The Caribbean Crime Study Group

The Gazette is a communication venue for the Caribbean Crime Study Group which is an off-shoot of the International Section of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences. It meets at least twice per year at the American Society of Criminology and at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences conferences. It also supports the University of the West Indies Criminology Conference normally held biennially at one of its campuses. The current Chair of the group is Lorna Grant, faculty member at North Carolina Central University. The Vice Chair is Sherill Morris an assistant dean at Prairie View A&M.

Caribbean Crime Study Group members visit Toronto Youth Centre

Sherill Morris

In lieu of the Caribbean Crime Study Groups regular meeting at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Conference in Toronto, Canada, March 1-5, 2011, a field trip was held to the Roy McMurtry Youth Centre, on March 4, 2011. In attendance were eight undergraduate students from North Carolina Central University, and their two professors Drs. Grant and Wilson; Charmaine Tapper a professor from Northern Caribbean University in Jamaica and Sherill Morris an administrator from Prairie View A&M University. The group was met by the resident psychologist, Dr. Lott Mamabolo, the Deputy Superintendent, Santos Lisi, and the Deputy Administrator, Robert McGucken (Rob). The visit began with a brief history followed by a tour of the facility.

(continued page 2)
The Roy McMurtry Youth Centre, a 192 bed secure facility, located at 8500 McLaughlin Road South, Brampton, Ontario, L6Y 0N6, opened its doors to youth in Canada on Thursday, May 28, 2009. The Ministry of Children and Youth Services operates the facility which was named after former Chief Justice Roy McMurtry to honor his contributions to youth as a judge, in public service and in the community.

The center is an innovative complex that replaced the Toronto Youth Assessment Centre and the Invictus Youth Centre (Sherill Morris worked at the Invictus Youth Centre up to its closing in July 2006). The new facility accommodates youth in detention and/or serving secure custody sentences. This facility accommodates youth ages 12 to 17 years and can employ up to 311 full-time and part-time staff. The facility is located on 77 acres and measures 220,000 square feet. The campus style facility includes 12 sixteen-bed units – 10 for males and two for females, a high school for educational and vocational training, workshops, sports field, basketball courts, running tracks, and a multi-faith spiritual and religious centre. There are a total of 10 buildings on the site, eight new and two that were renovated. In addition to the residential units, there is a new administration building.

In terms of architectural principles, there are no “mean-looking” prison-like spaces. Instead of the usual “prison” wall, the building and the garden wall between them are the “walls”. The building is secure, but it is much less intimidating to both the residents and the neighboring community in what is now a suburban area in Brampton.

The Roy McMurtry Youth Centre has a wide range of education, rehabilitative and recreation program. The programs are geared to provide more opportunities to help youth resolve conflicts and make better choices that steer them away from offending while holding them accountable for their actions. The facility includes many innovative features including improved sightlines for youth service officers, high performance “green” features, and a design to enable the efficient use of resources to achieve cost effectiveness in its operations. There are some lovely architectural features such as the oculus skylight located in the “smudging room”, and well appointed visiting areas which are conducive to family visits and private consultations with lawyers, social workers, and other relevant personnel.
Boot camps continued

adult offenders lack discipline, then a program based on discipline should be beneficial. The National Institute of Justice found ……………………………………………………………………………………………….

Visit to Roy McMurtry Youth Centre, Toronto, Canada. March 4, 2011

Caribbean Crime Prevention
SALISES 2011 Conference Follow-Up

Dear participants in the 12th Annual SALISES conference ‘Challenges of the Independence Experience in Small Developing Countries’, I want to say on behalf of the entire faculty and staff that it was a pleasure being your hosts at this the first major conference in our Fifty-Fifty project.

As I indicated at the closing ceremony, we don’t see this as an average conference in which you leave and go home, but a recruiting event for Fifty-Fifty. The purpose of Fifty-Fifty is to critically review fifty years of the independence experience in the Anglophone Caribbean and to elaborate proposals for the region’s possible development in the next fifty years. We use the important fiftieth anniversary of Anglo-Caribbean independence as a useful hook, but the purpose is always to move beyond narrow linguistic barriers to look at the region as a whole. Thus, in our recently concluded conference, we had a special plenary on Haiti and there were participants from all the linguistic areas of our Caribbean. We are also intimately concerned with the historical experience and prospects for the non-independent territories that together constitute a significant part of the population and land area of the region.

In terms of the next steps, I elaborate some of the points made at the closing of the conference:

1. The Fifty-fifty Conference is scheduled to be held in Kingston from August 20-25, 2012. We have not yet fine-tuned whether it will be all of those days, but it would be wise if you are thinking of coming to block them all off now.

2. We are approaching this event somewhat differently than the typical conference with a call for papers, by establishing clusters far in advance of the event that would focus research around a set of clearly defined areas. The aim would be for the clusters to meet, identify research questions and establish an agenda that might include, seminars, talks,
panel discussions between now and 2012, but would culminate with a panel/plenary/workshop at the 2012 conference.

3. Some sixteen clusters (see list below) have already been established at SALISES Mona; however, a cluster need not be chaired by someone from Mona, nor necessarily from someone from SALISES. Indeed, we encourage the broadest participation of scholars and practitioners in establishing research clusters across the region. All that we ask is that you stick to the thematic lens of Fifty-Fifty, give us information on who is the chair/convenor and who are the members of the cluster, keep us informed as to the progress on your research and come to the conference with a developed panel. We are also open to individual paper proposals, particularly, though not exclusively from scholars outside of the region, who might find it difficult to assemble a cluster.

4. Clusters might focus on a single territory, a comparative study involving two or more territories, or may be Caribbean-wide in scope. We are open to different lenses.

5. Please get in touch with us if you have an idea for a cluster or if you wish to join an existing cluster. We would be happy to include you in this exciting project. Write to Arlene Supersad, the overall administrator arlene.supersad@uwimona.edu.jm or brian.meeks@uwimona.edu.jm or go to our website http://salises.mona.uwi.edu for further information. Our website is not quite where we want it to be, but we are working on it and also on our Facebook page!

6. We are still in the process of raising funds for Fifty-fifty. We are therefore asking you to try to be as self-sustaining as possible. To the extent that we are able to secure a major grant, then we will let you know and see how best we can facilitate research and the necessary movement associated with the project.

Existing Clusters and Chairs

1. Economy: Michael Witter
2. Governance and Politics: Trevor Munroe
4. Health: Helen (Kristin) Fox.
5. Housing: Jimmy Tindigarukayo
6. Public Sector: Philip Osei
7. Education; Maxine Henry-Wilson.
8. Sustainable Agriculture: Pat Northover.
10. Grenada Case Study: Patsy Lewis.
15. Gender: Taitu Heron and Judith Wedderburn.

Proposed Clusters
1. Immigration: Jay Mandle.
2. Growth and Development in the Caribbean: Patrick Watson.
3. Climate Change in the Caribbean: Patrick Watson

There is also a media plan for Fifty-Fifty that film-maker Esther Figueroa has elaborated for interviewing and archiving critical individuals in politics, academics, the arts etc as well as the production of a film and a number of web-ready audio-visual products out of the deliberations leading up to the conference and the big event itself.

We look forward to hearing from you and to your involvement in this important and literally, once in a lifetime opportunity to critically engage with our situation and make concrete proposals for the future.

Sincerely,

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Preparing Juveniles to Re-enter their Communities after Secured Confinement
By Lorna Grant

In the Caribbean, juvenile re-entry is a concern. Re-entry is the process and experience of returning to society after incarceration (Mears & Travis, 2004). It has not been evident that juveniles are adequately prepared during their rehabilitation process to return or that their communities are equipped to accept them positively. This increases the possibility of recidivism. For the juveniles, proper re-entry and re-integration preparation must address their rapid mental, physical and emotional changes. Many of these juveniles have issues with mental illness, educational deficiencies, developmental delays, substance abuse and social skills deficits. Yet, they are released to communities that are impoverished, with a high rate of crime (Synder, 2004).

Reentry theory argues that, if juveniles are offered support and resources, they can be discharged from secure confinement and reintegrated within family residences where they will experience social inclusion, advancement in education, and employment. However, to realize post incarceration success it is vital to have early aftercare programs with tutoring, job skills training, cognitive therapy, family and individual counseling and community- based services (Giles, 2003). Thus, if these youngsters are to succeed in a non-institutional environment, the process has to be on a continuum starting with the facilities and ending with the family and community. This
requires an effective pre-release planning schedule, which should include all the relevant elements for that individual’s success. Attention should be given to factors predictive of reoffending such as family risk, substance abuse, school conflict and peer influence. This should be undertaken with the involvement and assistance of external agencies and individuals from targeted institutions. Targeted community activities would be those that prepare juveniles to face challenges during reintegration.

In Jamaica, substantial improvement is necessary by both the Department of Correctional Services and the Child Development Agencies. In a recent study by Grant, Morris and Gibson (2011) it was revealed that the illiteracy rate was high amongst “children in conflict with the law” despite efforts in the facilities to provide educational opportunities (classroom and vocational training). Obstacles to success included inadequate offerings in vocations, a shortage of instructors, and academically, a lack of urgency and intensity to see the juveniles make up lost ground. The counseling, psychological and psychiatric services in several facilities were not adequate, largely reflecting a poor commitment of resources, not expertise. Practitioners in the system felt there was a need for more programming that would prepare juveniles for a seamless transition back into their communities. Research has long recognized that many of the juveniles who are incarcerated are non-violent and often referred to as “uncontrollable” given a history of family dysfunction, physical abuse and, or, neglect. Juveniles in these situations engage in delinquency as a response to their circumstances; it is a cry for attention, affection, assistance or other remedy. While in secure confinement, the agencies with responsibilities for these juveniles should work together to identify and to respond to their needs efficaciously.

Grant et al. (2011) found that although most juvenile facilities provide education many boys especially, did not complete grade nine and were barely literate or possibly persons in need of special education services. Diagnosing the latter is largely not publicly available, so these students are undiagnosed and the subject of ridicule and rejection in schools. Unlike countries where these services are readily available, in Jamaica the lack of services accentuates the school failure and delinquency nexus. These problems could be addressed during residential placement and be followed up as a part of community reintegration by an aftercare officer. Grant et al. (2011) also found that many juveniles in Jamaica’s juvenile justice system evidenced signs of mental disorders (depression, anxiety) and received limited treatment. Of course, any medical, mental health, and substance abuse follow-up should also occur post-release. There should be quality and prompt healthcare available for juveniles. Research consistently indicates that recidivism is most likely soon after release, sometimes within a few days, due to mental illness, substance abuse, and new offending.

For the many juveniles who will choose to not return to school, employment should be available if they are older juveniles (near 17 years). Individuals who are gainfully employed are less likely to commit offenses (Bushway & Reuter, 2001; Uggen & Thompson, 2003). To facilitate employment, records will need to be expunged; employers need to be alerted to not exploit these young workers and the youngsters should receive the necessary vocational training and certifications while in the juvenile facilities or be eligible for the latter soon after release. Why waste time in the juvenile facility? Presently, the response is that vocational programming is hindered by a lack of resources (human, physical and financial) and poor literacy (Grant et al.,
2011). Here, a deficit in the system’s ability to garner the necessary resources from both public and private sector entities is evident. Where the will and care is strong enough, it can be done.

While some juveniles in the Caribbean return to supportive homes, many do not. Studies of homeless youth show a correlation between youth homelessness and contacts with the juvenile and criminal justice systems; these are associated with unresolved conflicts with parents, abuse from parents, homeless parents, overcrowding, and deficits in independent living skills. In the United States, the National Alliance to End Homelessness (2007), found that “homeless youth are also likely to become involved in prostitution, to use and abuse drugs, and to engage in other dangerous and illegal behaviors” (n.p.). In the Caribbean, stable housing and accommodation is essential for juveniles coming out of secure confinement. After being institutionalized for a long period, difficulties can arise if there is no structure to their new living situation.

Juveniles will also need to navigate the collateral consequences of civil or social exclusion, because of the stigma and labeling that goes along with incarceration. Caribbean societies can be rather unforgiving of those who have gone astray – ironic, given the region’s density in Christian religious institutions. What saves some from these scars is – privacy. In the interest of rehabilitation then, even in facilities, depending on the offense, greater care should be taken to protect juveniles’ privacy. Indeed, in the most effective facilities some of this already occurs.

The United States’ National Reentry Resource Center recommends that reintegration and reentry programming includes:

- **A reorientation of the juvenile and criminal justice systems.** This should reflect a reintegration perspective that addresses the unique socio-economic status and the environment to which they will reenter given available family support, community support and gender. There should be an inclusion of communities and family networks in reentry initiatives.

- **Transitional services which are accessible.** There should be the establishment of services and linkage with government, private sector, non-governmental agencies and community agencies that can address risk and protective factors.

- **Supervision.** Adequate supervision should be provided to assist in the de-institutionalization process. There is the need for comprehensive case management services to assist youth in acquiring the life skills and resources needed to succeed in the community, and prevent recidivism.

- **Adequate and effect delivery of prescribed services.** Prescribed services such as mental health, drugs and alcohol, academic and vocational and general health services should be provided at the community level.

- **Designed programs.** Programs that will cater to social integration into family and communities; reduction in recidivism; extra school studies; mastery of pro-social skills and workforce training and employment skills.

- **Development of a national agenda.** A national agenda should be developed and implemented by all departments responsible for children in the juvenile justice system.
Planning in these areas can reduce some of the barriers to reentry in order to help in creating a stable life for juvenile reentering their communities from secure confinement. If these strategies are implemented reoffending will be greatly reduced. Juveniles going back to a nurturing environment, a secure place to live, adequate services at the community level, educational and employment opportunities, assistance in enhancing their social skills and learning how to create healthy, positive relationships will tremendously assist transition and reentry of juveniles.

References


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