"Sun and Moon"

Incarceration to Inclusion

Looking at the Transition from Correctional Facility Programs to Community Based Adult Education

Prepared with generous funding from:

for

Smithers Literacy Services
Smithers Community Services Association
Box 3759, Smithers, B.C. V0J 2N0
Phone: 250-847-9515 Fax: 250-847-3712 Email: **literacy@scsa.ca**

By:
Lois Hobley
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"Sun and Moon" was developed and created by K.Davis. The eclipse represents transition, moving from the dark into the light.

For further information on adult literacy programs in British Columbia, contact:

Education Officer - Development Programs
University Colleges and Program Planning Branch
Ministry of Advanced Education
PO Box 9877, Stn. Prov. Govt.
Victoria, B.C. Canada V8W 9T6
Tel: (250) 387-6174
Fax: (250) 952-6110

For further information regarding the Incarceration to Inclusion Research Project, contact:

Smithers Literacy Services
Box 3759, Smithers, B.C. VOl 2NO
Tel: (250) 847-9515
Fax: (250) 847-3712
Email: literacy@scsa.ca

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Community Research:
So What

While conducting this community research project we often asked ourselves, "So what? Why are we doing this? What do we hope to achieve and how will this impact the inmates and the people who support them?" The Incarceration to Inclusion Research Project was developed to ignite communities and individuals to be proactive and advocate for literacy, inclusion and self-determination and to broaden our understanding of a specialized, low literacy population.

Beginning our research at the ground level and talking with the individuals for whom the Model for Reintegration was developed was truly the only place to start.
The thoughts, feelings, and words of the inmates kept us coming back to our questions. Will the inmates access this model? How do we know if we are being effective? The answers to these questions lie in the communities and the individuals who stepped forward to say, "Yes, I have a passion for this subject and I will be a community contact." The answers lie with incarceration facility personnel who are willing to establish relationships in the communities. And most importantly, the answers lie with the inmates who question the issue of literacy in their own lives and say, "Yes, I want more." The culmination of this research project and its successful application is clearly in the hands of those people and I urge all of us to ask, "What can I do now?" I am confident the answers will be evolutionary.

Lois Hobley
Smithers Literacy Services
May 2002

Lois Hobley has been a supporter of adult education and literacy in the Northwest for several years. She brings to this project a background in community development and a keen interest in transformational programming.

Introduction

A Burning Question. . .

In the winter of 1999, Jane Boulton, the Program Manager of Smithers Literacy Services had a burning question, "Why don't inmates access my program on return to the community? I know they are out there and have a need for literacy services, but where are they?" In conversations with other literacy practitioners in the region, Jane found she was not alone in this conundrum.

With this in mind, Smithers Literacy Services set out to discover the answers to the barriers to transition and more with the development of **Incarceration to Inclusion**, *Looking at the Transition from Correctional Facility Programs to Community Based Adult Education.*

Together with Sue Carson, counselor and teacher at the Terrace Community Correctional Centre (TCCC), Jane garnered the permission necessary to conduct research at the prison and upon successful funding, hired a researcher. Jane was committed to utilizing the research findings to develop a *Model for Reintegration*, a process that will assist inmates access community education programs across northern B.C.

The idea that the research would generate a ripple effect in the northern region was an integral part of the plan. The act of research would be as transformational as the results. Practical, useful and relevant, **Incarceration to Inclusion** is a project that can impact us all.

Executive Summary

Background

In September 2000, Smithers Literacy Services (SLS) was awarded a grant through Human Resources Development Canada and the Ministry of Advanced Education to conduct a research project to identify the barriers to transition for inmates returning to the community. More specifically, SLS intended to discover why inmates often failed to make the transition to community based education programs although they frequently participated in education programs while incarcerated. The purpose of the project was two-fold, as we also intended to develop and implement a *Model for Reintegration* that addressed the identified barriers.

Research began at the Terrace Community Correctional Centre (TCCC) in Terrace, B.C. where over 30 inmates participated. Questionnaires and interview questions were developed to probe what motivated individuals to participate or not participate in programs and to gain a better understanding of the inmates' life both in and out of prison.

Goals of the Project:

✓ Conduct research at TCCC and identify barriers to transition to community education programs.
✓ Conduct a literature review to identify past research findings and themes.
✓ Increase awareness about literacy issues in the various populations.
✓ Develop a *Model for Reintegration* for use by inmates, correctional staff and communities.
✓ Involve the participants in the development of the research and reintegration models.
✓ Develop a model that will work in other communities in Northwestern B.C.
✓ Initiate the Model in northwest B.C.
✓ Prepare a comprehensive report on the findings and document the *Model for Reintegration.*

Common Threads

Many interviewed inmates were from the Hwy 16 corridor from the Vanderhoof area to Prince Rupert. At least 40% of the inmates were from Terrace and 20% were from the Hazelton area. An additional 40% were from Smithers, Dawson Creek, Prince George and *Other* combined. We targeted these communities in the *Model for Reintegration*.

Most of the inmates interviewed had poor school experiences in the past. Seventy-three percent dropped out before completing high school, many cited alcohol and social problems as the primary reasons. As far as reading and writing, several inmates said, "I just didn't get it."

Many of the men interviewed were repeat offenders (86%) and discussed early involvement with the legal system. The inmates often worked on furthering their school goals while in prison, often to the exclusion of any other time. (They did not work on school goals while at home.) Time, a clear head, an opportunity for early release and the availability of programs were the primary reasons for participating in prison education programs. Several inmates said they did not know of any educational programs in the community or did not know how to access them. However, almost all of the inmates said they would be more willing to access community programs if they began the referral process while *on the inside*.

A common theme of connectedness was identified. Although in many cases an inmate's sense of community was complicated with addictions, social and financial problems, their reliance on support from the community was an integral component in retention and success in programs. Many of the inmates voiced the importance of a coordinated referral system, the knowledge of community programs, and positive peer support on return to the community.

The *Model for Reintegration*

The *Model for Reintegration* was developed to assist inmates, referring staff and prison personnel better access community supports. The implementation of the Model begins well before the inmate leaves the facility and teachers, reintegration staff, corrections personnel and the inmate all have a part to play in the successful transition to the community. A coordinated approach (Reintegration Network) and the identification of key individuals in the community are the cornerstones of the *Model for Reintegration*. The Model was initiated in several communities with the identification of several *initial community contacts* and preliminary testing of the Model was done.

Community Forums were conducted to promote the network and to identify the existing community infrastructures. In addition, the Forums provided an opportunity for key players to discuss the issue of literacy and corrections and to discover who was willing to be an initial community contact. The initial community contact is available for referrals and/or questions from inmates and referring staff and has knowledge of community resources. The initial contact is already in a position to assist people seeking community programs or education.

Implementation of the Model and Network

Networking began during the Community Forums. Key agencies discussed the issue of literacy and corrections and brainstormed ways to better serve clients. In some cases community initiatives arose as a result of the Forums. For example, Smithers Literacy Services volunteered to accommodate any adult student on a waitlist at School District #54.

Community specific brochures were developed and included initial community contact information, a list of community partners, and strategies for working with people with low literacy skills. In addition, referrals cards were developed with spaces for community contacts and information on the inmate's current school activity. This information was then distributed to all partners.

Conclusion

The maintenance of the Reintegration Network (relationships) is one of the primary recommendations made by the researcher for this project. With this in mind seizing opportunities to network, conference, communicate and refer must be undertaken by the individuals with whom this project was created. Prison teachers, corrections personnel, college and community educators and counselors have the ability to continue the network as a part of their normal job functioning. By utilizing the network and making the connections, support personnel are in a position to provide an inmate with options, valuable information and a sense of community.

Research Development

"What are the barriers to transition from correctional facility programs to community based adult education and how can we address those barriers?" This question provided the basis for this research and the subsequent development of a Model that addresses the identified barriers.

Considerations for Research:

- ✓ A consultative approach that included inmates, corrections staff, community agencies and adult learners.
- ✓ Ethical practices that included consent forms and confidentiality policy.
- ✓ Consultation with peer research advisors and attention to recognized research techniques.
- ✓ Intent that research process and findings would promote social change and accountability in communities.

Goals of the Research

Gaining the information needed to develop a *Model for Reintegration* that was appropriate and relevant to the needs of inmates returning to communities in Northwestern B.C. was the first goal of research. In addition, by involving participants in the development of the Model, we hoped to prompt critical thinking about the issue of literacy and encourage an attitude toward advocacy and inclusion.

Goals of the Research:

- ✓ Probe and analyze the data gathered and provide recommendations based on the findings.
- ✓ Gain the information needed to develop the Model for Reintegration.
- ✓ Prompt critical thinking about the issue of literacy and encourage an attitude towards advocacy and inclusion.

Research Advisory Team

A Research Advisory Team was created to guide the research process and provide expertise from the various sectors.

The Research Advisory team included:

- ✓ Literacy Practitioners (2)
- ✓ Probation Officers (2)
- ✓ Corrections Program Coordinators (2)
- ✓ Researcher (1)
- ✓ Adult Learner (1)

The researcher met with the Research Advisory Team several times over the course of the project and provided the Team with periodic updates. The team provided the researcher with a link to potential adult subjects and recommendations regarding working with low literacy adults and the correctional system.

The Facility

Research was conducted at the Terrace Community Correctional Facility, a 33-bed minimum-security facility in Terrace, B.C. Over 30 inmates and several correctional facility staff members participated in the information gathering process.

Research Tools

Questionnaires and interviews provided the basis for gathering information from the inmates. In addition, focus groups were conducted with staff from TCCC and community agencies. Informal interviews with supplementary support workers and community members also provided the researcher with up-to-the-minute anecdotal information.

Project and informational brochures, newspaper articles, media interviews and reports are examples of research products generated by this project. The purpose of these products was to promote the project and distribute research findings to key organizations and individuals.

Literature Review

"Reintegration is a complete process, which begins at the correctional institution and continues in the community" (Green and Green, 2000, p. 9). This philosophy is the key to the success of any reintegration model, regardless of whether the goal is sobriety, anger management, literacy, or all three. Personal success or failure happens within a context and awareness of this fact is essential to developing a model for the successful transition of inmates from prison-based literacy programs to community-based education programs upon release.

"65% of those entering jail or prison for the first time have trouble reading and writing" (1. Soltonovich, 1995, p. 1). Whereas 22% of Canadians have difficulty reading and writing that information which assists them in working, living, and accessing community to the fullest, " a disproportional percentage of persons in B.C. who do not know how to read at a productive functioning level are in prison" (1. Soltonovich, 1995, p. l).

The link between rehabilitation and education in the corrections setting was identified very early on. "The first North American prison, built in the late 1700's in Pennsylvania by the Quakers, was intended as a quiet place for study. Prisoners were to reflect on their wrongdoings, change their values, and become reformed" (R. Lowen, 1997, p. 6). Although these intentions reflect the ideology of the time and our current desire is not to 'make' offenders reflect on their wrongdoings necessarily, we do indeed encourage change and reformation in the form of specialized programming.

"Research has established that educational programs are among the most effective ways of helping offenders re-enter society" (R. Lilly, 1996, p. 4). Most correctional facilities in Canada have some kind of educational component incorporated into their programming. However, without adequate transitional links to community programs, successful reintegration is doubtful. "The positive effects of programming received while incarcerated will be lost if follow-up programs and services are not in place in the community upon release (R. Loewen, 1997, p. 40).

According to Audrey Thomas, author of *Opening Minds Behind Closed Doors*, inmates reported they had better school experiences while in prison than in the regular school setting (A. Thomas, 1992, p. xiv). In addition, the school environment in prison is seen as a "safe place" and "a way to put aside gang values and do something positive" (R. Lowen, 1997, p. 13). Thus it makes sense to encourage the continuity of this positive experience into the community upon release. According to a Corrections Service Canada report, "Offenders who are highly motivated to succeed in programs represent prime candidates for successful reintegration" (Motiuk, 2002, Vol. 13, No.1, p. 3). Motiuk adds that assessing the motivations of the offender accurately and thus referring to the appropriate program(s) is also a key element in the safe and effective transition to the community. A window of opportunity does exist, yet it remains open only for a short time and it takes the coordinated efforts of prison and community personnel to assist the ex-offender move onto the next phase.

Not only do ex-offenders need reintegration support to begin anew in their communities, awareness of the cessation of a particular way of life must also be considered. This "learner-in-transition" may be resistant to enrolling in a community education program upon release because "the important life support system (in the prison classroom) of peers, understanding instructors and stimulating activities is over" (S. Ives, 1996, p. 3). Said one participant in phase one of the report, *Learning A Way Out*, "There is nothing worse than getting out cold, with no where to go, no where to live, no where to find a job, and no community support..." (Green and Green, 1998, p. 10)

Life on the outside begins where prison programming ends. "The transition between the world of incarceration and the world of training and work requires many skills. In addition to addressing issues of motivation and self-esteem, many offenders have the added need to acquire basic literacy skills" (I. Soltonovich, 1995, p. l). Probation officers, community literacy program and other service providers need to be particularly aware of the special needs of low-literacy offenders returning to the community. Irma Soltonovich's *Literacy Training Guide for Offenders in the Community* is a comprehensive guide for tutors and learners alike. Soltonovich suggests that in addition to involving the student in goal setting and lesson planning, the tutor must also be aware of the community context in which the learning is to occur. This context may include the social, cultural, economic and educational resources and limitations of the community (I. Soltonovich, 1995, p. 5)

Agencies need to work together to provide client centered education (Green and Green, 2000, p. 4). However, in order for ex-offenders to successfully access continued programming, the community needs to welcome the individual back into the community. "Successful reintegration and adequate use of resources by the offender can only occur when family and community support systems are in place" (Green and Green, 2000, p. 44). Identification of community supports from an inter-agency perspective and then from agency to individual is one of the first steps in this process. Creating *social capital* by developing relationships within the community is an integral part of the reintegration process. In her book, *All Together Now: Creating a Social Capital Mosaic*, Frances Ricks states, "More important than the designated space or location of the community is the relational nature of community members" (Ricks, Charlesworth, Bellefeuille, Field, 1999, p. 32). To be truly effective and accountable, community resources and individuals need to work together. Indeed, correctional program workers believe education and family/community supports, as the two most important needs of offenders re-entering the community (c. LaPrairie, 2000, p. 42).

Those involved with the legal system may come to basic education programs with little or no support network. Development of this network may be the critical factor in determining the success of the individual. At this time, there appears to be scant concentrated effort and/or funding in the development of support networks for inmates returning to the community (Green and Green, 2000, p. 45).

However, the National Crime Prevention Council of Canada developed a guideline for the collaboration of those who support offenders and makes the following recommendations:

- Make a personal commitment to collaboration.
- Meet with other agency administrators and staff.
- Identify potential benefits from coordination.
- Exchange existing information with other agency staff.
- Identify obstacles to coordination.
- Develop plans to overcome obstacles.
- Establish common objectives.
- Coordinate activities within and between organizations (NCPC, 1997, p. 16).

The **Incarceration to Inclusion** project strives to implement these strategies and others in the development of an educational reintegration model uniquely created for use in northern communities of B.C.

Although supported educational programming is not the only factor in the successful reintegration of inmates into the community, its importance in the broader scope of the development of the individual must be considered. "A prisoner's problems are greater than any solution that education alone can offer, but without education the problems are unlikely to be dissipated by prison regime" (P. Sutton, 1992, p. 12). Only by encouraging and assisting ex-offenders to proactively access community resources (and adult literacy programs where appropriate) can we hope to see the individual recognize his or her value as an active, contributing member of the community.

The Questionnaires

Development

In the Fall of 2000, the Inmate Questionnaire was distributed to 30 inmates at TCCC. The questionnaire was developed to obtain the preliminary information needed to proceed to the interview phase and to provide data for use in developing the *Model for Reintegration.*

We required:

1. A snapshot of the inmate's incarceration history.
2. Information about the inmate's education history.
3. Demographic information including age and community of origin.
4. Information on the prison programs the inmates attended and how the inmates accessed those programs.
5. Background information to be used in an interview setting.
6. A process to prompt the inmates' interest in the project and the concept of literacy and education.
7. A list of those inmates willing to be interviewed.

The Research Advisory Team discussed what information they hoped to derive from a questionnaire and how this information would be used in the project as a whole. Once the draft questionnaires were developed they were sent to TCCC for additional input and editing by the staff and teacher. The Supervisor at TCCC removed all questions regarding offenses (past and present), as it is not appropriate within the prison culture to ask questions of this nature. The questionnaires were then checked for plain language by an adult learner and distributed by the teacher. Each inmate was offered the help of a tutor to complete the questionnaire and participants signed a form expressing their agreement to participate.

Most of the inmates voiced a willingness to complete the questionnaires and according to the prison teacher, they did so with enthusiasm. The teacher estimated that about 1/3 of those who agreed to complete the questionnaire asked for the assistance of a tutor.

During a previous visit I spoke with the inmates in the lunchroom about our project and how they could assist in its development. Although initially we were very happy with the interest shown by the inmates, we realized we were not starting at an appropriate place when later an inmate asked, "But what is literacy?" Obviously we had made an incorrect assumption and from that point on we kept our presumptions in check and explored the concept of literacy with individual inmates whenever possible. **(Appendix A for questionnaire results.)**

We also developed questionnaires to be distributed to those people living in the community who had previous involvement with the correctional system. The community participants were accessed through the Research Advisory Team, keeping in mind confidentiality and consentual participation. We discovered very early on that the community participants were difficult to access and as a result only a few people came forward. Therefore, their responses had little bearing on the outcomes of the project and consequently are not included in the statistics.

Outcomes of the Inmate Questionnaires

1. A snapshot of the inmate's incarceration history.

Although the questionnaires did not provide information about the inmate's offenses, they did provide a glimpse into the oftentimes lengthy and/or repetitive incarceration background. Of particular interest is that **86%** of the respondents were repeat offenders and **33%** reported that they had been sentenced to prison three or more times. Several inmates later reported during the interviews that it was during their incarceration that they worked on furthering their education goals.

The questionnaires also provided valuable information on how long the inmates were housed at TCCC. The average length of stay was reported as **88.6** days. This time is potentially significant for transitional initiatives like school and job readiness programs, drug and alcohol programming, and referral processes that can begin while the inmate is still incarcerated.

2. Information about the inmate's education history.

Many of the inmates reported a disrupted and incomplete school history. While more than **50%** of the inmates left school in Grade 10 or earlier, most were at least 17 years of age when they left. Of those who left school prior to completion, **36.6%** cited drug and alcohol problems or social and school difficulties as the primary reason for leaving school. An additional **23%** said they left to go to work. Almost half the inmates questioned reported they felt they had a learning disability of some kind. (A lack of concentration was reported as the most problematic area.) A link could be drawn between the presence of a learning disability and a poor school history, but the connection between learning disabilities and addictions/social problems (including involvement with the justice system) is an area that deserves closer scrutiny. Many men later reported that involvement with drugs and alcohol precipitated their involvement with the justice system.

3. Demographic information including age and community of origin.

When developing an accessible program it is important to have information that accurately reflects the individuals for whom the program is designed. Therefore, it was necessary to discover where the inmates lived in order to know where to begin developing the community networks. In addition, the responses provided the researcher with a concrete base from which to assess the resources available in anyone community.

We discovered that **40%** of the inmates were from Terrace, **20%** were from Hazelton and the remaining inmates were from Prince Rupert, Dawson Creek, Prince George, Smithers, and *Other* combined. The teacher later reported an increase from the Prince Rupert community.

While most inmates were in the 18-28 year age range, the average age was **33.1** years. Age is a consideration when developing programs as men in this age group are more likely to access education and job readiness programs than their older counterparts (i.e. those in the plus 50 category). In addition, those inmates who were working just prior to their incarceration at TCCC had different needs than those who had not worked for a while or had never worked.

Over half of the respondents were of First Nations decent. This knowledge is important to consider when bridging community resources and supports as the cultural context could include family and ancestral history and obligation, traditional healing and justice practices and other social considerations.

4. **Information on the participation in and knowledge of programs both within the facility and in the community.**

One of our primary interview goals was to discover what motivated the inmates to participate in programs whether on the *inside* of the facility or in the community. But first, we needed to know which programs the inmates were aware of, which ones they were taking or had taken, and how they became familiar with those programs.

All the inmates had heard about the programs offered in the facility. Most had been offered these programs by staff or had heard about them from other inmates. When asked which programs the inmates had taken either at TCCC or at another facility, the highest-ranking program was the Violence Prevention Program. The lowest-ranking program was the School Program. However, the teacher later reported that 16 out of 30 inmates were enrolled in the School Program. This figure reflects the fact that ten inmates were enrolled in school during the interview process and an additional six enrolled shortly thereafter. This reflects the intention of those who said they planned on taking school at the facility.

5. **Background information to be used in an interview setting.**

Having background knowledge of the inmate prior to conducting the interviews provided a much richer experience for both the interviewer and interviewee. The completed questionnaires provided clues as to which areas needed further probing and which areas were not relevant to the interview.

6. **A process to prompt the inmate's interest in the project and the concept of literacy an education and a list of those people willing to be interviewed.**

Early involvement of the inmates was the key to developing both the research process and the *Model for Reintegration*. The questionnaires prompted the interest of the inmate as well as discussions with the teacher at the facility.

The Interviews

Development

Following the collection of the questionnaires, the responses were audited for those inmates who wished to be interviewed. Although 27 out of 30 inmates agreed to be interviewed, only 18 interviews were conducted. Most of the remaining 9 inmates were released before an interview could be scheduled.

The interview questions were created to gain a better understanding of the needs of inmates returning to the community in the context of their current incarceration. In addition, an historical and critical look at past school, employment, support, and program histories was vital in developing the *Model for Reintegration*.

By beginning a dialogue about education and literacy with the inmates, we prompted them to look critically at their education and life goals. We also provided an opportunity for the inmate to voice some thoughts and feelings that may not have been articulated before.

Our objectives were to:

1. Gain a better understanding of the inmate's community life before incarceration.
2. Understand what it is like on the inside from the inmate's perspective.
3. Further probe the inmate's past and present learning experiences and goals.
4. Learn about the inmate's work history.
5. Understand the inmate's motivation to attend programs and his understanding of them.
6. Examine the inmate's knowledge of and participation in community programs and explore his perception of support in the community.
7. Discuss the inmate's plans upon return to his community.
8. Discuss the inmate's reflections on his experience in prison.
9. Discover what reintegration processes and supports the inmate would like to see developed.
10. Encourage the inmate to look at his education goals critically.

The interviews were conducted by the researcher on a one-to-one basis in a monitored, glass-walled library within the facility. The library was stocked with books, puzzles and games and was used often during "free-time". The environment was quiet, relatively private and relaxed. On many occasions the inmates were called in from the yard to participate in the interview. The interviews were recorded on a small tape recorder for review at a later date. **(See Appendix B for Interview Questions.)**

Although I initially thought I would feel uncomfortable speaking with participants at a correctional facility, at no time did I feel threatened during the interviews. The men were respectful and polite and with the exception of one man, all answered my questions without hesitation. One might suppose that my gender and a token gift of donuts assisted the men to speaking freely as I was not perceived as a threat. In addition, most inmates had a positive relationship with the facility teacher and given her endorsement, my job was made easier. I also made it clear that I did not work for the Ministry of Attorney General (Corrections Branch) as many of the men assumed. Following that disclosure, many of the men relaxed noticeably.

As with the questionnaires, a few community participants were accessed through the Advisory Team. Three interviews occurred and supplemented the research findings.

Outcomes of the Inmate Interviews

Each interview was recorded on a small tape recorder and later transcribed for examination. Common themes and stories were extracted and compiled to gain a better understanding of the inmate's personal motivations and challenges and give substance to the *Model for Reintegration.* Although the research questions were created to minimize bias, it is understood that some bias is inevitable. For example, the nature of the questions implied an interest and value in education and the inmates might have answered according to what they perceived I wanted to hear.

1. **Gain a better understanding of the inmate's community life before incarceration.**

 All the inmates reported either family or friend connections in their home communities. These connections provided the inmates with a link to their home and they often relied on these relationships for support and encouragement. However, some of the offenders recognized that not all their relationships were healthy but continued these relationships in spite of this knowledge.

> *"I have a variety of friends that are recovered alcoholics, they help me out a lot of ways. I have lots of friends… lots who help me drinking and doing drugs too."*
>
> *-Inmate, TCCC*

2. **Understand what it is like on the *inside*, from the inmate's perspective.**

Within the limitations of a 40-minute interview, the inmates provided a surprisingly succinct glimpse into the often tedious and sometimes terrifying existence in prison. Although most of the inmates described TCCC as a "safe" place, some of the men related unsettling experiences in the higher security facilities in the province. While at TCCC however, the most common problem for inmates appeared to be boredom and having to live with people not of their choosing.

The men often looked to each other for camaraderie and support, although when questioned most said they would not consider the other inmates as friends. They did however value their relationship with Sue, the teacher and counselor at TCCC. An open door policy prompted the inmates to seek out the video machine in Sue's office or her professional counseling services.

> *"When it was coming from the guards (the Substance Abuse Program), it was kind of a joke because I don't think they've been to the bottom of the barrel yet."*
>
> *-Inmate, TCCC*

The men admitted that their relationship with the Corrections Personnel was guarded and in some cases hostile. Although most of the hostility seemed to be more under-the-surface than outwardly, the inmates conveyed a real "us and them" attitude. When asked if having the Corrections Personnel present the CORE Programs was helpful, many of the inmates said it did not matter, it was more about the material. The exception was the Substance Abuse Management Program. Several inmates said it would be more helpful to have a presenter who had "been there".

The inmates reported the biggest change from life on the *outside* was the lack of access to drugs and alcohol while in the facility. Many men said this was a positive aspect of their incarceration and enjoyed living clean. On the other hand some men said they were looking forward to getting back to the community in order to "party".

3. Further probe the inmate's past and present learning experiences and goals.

Several of the inmates spoke of a particular teacher or mentor who helped them succeed in school. A few inmates spoke negatively of teachers whom they perceived to be unhelpful or hostile and who ultimately participated in an overall poor school experience.

> *"I liked Grade 10 and 11 best. The teacher made learning fun. I flew right through it. I was in his class for one and a half years and I finished three grades."*
>
> *-Inmate, TCCC*

> *"Math was one of my favorites. Social Studies was my least favorite…I just didn't like the teacher."*
>
> *-Inmate, TCCC*

Most of the inmates admitted involvement with drugs and alcohol affected their overall school performance and attendance. Some inmates used drugs and alcohol as a way to cope with an unproductive school experience, while others had poor school performances because of their involvement with drugs and alcohol. Most of the men interviewed also implied an on-going misuse of substances.

Many of the inmates cited educational goals, in most cases to gain a grade 12 diploma. Although a grade 12 diploma does not guarantee a job, there is a perception that having that certification will open doors previously closed to the inmates. Those inmates currently enrolled in the school program recognized that in order to realize their school objectives, they must first gain control of their drug and alcohol addictions.

During the interview process we further probed the issue of learning disabilities. Many men were able to articulate the areas in which they had difficulty learning, although they did not cite a particular diagnosis. Those who claimed to have some kind of learning disability specified concentration, spelling and math as the most difficult areas. One inmate with a brain injury had difficulty in letter recognition and decoding and although he felt his reading and writing skills were "pretty good", he admitted to having gaps in his knowledge.

On having to recite the alphabet:

"My spelling has to be improved. To this day, I don't know my ABC's. I don't know why. I got an impaired once and they wanted to me say my ABC's forward and then backward. I say, 'No shit! I can't even say it forward!'. They just looked at me.
-Inmate, TCCC

Most of the inmates identified school as a way to attain work and career goals. Some goals were very specific. For example, learning metric as a way to get a welding ticket. Others were less specific and directed towards broader life objectives. Philosophically, the inmates viewed education as important both personally and professionally.

However, education as a priority could conflict with the need to make money and deal with family and social issues upon return to the community.

"The actual education is not that important but the getting it done so I can go out and get jobs is."

-Inmate, TCCC

"In life there are certain things you gotta' know right? And if I don't then where am I going to go? I'll just end up back in here, plus it helps me get better jobs. Of course now to get a better job you have to have Grade 12 or college."
-Inmate, TCCC

Almost all the inmates who identified education goals had a plan to implement those goals. With the assistance of the teacher, they were either working on school or in the process of looking into a community program. Ironically several of the inmates said their only real opportunity to pursue education was *while they were incarcerated*. At no other time did they feel so free from distractions and drugs and/or alcohol. Indeed some viewed their time on the inside as a break from their often uncertain lives.

One of our objectives was to discover if the inmates were cognizant of their learning styles and behaviors. By probing this question we hoped to gain insight into which methods of disseminating information to the inmates would be the most effective. We also wanted to prompt the inmate's own critical thinking skills about his learning patterns.

Most of the inmates enjoyed hobbies or crafts that were either visual and/or kinesthetic in scope. Most said they preferred to learn by example or by performing the task themselves. No one said they preferred to learn something by reading about it. Drawing, painting, carving and sports were mentioned as preferred activities.

4. **Learn about the inmate's work history.**

Examining the inmate's work history was necessary to understand the motivation to work as well as any long-term goals. Many spoke of intermittent work opportunities and saw employment primarily as a means for support. Although some inmates dreamed of going into business on their own, most had vague career goals. Interestingly, the inmates were able to articulate their school goals better than their work goals. Although the inmates said that getting an education was important in getting a good job, many were unclear about what that good job could be.

5. **Understand the inmate's motivation to attend programs and his understanding of them.**

Most of the inmates attended CORE programs while in the facility in order to facilitate an early release. Although the inmates said that the programs were mandatory at other facilities, it was strictly voluntary at TCCC. Having said that, they also reported that they were often *strongly encouraged* by Corrections Personnel to participate.

More than one inmate voiced concerns over the concept of confidentiality while participating in the CORE Programs. CORE Programs are offered in provincial incarceration facilities and may include Substance Abuse Management, Healthy Relationships, Breaking Barriers, and Violence Prevention. The inmates complained that although the facilitators

> *"In the (sign-in) book they ask you what crimes have you committed that you haven't been caught for....I usually skip that page. I don't think that's so good. You take a course and they tell you it's all confidential then they tell you that if you say this you can be charged."*
>
> *-Inmate, TCCC*

encouraged the inmates to share their experiences with an assurance of confidentiality, they were also told that if they disclosed any prior criminal activity they could be charged. The idea of confidentiality with conditions is a tricky road to navigate while trying to instill trust in a process. To gain the most from a transitional and possibly life changing program like Breaking Barriers, the inmates must be able to speak freely to fully realize the benefits. However, within the climate of a correctional facility, it is understandable and expected that the disclosure of a criminal act be acted upon - a fragile process within an exacting milieu.

Several inmates spoke of varying degrees of benefit from the different programs and some of the inmates said the programs were not helpful at all. However, most said that they gained at least some benefit from attending, whether as a way to bank 'good time' or as an introspective exercise.

> *"If they (the inmates) are motivated to use the information in those courses for when they get out, then I think it would work. But if you are not motivated to stick with it then it's just going in one ear and out the other. "*
> *-Inmate, TCCC*

> *"I took Substance Abuse Management, but I said to hell with it I thought that it was going to help me get on parole but they shot me down before I could even get off the ground. "*
> *-Inmate, TCCC*

Many of the inmates enrolled in the school program to combat boredom, further their education goals, and to keep their minds off their present situation. When asked if they would continue schooling once they reached the outside, the inmates said they were motivated but knew there were many distractions like drugs and alcohol, work, a negative peer group or family matters.

> *"It will be harder for me to do it when I get out because I'll be free right? I might say, "Oh maybe I'll just go downtown. "It will be harder but if I stick to it I can probably keep it up. Here, I might as well do it. But on the street it's a different thing... too many distractions. "*
> *-Inmate, TCCC*

6. **Examine the inmate's knowledge of and participation in community programs and explore his perception of support in the community.**

While most of the inmates could identify community education programs, the college was the only one they could name. Unfortunately those same inmates said that the college was "not for them" and would not access this valuable source of adult education.

> *"I don't know of any. The college? I never thought that was for me. "*
> *-Inmate, TCCC*

We also discovered that many of the inmates did not perceive their Probation Officer as a support or advocate. Rather, they saw their probation appointments as a necessary evil and would not ask their Probation Officer for assistance or information. Although the trend in Community Corrections appears to be a change toward advocacy rather than a punitive role, most of the inmates were unaware of this.

Financial assistance was cited as a key factor to whether or not the inmates would consider continuing their schooling following incarceration. Lack of money could prompt an inmate to seek either work or criminal activity as an alternative to staying in school. Lack of family and community support and addictions problems could also lead to recidivism and dropping out.

<table>
<tr>
<td>"We end up having no chances...there are not many doors open to ex-cons. It's hard for us 'cause we get discouraged easily... "

-Inmate, TCCC</td>
<td>"Getting back into my old habits; drinking every day, drugs. I wouldn't have the time for school even though I wasn't doing anything important at all. I still wouldn't have the time. "

-Inmate, TCCC</td>
</tr>
</table>

7. Discuss the inmate's plans upon return to his community.

When asked what to envision their first day back in the community, the inmates responded with very specific activities. Appointments, family and social engagements, and probation requirements were listed as the top activities. Following that however, most of the inmate's were of a "wait and see" attitude. Some mentioned school and a few mentioned work. Some spoke of trying to stay clean while others envisioned partying with "a bag of weed".

While almost all the inmates looked forward to leaving the facility, not all anticipated their return to the community to be joyful. Many viewed their experience while

> *"I'm on a recovery route right now, so I'm pretty vulnerable. But a friend on the outside, he's got plans I could fall off pretty easy....but I'm safe here. I don't have anyone to do that to me in here."*
> *-Inmate, TCCC*

incarcerated as a break from their addictions and social issues and looked upon their return with trepidation. One inmate spoke of developing an entire new social network. Peer support and guidance were his priorities, something he lacked in his current social situation. Some inmates felt that their "friends" were waiting for them to get out in order to sabotage their sobriety efforts. Addictions issues at home also added to the difficulty of "staying clean".

Waiting to enter a treatment program was a challenge for the inmates. Some felt good about their sobriety and intended to stay that way, but anticipated they would need transitional support such as a treatment program. Fear was not an uncommon emotion expressed in the interviews - fear of the unknown, the waiting, and themselves.

8. Discuss the inmate's reflection on his experience in prison.

The inmates reflected on their time in prison with a combination of regret, acceptance, denial, wisdom and obliviousness.

Some men felt they had learned a few things about themselves and their deeds, while others regarded the incarceration process as a complete waste of time.   For the most part, the inmates alluded to lessons learned during the quiet times. Personal reflections included regret about past wrongs, the value of being free, and the harsh reality of life in prison. One of the most common themes was not wanting to end up like an old-timer, an inmate who had been in and out of jail for numerous offenses over a long period of time. The inmates looked upon these individuals with a mixture of contempt and clarity, as they understood that the only difference between them was time and a few bad choices.

Two of the inmates who had been incarcerated for more than two years spoke of having to relearn the proper way to act in normal society. One man said that he learned how to be violent in jail where everyday he felt the need to prove and protect himself. He felt he needed to unlearn this behavior in order to be successful socially. He spoke of social clarity while in prison. That is, he knew where the lines were, what was or was not tolerated from the corrections personnel and from the other inmates. A step out of line could end up with time spent in segregation, or with a "quick belt" from another inmate. However, such immediate and effective cues cannot be relied upon on the outside and the inmate predicted his social transition would be a difficult and complicated process.

> *"After being out after two years, I only made it 14 days and I was right back in. My first day out my grandma came and picked me up, we were going to go out to dinner. But I ended up eating in the car because I was too uncomfortable to eat in the restaurant. It's kinda hard, the first few weeks."*
> *-Inmate, TCCC*

Several of the inmates said that the one positive thing about their incarceration was the opportunity to continue their schooling. Several inmates expressed that their relationship with the facility teacher was positive. This foundation prompted the inmates to set education goals upon their release and many looked to the teacher for transitional guidance.

> *"Yes I'm just gonna keep busy, look for work, go to the library or something. Like before, I never would have thought about going to the library. If it keeps me out of trouble and these places, then for sure... "*
> *-Inmate, TCCC*

9. **Discover what reintegration processes and supports the inmate would like to see developed.**

Many of the inmates were unaware of the programs available in their community so were unable to articulate how these supports could be of assistance.

> *"Being in a place like this and getting them done (the first phone calls) is way easier than making an appointment out on the street. You can (always) say, I'll put it off until next month."*
> *-Inmate, TCCC*

> *"The teacher at Hutda Lake helped me to write the college entrance exam. He went and got the application for me....phoning back and forth whenever I needed to talk to various college counselors."*
>
> *-Inmate, TCCC*

However, they did know what challenges they faced and were able to discuss their needs on an individual basis. Almost all the men questioned agreed that beginning referral and reintegration processes while on the inside was the most effective way of not *slipping through the cracks*. Having a personal touch would assist the inmates in accessing different programs, be it education or support. Most said they were willing to begin a conversation with a key initial contact in the community prior to their release and many felt that this was instrumental in actualizing the referral.

10. Encourage the inmate to look at his education goals critically.

Most of the interviews lasted for about 40 minutes. Judging by the inmates' responses and thoughtful demeanor, it may have been the longest any of the inmates had spoken about their education in a long time. Near the end of the interview, many of the inmates could articulate release goals that included continuing education as a key component. They also integrated their learning in the school program with their learning of broader life goals while in the facility.

> *"So you know if you are going to pick up a drink or a joint or do some coke, you can basically play the tape and know how it's going to end. And if the end of the song is, 'I'll see you in jail!' or 'I'll see you in the hospital or I'll be at your funeral', the song stays the same. It's like a broken record, you learn from it. If you put a chair in the center of a circle of people, everyone has a different view of that chair, a different view of recovery. This time I think I have changed chairs."*
>
> *-Inmate, TCCC*

The Barriers to Transition Identified

During the information gathering phase several barriers to transition were identified. Although each inmate had unique experiences, common themes percolated to the top during these discussions.

To sum up, the barriers to transition include:

1. **Personal addictions issues.**
2. **Undeveloped structured referral processes from the incarceration facility to the community.**
3. **Lack of knowledge of community resources on the part of the inmate and staff.**
4. **Decreased risk taking on the part of the offender and lack of confidence with process and personnel.**
5. **Recidivism.**
6. **Personal educational standing often unknown to the inmate.**
7. **A continuation of poor school experiences.**
8. **Family and social issues or problems.**
9. **Little knowledge of financial resources, or lack of finances.**
10. **Work.**
11. **Perceived lack of support in the community.**

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1. Personal addictions issues.

It was made clear during the interviews and through discussion with staff at the facility, that reliance on drugs and/or alcohol was an area of concern in the lives of these men. The counselor reported that approximately 85-95% of the men at the facility had an addiction problem and support in this area on return to the community was imperative to a successful transition. Drugs and alcohol played an important part in many offenses from spousal assault to impaired driving.

2. Undeveloped structured referral processes from the incarceration facility to the community.

In most cases, the prison staff/counselor made referrals to the community to the best of their ability.

However, in some cases referrals were not made because the staff was unfamiliar with the referral process. In addition, undeveloped relationships with the community service provider made referrals more difficult.

3. Lack of knowledge of community resources on the part of the inmate and staff.

Several of the inmates could not name an adult education resource in their community. By far, the community college was the most well known resource, however many men said it was "not for me". The referring staff are often unaware of the programs available in anyone community and therefore, referrals did not take place. In addition, when the staff was busy, making the time to research the correct community resource was not always possible.

4. Decreased risk taking on the part of the offender and lack of confidence with process and personnel.

Many of the men reported a lack of confidence upon (prior) release from a facility and trepidation when thinking about their upcoming release from TCCC. A lack of structure, new-found freedom and unease with normal social intercourse combined to make the inmate feel uncertain and easily discouraged. In particular, previous unpleasant involvement with process and personnel (the legal system) resulted in making the offender highly suspect of community interventions.

5. Recidivism.

Over 86% of the men had been in jail prior to their incarceration at TCCC. Although several men stated that prison provided them with the opportunity to further their education goals, chronic recidivism in the long run would only serve to disturb personal momentum and motivation.

6. Personal educational standing often unknown to inmates.

During the interview process many of the men were not able to say exactly what education level they were working towards. They said that upon previous releases to the community, they had left schoolwork behind and were unable to recall what they had been working on.

7. A continuation of poor school experiences.

While many of the men admitted to a positive educational experience while incarcerated many believed they would have difficultly adapting to a classic school model. The help of a tutor or a designate to assist the men with specific problems was often suggested as a way to succeed in school.

8. Family and social issues or problems.

Many of the men spoke of "interference" from friends or family members in their education or sobriety goals. Several also spoke of overwhelming legal, custody and financial issues upon return to the community and as a result, education took a lesser priority.

9. Little knowledge of financial resources, or lack of finances.

Financial pressure was cited as one of the biggest concerns for inmates returning to their community. A lack of knowledge of financial resources was also named as the biggest challenge for those men who wished to continue their education. The need to generate income was a priority for most inmates.

10. Work.

Many of the men talked about work on return to the community. Many men were previously employed in the trades and hoped to find a job in that area upon return to the community. Again, generating an income was cited as one of the biggest barriers to remaining in a school program.

11. Perceived lack of support in the community.

Several inmates voiced concern over the lack of support or perceived negative reception on the part of the community. While many men said they had a desire to access community support on return to the community, they articulated confidentiality issues and interference from estranged family members as a concern, especially in the smaller communities.

Barriers Within the Facility

During the research gathering process many barriers within TCCC were identified. For example schoolwork and records were not always transferred with the inmate to or from another facility. (Transfers were a common occurrence.) Schoolwork was often begun but never completed and this added to the inmate's discouragement. In addition, it was often difficult for the inmates to reveal what grade or component they were working on (or had completed) and subsequently some students had to repeat work unnecessarily.

It was also discovered that there was no formal process established for the identification of people with low literacy skills or education needs. Luckily, TCCC is a small enough facility that the teacher/staff were made aware of these issues in other ways, however during busy times it could be overlooked.

TCCC is primarily a work facility and although the Supervisor gave her full support to the education program, work often took precedence over school.

Although the teacher made every effort to connect the inmate with key community people, she was not always aware of the services available in the receiving communities. Furthermore, referrals were not always made if the teacher were not present for the release.

The Model for Reintegration

Development

The *Model for Reintegration* was developed with the information gained during the questionnaire and interview phase and was designed to address the identified barriers. A template was designed and then modified to meet the specific needs of the communities. Each community had its own strengths and weaknesses depending on availability of resources, geographical accessibility or isolation, and personnel. Although there are similarities between the *Model for Reintegration* and a typical case management approach (where several community service providers come together to provide an integrated approach to client care), the most significant difference is that the *Model for Reintegration* focuses on literacy and education. In addition, whereas previous referrals may have occurred on a casual basis, a deliberate relationship with key individuals in the community was established for the purpose of referrals.

The model will:

- ✓ **Be accessible to inmates, ex-offenders, support personnel and educators.**
- ✓ **Be community specific.**
- ✓ **Encourage the inmate to establish his own goals and objectives.**
- ✓ **Encourage self-referrals.**
- ✓ **Rely on networks and reintegration strategies that already exist in the community or establish them where they do not exist.**
- ✓ **Assume community accountability.**
- ✓ **Be client-centered.**
- ✓ **Address the identified barriers to transition.**

Community contacts differed as various people came forward to embrace the project and network. For example, in some communities the Probation Officer took a lead, particularly where he/she had previous training/experience in low literacy issues. This was not the case in all the communities. Perhaps a combination of workload and availability thwarted involvement. In other communities, those people involved in community literacy and college programs took a lead.

Implementation of the Model for Reintegration

Implementation of the *Model for Reintegration* involved the collection of community resource information as well as developing networks in the individual communities. Development of the *Model for Reintegration* occurred in tandem with its implementation and as a result of the project, several community initiatives arose which ultimately became part of the Model for that particular community. For example, Smithers Literacy Services will accept students on a wait list through School District #54, and several community contacts in Houston would like to host a teleconference with teachers at the Prince George Regional Correctional Centre. Community Forums were held to promote the project and to research community specific infrastructures and networks. As a result of the Community Forums, the *Model for Reintegration* was both developed and implemented.

Implementation of the Model included the following activities:

1. **The development of a Reintegration Network.**
2. **The collection of community specific resource information.**
3. **The establishment of key community contacts.**
4. **The development of community specific referral materials to be used by the teacher and inmate upon release.**
5. **Educate support people in assisting people with low literacy skills.**
6. **Coordinate Community Forums to educate service providers and interested individuals about the project and facilitate community networking, relationship building and accountability.**
7. **Activating the Reintegration Network.**

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1. The development of a Reintegration Network.

The Reintegration Network is a system that focuses on education and reintegration and utilizes the existing structures in the community and/or develops them where they had not existed previously. A relationship between key people in the community and those people in the sending facility was necessary to facilitate a smooth transition to the community. As the inmates themselves noted, beginning a discussion with key people in the community prior to release was an important element in program transition. Having an established relationship between the jail and the service provider will only help to facilitate this process. In addition, relationships among community organizations (particularly educators) were also important to the retention of an ex-offender in an adult education program as the different sectors could assist in providing appropriate programs where others could not.

2. The collection of community-specific resource information.

The collection of community resource information was a time-intensive, yet vital activity. In order to establish key relationships within the community, it was important to understand what resources were available and who had a potential interface with ex-offenders. In many cases, this information was relatively easy to access through community resource directories or telephone inquiries. It should be mentioned however, that staff and program changes are common occurrences in every community and continuity can be a problem. In addition, resources in the smaller communities were sparse and in some cases non-existent.

Relevant community resources include:

- ✓ Drug and alcohol counseling services.
- ✓ Family counseling services.
- ✓ First Nations Bands.
- ✓ Adult education programs. (Colleges, school districts, community literacy programs, education societies.)
- ✓ Job readiness programs.
- ✓ Community Probations.
- ✓ Aboriginal justice organizations.
- ✓ Financial assistance programs.

3. The establishment of key community contacts.

In every community, the establishment of a key community contact (or contacts) was fundamental in the development of an effective network. Those people who either had a professional or personal mandate to work with ex-offenders provided the necessary specialized element. This role was seen as a way to provide services more effectively, not as an addition to anyone's workload. Educating the contact about the project and its goals prompted people to become involved. This was done through telephone contact, faxed materials and media presentations. It was also imperative that the key community contact be well connected in the community and with the sending facility. Key community contacts include college and community educators, Aboriginal Justice Workers, Counselors and Probations Officers.

4. The development of community-specific referral materials to be given to inmates upon release from the facility.

Both the inmates and the teacher at the jail said that a referral would facilitate the transition to community-based programs. Having the name and telephone number of someone in the community sensitive to the needs of an ex-offender is just another positive step toward reintegration. A small referral card that an inmate could carry in his pocket or wallet could be just the assistance he may need to access a critical community program. In addition, if the inmate was in a position to make his own referral prior to release, the process would be made that much more effective. **(See Appendix D.)**

5. **Educate support people in assisting people with low literacy skills.**

Awareness training on the part of support personnel can be achieved through relatively low-key methods like the distribution of pamphlets **(Appendix D)** and through informal discussion. In many cases discussion began during the Community Forums and continued throughout the development and refinement of the reintegration process. Once contact lists were made they were distributed to key personnel in pamphlet form along with some helpful hints about working with people with low literacy.

6. **Coordinate Community Forums to educate service providers and interested individuals about the project and facilitate community networking, relationship building and accountability.**
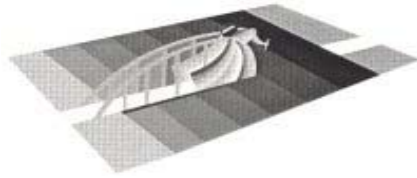
Community Forums were conducted in Terrace, Smithers, Houston, Hazelton and Prince Rupert. In addition, research was also conducted in Moricetown and the smaller communities around Hazelton to reflect the demographics of the surveyed inmates. In each case, key personnel were contacted, educated about the project and invited to participate at the Community Forum. Depending on the size of the community, attendance at the Forums varied from 8-18 people. Although the smaller communities generally had fewer resources, they had the advantage of being well connected, since individuals often performed several roles in the community. In addition the smaller communities sometimes shared resources between them.

The Forums consisted of introductions, a media presentation of the project and its findings, a community-initiatives brainstorming session, the creation of a contact list and follow-up.

7. **Activating the Reintegration Network.**

Following the gathering of all relevant information, the contact lists and referral pamphlets and materials were mailed to all the community contacts. All community specific pamphlets and referral materials were distributed to two prison facilities in the province. Teachers and staff at the prison facility as well as community resource personnel were encouraged to contact each other via phone or email to begin relationship building.
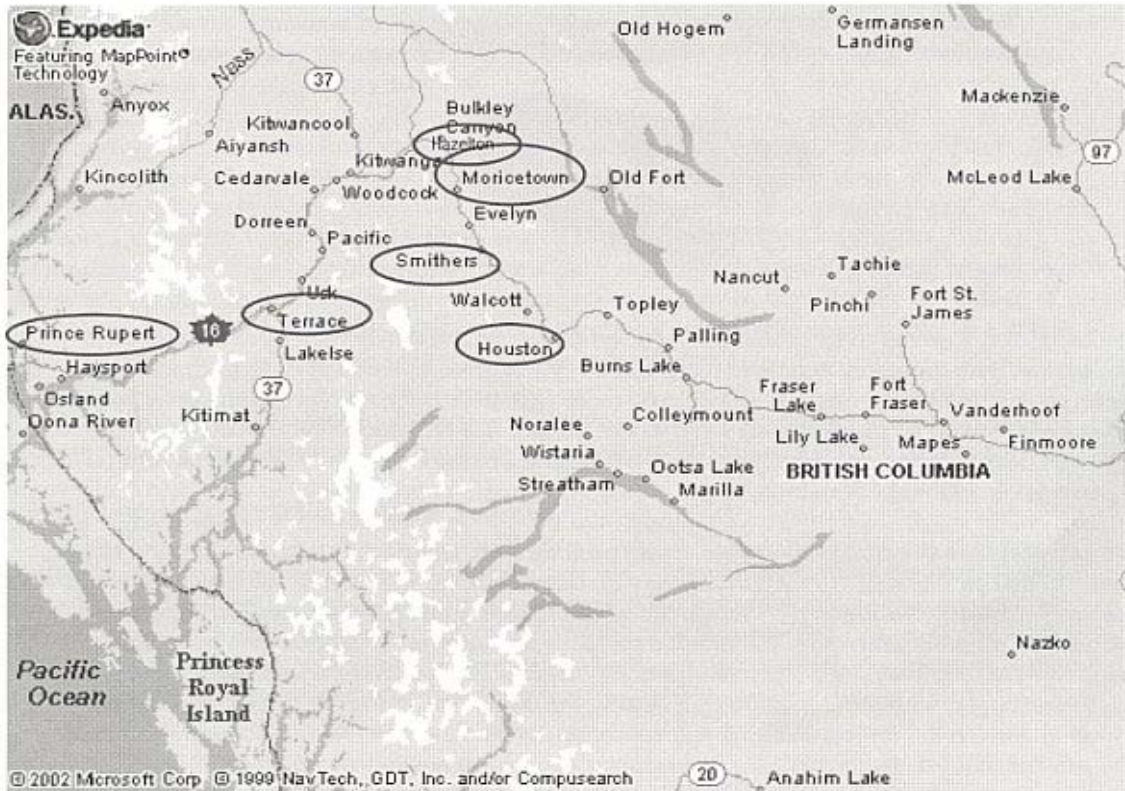
The Community Forums

The Community Forums were conducted for several reasons. Primarily they were developed to make contact with those key people in the community who could potentially interface with inmates re-entering the community. It could be those people directly involved with corrections or education or it could be supplementary support personnel like drug and alcohol workers or counselors. Most community organizations were accessed using community service directories, the phone book and word of mouth.

Once key people in the community were identified they were approached with information about the project and an invitation to the Forum. Having an established link with a community literacy group or Northwest Community College assisted in promoting the program to other support personnel in the community. Generally, once contact was made, most people were interested enough to want to know more. The main barrier to making the connections was unreturned phone calls. Interestingly, with the exception of Houston, the urban Native Friendship Houses did not show an interest in the project although the education coordinators and family support personnel in the smaller villages demonstrated a good response. One might suppose that the cultural dynamics of a First Nations organization in an urban center differ from those in a predominantly First Nations community.

In some of the First Nations communities, approaching both the hereditary Chiefs as well as the elected Chiefs would have been helpful to promote the project and network further. In only one case did a Chief come to a forum and that was by an indirect invitation. His presence provided a richness to the Forum as he described in detail his observations of his community and its challenges.

The Community Forums were developed to:

- ✓ Identify those people in a position to receive information about the project and both give and receive referrals.
- ✓ Educate those people about the project and begin or identify established community infrastructure.
- ✓ Provide the researcher with community specific information about referral processes.
- ✓ Draw from the community people who were willing to be (or already was by nature of their work) an initial community contact.

Map of the Northern Communities in British Columbia

Community Forums were conducted in:

> Terrace
> Smithers
> Houston
> Hazelton
> Prince Rupert

Terrace

The first Community Forum was presented in Terrace in November, 2001. The meeting was well attended by community education and counseling programs, Northwest Community College (NWCC), a Terrace men's programs, Haisla Justice, Kitimat Village and Community Services, staff from TCCC and the Principal of North Coast Distance Education.

The various participants were receptive to the findings of the research as well as to the creation of a network. However some had suggestions and criticisms to offer. For example, the native court worker wondered how so many of "our people" end up in the justice system without fully realizing how they got there. It was evident from the school histories and the court worker's experience that many inmates had difficulty with the printed materials involved in their arrests and convictions and this concerned the court worker. She also suggested that any reintegration processes build in self-responsibility on the part of the inmate as she identified system dependency as an issue. Early educational assessment including a vision and hearing test was recommended by the coordinator of Kitimat Literacy Services.

Many of the service providers and advocates agreed that a "safety-net" or support system was the key to a successful transition. Alcoholic Anonymous was suggested as an organization that has strong developments in this area, although because of their *anonymity* they are difficult to access for purposes other than addictions. It was also suggested that a peer support group be investigated. Both the staff from NWCC and Warren Wilson, the principal of North Coast Distance Education, realized the difficulty in completing distance education without some kind of support. One NWCC staff member exclaimed, "It's hard! I've done it." Mr. Wilson recognized this difficulty and suggested he would try to maintain the same marker for inmates returning to the community. NWCC Terrace also offered to look into student support options for those inmates taking correspondence.

Initial Community Contacts:

- Sue Carson, Community Readers and Writers Program.
- Warren Wilson, Principal, North Coast Distance Education.
- Mae Derrick, First Nations Coordinator, Northwest Community College, Terrace.
- Janette Camazzola, Literacy Coordinator, Kitimat Community Services, Kitimat.
- **(See Appendix C for Contact Information.)**

Smithers

Seventeen people attended the Smithers Forum that was held in December 2001. Key educators, counselors and Ministry staff participated in the event. The group discussed financial options for inmates returning to school, support networks in the community, and educational initiatives.

The educational alternatives in Smithers were both adaptive as well as restrictive. Educators in the college and school district systems were willing to look at modifying programs to meet the needs of ex-offenders, particularly those with learning concerns. On the other hand, the college and school district curriculums could be unsuitable and frustrating for adults with low literacy needs or low academic standing.

School District 54 CCP Program (College and Career Prep) will accept adults who wish to upgrade but do not feel comfortable in a teen environment. However, the regional limit is only 30 adults and there is often a wait list. On all levels, educators agreed that the more educational information made available to the teacher will assist in creating better, more individualized curriculum. Jane Boulton from Smithers Literacy Services stated that she is willing to work with those people on a wait list (to enter School District Program) in order to facilitate the transition process. She will also meet with anyone who is interested in the literacy program and will meet potential students outside the office as well. (i.e. At Probation appointments.)

Options regarding financial aid were discussed with input from the Ministry of Human Resources. It was suggested by a Ministry staff person that individualized financial plans (established before leaving) would be best. In some cases it may be possible for financial aid workers to make contact with inmates before they leave the institution either by face-to-face contact or by telephone. Literacy training could be recognized under the new BC Benefits conditions that require recipients to be working or taking academic upgrading. However, literacy upgrading will need to be defined to fully detail the actual number of hours spent with a tutor.

The Skeena Native Development Society is an aboriginal employment and training program. It serves individuals from Houston to Moricetown and has experience in working with individuals involved in the justice system. Counselors work with individuals to develop back to work action plans that may involve upgrading, financial options, and job readiness skills. The Skeena Native Development Society is a key first contact in Smithers.

Initial Community Contacts:

- Jane Boulton, Coordinator, Smithers Literacy Services.
- Christine Doran, Adult Probations.
- Daphne Moser, Bulkley Valley Learning Centre, School District 54.
- Katherine Staiger, College and Career Prep Instructor, NWCC.
- Cathy Anderson, Employment Counselor, Skeen a Native Development Society.
- **(See Appendix C for contact information.)**

Moricetown

Moricetown is a small First Nations community approximately 20 minutes west of Smithers. Despite its size, it has a variety of services to offer including health services, education, and a native justice program. Moricetown was one community that was not interested in participating in a Community Forum, however, they were receptive to smaller meetings to discuss the project. I sensed that people were too busy to commit to a three-hour session and preferred a shorter, more intimate meeting.

Discussions with key individuals in Moricetown revealed that some community members felt that ex-offenders need to be seen in the context of their communities and cultural identity is the first issue to address.

Wet'suwet'en Unlocking Aboriginal Justice (an alternative aboriginal justice program) works with offenders and relies upon social censure and compensation for wrongful deeds within the kinship system. It is an alternative or a compliment to the western system where the offender, the offender's house group and victim work together to create an action plan. It is a voluntary program and the victim must also consent prior to the offender's acceptance into the UAJ program. Key counseling initiatives include encouraging clients to take responsibility for their actions and promoting healthy choices like the creation. of a positive peer group and the exploration of traditional healing practices. The UAJ Program is open to any Wet'suwet'en person and is an initial community contact.

Through the Kyah Wiget Education Society, the Adult Basic Education (ABE) Coordinator goes door to door to recruit people for ABE. The coordinator found this the most effective way, as literature does not always find its mark. The coordinator provides a link for college if there is a need although most adults enrolled in school in Moricetown want their Grade l2 diploma. (As reported by the ABE Coordinator.) The coordinator also assists people taking correspondence through North Coast Distance Education.

Initial Community Contacts:

- Bonnie George, Unlocking Aboriginal Justice, Office of the Wet'suwet'en.
- Caroline Michel, ABE Coordinator, Kyah Wiget Education Society.
  (See Appendix C for contact information.)

Houston

Although no inmates reported being from the Houston community, it was suggested by the teacher at TCCC that this community be included in the network.

Several educators from Houston voiced concerns over the school history results and confirmed that they too had seen these kinds of cases in their own school. It was identified that it was an oversight not to include educators from the grade school level to the forum, although it was explained that our focus for the time being was on adults.

Several educators voiced a willingness to have a meeting with the teacher from the Prince George Regional Correctional Centre in order to facilitate reintegration processes. This could be done by telephone or face to face.

Hazelton

Within the Hazelton area are Hazelton, New Hazelton, Old Town, Hagwilget and Two-Mile. The outlying areas include the reserves of Gitanmaax, Kitwancool, Gitseguecla, Gitwanga, Glen Vowell and Kispiox. First Nations territories include Frog (La<u>x</u>-Seel-<u>G</u>anada), Wolf (La<u>x</u> Gibuu), Fireweed (Gisga'ast) and Eagle (La<u>x</u> Skiik).

Several community members participated in the forum including representatives from the education, corrections and counseling sectors. Each of the reserve communities has an Education Society that provides adult education services. There is also a campus for Northwest Community College in Hazelton and ABE is offered through the First Nations High School.

Gitxsan Unlocking Aboriginal Justice is a program of the Gitxsan Health Society and has been active in the Hazeltons for several years. Its mission is to maintain "law and order according to the high principle of respect and Ayookhl Gitxsan" (Gitxsan Unlocking Aboriginal Justice Program, pamphlet). Like the Wet'suwet'en UAJ Program, Gitxsan UAJ operates on the principles of inclusion and restoration and includes the victim, the offender and the offender's house (clan) in the action plan. Offenders can access the program prior to sentencing or on their return to the community. UAJ counselors do not encourage offenders to seek the program as a way to facilitate an early release as this undermines the UAJ principle that offenders must take responsibility for their actions.

Generally speaking the community members felt that the current inter-agency networking processes worked reasonably well, as service providers met regularly. On the other hand some community members felt that getting information out to those people who needed it most was a challenge and the lack of structured referrals might make an offender feel excluded, abandoned or isolated if he/she fell through the cracks.

Various funding opportunities were available through band offices. Members could access funds through an application process provided they meet the deadline(s). For example, in Glen Vowell the deadlines for funding applications for status members of the Glen Vowell Band are May 31st and November 30th. It should also be noted that members must first write a letter of request, specifying their need. This could be done before the inmate leaves the facility.

Initial Community Contacts:

- Colleen Burns, NWCC, Hazelton.
- Linda Morrison, Coordinator, Gitxsan Unlocking Aboriginal Justice.
- Julie Muldoe, Youth Probation Officer.
- Lynn Wilson, Hagwilget Education Coordinator.
- Debbie Bright, Gitwangak Education Coordinator.
- Sheila Joseph, Glen Vowell Education Coordinator.
- Annette Wilson, Kispiox School.
  (See Appendix C for contact information.)

Prince Rupert

Although only 8 community members attended the Forum in Prince Rupert, the project in general was extremely well received. In particular, the Education Coordinators from the smaller First Nations communities who were unable to attend because of transportation issues were very interested in the project. (Several communities in the area are only accessible by boat.) Prince Rupert Adult Community Corrections was also well represented with the attendance of three Probation Officers. Representation from NWCC, the Salvation Army and Prince Rupert Addictions Services (PRAS) rounded out the Forum. An enthusiastic conversation ensued and as a special note, every person who attended the Community Forum agreed to be an initial community.

Several participants agreed that Community Corrections was on the increase in Prince Rupert and felt this was due primarily to a trend in sentencing. Additionally, although the attending members had worked together in the past, they admitted that referrals from correctional facilities appeared to be on the decrease and that communication could be improved.

A Probation Officer voiced concerns over the difficulty in accessing mental health services for clients and felt that people were often better served in the system than in the community. There appears to be a gap in service for clients with mental illness, schizophrenia and FAS.

Dale McKinnon from PRAS described a community-based men's treatment program that he has incorporated into the programming at PRAS. It is a non-residential, day/evening program and is modeled after a women's treatment program. Program development was initially funded through the Ministry for Children and Families and PRAS and according to Mr. McKinnon, each Community Health Council in B.C. has a copy.

Several participants felt the term "ex-offender" was exclusive and inaccurate and suggested changing the language to something more inclusive like, "those involved with the justice system. . . "

Initial Community Contacts:

- Dale McKinnon, Prince Rupert Addictions Services.
- Vena Hachkevich, NWCC, Prince Rupert.
- Kaarlene Lindsay, First Nations Access Coordinator, NWCC, Prince Rupert.
- Ken Copping, Coordinator/Counselor, The Salvation Army.
- Neal Barton, Education Coordinator, Gingolx Education Department.
- Kristi Kucey, Career Counselor, Haida Gwaii Community Futures Career Centre, Queen Charlotte City.
- Tara Leighton, Prince Rupert Community Corrections.
- Keri Swanson, Prince Rupert Community Corrections.
- Daisy Clayton, Prince Rupert Community Corrections.
  (See Appendix C for contact information.)

Dawson Creek

Due to funding and geographic limitations a Community Forum was not held in Dawson Creek. Some preliminary contacts were made via telephone; however this method provided its own challenges. For example, unreturned telephone calls by a central adult education institution created a barrier to accessing a very important community resource. This experience helps to illustrate the importance of <u>relationship building</u> in the Model. Lack of relationships can mean a waste of time, energy and confidence on the part of a vulnerable transitioning inmate.

Making Connections: Activating the Network

At the beginning of 2002, it was announced that the Terrace Community Correctional Centre was closing its doors. By April the facility was closed and the research project needed to quickly change gears. Luckily, a link with the Prince George Regional Correctional Centre (PGRCC) had been established and the education coordinator at the facility was more than willing to participate in a northern network. The research information gained from the inmates at TCCC was still extremely valuable, as the men continue to return to the northern communities although now from even farther away. A meeting at PGRCC with the education staff helped to initiate the regional network. However, during the meeting it was discovered that although our information was helpful, it was not an exact fit. There are still vast areas that are not covered by our project to which PGRCC discharges inmates every week. The staff at PGRCC were very interested in modeling the project to include areas like Valemont/McBride, 100 Mile House, the northern borders and Alberta.

Following the development of the contacts lists and the link with PGRCC, community specific brochures **(see Appendix D)** were created that included a brief description of the project, the names and phone numbers of key community contacts and points for working with people with low literacy skills. In addition, a small card was developed to record the inmate's school level or area he was working on. The brochures and blank cards were then distributed to partners in the project, like drug and alcohol programs, Band and Ministry offices, and corrections institutions like PGRCC and the Burnaby Centre for Women. A database of partners was created from the lists of general community contacts and participants from the Community Forums.

To sum up, activating the network included:

- ✓ The creation and distribution of community specific brochures that included initial contact names and numbers.
- ✓ The creation of a small referral card.
- ✓ Meeting with teachers and support personnel at PGRCC and providing them with contact names and numbers and encouraging them to make contact with the communities.
- ✓ Distributing the brochures to community partners and encouraging them to make contact with PGRCC and other facilities in the province.

Maintaining the Connections

Although community accountability was an important element in the development of the network, some maintenance of the project is necessary to ensure its effectiveness and longevity.

Recommendations for maintenance include:

- ✓ **Initial community contact lists be reviewed annually and updated.**
  Smithers Literacy Services, estimated time: 3 hours annually.
- ✓ **New brochures be updated and sent to all community partners.**
  Smithers Literacy Services, estimated time: 6 hours annually.
- ✓ **Encourage relationships between key community contacts, partners and corrections facilities by coordinating a face-to-face meeting or teleconference.**
  Smithers Literacy Services or PGRCC, estimated time: 4 to 8 hours annually.
- ✓ **Encourage community literacy groups and educators to contact the facility to discuss potential referrals.**
  All community literacy and education groups, estimated time: 1-8 hours annually.
- ✓ **Each community contact to keep track of referrals.**
  Community contacts, estimated time: 2-4 hours annually.
- ✓ **Compile referrals and evaluate effectiveness of model.**
  Smithers Literacy Services, estimated time: 200 hours over 6-12 month period, depending on funding and staffing.
- ✓ **Encourage PGRCC to connect with Literacy B.C. (a provincial literacy advocacy group) and be on mailing list.**
  PGRCC, estimated time: minimal.

Note: These recommendations were made prior to the notification that Smithers Literacy Services would not receive funding for the 2002-2003 period. However, it is hopeful that adult literacy services will continue in Smithers in another capacity and that these recommendations will be implemented by whoever continues the service.

Recommendations in the Big Picture

The <u>development of relationships</u> is integral to the long-term success of this project and we need to maintain those relationships to ensure its longevity. However, the maintenance of effective relationships can be difficult, particularly in uncertain economic times where staff and program changes are a common occurrence.

Evidently, some education about the resources available in the communities could begin as soon as an inmate enrolled in the prison school program since most inmates said they would access education programs if they knew about them *prior* to leaving TCCC. This might even be a key element to include in standardized CORE education curriculum.

Having a tutor or a key educational contact within the community who is sensitive to the needs of an inmate returning to his home is essential, particularly for those who have given learning a second chance. It is important not to underestimate the power of a positive relationship as a catalyst to a successful learning experience. Those people committed to literacy, reintegration, and support of the individual are in a position to advocate for ex-offenders and create *social capital* within their communities. According to Ricks, Charlesworth, Bellefeuille and Field (1999), *social capital* is defined by a set of principles that reflect what is achievable in a community. Those principles are described in All *Together Now: Creating a Social Capital Mosaic:*

- "Every community and community member has the capacity to be different.
- You can start anywhere and with whatever you have.
- Healthy communities and healthy individuals are interdependent.
- Respect for the dignity and worth of people promotes equal opportunities and access to resources." (Ricks, Charlesworth, Bellefeuille, Field, 1999, p. 39).

With this in mind, the continuity of the project rests with the initial *community conta*cts and the *facility teachers* who have taken a lead in sustaining the regional network. They can create or maintain community accountability by following through with the aforementioned recommendations and by integrating the following initiatives into program delivery and individual service.

Initiatives include:

- ✓ Service providers to maintain their advocacy role regardless of their position in the community or in the province.
- ✓ Service providers to incorporate role as community contact as a responsibility of their position. (Include in job description.)
- ✓ Create processes within community education and support organizations to include program access and delivery to ex-offenders.
- ✓ Network wherever possible, particularly between community groups and corrections facilities.
- ✓ Create processes within correctional facilities for self-determination and community connectedness.

Specific Recommendations:

Prince George Regional Correctional Centre

- Teachers and staff to ensure that school records/materials travel with the inmate upon transfers to other facilities.
- Teachers and staff members to ensure that school placement be accurately recorded upon release from the facility and that information be accessible to inmates.
- Prison facility provide educational and hearing/sight testing.
- Prison school program to incorporate community networking (on the part of the inmate) as part of the curriculum.
- Whenever possible, teacher and support staff to assist the inmate to self-refer.
- Teachers and staff to provide opportunities for the discussion of literacy issues as it affects the lives of the inmates.
- Prison teacher to register with Literacy, B.C, a provincial literacy advocacy group as a way to network and keep up-to-date on the latest literacy initiatives.
- Prison teacher/staff to participate in provincial correctional educator's conference to network and exchange information about programs.
- Release plans to include a holistic approach that includes education.

Ministry of Attorney General, CORE Programs Coordinator

- Include community research and networking on the part of the inmate in CORE Education Program Curriculum.

Communities

- Participate in the maintenance of the regional network.
- Make personal contact with prison facilities.
- Obtain Irma Soltonovich's *Volunteer Tutor/Learner Guide. Literacy Training Guide for Offenders in the Community a*nd educate personnel on working with people with low literacy skills.
- Advocate for ex-offenders and low literacy adults.
- Develop Community Education Councils in each community who will advocate for community learning.
- Return inquiries and telephone calls from inmates as promptly as possible.
- Encourage and assist ex-offenders to create positive peer support.

Funders

- Provide opportunities for future research to include full-scale testing and evaluation of the model.
- Provide funding in the corrections system for educational/sight and hearing testing.
- Provide on-going funding for program maintenance.
- Provide funding for a Prison and Community Education Conference.

Conclusion

During the two years it took to complete the **Incarceration to Inclusion** research project, many changes occurred. The closure of the Terrace Community Correctional Facility, the change of focus to the Prince George Regional Correctional Centre, the restructuring of Smithers Literacy Services and the vast changes in community and facility staffing ironically foreshadowed the environment in which the project was to be released. Although challenged by the changes, **Incarceration to Inclusion** adapted to produce a flexible, creative and utterly individualistic project.

From the interviews with inmates to the identification of initial community contacts, the research project never strayed far from its purpose - to identify and challenge the barriers to transition to community adult education programs and develop a *Model for Reintegration.* At the center of the project are the inmates and the people who support them. The next step is up to them.

Endnote:

A full-scale testing of the *Model for Reintegration* was initially planned but not carried out due to the closure of TCCC and the late relationship with PGRCC. However, we became aware of two separate cases where the *Model for Reintegration* (Reintegration Network) was accessed even prior to its activation. I am confident there will be many more examples of this in the future.

<u>Inmate Questionnaire Responses</u>

1. **Number of Inmates Surveyed:** 30

2. **Age:**
    18-28 years: 13 29-39 years: 10
    40-50 years: 6   51+ years: 1

3. **Is this your first time in prison?**
    Yes: 4   No: 26
    *No. of inmates who reported being incarcerated three or more times: 10

4. **What is your release date?**
    Various responses between January 29, 2001 and April 4, 2001
    Seven inmates on remand, 2 release dates unknown.

5. **When did you start your sentence?**
    Various responses between September 9, 1998 and January 24, 2001.

6. **What is your First Language?**
    English: 27   First Nations: 2 Other: 1

7. **Are you a member of First Nations Band?**
    Yes: 17   No: 13

8. **Where do you live?**
    Terrace: 12
    Hazleton: 6
    Prince Rupert: 3
    Dawson Creek: 2
    Prince George: 2
    Smithers: 2
    Other (Combined) 3

9. **Will you return home after prison?**
    Yes: 22   Do not know: 8

10. **What Grade did you finish?**
    Gr. 7: 3 Gr. 9: 3 Gr. 10: 10 Gr. 11: 6 College: 2

11. **What Grade did you last enjoy?**
    Gr. 9: 4 Gr. 12:3 All: 1 Gr. 10: 7 College: 1
    Other: 1 Gr. 11: 3 None: 3 Unknown: 7

12. How old were you when you left or finished school?
Age 13: 1   Age 17: 9   Age 15: 4   Age 18: 5
Age 16: 2   Over 19: 7   Other: 2

13. Why did you leave school?
Social and Alcohol Problems: 8
Difficulty with school work: 3
Wanted to work/make money: 7
Moved: 1
Graduated: 6
Unknown: 5

14. Do you think you have a learning disability?
Yes: 26   No: 17
*(Concentration was reported as the most problematic area.)

15. Did you work (immediately) before prison?
Yes: 26   No: 4

If yes, what did you do?
Forestry: 9   Trades/Heavy Equip: 9
Retail: 2   Fishing: 2
Food Service: 2   Mining: 1
Trucking: 1   Janitorial: 1

16. Have you ever worked?
Yes: 29   No: 1

If yes, what did you do?
West Coast Amusements: 1   Logging: 1
No response: 1

17. What areas do you work in now? (At TCCC)
Yard: 15   Wood: 4
Kitchen: 4   Other: 4
Unknown: 3

18. Have you been offered CORE Programs?
Yes: 22   No: 8

If yes, which one(s)?
Substance Abuse Management: 8
Breaking Barriers: 8
School Program: 5
Healthy Relationships: 5
Violence Prevention: 4

19. Have you taken any CORE Programs?
Yes: 22   No: 7   N/A: 1

If yes, which one(s)?
Violence Prevention: 15
Substance Abuse Program: 13
Breaking Barriers: 12
Healthy Relationships: 11
School Program: 10

20. Do you plan on taking any Core Programs?
Yes: 20   No: 8   N/A: 2

If yes, which one(s)?
Healthy Relationships: 11
Substance Abuse Program: 10
School Program: 6
Violence Prevention: 4
Breaking Barriers: 3

21. Do you know of any adult education programs in your community?
Yes: 23   No: 6   N/A: 1

If yes, please list:
College: 10
Continuing Ed/GED: 10
Trades Related Courses: 4
Friendship Centre: 2
UNBC: 2

22. How did you hear about them? (From 23 respondents.)
Friends: 7   Word of Mouth: 6   Educators: 4
Written Materials: 2   Work: 2   Other: 2

23. Are you willing to be interviewed?
Yes: 27   No: 3

****Number of questionnaired inmates enrolled in school program: 16
(Ten inmates enrolled in school at time of interview and six enrolled shortly thereafter.)**

<u>Interview Questions (Inmates)</u>

<u>SECTION A</u>: ABOUT THE PARTICIPANT

This section will help me to find out more about you and your home life.

1. **Tell me about where you live.**
2. **Do you have family there? Friends?**
3. **Are you in contact with them? Would you like to be?**
4. **Would you consider them supportive of you? In what way?**
5. **Who could you count on to be supportive and why?**

<u>SECTION B</u>: LIFE IN PRISON

This section will help me to understand what life is like for you 'on the inside'.

1. **Describe your typical day.**
2. **What are some major differences about how you spend your time? What are some smaller differences?**
3. **What has been the most negative thing about your time in prison?**
4. **What, if any, positive things have come out of this?**
5. **Do you feel safe or threatened here? Why?**
6. **What do you think about friendships here?**
7. **What is your experience with the Corrections Personnel?**
8. **How do you feel about Corrections Personnel presenting the Programs?**
9. **What is your experience with the prison counselor?**
10. **Is there any thing else you would like to say about life in prison?**

<u>SECTION C</u>: SCHOOL EXPERIENCES

This section will help me to find out more about your learning experiences and what that was like for you.

1. **Tell me about your experience with school.**
2. **What did you like about it?**
3. **What did you not like about it?**
4. **What was your least favorite subject? Why?**
5. **Was there anything you felt you gained from school? Why?**
6. **How do you learn best?**
7. **How do you feel about your reading and writing skills now?**
8. **If you feel you have a learning disability, please describe.**
9. **How important is education to you?**

10. Do you have any education goals? What are they?
11. Do you have a plan to make that happen?
12. Do you do any crafts, art, hobbies? What do you enjoy about it?
13. How did you learn to do it?
14. How would you teach someone else to do your craft?

SECTION D: WORK HISTORY

This section will look at your work history, work goals and what may stop you from working.

1. What kind of work do you do? (If applicable.)
2. What kind of work are you interested in?
3. What would need to happen to get that kind of work?
4. What would stop you from working?
5. What other skills do you have? (Cooking, sports, fishing, etc.) How did you get those skills?

SECTION E: PROGRAMMING

This section will tell me what kind of programs you are in, and what you like or do not like about those programs.

1. Why did you choose to participate or not participate in the prison program(s)?
2. How did you find out about the program(s)?
3. What difficulties (if any) did you experience while at the program?
4. What do you enjoy about the program? Why?
5. Is schooling different here than in the community? Why or why not?
6. Did it meet your expectations? How do you feel about it now?
7. Would you attend a program like this on the outside? Why or why not?

SECTION F: COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

This section will help me to understand your knowledge of community programs, why you would or would not attend, and what supports are available to you.

1. Have you ever attended an adult education program? What was that like for you?
2. What, if any, educational programs are you aware of and how did you hear about them? Are you aware of any other programs?
3. What is your perception of them?

4. **Would you consider continuing your studies after prison? Why or why not?**
5. **What would make that easier for you?**
6. **What would prevent you from attending a program after your release?**
7. **How important is community/family support to you in this regard?**
8. **Would you be open to attending a community education program if you knew about it while in prison?**

SECTION G: RELEASE

This section will look at your release and what your concerns are. It will also look at the supports available to you.

1. **What do you think your first day after release will be like?**
2. **Are you looking forward to it? Why or why not?**
3. **What are your concerns about it?**
4. **What are your expectations of your probation officer?**
5. **Do you feel you have made any changes while in prison? What are they?**
6. **Will you be able to maintain these changes once you are released? Do you want to maintain these changes?**
7. **What will make that easier? What will be the most difficult?**
8. **What do you think your family and friends will think about these changes?**
9. **What will make returning to your community easier for you?**
10. **What would help you attend an education program on an on-going basis?**

Initial Community Contact Lists

Smithers

Jane Boulton Manager, Smithers Literacy Services	Box 3759 Smithers, BC V0J 2N0	Tel: 250-847-9515 Fax: 250-847-3712 Email: literacy@scsa.ca
Cathy Anderson Employment Counselor Skeena Native Development Society	Box 2319 Smithers, BC V0J 2N0	Tel: 250-877-6060 Fax: 250-847-1860 Email: cathyanderson@uniserve.com
Christine Doran Smithers Community Corrections	Bag 5000 Smithers, BC V0J 2N0	Tel: 250-847-7365 Fax: 250-847-7582 Email: christine.doran@gems4.bc.ca
Daphne Moser Teacher School District #54	Box 4750 Smithers, BC V0J 2N0	Tel: 250-847-2008 Fax: 250-847-3626 Email: dmoser@mail.sd54.bc.ca
Katherine Staiger College and Career Prep. Instructor	Box 3606 Smithers, BC V0J 2N0	Tel: 250-847-4461 Fax: 250-847-4568 Email: kstaiger@nwcc.ba.ca

Moricetown

Bonnie George Facilitator Wet'suwet'en Unlocking Aboriginal Justice	RR 1, Box 1 Comp 26, Site 15 Smithers, BC V0J 2N0	Tel: 250-877-5090 Fax: 250-877-5091 Email: bgeorge@wetsuweten.com
Caroline Michel Adult Basic Education Coordinator Kyah Wiget Education Society	RR 1, Site 15 Comp 25 Smithers, BC	Tel: 250-847-1477 Fax: 250-847-3813

Houston

Dee MacRae Regional Literacy Representative	Box 1277 Houston, BC V0J 1Z0	Tel: 250-845-2727 Fax: 250-845-5907 Email: dmcrae@nwcc.bc.ca
Kathy Anderson Coordinator Houston Link to Learning	Box 1277 Houston, BC V0J 1Z0	Tel: 250-845-2727 Fax: 250-845-5907 Email: kanderson@nwcc.bc.ca
Miles McGuire Probation Officer Community Corrections, Houston	#42, Bag 5000 Smithers, BC V0J 2N0	Tel: 250-847-7366 Fax: 250-847-7582 Email: miles.mcguire@gems1.gov.bc.ca

Sharon Smith
Education Advisor
NW Community College, Houston

Box 1277
Houston, BC
V0J 1Z0

Tel: 250-845-7266
Fax: 250-845-5907
Email: ssmith@nwcc.bc.ca

Hazelton

Julie Muldoe
Youth Probation Officer

Box 380
Hazelton, BC
V0J 1Y0

Tel: 250-842-6011
Fax: 250-842-6723
Email: julia.muldoe@gems54.gov.bc.ca

Linda Morrison
Coordinator
Gitxsan Unlocking Aboriginal
Justice

Box 223
Hazelton, BC
V0J 1Y0

Tel: 250-842-5165
Fax: 250-842-6435
Email: lymorrison47@hotmail.com

Debbie Bright
Education Coordinator
Gitwangaak Education Society

Box 280
Gitwanga, BC
V0J 2A0

Tel: 250-849-5330
Fax: 250-849-5327
Email: grbright@hotmail.com

Sheila Joseph
Education Coordinator
Glen Vowell Education Society

Box 157
Glen Vowell, BC
V0J 2Y0

Tel: 250-842-5241
Fax: 250-842-5601
Email: glenv@bulkley.net

Joan Brown
Social Worker
Glen Vowell Band

Box 157
Glen Vowell, BC
V0J 2Y0

Tel: 250-842-5241
Fax: 250-842-5601
Email: glenv@bulkley.net

Colleen Burns
Education Advisor
Hazleton NWCC

Box 338
Hazelton, BC
V0J 1Y0

Tel: 250-842-5291
Fax: 250-842-5813
Email: cburns@nwcc.bc.ca

Annette Wilson
Education Coordinator
Kisplox School

RR 1, Site K,
Comp 128
Hazelton, BC
V0J 1Y0

Tel: 250-842-6148
Fax: 250-842-5799
Email: postkispo@bulkley.net

Lynn Wilson
Education Coordinator
Hagwilget Education Society

Box 460
Hazelton, BC
V0J 1Y0

Tel: 250-842-6258
Fax: 250-842-6924
Email: louise_hvc@kermode.net

Prince Rupert

Dale McKinnon
Counselor
Prince Rupert Addictions Services

309-2nd Ave. W.
Prince Rupert, BC
V8J 3T1

Tel: 250-624-4375
Fax: 250-624-5245
Email: dale.mackinnon.ncchc.hnet.bc.ca

Vena Hachkevich
Northwest Community College

130-1st Ave. W.
Prince Rupert, BC
V8J 1A8

Tel: 250-624-6054
Fax: 250-624-4920
Email: hach@nwcc.bc.ca

Ken Copping	501-6th Ave. W.	Tel: 250-624-2976
Counselor/Coordinator	Prince Rupert, BC	Email: harbourlight@kaien.net.ca
The Salvation Army	V8J 1Z7	

Ken Copping
Counselor/Coordinator
The Salvation Army
501-6th Ave. W.
Prince Rupert, BC
V8J 1Z7
Tel: 250-624-2976
Email: harbourlight@kaien.net.ca

Kaarlene Lindsay
First Nations Student Support
NWCC
130-1st Ave. W.
Prince Rupert, BC
V8J 1A8
Tel: 250-624-6054
Fax: 250-624-4920
Email: klindsay@nwcc.bc.ca

Neal Barton
Education Administrator
Gingolx Education Department
1306 Volunteer St.
Gingolx, BC
V0V 1B0
Tel: 250-326-4313 / 1-800-711-2511
Fax: 250-326-4303
Email: gingolx_ed@yahoo.com

Prince Rupert Community Corrections
Probation Officers

Tara Leighton
Keri Swanson
Daisy Clayton
132 First Ave.
Prince Rupert, BC
V8J 1A8
Tel: 250-624-7435
Fax: 250-624-7791
Emails:
tara.leighton@gems1.gov.bc.ca
keriswanson@gems3.gov.bc.ca
daisy.clatyon@gems4.gov.bc.ca

Kristi Kucey
Career Counselor
Haida Gwaii Community Futures
Career Development Centre
111-107 Causeway
Box 340
Queen Charlotte City, BC
Tel: 250-559-7731
Fax: 250-559-0008

Terrace

Sue Carson
Community Readers and Writers
Program
#2-3215 Eby St.
Terrace, BC
V8G 2X8
Tel: 250-638-1330
Fax: 250-638-1331
Email: tvb@kermode.net

Warren Wilson
Principal
North Coast Distance Education
Bag 5000
Terrace, BC
V8G 5K2
Tel: 250-635-7944
Fax: 250-638-2399
Email: wwilson@cmsd.bc.ca

Mae Derrick
First Nations Access Coordinator
NW Community College
5331 McConnell Ave.
Terrace, BC
V8G 4X2
Tel: 250-638-5421
Fax: 250-638-5440
Email: mderrick@nwcc.bc.ca

Jeanette Camazzola
Literacy Kitimat
310-370 City Centre
Kitimat, BC
V8C 1T6
Tel: 250-632-3139
Fax: 250-632-3368

Correctional Facilities

Prince George Regional
Correctional Centre
Teacher: Dave Fraser
Director of Programs: Joanne Hawkins
Box 4300
Prince George, BC
V2L 5J9
Tel: 250-960-3001
Fax: 250-900-3021

Burnaby Correctional Centre
for Women
7900 Fraser Park Dr.
Burnaby, BC
V5J 5H1
Tel: 604-436-6020
Fax: 604-660-9724

Literacy Advocacy

Literacy, BC

Suite 601-510 W. Hastings St.
Vancouver, BC
V6B 1L8

Tel: 1-800-663-1293
Web: http://www.literacy.bc.ca

Working with People With Low Literacy Skills

*One in five Canadians has difficulty reading and writing. For people in correctional institutions this rate is even higher. * The following are some guidelines for working with someone you suspect might have difficulty reading and writing.*

- *Don't assume someone can read and write. If you have paperwork to complete, offer to go over it or read it with the person.*

- *If possible, limit paperwork. (Lots of paper and dense text can be very intimidating.)*

- *Understand that some people with low literacy skills may or may not have a learning disability, brain injury or cognitive disorder.*

- *Provide opportunities for early success. For example, print your name and number on a plain piece of paper instead of a business card. Learning happens when there is trust.*

*(*From Literacy Training Guide for Offenders in the Community. I. Soltonovich, 1995.)*

Other Community Partners in Smithers and Moricetown

Aboriginal Court Services:	847-4008
Adult Mental Health:	847-7205
B.C. Schizophrenia Society:	847-9779
CORR Home Program:	847-9515
Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre:	847-8959
Ministry for Children and Families:	847-7311
Northwest Addictions Services:	847-5899
Positive Living Northwest:	877-0042
Salvation Army:	845-7046
Community Policing Office:	847-6197
Min. of Human Resources:	847-7305
Legal Services:	847-1595
Northern Society for Domestic Peace:	847-9000
NW Health Services Society:	847-7410

Smithers Literacy Services is a program of Smithers Community Services Association
May 2002

For more information contact:
Smithers Literacy Services
Box 3759
Smithers, BC V0J 2N0

Phone: 250-847-9515
Fax: 250-847-3712
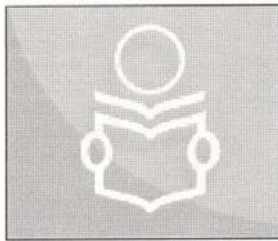Email: volunteer.sm@scsa.ca

Making the Transition to Community-based Adult Education: Contact Information

Smithers and Moricetown

Making the Transition to Community Based Adult Education

Incarceration to Inclusion

How It Works

The Issue:

Although many inmates participate in education programs while in prison, they often do not continue their studies after they are released.

The Research Project:

The **Incarceration to Inclusion Research Project** was conducted to discover why this happens and develop a *Model for Reintegration* with a focus on education.

The Project:

- Identified barriers to a successful transition.

- Gained insight from inmates, community educators and support agencies.

- Worked with community partners to establish a network.

- Established relationships with key community contacts.

- Developed a network that rural and urban centres can access to improve services to this low literacy population.

A Model for Supported Transition

Supported Transition means that:

- The adult learner is always at the centre.

- A circle of various support individuals and agencies exist in the community who can assist an ex-offender who is interested in continuing his or her studies.

- The student is helped to identify the appropriate support groups or individuals to work worth and encouraged to make a self-referral.

- The chosen contact incorporates the adult learner's continuing education as part of their work with him or her.

The inmate may self refer or be referred to *an initial community contact* person *BEFORE* they are released or shortly thereafter.

Each community will have a network of partners who are knowledgeable of the education and support resources available and are willing to support ex-offenders in their pursuit of further education.

Smithers and Moricetown Initial Community Contacts

☐ **Jane Boulton**, Smithers Literacy Services **250-847-9515**

☐ **Christine Doran**, Adult Probations **250-847-7365**

☐ **Daphne Moser**, B.V. Learning Centre **250-847-2008**

☐ **Katherine Staiger**, Northwest Community College **250-847-6757**

☐ **Cathy Anderson**, Skeena Native Development Society **250-877-6060**

☐ **Bonnie George**, Unlocking Aboriginal Justice, Moricetown **250-877-5090**

☐ **Caroline Michel**, Adult Basic Education, Moricetown **250-847-1477**

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Level completed or working on:

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         _____ Other

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         _____ Adult Literacy Program
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         _____ ABE
         _____ Adult Literacy Program
         _____ Other

Resources

- ♦ **Volunteer Tutor/Learner Guide: Literacy Training Guide for Offenders in the Community by Irma Soltonovich, John Howard Society of BC.**

Available from the John Howard Society of BC:
2675 Bridge St.
Victoria, BC
V8T 4Y4
Tel: (250) 386-3428
email: jhs@johnhoward.victoria.bc.ca

- ♦ **Relapse Prevention by Tara Realini**
- ♦ **Getting a Job by Tara Realini**
- ♦ **Stress, Anxiety and Depression by Tara Realini and Alicia Freeman**
- ♦ **Understanding Anger: An Anger Management Manual by Stan Plett**
- ♦ **Overcoming Cocaine Addiction by Tara Realini**
- ♦ **Staying Sober by Stan Plett**

These plain language workbooks and others are available from the
John Howard Society of Manitoba,
583 Ellice Ave.
Winnipeg, MB
R3B 1Z7
Tel: (204) 775-1514
Email: office@johnhoward.mb.ca

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