularly by the experience of cooperatives and other forms of mutual governance and service delivery in other jurisdictions abroad - particularly the 'social cooperative' model developed in the Italian prison system.

Social Cooperatives

- An explicitly cooperative model that embeds and reinforces the coproduction of rehabilitation in prison, through the prison gate and on final release in the community.
- It provides an employment-based comprehensive and co-produced rehabilitation service - a membership-based 'Special Purpose Vehicle', a 'rehabilitation society', or a 'Social Cooperative'.

Prison Social Cooperatives

- Originating in Italy, Prison Social Cooperatives are multi-stakeholder cooperatives - prison staff, prisoners, local community etc. are members
- Cooperative styles of working and mutual support, reinforced by formal membership of the cooperative are part of the process of developing a new pro-social identity amongst prisoners - cooperative working, mutual support and membership as a therapeutic intervention in its own right

A therapeutic resettlement service

- This therapeutic intervention is part and parcel of a real job in a real working environment rather than just another Offender Behaviour Programme and it is co-produced with prison staff and others involved in the business
- Not only in custody - it provides mutual resettlement support in the context of real paid transitional employment in custody, on ROTL (where available) and on final release

Co-operativa Alice Milan (San Vittore Prison):

- For more than twenty years, this social co-operative has provided women prisoners on day release the opportunity to make costumes for theatre and television productions
- Co-operativa Alice produces its own clothing line called “Jailcats” and has produced costumes for the local opera house, as well as accessories for the inter Milan football team
- About 100 women have been members of the co-operative and some have gone on to careers in the fashion industry; only one member returned to prison

San Patrignano Drugs Project, Rimini:

- This social co-operative focuses on supporting individuals who are recovering from addictions. It trains and employs workers in carpentry, plumbing, artisan wine and cheese production, ornamental iron work, and the craft of hand-painted wallpaper
- Approximately 800 of the workers at San Patrignano are provided with free accommodation and 2,000 individuals in recovery are employed
- **The co-operative relies exclusively on private funding and capital from the sale of its products**

Spazio Aperto Labour Insertion Project

- Founded in 1994 and employs marginalized groups excluded from the labour market, including individuals recovering from addictions, former prisoners and current prisoners on day release
- This social co-operative provides training and labour related to cleaning, assembly, and landscape gardening, waste disposal, and recycling
- It also provides an alternative placement to imprisonment for those serving Community sentences

The Vägen ut! Co-operatives

- Founded 2002 in Göteborg, Sweden. Cooperatives for social justice co-commissioned by Försäkringskassan (health insurance), Kriminalvården (Prison and Probation service), Arbetsförmedlingen (employment office), Coompanion (cooperativ development agency) and other professional agencies
- **Originally three social cooperatives** - Villa Vägen ut! Solberg (a halfway house for men), Karins Döttrar (a handicraft co-operative for women) and Café Solberg. Together they initiated the consortium Vägen ut! which today includes ten social cooperatives

Social Cooperatives in the UK?

“Our vision is of safe prisons in which responsible prisoners and exemplary staff work together to change lives”

HMP Coldingley

Prisoners and prison staff working together

- to set up and run co-operative businesses which provide
- real paid employment for their prisoner members in custody, on ROTL and on final release
- rehabilitation and resettlement support for their prisoner members in prison and on final release

Pilots at various stages of development

- HMP Coldingley
- HMP Ford
- East Midlands Reform Prisons
- Staffordshire Police and Crime Commissioner
- Self Reliant Group

Self reliant Groups and Social Cooperatives

- Small groups of people (5-10) from a shared economic and social background who come together to support each other and create opportunities for change and mutual enterprise
- Meet regularly and agree to save together (often just £1 per week)
- Use their savings and other income to help each other in times of need and crisis
- Learn a skill together
- Start a micro business together to provide them and their families with extra resources
- Helping and supporting each other financially and socially
- Creating their own supportive social cooperative in a supported accommodation environment assisting movement towards independent living as a group

Social Justice Commissioning Implications

- Social Cooperatives and Self Reliant Groups provide a way out of both poverty and crime
- Cooperating out of poverty and crime
- Co-commissioning of anti-poverty and desistance services?
- Cooperating out of poverty and crime meets custodial services commissioning priorities of education and employment
- Also meet probation services commissioning priorities of supportive move-on accommodation from supported housing

Social Justice Procurement Implications

- The Preston Model
- The Cleveland Ohio Model
- ‘Anchor’ Institutions
- Mental Health NHS Foundation Trusts
- Social Landlords
- Prisons
- CRCs

End



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