

The Impact of Social Enterprise on Reducing Re-offending

Dr Faye Cosgrove

Professor Maggie O'Neill

School of Applied Social Sciences

Durham University

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Foreword

The prison population in the United Kingdom is among the highest in the Western world. Despite the best efforts of successive governments, it has risen inexorably and currently stands at over 85,000. The probation service is severely stretched. The social and economic cost is appalling, and the long-term consequences are immensely destructive for individuals, their families, and society at large.

Despite a 50% increase in budget in the last ten years half of all adult offenders released from custody re-offend within a year, and 75% of offenders sentenced to youth custody re-offend within a year. Reducing re-offending is the surest way to bring the prison population down to manageable proportions, and to cut the financial and social burden on society.

The Coalition Government's response has been to initiate a 'Rehabilitation Revolution', designed to tackle the problem at source; it is looking for innovative and creative approaches which address the root causes of the problem.

There is a wider context too, however. The Government is embarking on the Rehabilitation Revolution while the nation is in the depths of one of the worst recessions of modern times. Solutions must be innovative, creative – revolutionary, even – but they must be delivered without burdening rapidly reducing budgets.

These circumstances have combined to create a fertile environment for one branch of the economy – social enterprise. The tight fiscal conditions have encouraged the Ministry of Justice to consider new and innovative approaches which, in more relaxed times, they found unattractive, particularly those which can be delivered at little or no cost to the public purse. This, combined with the social benefits they deliver, make a compelling case for social enterprise to take on mainstream roles within the penal system.

For more than a decade, inquisitive social entrepreneurs have been exploring ways to contribute to the criminal justice agenda in the United Kingdom, and there has been real progress on the ground. This potential has been recognised by the National Offender Management Service, which has created a team of people dedicated to stimulating innovative thinking, led by a dedicated Social Enterprise Champion.

Yet, despite the potential contribution that social enterprise can make to this huge social challenge, there is a surprising dearth of research in the field, which is one of the factors hampering its development. Therefore, this research is important for policy makers and practitioners alike: it provides a benchmark for current learning in the field and will, the authors hope, provide a platform for informed and thoughtful discussion and debate.

John Sargent

Chair, Acumen Community Enterprise Development Trust and Managing Director, The Ideas Mine CIC

Introduction

The scale of imprisonment in England and Wales has reached unprecedented levels in the last decade scaling to over 85,000. A tough stance on law and order adopted by New Labour, an emphasis upon punishment over rehabilitation and calls for greater public protection from dangerous and prolific offenders (Garland, 2001, Pratt, 2007) have culminated in a 60% increase in the prison population over the last decade (Home Office, 2005). Such vast increases however have not facilitated reductions in reoffending. Data collated by the Ministry of Justice (2010a) suggests that prison is failing to rehabilitate offenders and reintegrate them back into civic society. Of those offenders who were charged or who received a court order in 2000, 43% were reconvicted within one year, 55% were reconvicted within two years, and 68% were reconvicted within five years. Further, reoffending rates of those sentenced to short prison sentences of 12 months or less have increased from 58% in 2000 to 61% in 2008 (*ibid.*). Whilst these figures are startling enough, it has been further suggested that individuals who are reconvicted within two years of their release from prison will actually have received an average of three further convictions (Social Exclusion Unit 2002). High recidivism rates coupled with the staggering financial costs of mass imprisonment (Garland, 2001) and the subsequent social costs of reoffending upon victims of crime (Goodey, 2004, Walklate, 2007) has led to an increased emphasis upon inter-agency co-ordination amongst statutory agencies and increased co-operation with voluntary and community organisations in a bid to break the cycle of re-offending and imprisonment (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002, McEvoy, 2008). The recent introduction of social enterprises within the prison and probation setting is symptomatic of this trend.

Social enterprises seek to create cost-effective, realistic employment and training opportunities for offenders, build self-esteem and confidence, and facilitate offender reintegration into civic society. They are perfectly placed to work with offenders due to their experience in working with socially excluded clients, flexibility in delivery and ability to provide innovative, realistic work opportunities to offenders and they can deliver programmes at a lower cost than statutory providers; particularly important within the current climate of austerity and associated cuts in prison budgets (The Ideas Mine, 2010a). However, in spite of the growing number of programmes working within the criminal justice sector (NOMS, 2009), there is to date limited knowledge and evidence of their impact, both in terms of recidivism and their potential social impact on local communities. Commissioned by the Economic and Social Research Council and Acumen Community

Enterprise Development Trust, this piece of work seeks to provide greater understanding of the relationship between social enterprise, employment and reoffending through an examination of scholarly and sector based literature. This review is structured in four parts. The first section begins by exploring the concept of social enterprise before placing the development of social enterprise within the context of criminal justice policy. Following on from this, analysis of the relationships between offending and employment, and offenders and entrepreneurship is provided, before going on to explore the current nature of prison work and its relationship to employability and desistance from crime and the use of social enterprise as an alternative model in supporting offender rehabilitation and desistance. The second section of this review examines a number of successful social enterprise ventures currently operating in prison and within probation services in England and Wales, and where available, draws upon indicators of success of these programmes. Some of these examples focus upon inmates in prison, some provide employment, social and/or financial support to ex-offenders on release from prison, whilst others focus upon diverting young people from offending. The third section explores examples of good practice of Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector approaches to reducing reoffending implemented within North America, Canada, Italy and Sweden. Whilst there is evidence of a wide range of social enterprises across Europe concerned with work integration of the socially excluded, very few programmes specifically target prisoners or ex-offenders. The review concludes with a discussion of some of the challenges in developing and delivering social enterprise with ex-offenders within criminal justice institution

Part 1 Review of the Literature

Emerging Context and the Concept of Social Enterprise

Whilst the idea of using market based approaches to tackle inequality is not new, the use of social enterprise to describe innovative and inclusive types of this activity is (Kerlin, 2009). The new concept of social enterprise emerged within public policy in the late 1990s in response to the growing significance of the VCSE sector in Europe as a means of supporting regeneration, delivering public services and the long term sustainability of programmes to support the disadvantaged in society. The Department of Trade and Industry, predecessor of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, defines a social enterprise as “a business with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners” (DTI, 2002; 13). Whilst profit plays a defining role in sustaining the future of social enterprises, any revenue generated by social enterprises is typically further reinvested within the business or the community to support social objectives rather than being directed to benefit shareholders or owners. Whilst business entrepreneurs might set up traditional for-profit companies and then use these profits for social purposes, the organisation of the business is not a social enterprise.

According to Pearce (2003) social enterprises share five defining characteristics; firstly, having a social mission or purpose, for example, creating employment, training or the provision of local services, secondly, achieving that social purpose by engagement, on some level through the production of goods or services, within the marketplace, thirdly, not distributing profits to individuals but holding assets and wealth for the benefit of the community, fourthly, the democratic involvement of members of the organisation within its governance and lastly, having an independent status with accountability to members of the enterprise venture and the wider community. Further, social enterprises are typically linked by a shared commitment to ‘trading for a social purpose’ (Peattie and Morley, 2008) or as ‘having a social conscience’ (Harding, 2010). Despite these defining features, there is a wide variety of organisations that are commonly recognized as social enterprises. Spear et al (2009: 269) suggest that social enterprises can be divided into four main types based on their origins and developmental path. These types are mutuals (e.g. co-operatives and credit unions), trading charities (e.g. enterprises set up by charities to develop revenue), public sector spin-offs (e.g. enterprises formed to undertake some services previously delivered by

public authorities) and new-start social enterprises (e.g. new businesses started from scratch by a social entrepreneur).

Social enterprise became an integral part of government policy following the launch of the Social Enterprise Strategy and the associated establishment of a Social Enterprise Unit (SEU) in the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) by the New Labour government to co-ordinate its implementation across England and Wales (Spear, Cornforth and Aitken, 2009). In June 2007 the SEU was transferred to the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) before merging more recently in 2009 within the governing ambit of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). In 2009, the Office of the Third Sector (OTS) estimated there were 60,000 social enterprises in the UK (OTS, 2009). Their earlier Social Enterprise Action Plan (OTS, 2006) estimated that the annual turnover of the VCSE sector was around £27 million. However, there is not only evidence to suggest that the prevalence and type of social enterprises is not equally distributed throughout the UK, instead being determined by local political factors, class interests or socio-economic factors (Amin et al, 2002) but also that the ambiguity of the terms 'business' and 'social objectives' can call into question the validity of such estimations. As a result, Lyon and Sepulveda (2009) argue that there is vigorous debate about how social objectives should be defined and what proportion of a social enterprise's profits should be reinvested in order for an organisation to be considered a social enterprise. The ways in which profits made by social enterprises become reinvested into the business is not always immediately apparent. Whilst social enterprises may utilise profits to satisfy borrowing demands created as a consequence of the instability of funding, social enterprises typically socially reinvest in more indirect ways (Price, 2008). They might employ people who are less attractive to other employers, such as people with disabilities, mental health problems, ex-offenders, those with drug dependencies and/or those with few qualifications and skills, who present greater perceived risks to the employer in relation to the reliability and commitment of those involved. They might operate in locations that are less attractive to other employers, including social housing estates or post-industrial areas, or in activities that are less profitable or ideologically driven than typically accepted within the private sector, for example, renewable energies, recycling or with a commitment to Fairtrade.

Despite distinctions being made between social enterprises or the social economy and profit-making economies, and therefore different rationales for the generation of profit, an absence of an agreed definition and/or agreed defining characteristics of social

enterprises remains. According to Kerlin (2009), the specific focus, defining principles, forms and operation differs markedly depending upon geographical, economic, political, historical, social and culturally derived meanings. Indeed, commentators have suggested that the concept of social enterprise can mean different things to different people across different periods of time (Teasdale, 2010). Certainly, its emergence and growth over the last decade has been interpreted and explored in varied ways from being perceived as a mechanism to tackle social problems and inequality (Blackburn and Ram, 2006), as an innovative and more cost-effective means of delivering welfare services (Haugh and Kitson, 2007), to more radical proposals of its potential value as an alternative to state and private service provision under capitalism (Amin, 2009). As such, the ambiguity in definition and purpose has supported its broad political appeal and potential contribution to a number of governmental agendas including social exclusion and social justice, increasing employment and opportunities and introducing innovation to the delivery of public services (Teasdale, 2009). Not only do such contested and plural definitions of social enterprise, and its counterpart 'social entrepreneurship' mean that estimations of the nature, scale and potential impact of social enterprises within a particular agenda or focus are difficult to quantify, but it also runs the risk of firstly, undermining the significance of activities undertaken by social enterprises and their wider social value, and secondly, of providing cynics of social enterprise with greater ammunition to discount social innovation and those who drive it (Martin and Osberg, 2007).

Kerlin (2009) argues that part of the problem in defining, and levels of understanding about social enterprise, is caused by social enterprise being associated with distinct models and activities across different parts of the world depending upon particular histories, social structures and political contingencies surrounding them. As a consequence, argues Kerlin (*ibid*, 2), social enterprise has become associated with "a wide range of not only problems and issues, but also forms, resources and institutions that are connected to an immediate country or region context". Social enterprise in the United States has taken on a rather vague conception of the term, focusing more upon the pursuit of income generation than definitions elsewhere. As a result, American academics have included organisations on a continuum from profit oriented businesses engaged in socially beneficial activities, dual purpose businesses or hybrids that balance profit goals with social objectives, to non-profit social purpose organizations (Kerlin, 2006). By contrast, Western European social enterprises emerged alongside the co-operative movement, primarily within Italy. In 1991 the Italian

Parliament established social co-operatives as a new legal form encouraged by the failure of public services to satisfactorily meet social needs (Borzaga and Santuari, 2001). As a consequence, social enterprises within Western Europe have placed greater emphasis upon social benefit and profit distribution to a much greater extent than that employed in the United States. The usage of the concept of social enterprise in the UK, as in the United States, is rather imprecise. However, the UK model of social enterprises is comparably closer to the co-operative model of Western Europe, emphasising the central significance of social objectives and sustainability through trading. Despite broad variation in working definitions and conceptualisation of social enterprise, what is clear is that an unenviable ideological challenge is likely to arise in balancing levels of commitment to the social purpose of social enterprises with the necessity of being self-sustaining. As articulated by Leadbeater (2007: 2)

“Social enterprises deliberately adopt an uncomfortable position: they are in the market and yet against it at the same time. This ambiguous position is based on a recognition that solutions to many problems – poverty and employment, environment and fair trade development – depend on changing the way markets work. There can be no long term solutions to many of these problems based entirely on government grants, subsidy or charitable donations”

Thus, social enterprises can be an innovative means of finding longer term solutions to assisting people long disconnected from the jobs market, including ex-offenders and those at risk of offending, in finding a route into work, employment, education and training and/or offering support for lifestyle changes to support their reintegration into society.

Social Enterprise and the Policy Context of Offender Management

The VCSE sector has long played a significant role in supporting victims, offenders and their families delivering services across offender pathways to support the management of offenders, including the provision of advice, education and training, spiritual and faith guidance, mentoring and peer support schemes (NOMS/Ministry of Justice, 2008). However, it wasn't until the publication of the Carter Report recommending the introduction of “end to end offender management” (Carter, 2003) from custody to reintegration into the community that the use of competition and a mixed market of provision became a central strand in criminal justice policy. Current challenges imposed by

funding constraints combined with increased demands for value-for-money, increased productivity and service improvement experienced by NOMS, supported by commissioning changes, is likely to mean that partnerships with a wider range of providers, including the VCSE sector, are likely to become an increasingly central component of offender management and reintegration (NOMS/Ministry of Justice, 2008). As stated in the 2009 NOMS report 'Reducing Reoffending through Social Enterprise', "The Criminal Justice Group (CJG) of the Ministry of Justice has estimated that up to 50% of the resources necessary to manage offenders and reduce reoffending lie outside the criminal justice system" (NOMS, 2009, 25). NOMS predicts that the introduction of a formal review process, through a Best Value approach, will create further opportunities for the involvement of private or VCSE sector providers in the delivery of services and NOMS outcomes (ibid.). Whilst VCSE sector provision will provide valuable resources and value for money, Sharpe and Gelsthorpe (2009, in Meek et al, 2010: 5) however argue that increasing the role and involvement of the VCSE sector within the penal system might actually serve to diffuse responsibility for social welfare amongst statutory providers with the possible result of causing a weakening of impact and/or a loss of expertise within the criminal justice system.

Despite these misgivings raised by Sharpe and Gelsthorpe (ibid.), the involvement of private, voluntary or community providers in offender management and reintegration is dependent upon their capacity to both provide rehabilitation services more effectively and efficiently and to demonstrate their social impact. More specifically, there are current plans to encourage innovation and the involvement of a wider range of providers within offender rehabilitation through payment by results (Ministry of Justice, 2010b). The payment by results (PBR) approach encourages providers to invest in crime prevention, rather than tackling the consequences of offending. The hope is that social enterprises or private investors might offer more innovative and creative approaches to tackling recidivism, tailored to the needs of particular areas and individual offenders including those whom are hardest to change. In order to incentivise providers to achieve the above, providers will only receive payment from the Ministry of Justice providing they have reduced reoffending by a set amount.

Implementing a system of PBR however presents some real challenges for the success of social enterprises working with offenders. Firstly, social enterprises are typically small and localised in scale, often without the expertise or funding to conduct evaluation of services provided and thereby to measure their impact on reoffending. Without a capacity to

evaluate their impact, social enterprises might fail in securing commissions within prison or probation services particularly given the increased financial capabilities of private investors to commission professional evaluations of their services. Secondly, even where reductions in reconviction rates can be demonstrated, it is extremely difficult to isolate what role other criminal justice interventions or influences at an individual, community or wider societal level have played in their desistance (Sampson and Laub, 1993, Pawson and Tilley, 1997). The complex and multifaceted nature of desistance therefore renders the PBR concept fundamentally flawed.

In May 2010, the Ministry of Justice piloted a six year Social Impact Bond (SIB) scheme in Peterborough Prison founded upon PBR principles. The SIB scheme however operates in a fundamentally different way from other traditional PBR arrangements; instead of service providers supporting themselves and then being paid by results if successful, private non-government investors provide upfront funding for interventions, and receive payment if and when social outcomes are secured (i.e. if reconviction rates are reduced by 10% or more) and governmental savings are made (<http://www.justice.gov.uk/news/sp221010a.htm>). Social Impact Bonds (SIBs) are likely to have greater appeal to not for profit organisations within the wider VCSE sector since payment for services is made upfront and with minimum risk (Disley et al, 2011). Indeed, VCSE providers will play a central role in the Peterborough scheme by delivering services to 3,000 short term prisoners over a period of six years to support their release from prison and to break the cycle of offending. SIBs also differ to traditional PBR schemes in that several different providers can deliver services that contribute to improved outcomes without the concern of demonstrating direct impact on reoffending.

Similarly, there are also clear challenges faced by VCSE organisations in working within the criminal system and NOMS that may hinder success. Meek et al (2010) point towards the varied quality of the relationship between VCSE sector providers and the penal system whereby relationships and subsequent co-ordination with and support to VCSE organisations are often shaped by the agenda of prison governors and/or probation trust directors. In terms of delivery and supportive partnerships, VCSE organisations may be viewed with suspicion by prison and/or probation staff who fear that they will be used instead of paid labour (Neuberger, 2009). The scarcity and short term nature of funding of social enterprises and charities may also mean that projects do not survive once an initial funding source has been exhausted (Gelsthorpe et al, 2007).

Offenders and Employment

It is widely recognised that employment, particularly stable employment, is a fundamental issue in the prevention and/or reduction of offending (Farrington et al, 1996, Maruna, 2001). Estimations by both the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU, 2002) and the Home Office et al (2005) suggest that over two-thirds of prisoners are unemployed at the time of being sentenced, representing around thirteen times the national unemployment rate. A more recent review of the evidence provided by Shea (2005, cited in Howard League, 2008) suggests a more modest rate of prisoner unemployment rate of six to ten times higher than the national average. Unemployment rates and subsequent rates of social exclusion are even worse for women in prison (Corston, 2007); a survey of 567 women prisoners conducted by Hamlyn and Lewis (2000; 19) reported that only three in ten women had been in full or part time employment immediately prior to entering prison, 39% had not worked outside the home in the year preceding imprisonment, and 23% had not worked for over five years. Even where offenders did have some form of employment experience prior to their imprisonment, very few men or women were engaged in fairly paid, fulfilling work (Gill, 1997).

However, the connection between unemployment and reoffending is far from straightforward (Downes, 1995, Fagan and Freeman, 1999). Whilst some analyses of aggregate level data have suggested a “consensus of doubt” between the crime-unemployment relationship, concluding that any association between the two is inconsequential, too generalised and multi-faceted to identify a positive correlation (Orsagh, 1980, Wilson and Herrnstein, 1985), others (Box, 1987, Chiricos, 1987, Machin and Meghir, 2000, Raphael and Winter-Ebmer, 2001, Gould, Weinberg and Mustard, 2002) offer evidence to support a more direct positive correlation. Box (1987) argues that the decline of the UK unemployment rate in the 1980s, and associated social and economic inequality, can be directly linked to crime rates during this same period. The Cambridge delinquency study of self-reported job histories and official criminal records of 411 delinquent males identified that the rate of offending during periods of unemployment was significantly higher than during periods of employment (Farrington et al, 1986). Other studies have been more focused in their analysis and modest in their conclusions, emphasising a relationship between unemployment and property offences (Pyle and Deadman, 1994, Raphael and

Winter-Ebmer, 2001). In an analysis of 63 studies across America, Chiricos (1987; 202) concludes that the crime-unemployment relationship for property crimes in the US during the 1970s was “essentially positive, frequently significant and not inconsequential”.

Similar patterns of unemployment can be identified amongst ex-offenders following release from prison (Howard League, 2008). Despite education, training and employment being one of the main pathways towards reducing reoffending, it would appear that prisons are failing in their efforts to prepare inmates for employment on release. A study conducted by Mair and May (1997) identified that of 3,299 offenders on probation only 21% were employed. Of these, 79% were employed in manual occupations (ibid.). A larger study conducted by NACRO a year later, reported similar findings with 63% of 26,000 individuals on probation were unemployed (NACRO, 1998, cited in Howard League, 2000).

There is however evidence to suggest that low rates of employment amongst ex-offenders might in part be explained by the stigmatising effects of having a criminal record and serving a prison sentence upon employer attitudes (Holzer, 1996, Apex, 1991, , Fahey et al, 2006, Haslewood-Pocsik et al, 2008) rather than the result of institutional failings of the penal regime. Whilst prison work might be beneficial in providing prisoners with a confidence boost, as reported by participants engaged in Simon’s study (1999), the stigma attached to offending and experience of prison can hamper efforts to find and sustain employment. Where reluctance amongst employers is identified, employers tend to cite concerns relating to lack of skills and work history, untrustworthiness, risks to staff and the company, and fear of liability for negligent hiring (Apex, 1991, Gill, 1997, Mair and May, 1997, Bridges, 1998).

The negative effects of imprisonment upon employment can be exacerbated when convictions are received by younger offenders. Nagin and Waldfogel’s (1995) exploration of longitudinal data on job market performance and self-report data on convictions and criminality amongst 300 young offenders highlights that having a criminal conviction can create job instability of young offenders throughout their lives by impeding entry into apprenticeships and training opportunities. As a result, their longer term career advancement is restricted, their potential earnings remains low and they become trapped in a cycle of crime/social exclusion. Crucially, Nagin and Waldfogel’s (ibid) study makes an important distinction between offending and conviction with respect to commitment to legitimate employment; their analysis suggests that whilst conviction had a positive effect

on job instability and income, offending itself had not had such effect on performance. This suggests that it is stigma associated with their conviction, rather than the commitment of individual offenders to legal work, that causes job instability.

There is equally damning evidence to suggest that the stigma associated with being in prison and having a criminal record has a more debilitating impact on securing employment and reintegration for women since they are deemed as being 'doubly deviant' for offending against the law and their femininity (Carlen, 1985, Lloyd, 1995, Heidensohn and Gelsthorpe, 1997). Gill's (1997; 340) study of offender perspectives on employment identified that women offenders¹ were more worried than men about the stigma of being an ex-offender and were less likely to have considered employment on release. Of those who had, many were eager to engage in courses to build their confidence for employment and many were willing to consider part-time, poorly paid work.

Research evidence from the UK paints a more optimistic picture of employer attitudes to ex-offenders, with Haslewood-Pocsik et al (2008) finding very little evidence of judgemental perceptions, such as taking a hard-line approach that offenders were undeserving or lacking in skills, as previously identified by Gill (1997). The APEX Trust found that only 15% of private and 3% of public sector employers were unwilling to employ someone with a criminal record (1991). A similar level of support can be gleaned from findings of a study involving a partnership between a probation service and a training and enterprise council by Buffery (1998), with 80% of employers stating they would consider employing an ex-offender if that person had been recommended by the Probation service. Survey findings from the British Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD, 2002) are also demonstrative of a general recognition amongst employers of the value of employing ex-offenders to the economy. The report identified that two-thirds of 510 Human Resources professionals recognised that organisations should be expected to make a conscious effort to recruit ex-offenders.

Employers' attitudes towards employing ex-offenders are however significantly shaped by offence type rather than being applied to all offenders (Conalty and Cox, 1999, Scott and Sillars, 2003, Brown et al, 2005). Some commentators have argued that a 'hierarchy of offences' exists with employers most likely to be dissuaded from employing offenders with offence records involving sexual offences, property offences, violence and

¹ Gill's study involved individual interviews with 47 prisoners in nine prisons; 15 adult males, 15 young males and 17 females.

fraud/forgery (Rolfe, 2001). In relation to the former, 70% of participants engaged in Haslewood-Pocsik et al's research (2008) would never consider employing an individual convicted of a sexual offence with a further 71% expressing reluctance to employ someone with a conviction for arson. Despite such reluctance, particularly in relation to sex offenders, Rolfe (2001: 128) qualifies that this 'hierarchy of offences' is significantly shaped by the moral code of the employer whereby their "objection to violent/ sexual offences may therefore be from anger felt at the offence rather than the risk of reoffending". Thus, the subjective opinions of employers play a significant role in recruitment (Brown et al, 2005). However, what is clear from the literature is that employer experiences of employing ex-offenders are almost always positive (Gill, 1997, Bridges, 1998, Brown et al, 2005), and employers become more positive in their attitudes to ex-offenders if they have made efforts to improve their level of education and skills whilst in prison and/or on parole (Albright and Denq, 1996). In spite of such encouraging evidence, McEvoy (2008) critiques existing research on attitudes of employers to employing ex-offenders for failing to account for differences between industries undermined by small sample sizes and a failure to examine the barriers to employment experienced by ex-offenders. Drawing upon the work of Metcalf et al (2001, in McEvoy, 2008) McEvoy consequently suggests that presenting a positive attitude and a motivation to change their past behaviour is more important for employers.

Offenders and Entrepreneurship

The social marginalisation and exclusion that accompanies imprisonment and the psychological experience of punishment can act as a catalyst to ex-offenders setting up their own business (Bruce, 1976, Harper and Rieple, 1992, Rieple, 1998). Ex-prisoners may therefore pursue self-employment as a possible alternative to paid employment whereby the constraints from the stigma of their criminal record and being in prison are considerably reduced. However, as noted by Fairlie (2005) they may still face discrimination from lending agencies, and consumers, thereby threatening the longevity of their venture. In addition to the environmental pressures placed on ex-offenders, there is reason to believe that ex-offenders might have high entrepreneurial potential; the desire for wealth frequently underpins their rationale for offending and their offending requires them to act autonomously, engage in risk-taking and behave in a self-centred way (Horvath and Zuckerman, 1993). Indeed, Washburn (1987) identifies a number of cases in the US where

businesses have been established within the prison itself, only to be closed on the grounds of the lack of constitutional rights enjoyed by prisoners.

A study conducted by Rieple, Harper and Bailey (1996) provides supportive evidence of the entrepreneurial potential of offenders. The study compared the General Entrepreneurial Tendency (GET) test scores of a sample of 138 prisoners and 55 probationers with previous data generated by Caird (1988, in Rieple, Harper and Bailey, 1996) for entrepreneurs, civil servants, and nurses. Participants were scored in relation to known entrepreneurial traits contained within GET; risk-taking, creativity, the need for autonomy, the need for achievement and internal locus of control, and concluded that prisoners were more entrepreneurial than other occupational groups, but probationers were not. There were a number of methodological weaknesses to this study however. Firstly, the sample sizes were too low to enable statistical significance testing of the extent of their heightened entrepreneurial potential. Second, they were unable to access prisoners at various stages in their sentence to assess the socialising effects of prison and its negative impact on self-esteem. However, the study did indicate that “a large number of offenders [58% of the sample of prisoners and 52% of probationers] have worked in their own businesses in the past, and an even higher proportion [70% of prisoners and 77% of probationers] intend to do so in the future” (Rieple, 1998; 254). Reasons provided for not wanting to set up their own business included financial problems, lack of business skills and the effect of bad publicity from imprisonment (ibid, 243). However, the principle reason that deters ex-offenders from setting up their own business is having the confidence and self-belief required to secure capital and succeed (Rieple, Harper and Bailey, 1996).

The interest amongst ex-offenders to pursue self-employment has some significant implications for social enterprises. Given the challenges experienced by offenders in finding employment on release, the Social Exclusion Unit (2002) concluded that self-employment may present the most practical way of successfully re-entering the labour market for some prisoners. In addition, collective forms of social enterprise, as an extension of entrepreneurship and as an alternative to paid employment, can not only offer an “opportunity of meaningful and rewarding employment” (SBS, 2004; 34, in Fletcher, 2005; 726) for ex-offenders who are unable to secure in the job market, but can be a valuable mechanism for supporting those wishing to be self-employed by providing marketable skills, enabling the sharing of skills and risks, and instilling confidence through processes of mutual support.

Prison Work, Employability and Desistance

The UN standard minimum rules for prisoners specify that all prisoners are expected to work subject to physical and mental fitness. Prisoners should be able to choose the type of work they wish to perform, and work allocations should aim to maintain or increase the prisoners' ability to earn a decent wage (cited in Stenson-Clark, 1994). Prison work in Britain is multi-faceted in nature, ranging from cleaning prison wings to catering, to technicians working within prison workshops. Prison work however, is not only varied in nature but in purpose incorporating work that contributes to the running of the prison, work that is conducted by prisoners for external organisations under contract and work that is carried out by prisoners on temporary licence. Contract work undertaken within prisons is equally varied with general packing and assembly, recycling, the assembly of electrical components and printing work being the most common. Prisoners are currently expected to work up to 24 hours per week in line with their assessed needs and targets (Morgan and Owers, 2001). There are however plans to increase this quota to 40 hours per week for which prisoners would earn a minimum wage and with a proportion of their earnings going to victims of crime.

Whilst attitudes to prison work have significantly improved over the last few years, there are numerous obstacles in achieving the standards set by the UN. Work in prisons has traditionally been perceived as a means of alleviating the boredom of prison life and providing purposeful, 'constructive' activity whilst in prison rather than as an opportunity to provide prisoners with the skills needed to obtain employment on release (McEvoy, 2008). The availability of employment is also restricted. According to the Howard League (2008) only 10,000 prisoners of a population of 82,000 [at the time of writing] were employed in prison workshops, earning between £10 and £30 for a maximum 32 hour week. Much of the work available within prisons is low skill, monotonous and unfulfilling, frequently unrelated to sentence planning as part of an integrated programme of rehabilitation, and prisoners only receive a token salary for their efforts (SEU, 2002, Shea, 2005). This token, typically paid to Category D prisoners held within open prisons, is paid, in effect, cash-in-hand, which according to Crook (1997; 303), "encourages and legitimises the practice of employers paying cash that avoids all the fiscal responsibilities incumbent on outside employers", thereby serving to sanction the informal economy. Therefore, for the Howard

League (2000; 10) “wage levels provide little incentive to work and help to reinforce a negative picture of legitimate work”.

The recent introduction of community payback as a form of community punishment (Casey, 2008) runs the risk of having a similar effect upon perceptions of work. Offenders can expect to receive 20 to 300 hours of unpaid work or other activity to be completed within 6 months, or 3 months if the sentence is less than 100 hours (McIvor, 2010). The ‘payback’ work in which offenders are involved typically includes environmental clean ups, the removal of graffiti and /or gardening maintenance due to their visibility and direct benefit to the local community. Dressed in highly visible orange jackets to set them apart from public service employees, community payback aims to engage the community by giving them the right to vote for the kind of work they would wish the offenders to become involved in. However, rather than being an opportunity for skill development, developing relationships with beneficiaries of their work or a means of encouraging a sense of responsibility, Johnson (2010) presents community payback as a public spectacle that is designed to seek retribution and humiliation, rather than ‘making good’. The use of intensive payback is likely to increase in order to meet the government target of doubling the amount of unpaid work annually performed by offenders to 10 million hours by 2011 (Home Office, 2006). One proposed way of doing this as contained in the 2009 Green Paper ‘Engaging Communities in Criminal Justice’ (Ministry of Justice, 2009a) is to treble the number of weekly hours of work performed by some offenders to 18 hours, reducing the ratio of offenders to supervisors from 1:6 to 1:10, and applying intensive community payback to unemployed offenders only. It is likely that increasing demands on offenders in this way will undermine their efforts to secure legitimate employment. Work, in the form of community payback, is thus experienced as punishment and another affirmation of their exclusion from society rather than as valuable experience (McIvor, 2010).

Prison work has been criticised for failing to reward prisoners for their efforts and providing them with the protections and terms and conditions given to those at liberty. Champions for the introduction of ‘real work’ in prison argue that work within prison should be meaningful and should enable prisoners to support their family without dependency on the State (Howard League, 2008). Crook (1997) argues that the problem with prison work is that it benefits the prison rather than being for an external employer. Prisoners therefore feel no sense of responsibility or relationship to the work and quality inevitably suffers. Prison work thus needs to be more than just well-meaning and provide

more than just 'purposeful activity' if it is to rehabilitate and have a positive impact on reoffending.

Real work, according to the Howard League (2010a), is an opportunity to encourage businesses and the voluntary sector to develop industries within the prison that would be mutually beneficial to business and reintegration efforts. The introduction of Barbed, a graphic design studio in Coldingley Prison was implemented in 2005 as a pilot business, but unfortunately was closed in 2008 as a result of cost inefficiencies and a lack of alignment with the prison regime.

Similar 'real work' programmes have been established in the United States as part of the Prison Industry Enhancement Certification Program (PIECP) initiated through Congress in 1979. These schemes enable prisoners to work for an employer outside the prison and to earn the federal minimum wage for particular types of work. According to Moses and Smith (2007), 6,555 offenders were employed through the programme by the end of 2005. In a national evaluation of the programme involving 6,454 participants, Moses and Smith (*ibid*) compared individuals engaged in the PIECP programme, those engaged in traditional industries within the prison and those engaged in 'other work' activities, such as a vocational education programme, a treatment programme or no programme at all. Participants of the PIECP programme, according to Washburn (1987), typically experience improved feelings of self-worth supported by the opportunity to send money home to their families; and some cases, the confidence to start their own businesses on release. There is evidence to suggest that engagement within the PIECP positively impacts on employment of ex-offenders on release from prison. The first national evaluation of PIECP conducted by the National Institute of Justice and the Office of Justice Programs concluded that "PIECP participants found jobs after release more quickly and held them longer than did their counterparts in the TI [traditional industries] and OTW² [other than work] groups" (Moses and Smith, 2007, 2). Moses and Smith (*ibid.*) further assert that PIECP participants also retain these jobs for longer and return to the criminal justice system at a lower rate than the other two groups. Nonetheless, despite the claimed successes of PIECP, it is underused and remains at a marginalised position in America's prisons, undermined by a lack of management input from inmates and the perception that prisoner run industries undermine the deterrent effects of incarceration (Fletcher, 2005).

² 'Other than work' includes general educational development, treatment and cognitive behaviour programmes.

The publication of 'Reducing Reoffending by Ex-Prisoners' by the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) in 2002 contributed in reorienting the UK government's approach to rehabilitation and programmes aimed at tackling re-offending. In response, the Offenders, Learning and Skills Unit and Custody to Work Unit were established in 2001/02 to improve the quality, accessibility and co-ordination of resettlement focused education and work programmes. These developments were closely followed by the government's Effective Practice Initiative (EPI), which piloted a number of interventions for individuals in prison or on probation, which subsequently became integrated into the Crime Reduction Programme (Vennard and Hedderman, 2009). Through these programmes and investment, the idea of 'purposeful activity' in prison became one of the principal aspects of 'moral performance' upon which modern prisons are judged (Liebling, 2004). However, as demonstrated in the case of Barbed (Howard League, 2008), the accessibility of education, training and employment (ETE) opportunities to enhance prisoners' employability on release can be thwarted by the architectural design of prisons, the primacy of control, security and risk management within prisons, and the difficulty in delivering adequate training for those serving short sentences (McEvoy, 2008).

In spite of the good intentions of criminal justice practitioners to improve the provision of ETE services and 'purposeful activity' becoming a core performance indicator within the penal estate, the effectiveness of interventions designed to support prisoners back into work are notoriously difficult to assess owing to the absence of an agreed 'gold standard' for the evaluation of criminal justice interventions (Nutley and Davis, 1999; 49) and a lack robust evaluation (Webster et al, 2001, Visher et al, 2005). Whilst official reconviction rates (over a two year period) are often utilised as a standard measure of impact of interventions (Farrow et al, 2007), reconviction as a measure of success is particularly problematic. Firstly, reconviction may not be an accurate measure of offending since not all offences are brought to justice (Home Office, 2002), although the count of offences brought to justice has risen by almost 20% between 1999/00 and 2009/10 (Ministry of Justice, 2010b). Secondly, reconviction may be insufficient in itself to measure any reduction in the frequency and seriousness of re-offending (Merrington, 2006, in Farrow et al, 2007). More specifically, without empirical, reliable testing, it is therefore difficult to assess whether such programmes have themselves led to change or whether those who engage in them are the most motivated and who would most likely have resettled on their own. Further, even when positive outcomes are identified, such as sustained desistance from

crime or securing employment, it is often impossible to tell which elements of a programme or programmes influenced that achievement since offenders typically access a wide range of support and training in prison and on probation (Pawson and Tilley, 1994, Bushway and Reuter 1997, in McEvoy, 2008). Even where initiatives, such as the EPI, are driven by the 'what works' literature on tackling re-offending, they can fail to achieve desired results as they tend to prioritise certain principles of 'what works' over others (Hedderman, 2004). In the case of the EPI, elements such as programme integrity – making sure delivery matched programme design – were prioritised over other aspects, such as careful targeting to ensure that programmes were responsive to the learning needs of offenders, so that individuals did not sufficiently engage individuals in the programme.

Similar conclusions regarding a lack of robust evaluation have been raised by Visher et al (2005) in their assessment of post-release employment programmes in the United States. Whilst recognising that a varied range of programmes are taking place in local communities, including vocational education, job training and job placements, they argue that "evaluations of their effectiveness are rare and random assignments have not been used" (ibid., 311). However, Visher et al (ibid) relevantly observe that not all prisoners need the services provided; whilst some may never have been employed, some will have had legitimate employment prior to their sentence. The authors conclude by suggesting that post release ETE programmes may be more effective if they are catered to the needs of individuals to the extent that services can be linked up accordingly (ibid, 311).

Signalling a direction away from 'what works' and a preoccupation with a one size fits all strategy to offender management, there have been efforts more recently in the UK towards integrated approaches to offender management and resettlement to complement traditional prison-based interventions (Ministry of Justice, 2009b). This approach recognises the importance of matching interventions and service delivery to individuals as well as specific offender populations, such as women, young people, BME groups, and implementing individual plans to support offenders in overcoming other significant problems, such as drug and alcohol misuse, mental health issues, a lack of basic skills (Farrow, Kelly & Wilkinson, 2007).

Desistance and Enterprise

Job stability promotes desistance, according to Laub and Sampson (2003), in four principal ways; firstly, by providing routine activities thereby reducing criminal opportunities, secondly, by enabling a reciprocal exchange of social capital between employer and employee, thirdly, by providing informal social control and lastly, by giving the individual a sense of purpose and identity. Whilst recognising the central significance of family and a stable emotional relationship in desistance, Laub and Sampson (*ibid*) argue that the processes underlying the relationship between work and desistance are similar to that between marriage and desistance. They suggest “stable work may not trigger a change in antisocial trajectory in the way that marriage or serving in the military do, even though employment may play an importance role in sustaining the process of desistance” (*ibid*, 129). The potential value of employment to desistance has also been identified by Uggen’s (2000) experimental analysis of data collected as part of the National Supported Work Demonstration Project in the United States. The dataset was comprised of 3,000 persons with an official arrest history drawn from nine U.S. cities who were allocated to either a control group or treatment group. Those in the treatment group were offered marginally paid work in the construction or service industries whereas those in the control group were not. From his analysis he concludes “offenders who are provided even marginal employment opportunities are less likely to reoffend than those not provided such opportunities” (*ibid*; 542). Efforts to support ex-offenders in gaining employment as provided by social enterprise not only increases income and work-related competence but can enhance the socio-cultural abilities and instil a sense of purpose. As Savio and Righetti (1993: 238) observe, “work is one of the most suitable tools for re-acquiring social abilities, practical skills, a job and, most of all, a new relationship with oneself and the world”.

The underlying sense of mutualism (Boyle and Harris, 2009) associated with the current enterprise approach with offenders in fact shares some similarities with the Good Lives Model of offender management and rehabilitation (Ward, 2002, Ward and Brown, 2004). The Good Lives approach posits that “criminal actions arise when individuals lack the internal and external resources to attain their goals in pro-social ways” (Ward and Maruna, 2007: 111). Not only does this model promote the equal partnership between offender and criminal justice professional but proposes that in order for offenders to desist from crime they need to be given access to knowledge, skills, resources and opportunities to live a ‘good life’ or ‘good lives’, that is, one which “does not involve immoral or socially destructive

behaviour" (Ward, 2002: 516). A central tenet of the theory poses that all individuals seek primary human goods that evolve from basic needs, such as knowledge, mastery of experience, autonomy and self-directedness, purpose and meaning of our lives, and a sense of relatedness and community, irrespective of levels of education, intelligence or class (Ward, 2002). The achievement of such primary goods results in higher levels of well-being (Emmons, 1996, Cummins, 1996). Secondary or instrumental goods provide individuals with the particular means of achieving these primary goods (Ward and Maruna, 2007). Individuals are therefore only able to secure a good life when he or she;

"possesses the necessary conditions for achieving primary goods, has access to primary goods, lives a life characterized by the instantiation of these goods and when this is achieved in balance with the social obligations of community membership" (Ward, 2002: 249).

Research conducted by Maruna (2001) with offenders who were both continuing and desisting from crime supports the Good Lives Model and the significance of primary goods in desistance. Maruna concluded that the determining factor in shaping desistance was the way in which individuals made sense of their lives (Maruna *ibid*). In drawing upon Maruna's work, Ward, (2002: 523) asserts that the narrative of the offender who is able to desist from crime was someone who "possesses a sense of empowerment and sense of agency over his or her destiny and life and who has a desire to be productive and give something back to the community, family, and other offenders". Crucially, the domain of work was of central importance in constructing a sense of purpose and therefore in providing individuals with a social network that was not linked to offending behaviour. However, according to Maruna (*ibid.*) desisting individuals could not construct a new conception of themselves (or in terms of the Good Lives Model achieve primary goods) on their own. Rather, they needed assistance to identify opportunities, learn new skills and seek and accept social support. Whilst being used primarily within the treatment sector especially amongst sex offenders, the Good Lives Model has steadily gained popularity as a rehabilitative approach to case management within the probation service. However, the enthusiasm of probation officers, or other service providers, and subsequent efforts to implement key principles of the model are significantly undermined by their limited capacity and resources to deliver anything other than basic skills and education training.

Social enterprises or co-operatives not only provide employment opportunities and training under a supportive infrastructure, but are operationalized under a philosophy and employment model whereupon offenders can take ownership and responsibility for their own rehabilitation and so support their desistance from crime (Nicholson, 2010; 17). Leadbeater (2007) suggests that social enterprises are frequently in a better position than public services, to provide more people-focused, integrated solutions to marginalisation. Unlike public services, which can be paternalistic, disjointed and beset with bureaucracy, the philosophy of self-help underpinning social enterprises not only encourages greater individual autonomy but “often mobilise[s] peer-to-peer systems of support...rather than relying on professionals” (ibid; 4). Under such a model and a commitment to co-production in tackling reoffending, individuals have the potential of becoming active agents in their own rehabilitation rather than passive recipients of expert advice (Bottoms and McWilliams, 1979, in Nicholson, 2010).

Much of the empirical research on desistance has focused upon work or family roles, with limited attention paid to civic participation and reintegration into community life (Uggen et al, 2004). Whilst Maruna (2001; 88) identifies the central importance of ‘giving something back to society’ in the desistance process, prison work and traditional one-to-one probation supervision typically experience limited success in helping ex-offenders to desist because they are unable to increase characteristically low levels of social capital possessed by ex-offenders (Farrall, 2004). Whilst social capital can be understood in a myriad of ways, it is frequently thought of as a resource which emerges from people’s social ties (Coleman, 1988, in Farrall, 2004) that facilitates increased engagement in civil society (Putnam, 1995). Not only might social enterprises therefore be a suitable, supportive structure in which to alter offenders’ attitudes and behaviour, but social enterprises, whether in prison and through probation services, might be a more successful means of increasing an individual’s ‘stock’ of social capital to encourage desistance from crime and better enable their reintegration into civil society (Sampson and Laub, 1993). As urged by Brayford, Cowe and Dearing (2010; 256) in their exploration into creative work with offenders, “Offenders need communities and relationships to which they have responsibilities and within which they can (re)learn to add value to wider society as well as becoming active social agents in determining their own lives. Workers need ‘real’ communities within which to resettle offenders and enable them to lead constructive lives”. Excluded from society as a result of their offending behaviour, social enterprises or co-operatives offer a valuable infrastructure

to support individuals in forging a legitimate identity and increasing levels of self-esteem and sense of purpose by creating a sense of obligation, developing reciprocal trust and providing individuals with information channels and knowledge" (Farrall, 2004; 65); all of which are deemed central ingredients to desistance.

Part 2 - Social Enterprise with Offenders in England and Wales

Having explored the policy context under which social enterprises in the prison and probation service have emerged, the relationship between unemployment and crime and the potential contribution of the enterprising idea to desistance, this section will examine the nature and scope of social enterprise activity with offenders within the prison and probation services in England before highlighting examples of social enterprises that are experiencing measures of success. Although drawing heavily upon the recent NOMS report 'Reducing Reoffending through Social Enterprise' as a result of limited available documentation on impact, information gained from individual websites, funding providers and virtual social enterprise networks will also be discussed.

There are currently 130 prisons and 37 probation services in operation in England (NOMS, 2009), however exactly what proportion of these are working with the VCSE sector is currently unknown. A recent report by NOMS (2009) involving 91 respondents working in 94 (72%) prisons and 39 respondents engaged across all probation services was unable to ascertain the actual numbers of social enterprises working within prisons or with probation services (NOMS, 2009). However, the report suggests that 62% of probation services (24 across England), and 53% of prisons are currently working with one or more social enterprises. 40% of probation services were working alongside social enterprises to fulfil the requirements of Community Payback orders, and all probation areas reported some contractual arrangements with VCSE sector organisations.

However, the reliability of such statistics is questionable. Firstly, none of the respondents identified working with national providers, such as Turning Point, who are well established within both prisons and probation services. Secondly, limited levels of awareness and knowledge about social enterprises amongst respondents and the presence of a wide range of organisational links with VCSE sector organisations working under contractual, sub contractual, and referral based relationships increases the likelihood for social enterprises to be confused with voluntary sector and charitable organisations, potentially masking the true level of social enterprise activity within prisons and probation. In spite of measurement issues, those who were working with social enterprises expressed high levels of satisfaction with services provided. Specific advantages of working with the VCSE sector identified in the report include the sector being more responsive than statutory agencies to policy shifts, that provision is either free or at least cheaper than the cost of

providing services internally, and a preference amongst offenders to work with VCSE sector providers due to a perceived better appreciation of their needs (ibid, 43).

Research undertaken by NOMS (ibid.) with 57 social enterprise organisations working in the offender management sector provides useful insight into the nature of work being undertaken and its relation to NOMS offender pathways. Twenty-six of these organisations were working directly with prisons, and 21 directly with probation services. Organisations were funded through a variety of means but more commonly through a contract or grant. Most social enterprises defined themselves as being economic based, education, employment and training (ETE) social enterprises conducted for the purpose of reintegration, but other NOMS priority areas, including 'Attitudes, thinking and behaviour', 'Finance, benefits and debt' and 'Drugs and alcohol' were also identified (ibid, 70).

Social Enterprise Approaches with Ex-Offenders in England and Wales: Evidence of Good Practice

This review of the literature, as identified in the research conducted by NOMS (2010), has identified a greater proportion of social enterprises in England that focus on the provision of education, training and employment opportunities for ex-offenders, although there are examples of projects aligned with other NOMS pathways. The next section of this review will provide some snapshot examples of social enterprises operating within prison, through probation services or in local communities that have been identified as being innovative in supporting offenders into employment, education and/or training, providing financial and family support or diverting young people away from crime. Some of the following examples incorporate supporting offenders involved in community payback as part of a community order, some are targeted to ex-offenders only, whilst others have a wider range of service users, including the long-term unemployed, excluded or disadvantaged young people and/or those with alcohol and drug problems.

Education Training and Employment (ETE) Social Enterprises

- Erlestoke Social Enterprise CIC, HMP Earlstoke

Founded in 2007 and employing 70 prisoners each year, Erlestoke is the first CIC to operate within a prison setting, receiving a Butlers Trust Award for Excellence in 2007. Supported by

a £23,000 grant from the Prince's Trust and Community First charities, the project aims to provide learning opportunities that increase rehabilitation and employability of prisoners. The first initiative developed by the social enterprise was the conversion of a derelict piece of land into a profitable vegetable garden. Profits are secured by selling food, flowers and crafts in an enterprise shop in the local community and selling goods to private companies at commercial rates. The enterprise receives no direct funds from the prison service and is now a self-sustaining business with a turnover of £40,000 employing 100 inmates that are reinvested into the company. Inmates work seven days a week, even though they are only paid for four or five such are their levels of commitment and pride in the project. The project is integrated into release plans for each offender and trust fund secured through the project provides resettlement support to offenders

The success of their vegetable garden has enabled further diversification, providing prisoners the opportunity to learn business skills, pottery and waste management skills in addition to horticultural skills. Erlestoke has increased their production capacity by establishing Vicarage Lane nursery in a local community 4 miles outside the prisons. It is hoped this recent addition will enable the project to work with those on probation through Community Payback orders and young people at risk of offending.

- The REACH project at Prinknash Abbey Gardens, Gloucester
<http://www.reachweb.org/>

Transforming an ancient abbey garden into a centre for learning trades and leisure, this project aims to provide activities that help to reduce re-offending, discourage anti-social behaviour, improve health, address social exclusion and promote education, training and employment of those who are socially excluded or who have committed offences. This might include those engaged on Community Payback Initiatives, the long term unemployed, children at risk of being excluded, ex-offenders and the homeless. Work is also conducted for outside organisations in the form of managing vegetation along footpaths, growing vegetables for 'lunch clubs', building retaining walls and restoring dry-stone walls.

The project is currently undergoing evaluation though 6,000 hours of community payback hours have been undertaken, offenders have achieved education awards, and the

partnership has been awarded the Gloucestershire Criminal Justice Board 2009 Partnership of the Year Award.

- The SOFA project, HMP Leyhill, Bristol
<http://www.sofaproject.org.uk>

The SOFA Project runs a partnership with the 'Through the Gate' (TTG) operation at Category D prison, HMP Leyhill operating within the West of England. The main activity conducted by the social enterprise is the recycling of household and electrical white goods; however the business has recently expanded and formed a franchise social enterprise 'SOFA Office'. In conjunction with another social enterprise 'Green Works' based in London, SOFA Office will sell on office furniture sourced from blue-chip companies across England and Wales to other charities, start-up businesses and private purchasers. The SOFA project employs 14 prisoners on a full time basis, five days per week providing valuable work experience and learning opportunities in preparation for parole or resettlement at the end of their sentence. It is anticipated that the SOFA Office project will support an additional 40 prisoners over a 15 month period; ten will receive experience of working in the SOFA Office, ten will receive training in a pre-ROTL (Release on Temporary Licence) delivered at HMP Leyhill, and an additional 22 prisoners will participate in activities associated in running the SOFA Project.

In the past five years, the SOFA Project has provided work experience opportunities to 45 prisoners from HMP Leyhill, three of whom have secured permanent employment contracts with the project in addition to helping an additional three prisoners to find employment with similar organisations in England and Wales.

- Inside Job Productions, Media for Development, HMP Downview, Surrey
<http://www.insidejobproductions.org.uk/>

One of the learning and training opportunities provided for the women at HMP Downview is media training offered by the international charity Media for Development. Through this scheme inmates are able to undertake a BTEC in Media and Video Production, and are afforded the opportunity to work for the prison's broadcasting unit on completion.

Established in 2006, 'Inside Job Productions' generates income for developing a wide range of projects delivered by Media for Development for a diverse range of clients from the third and private sectors, including promotional films, documentaries, training films and films for the internet.

The project prides itself not only on providing access to work experience opportunities and qualifications of those involved, but as a means of supporting inmates to develop life skills and interpersonal skills, including anger management. As articulated by the Operations Manager in Moulds (2008)

“Just the process of interviewing somebody, learning to look them in the eye, learning to defuse a tense conversation in order to get your interview and not let it degenerate into a fight; those things are not necessarily skills that everyone has picked up by this point. So it's a great way of doing it without putting them in a room and calling it anger management. They just pick up all those skills by stealth”.

In March 2011, the project won two awards at the IVCA (International Visual Communications Awards); one for Best Animation, Graphic and Special Effects, for their animated film 'Better Drug Treatment in Prison,' produced for the National Treatment Agency, and a Best Drama award for their 10 minute information short film 'Making a Fresh Start' produced for NACRO and Barclays.

- Fine Cell Work

www.finecellwork.co.uk

Established by Lady Anne Tree in the 1960s, Fine Cell Work is a registered charity that teaches inmates needlework enabling them to contribute to the production of tapestries, quilts, rugs and cushions while they are locked in their cells. 300 prisoners held in 26 prisons across the country currently participate in the project, of which 80% are men. The project reports high demand from both prisoners, demonstrated by waiting lists, volunteers, and non-participating prisons. According to the project's website, Fine Cell Work received 150 offers of volunteering in 2008 and expressions of interest from 63 prisons during the period 2004-2008 which they were unable to meet due to limited resources (see www.finecellwork.co.uk/aboutus/).

Prisoners benefit from the project in a number of ways. Firstly, whilst serving their sentence, they benefit psychologically from participating in creative work, helping them to tackle depression and boredom. Secondly, they achieve a sense of value and purpose through their participation in a collective endeavour that contributes to supporting future inmates. And thirdly, their participation supports the development of their self-esteem towards addressing their reoffending by enabling the generation of income to either provide a nest-egg on their release or support relatives whilst they are in prison.

Each participating inmate typically works 20 hours per week on their needlework, earning up to £500 per year for their contribution. In 2008, 403 inmates earned a total of £61, 890. There has however been criticism levelled at the level of payment received by inmates (<http://www.againstprisonslavery.org>). The Campaign Against Prison Slavery argues that this figure equates to £153 each for that year, rather than £500 or £3 a week, or 15p an hour for a 20 hour week worked.

- Work This Way, HMP Ford, West Sussex
www.workthisway.org.uk

Founded in 2007 in HMP Ford, Work this Way aims to provide training, work experience, employment opportunities and support to prisoners approaching the end of their sentence “to improve offenders’ employability, help offenders into employment and reduce the risk of their re-offending” (www.workthisway.org.uk). Prisoners not only receive accredited, vocational training and work experience through real contract work providing them with invaluable references, but are given support to improve their self-esteem, interpersonal skills and confidence to assist them in securing a job on release. Despite the absence of available impact data relating to reoffending, the project has provided over 420 training places for over 130 offenders.

Work this Way’s Waste Oil Recycling Project (WORP), established in December 2008, has developed a unique production system to convert used cooking oils from prison kitchens and local businesses into clean biodiesel, resulting in the UK’s first accredited training in the production of biodiesel from waste cooking oil. Cited as an example of good practice, Work this Way has won the West Sussex Social Enterprise Network 2009 Award, has received a

nomination in the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) 2009 Big Green Challenge.

- Changing Directions, North West England

Changing Directions delivered through IMPACT (Innovation Means Prisons and Communities Together) seeks to complement services provided by statutory agencies by providing self-employment opportunities to selected serving sex-offenders in order to support their social and economic reintegration and reduce the risk of reoffending.

The project, although underpinned by concerns of public protection, was developed in recognition of the combined importance of stable employment and treatment to achieving reducing reoffending by sex offenders on their release from prison (Kruttschnitt, Uggen and Shelton, 2000). However, only individuals who have undergone an extensive risk assessment process, have successfully completed a Sex Offender Treatment Programme and are sufficiently motivated to pursue self-employment on release are considered for the programme.

Individuals participate in an in depth training programme, are given guidance in relation to drawing up individual business plans and financial management, and beneficiaries are also supported through a small business support network. The Changing Directions project also trains volunteer mentors to work alongside MAPPA and an individual's risk management plan to provide an additional layer of monitoring and support. The project maintains data relating to employability skills of participants and on the number of individuals who successfully go on to form their own businesses. Unfortunately no such data was publicly available.

- Barbed, HMP Coldingley, Surrey

Launched in 2005, The Howard League's 'Barbed' project was the first social enterprise to be run from an English prison. Representing a radical departure from the repetitive work in modern incarceration, the enterprise provided an innovative, meaningful approach to prison work to eleven prisoners at HMP Coldingley through a high quality and professional graphic design service (Howard League, 2008). Unfortunately, Barbed drew to a close in December 2008 due to financial difficulties. The Howard League (2010b: 1)

attribute these financial difficulties to “vagaries of the prison regime”, including the transferral of Barbed designers to other prisons without notice, lockdowns on the wings, the timing of urine testing and staff training. All of these interruptions meant that designers were unable to go to work thereby affecting the productivity of the enterprise.

Although the number of prisoners who were employed by Barbed was small, research undertaken by the Howard League (ibid.) identified that the project provided valuable design and business related skills for those involved. Two of the 11 employees engaged in the project secured a career in graphic design on release; one as a freelance designer, the other as an in-house designer and assistant office facilitator. Testimonials received by employees of Barbed suggest the experience has translated into a range of transferable skills, supported personal development and encouraged the construction of long term aspirations to tackle reoffending behaviour. As Terry, one of the employees remarked;

“I thought that after serving my sentence my options in life would be limited...Barbed proved to me that it’s never too late to discover new talents and that there are people who want to help and nurture that talent. I can see how Barbed has changed the course of my life” (Howard League, 2010b: 1)

In accordance with research evidence on desistance and civic reintegration (Maruna, 2001, Uggen et al, 2004, Farrall, 2004) financial management training received by employees including guidance on bank accounts, pensions, pay and the importance of socially responsible deductions, and the 30% of their earnings paid by all Barbed designers to selected charities, enabled employees to contribute to wider society in a way most of the prisoners had not known in the past.

- Blue Sky Regeneration and Development

www.blueskydevelopment.co.uk

Founded in 2005 by the charity Groundwork Thames Valley, Blue Sky Regeneration and Development seeks “to help break the cycle of reoffending and achieve long-term benefits for society” (ARCS, 2007: 2) by providing temporary employment opportunities in grounds maintenance and recycling exclusively for ex-offenders. Employees are also given practical

assistance in dealing with housing issues and in securing further training opportunities and day-to-day motivational support to help them into more stable employment. Participants for the most part are referred from probation services (43%) or prison (16%). Having spent an average of 26 months in prison, ex-offenders engaged on the project are typically single, white and with no dependents, with a history of drug and/or alcohol abuse. In addition, 16% who joined the project in 2009/10 were homeless. Whilst 48% of ex-offenders who begin a placement with the scheme have been dismissed prior to completing their planned level of involvement due to non-attendance, misconduct or using drugs and/or alcohol (ARCS, 2009), the majority of these dismissals (72%) occur within three months of joining.

Both output and outcome data collated by the project is impressive.

- In 2010, the project conducted maintenance improvements to over 2m square metres of land and diverted 7,000 tonnes of materials from going into landfill sites
- The project has also been able to enhance its financial stability by securing 60% of Blue Sky Development's running costs through commercial contracts with local authorities and private companies.
- Originally located within the Heathrow area in Greater London, the project has expanded into a national organisation employing over 400 ex-offenders (www.socialenterprise.org.uk)
- 300 ex-offenders have completed 6 month contracts since October 2005
- In 2009/10, 70% of employees completed their involvement with Blue Sky with an accredited vocational qualification
- 48% of past participants were in full time employment at a point three months after leaving Blue Sky
- Only 15% of those employed on the project have reoffended

In 2007, the project commissioned the consultancy ARCS Limited to conduct an evaluation of the project since its inception in 2005. Part of the research design for the evaluation included telephone and individual interviews with 68 past participants of the scheme. The evaluation reports that vast majority of past participants identified the project as having a lasting positive influence on their lives, with over 15% claiming that they would be in prison if not for Blue Sky. Drawing upon feedback from stakeholders of the scheme, the evaluation attributed the success and sustainability of the project to the strong leadership, motivational

and commitment of staff, pragmatism, good quality service delivery and an effective business model and marketing strategy. In March 2011, Blue Sky Development and Regeneration won the English Social Enterprise of the Year award for its innovation and excellence in tackling reoffending.

- Horticultural Acumen, County Durham
<http://www.acumentrust.org.uk/>

Acumen Community Enterprise Development Trust delivers employment, skills and enterprise support across some of the most disadvantaged communities in the north of England. With over 40 employees, the group has developed a number of social enterprises ranging from providing IT support to community organisations, a café and gardening and landscaping services. In 2009 it began working with ex-offenders through horticulture at their 10 acre planting nursery in Peterlee, County Durham. Supported by 9 permanent members of staff and an additional 6 individuals accessed through the Future Jobs fund, the social enterprise sells most of its products to the wholesale market and garden centres to the value of £200,000 per annum. Horticultural Acumen currently works with 15 offenders, one day per week as part of their Community Payback orders. In addition to gaining valuable work experience, individuals are also given the opportunity to achieve a NVQ Level 1 certificate in Horticulture.

- The Ideas Mine CIC, Newcastle-upon-Tyne
<http://www.theideasmine.co.uk>

Acumen works very closely with The Ideas Mine, a research consultancy with a particular interest in the contribution which social enterprise may make to reducing re-offending. In 2005 it developed a unique market-led model with the intention of establishing a fully functioning, sustainable hospitality and conferencing social enterprise within HMP Askham Grange. The model aimed to develop the existing skills-based training within the prison into a fully functioning business but faced considerable challenges in its implementation. In 2009, Acumen and The Ideas Mine ran a pilot project at HMP Low Netwon, which brought the horticulture skills from Acumen together with the learning and

skills team at the prison. The programme was successfully implemented, good quality plants were produced and the model was well received by participants at the prison. However, its success was hampered by a change of governor at the prison, the limited support offered by some prison staff and the low availability of trainees due to the pilot taking place in the winter months. In consequence, achievements were more modest than had been expected; important parts of the model were not implemented, for example, links with supported housing and work placements following release from prison, the project was only able to engage with 4 offenders over a period of 6 months, and was unable to develop to a commercial scale (The Ideas Mine, 2010b).

Finance, Benefit and Debt

- Leeds City Credit Union, HMP Leeds and HMP Wealstun

Survey findings from a study conducted with 133 prisoners by Buck et al (2007) identified that 54% of prisoners, compared to 21% of employees in society, had a total household income of less than £10,000 per year before going to prison, and that a further 73% had no or limited access to mainstream banking services. A partnership between Leeds City Credit Union and HMP Leeds and Wealstun was set up in 2008, providing money management services to prisoners and supporting 600 prisoners in opening up savings and current accounts to support them on their release. This collaboration demonstrates an enterprising way in which prisons can be proactive in improving access to financial services amongst prisoners. The increased financial stability brought by projects such as this may provide a means of protecting against re-offending upon release.

- Ox-CAB Springhill Partnership, HMP Springhill, Buckinghamshire

The open Category D prison of HMP Springhill was approached by Oxford Citizens Advice Bureau (Ox-CAB) for assistance in finding a solution to their inability to meet demand on their services. The Deputy Manager of the Bureau was keen to explore the untapped potential of training and employing long term, able prisoners in becoming citizen advisors. After months of debate and discussion, the partnership between Springhill and Ox-CAB was formalised in August 2002. After achieving a £100,000 grant from the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, that supported the installation and supervision of a telephone advice centre in

the bureau, the partnership was able to support a team of six trained and closely monitored prisoner-advisers. Whilst only open to prisoners on temporary licence (ROTL) who have passed robust risk-assessment and selection procedures, prisoners achieve valuable CAB training and work experience for a period of six months. In 2004, the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation (2004: 5) reported that “prisoner volunteers are doing the majority of OxCAB’s telephone advice work (60 per cent) and dealing with over a quarter (28 per cent) of all clients advised by the bureau”. The CAB now offers advice in a range of prisons and runs a helpline to provide practical factual advice to prisoners in preparation for their release.

Children and Families

- Pictora

Pictora, although only in operation since 2009, has received support by NOMS as an innovative social enterprise designed to facilitate the development of business enterprise skills to support offender resettlement and reintegration. Funds raised from the sale of offender art is invested in victim support, to further support the development of art in prison and to provide practical incubation support on prisoners release from prison. As of October 2009, prisoners have also been given the opportunity to work towards acquiring Level 1 and 2 NCFE Enterprise qualifications.

- Storybook Dads, HMP Dartmoor, Devon
<http://www.storybookdads.co.uk/>

Based within HMP Dartmoor, Storybook Dads was set up in 2003 to provide a service to imprisoned fathers whereby they could record a story for their children onto a CD.

The project has three principal objectives. Firstly, to create a workable model that could be efficiently copied in other establishments. Secondly, to equip prisoners with improved literacy and IT skills and to create a qualification for prisoners, as audio editors, that would subsequently support resettlement, employment and prevent reoffending on release. And thirdly, to enable prisoners to establish or maintain a bond with their child whilst they are in prison with a view to reducing the trauma of having a parent incarcerated. The social enterprise now delivers an OCN Level 2 qualification in Sound and Audio Production at

Dartmoor and absent parents also have the opportunity to access parenting courses to support family relationships.

With support from the prison service in providing audio-editing facilities and securing funding from charitable foundations and trusts, Storybook Dads has extended from Dartmoor prison and now operates in over 90 other prisons in England and Wales, including 10 women's prisons under the sister project Storybook Mums. The project has supported 2000 fathers and mothers to record stories for approximately 4000 children since its inception in 2003.

- pact Lunch

pact Lunch, delivered through the large national charity PACT (Prison Advice and Care Trust), is a social enterprise that sells sandwiches and snacks within visit halls and visitors centres operating across 11 prisons in England. Employing around 100 people and supported by 270 volunteers and serving prisoners in two of the eleven prisons (NOMS, 2009), PACT competes for contracts issued by prisons to run services for prisoners and their families, reinvesting profits into additional services, including play areas for children across prisons in the South of England. The project aims to strengthen family bonds, to alleviate stress experienced by families in visiting prisons and ultimately support resettlement by enabling prisoners to eat with their family during visits. Key challenges experienced by the project include the security concerns presented by employing serving prisoners in visitor service areas and limited commercial awareness of the project within the Prison Service.

Diverting young people from crime

- Prudential for Youth

The programme is a collection of projects that focus on preventing and reducing anti-social behaviour and crime in shopping malls and town centres. Operating through a partnership between Prudential and PRUPIM owned shopping centres and Crime Concern, the eleven projects focus on community safety concerns identified by the local community including vandalism, graffiti, and alcohol and drug misuse. Although underpinned by a commitment to active citizenship and with a clear social purpose characteristic of social enterprise, the

project receives an annual income of £80,000 from Prudential and PRUPIM that pays for management fees, staffing and project development. Evolving over a period of 12 years, the principal aim of projects is to empower and engage young people at risk of offending as partners in tackling crime and community safety. A recent addition to its portfolio of projects is the 'Say Yes Challenge' that provides business and enterprise education to address the social issues currently faced by young people.

Measures of impact relating to anti-social behaviour and disorder include:

- 21.6 per cent reduction in insurance claims as a result of malicious damage through the Manchester Arndale anti-vandalism project
- 16 per cent reduction in the theft of mobile phones through the Wolverhampton Mander Centre project
- 70 per cent reduction in youth nuisance through the Washington Galleries, Tyne & Wear, project
- 41 per cent reduction in the number of anti-social incidents recorded during the project at Cwmbran town centre
- 74 per cent of shoppers feeling safer in the West Orchards shopping centre, Coventry as a result of an innovative 'Txt Zone' scheme, designed by young people

(Data available at

<http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=8039127&aspect=print>)

- United Estates of Wythenshawe

The United Estates of Wythenshawe group in South Manchester is an unconventional social enterprise run by the local community of Benchill, one of the UK's most deprived wards. Street crime, particularly violence and anti-social behaviour, was becoming an increasing concern of local residents of Wythenshawe in the mid-1990s. One resident, Greg Davis, saw an opportunity to set up a community hub in a vandalised Methodist church that was facing closure and retrenchment with the aim of establishing a gym as a means of engaging with young people in the area. Key to the success of the project, according to founders of the group (Lynn, 2008) was getting marginalised, socially excluded young people living on the estate involved in the project from the outset in order to instil a sense of ownership. Instead

of seeing the church as a target for vandalism, the young people, with a little coaxing from the project organisers, became involved in the physical renovation of the building, fund raising and developing ideas for the project.

The gym became fully operational by 1998 and the group began to introduce other activities in which to engage young people, including the introduction of a practical building skills course, validated by Manchester College of Arts and Technology (MANCAT), the creation of a landscaped garden, and providing space for qualified hairdressers and therapeutic massage to practice until they had the confidence to set up their own businesses. A number of critical success factors of the project were identified in a recent evaluation of the project (Lynn, 2008; 11), including visionary leadership and determination to provide opportunities for local people to better themselves, creating a down-to-earth atmosphere that played well with traditional working class interests, and empathy shared by the group regarding to the experiences of socially excluded young people as a result of sharing similar experiences when they were young, and ultimately, an entrepreneurial approach and a willingness to fight for funding outside of mainstream government-funded regeneration programmes.

Owing to the success of the project as measured by the engagement of young people and the local community, similar projects have been set up in other deprived areas within Manchester and further afield in Nottingham, Sheffield and Liverpool.

Having explored some examples of good practice involving social enterprises across England and Wales, this section will explore a number of social enterprise schemes or co-operatives operating within the United States, Canada and Europe, specifically focusing upon examples of work integration schemes within Italy and Sweden. Where possible, measures of impact on reoffending and/or diversion from crime are provided.

i. Social Enterprise with Offenders in the United States

- New Horizon Landscaping Project, Georgia

The Georgia Justice Programme's New Horizon Landscaping (NHL) is a social enterprise operating as an integral part of the federal rehabilitative strategy for current and former prisoners. The project identifies suitable employment within landscape gardening for prisoners whilst they are in prison, collects them on the day of their release and they then begin a programme of work over a six month period. Engaging with 80 ex-offenders at a time, after six months 50% are ready to enter legitimate, permanent employment, with over half or 40 at any one time remaining with the NHL project as a means of retaining its skill base (White, 2008). Those who gain permanent employment through the project are given individual support in developing employability skills and changing attitudes towards offending behaviour.

Unfortunately, the project was forced to terminate in January 2011 due to changes in the economy at large as well as in the landscaping/lawn service industry, the resignation of the project's landscaping director, and absence of an alternative, practical business model that would not divert resources from other aspects of the Georgia Justice Programme.

- Delancey Street, San Francisco
www.delanceystreetfoundation.org

Founded in 1971 by two resourceful and committed individuals with expertise in criminal psychology and direct experience with addiction, San Francisco's 'Delancey Street' helps previously incarcerated men and women - many of whom with a past history of substance abuse - to run restaurants, coffee shops and transportation services. According to the

foundation's website, "The average resident has been a hard-core drug and alcohol abuser, has been in prison, is unskilled, functionally illiterate, and has a personal history of violence and generations of poverty" (www.delanceystreetfoundation.org). Residents stay at Delancey Street for a minimum of two years, but with an average stay of four years, and currently houses over 500 residents in a complex, designed and built by its residents.

Since 1972, Delancey Street has created 12 successful enterprise ventures that have trained residents in marketable skills and created positive interactions between residents and customers in the community, including catering and event planning, a digital print shop, the production of handcrafted furniture, ironworks and ceramics, landscaping, a restaurant and logistics, which provides 60% of the project's annual budget. According to the foundation, over 18,000 people have benefitted from the foundation and have successfully reintegrated back into society as productive, taxpaying citizens. The Delancey Street model has supported thousands of people across 5 states, becoming the leading self-help organisation for former substance abusers, ex-prisoners and the homeless in the United States.

- Greyston Bakery, New York
<http://www.greystonbakery.com>

The pioneering Greyston Bakery provides job-training and supportive services to several different "hard-to-employ" populations, including ex-offenders. The enterprise operates both as a wholesaler of baked ingredients to the ice cream industry and producer of gourmet cakes sold on-line to individuals and directly to upscale restaurants, cafés and other institutions. 55 people are employed by the bakery, 50 of them formerly homeless, recovering from substance abuse or returning to the community from prison with the intention of supporting their reintegration into civic society. Employees do not undergo background checks and are not required to have previous experience in the industry. Many of those engaged in the project have been promoted in the bakery or have gone onto secure employment with external organisations. The bakery currently achieves a turnover of \$7 million each year, producing more than 20,000 pounds of brownies each day for Ben and Jerry's ice cream. A proportion of the business' profits are reinvested into supporting the non-profit projects of the Greyston Foundation.

ii. Social Enterprise with Ex-Offenders in Canada

Social enterprise in Canada has evolved over the last few years but has developed within distinct geographical areas, particularly within the district of British Columbia. This section will explore some of the more successful schemes operating in and around Vancouver in British Columbia.

- ARISE (Abbotsford Recycling Industries Social Enterprise)

The aim of Abbotsford Recycling Industries Social Enterprise (ARISE) is to create employment for marginalized individuals, including ex-offenders, young people at risk of offending, the homeless, and people with disabilities, through the recycling of glass waste. Still in its feasibility stage and awaiting investment, the founders of ARISE intend to re-melt the glass waste received and recast it into functional and desirable products for use in residential and commercial pieces of design, including glass wall blocks, cast glass sinks and baths. In so doing, the goal is to provide employees with valuable experience in shipping and receiving, packaging, design, customer relations, promotion, and administration.

- InsideArt Co-operative, Fraser Valley, British Columbia

InsideArt is an art marketing cooperative whose members are predominantly current and former inmates incarcerated in federal prisons in the Fraser Valley. Dealing exclusively in fine art and crafts produced by its members via an on-line virtual gallery, the program is the first of its kind in Canada. The primary goal of the program is to support ex-prisoners to have less dependence on social welfare agencies and to be productive members of society on their release from prison. Individuals not only gain an income from their endeavours that supports their transition from prison but they also gain training in the establishment and operation of a legitimate business enterprise, learn the values of responsibility and self-sufficiency and gain invaluable work experience. Income generated through their work contributes towards business expenses, their room and board, and is subject to income tax. Artists are also supported in their reintegration into the community. A number have donated pieces of work to non-profit organisations including The Red Cross, the Salvation Army and the Breast Cancer Foundation.

InsideArt is an innovative idea but is in the early stages of its development. The current lack of information on the social impact of the venture prevents any conclusions to be made regarding its success in tackling reoffending of its members.

- United We Can, Vancouver, British Columbia
www.unitedwecan.ca

Starting in 1995 through the 'United We Can Bottle Depot', the project is an example of a sustainable, environmental social enterprise that has balanced economic imperatives with central social purpose. United We Can aims to create employment opportunities for disadvantaged people, including the homeless and substance misusers, living in an impoverished and stigmatised area of Vancouver through a recycling scheme that uses non-motorised foot and cycling carts known as Urban Binning Units (UBU). Employees or 'binners' use UCUs and shopping trolleys to collect recyclable materials from local businesses, residential areas and special events, before returning the items collected to United We Can for recycling. According to Heirn (2010), 700 'binners' bring recyclables to the project's warehouse each day, where materials are sorted by 150 employees before being transported to a processing centre for recycling. In an interview with O'Neill (2011) the then Chief Executive, Brian Dodds stated that "between 750-900 'binners' come through the doors each day and we have created job opportunities for 117 people who work casually, part-time or full-time." UWC is open 365 days per year and the social enterprise also includes a 'computer shop', a 'bike project' and 'Solefoods urban farm'. Research conducted by Tremblay et al (2010) suggests that 'binners' are highly productive at retrieving recyclable materials from a range of sources and through partnerships formed with residences and businesses who will mark the recycling to ensure it is them who collects it. Most of the collectors typically earn \$20-30 per day for their efforts, working within individual territorial boundaries (ibid.), up to 10-12 hours each day, up to 7 days per week. Operating within established geographical routes or 'traplines' contributes in creating a sense of ownership and territory amongst 'binners' within a broader community network. The social enterprise model provided by United We Can facilitates a sense of security and social cohesion through the attachments individuals form with specific territories within the community. In addition, the scheme has achieved numerous awards in recognition of its contribution in tackling poverty and social exclusion in the city of Vancouver and 117 of its 'binners' have also become employees of the project.

iii. Social Enterprise with Ex-Offenders in Europe

Social enterprise is a rapidly emerging trend in Europe, particularly within the area of work integration, but very few schemes focus specifically on the employment or social inclusion of ex-offenders or prisoners. Instead, social enterprises, in their many and varied forms across Europe, tend to be principally concerned with supporting the work integration of marginalised people more broadly; that is, economically disadvantaged and disabled people who are at risk of permanent economic and social exclusion (Spear and Bidet, 2005). There are however examples of enterprising activity in Italy and Sweden that target individuals in prison, ex-offenders and those at risk of offending (for example, substance users, marginalised young people) that have relevance for the purposes of this review.

Italy

The notion of social enterprise first appeared in Italy in the 1980s. Since this time social co-operatives or enterprises in Italy have become embedded within the social economy earning legal recognition in 1991. The legal status afforded to social co-operatives through Law 381/91 ensures that a certain proportion of public contracts are retained for social enterprises thereby consolidating their role in the wider economy (Defourney and Nyssens, 2001). Italian law distinguishes between two types of social co-operative: those delivering social, health and educational services, and those providing work integration for disadvantaged people. Offenders or prisoners however only constitute 4% of disadvantaged members in the latter (Mationi and Tranquili, 1998). According to an estimate by Spear and Bidet (2005: 211), there were 1,915 work integration social enterprises (WISEs) in Italy involving 33,000 people at the time of writing, compared to 1,000 similar ventures in the UK supporting 23,000 disadvantaged people. Whilst social co-operatives in Italy have a clear social purpose in tackling exclusion of marginalised groups, they tend to be private initiatives, established with the intention of overcoming the shortcomings of labour policies for the integration of disadvantaged people (ibid, 216). Target groups of Italian social co-operatives include those with physical or mental disabilities, those with drug and alcohol dependencies, minors with problem families and prisoners on probation.

- Spazio Aperto Labour Insertion Project

Founded in 1994 by parents and friends of disabled people to create job opportunities, the main activities of Spazio Aperto are to train disabled people and to employ them in key sectors including cleaning, assembly, and landscape gardening, waste disposal and recycling. The co-operative currently has 92 employees, compared with 15 when it began trading (Gosling, 1998) and has a turnover of E1.6m (£1m).

The introduction of Law 381/91 facilitated a redirection in its focus, whereby the co-op expanded its target population to include people with various types of mental illness and physical disabilities and former drug addicts. People recovering from drug addictions are placed on work placements with the co-op as part of a court imposed alternative to imprisonment, and a number of workers are on day release from prison returning to prison in the evening.

- San Patrignano Drugs Project, Rimini

www.sanpatrignano.org

The vineyard estate of San Patrignano is a well established co-operative operating in Rimini as an alternative, integrated approach to dealing with the challenges presented in the rehabilitation of drug addicts. The project engages 2,000 former drug addicts in a rigorous programme of work and employment training in the areas of carpentry, plumbing, artisan wine and cheese production, ornamental iron work and the craft of hand painted wallpaper. The Operations at San Patrignano have been financed through production and sales as well as gifts and donations from private individuals, but no public funding. According to San Patrignano's website, the engagement of individuals with drug-related prison convictions in the scheme has replaced 1500 prison years since 1983, saving the State more than 136 billion lira. Whilst the majority of employees stay at the co-operative for a period of up to five years, the majority are rehabilitated, do not reoffend and are reintegrated into society as a consequence of their improved technical and social skills.

- Teatro Kismet

<http://www.teatrokismet.org/>

Unlike the above examples that focus upon work integration, the co-operative Teatro Kismet focuses its attention on providing diversionary activities to young prisoners through theatre. Kismet has created a theatre in a prison for young offenders where prisoners have the opportunity to create and present theatre with professional artists. Their social purpose also extends to diversionary activities for young people at risk of offending through the MOMArt project. MOMArt is a groundbreaking project operates alongside Libera, a national umbrella organization of anti-mafia associations. In 2007, the project transformed a mafia run nightclub on the outskirts of Bari into a cultural hub dedicated to young people similar to that provided through the United Estates of Wythenshawe in Manchester. The project offers the opportunity of artistic residences, workshops, and projects of regional, national and international cultural exchange.

- Co-operativa Alice

<http://www.cooperativalice.it/>

Established in 1992, the innovative Co-operativa Alice, located in Milan's San Vittore prison, provides opportunities for female prisoners on day release to make costumes for theatre and television with the aim of supporting their transition to employment on release. The project claims a number of indicators of success, including the launch of their own womenswear line 'Jailcats', the successful employment of some of the women in the fashion industry, and above all, a very low recidivism rate. According to Hooper, (2007), of the 100 plus women who have joined since Alice was founded, only one has gone back inside.

Sweden

A greater proportion of social enterprises operating in Sweden are concerned with providing work-oriented rehabilitation for people with experience of crime as a consequence of substance abuse, rather than being targeted to ex-offenders more generally.

- Basta Arbetskooperativ

Located in Nyqvärn, 40 km southwest of Stockholm, Basta Arbetskooperativ's members have overcome their addiction and now run a self-supporting business. Established in 1994,

the initiative, like San Patrignano in Italy, provides opportunities for responsible work in the form of environmental cleaning, carpentry and construction for substance users as part of their rehabilitation. An evaluation conducted by Meeuwisse (2001, in Hedin et al, 2005) into the roles and relationships developed through the project however is disappointing, with Meeuwisse stating (ibid) that Basta was no better or worse than other programmes of treatment for substance users. However, where Basta differs from other programmes is that people are able to “live their lives in a miniature society, with real work and tasks which demand responsibility” (Hedin et al, 2005) where people are able to develop a new sense of purpose and sense of belonging. After ten years, the social co-operative model developed at Basta has been replicated at a second location near Gothenburg.

- Vagen ut! project

The ‘Vagen ut!’ (EXIT! from prison to social cooperative) initiative was launched in August 2002 with the support of funds from the Swedish ESF (European Social Fund) Council. The primary aim of the project is to facilitate entry and re-entry into the labour market for people who have difficulties integrating or reintegrating into a labour market, including ex-offenders. The most common user in Vågen ut! is a recently released man or unemployed woman who have previously had problems with narcotic drugs.

The project consists of seven co-operatives that employ 50 people, 20 of whom are also members, and supports an additional 50 people in employment related training (<http://www.vagenutsidor.se>). Of these, only three share a common purpose of supporting the rehabilitation of ex-prisoners or substance users with a history criminal behaviour; Villa Solberg (a halfway house for recently released men from prison that follows a structured work programme in horticulture or carpentry), Café Solberg (an offshoot art café for ex-offenders) and Karins Döttrar (providing 6-12 months work training in the form of handicraft production for women recovering from substance abuse). Although impact data was not available, a three year evaluative study conducted by Hedin et al (2005; 164) concluded that the work of the Vagen ut! Project has been a constructive form of rehabilitation from substance abuse and crime as a consequence of the structure and safety of the united work group provided and the sense of empowerment it provides to the individual user.

Part 4 - Concluding Comments: Social Enterprise and the Challenge of Demonstrating Impact on Reoffending.

Despite the clear connections between mutualism, employment and reoffending (Hunt, 2006, in Nicholson, 2006) there is a distinct lack of documentation on the activities and/or achievements of social enterprises, particularly in relation to their impact on reoffending. This is not limited to the delivery of programmes in the UK. As indicated by Visher et al (2005) very few post-release employment programmes have been subject to robust evaluation owing to the difficulty in delineating impact of a specific programme from the wider programme of support interventions and services accessed by offenders. As Black and Nicholls (2004: 139-140, in Russell and Scott, 2007: 34) assert “there is often some gathering of data around job outcomes or numbers of people helped but too little about quality; still less an independently audited analysis of impacts”. Rather, evidence of success tends to be based on reputation, or is numbers-driven without any detailed evaluation of its social value or impact, therefore preventing reliable conclusions to be made with regards to their impact on reoffending.

Drawing upon findings from their review of social enterprises working within prisons and with probation services, NOMS acknowledge the limited evidence base from which to assess the impact of social enterprise upon offending, stating “no evaluations by the Probation Service were identified and evaluation of social enterprise activity that had taken place within Prisons was limited” (NOMS, 2009: 60). NOMS further adds that even when evaluations have taken place, the focus of assessment tends to be upon the delivery of services and outputs achieved, for example, heightened compliance with community orders or positive employment outcomes, or impact is otherwise assessed on a case by case basis to demonstrate a change in attitude of individual ex-offenders, rather than specific outcomes relating to arrest or reconviction. This is hardly surprising given the multifarious and complex nature of problems faced by prisoners and ex-offenders and the subsequent limitations these problems pose to desistance (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002).

There are a number of possible reasons for the lack of impact data regarding reoffending relating to the programme design and delivery of social enterprises. Firstly, the majority of social enterprises are both small in scale and localised in their delivery producing limited quantifiable data on which impact might be measured. The small scale of

social enterprise initiatives subsequently leads to limited understanding and expertise within social enterprises regarding how to evaluate their initiatives and/or how to measure the social value of their efforts. Second, demonstrating social impact is not typically required for the purposes of commissioning or in demonstrating value for money and therefore is not prioritised to the same extent as delivery. Thirdly, the majority of social enterprise activity within prison and probation services is delivered on a non-contractual basis, again leading to a lack of emphasis upon evaluation. Fourthly, many social enterprises, particularly those that are small-scale and at an early stage in their development, might deliver services through grant funding or through their own reserves and therefore have insufficient finance to evaluate their services.

An evaluation of Acumen's horticultural pilot at HMP Low Newton (The Ideas Mine, 2010b) does however provide suggestions into the ways in which social enterprises might demonstrate their wider social impact or social value through 'sustainability reporting' (an approach to measuring the financial, social and environmental performance indicators of an intervention). Drawing upon the Triple Bottom Line approach of the environmentalist John Elkington (ibid.), the report proposes a bespoke approach to programme evaluation that draws upon existing data and indicators, supports performance indicators required by NOMS (albeit indirectly) and is able to capture narrative results of those who participate. In the prison context, they suggest that achievements of social enterprises can only have a contributing influence upon offending due to the multiple influences upon recidivism. As such, the impact of reoffending can only therefore be measured by the individual learning outcomes achieved by offenders, such as the successful achievement of qualifications, and where possible, the successful completion of a job placement on release from prison (ibid.). Whilst the approach adopted by The Ideas Mine (2010a, 2010b) provides a more holistic means of measuring the social impact of social enterprise upon re-offending, there remains a logical need for robust critical analysis over time beyond the delivery of outputs to determine whether programmes are positively impacting on reoffending.

There are clear challenges in the formation, delivery and sustainability of social enterprises within the criminal justice arena. As reported by NOMS (2010) the introduction of social enterprises within prison and probation services is hindered by a lack of awareness amongst prison and probation staff, the financial and governance-related barriers presented by prison rules, and as demonstrated in the case of the Barbed project, restrictions on activity and production imposed by the prison regime. Developing awareness of the way in

which social enterprises need to operate and ensuring that social enterprises are embedded within the ethos of the institution and a wider strategy of offender management and rehabilitation are essential prerequisites in supporting the sustainability of enterprise in the criminal justice system. This is particularly challenging given the complexity of demonstrating social impact and added value provided by social enterprise. Without a clear vision of where social impact and the activities of social enterprises fit within the wider remit of NOMS, projects that are perceived to fall outside of core targets and standards are most likely to fold (Boyle and Harris, 2009). This will be a particularly big ask given that social enterprises are at an early stage in their development in the criminal justice system, are typically only able to engage with small groups of offenders at any one time and the multi-faceted nature of desistance (Sampson and Laub, 1993, Maruna, 2001).

The small scale of most social enterprises will invariably limit the number of offenders they can work with at any given time, therefore producing limited opportunity and an element of competition amongst would-be employees and leading to strict standards of behaviour within enterprise initiatives. However, as a target group, offenders are typically chaotic, unpredictable and often lacking in the necessary interpersonal and social skills to comply with such strict behavioural standards (Hough et al, 2006). Although necessary in order to maximise their potential for success, in imposing strict discipline on offenders, enterprises may be setting offenders up to fail. Securing compliance from individuals participating in social enterprise activity as part of a community payback order is likely to be inherently more difficult than when working with ex-offenders where their participation is self-initiated. In these instances, participation is rigorously monitored, non-compliance is enforced and supervision is less likely to encourage a sense of ownership and responsibility amongst offenders.

Prison and probation services are likely to express reservations regarding the reliability and financial viability of social enterprises and their ability to satisfy statutory requirements of the service regardless of their size and scope. Larger national social enterprises might benefit from greater financial security leading to increased flexibility and an increased capacity to engage with and earn the trust of prison and probation services, however, the large scale nature of their services may conversely mean that they have lost the 'localness' of their services in terms of partnerships with local supportive agencies and members of the local community. Conversely, smaller, more localised social enterprises are likely to experience difficulty in engaging with prison and probation services due to their

limited financial sustainability and limited scope in their delivery, but might have stronger local links with relevant agencies and support services than larger projects to better support desistance. In essence, risk is an inevitable, albeit unenviable, aspect of all enterprise. The very process of working with offender populations creates challenges associated with risk for social enterprises. A key finding from interviews conducted with probation and prison staff by NOMS identified a common concern amongst prison and probation staff that social enterprises have insufficient understanding of the reality of working within a prison or probation environment and subsequently don't appreciate the challenges and risks involved in working with offenders, particularly around the importance of enforcement and disclosure (NOMS, 2009). The report goes on to recognise that some prisons and probation services might instead favour working with established national organisations with experience of working with offender populations. Working within the risk averse culture of the criminal justice system, social enterprises will need to recognise such challenges and to demonstrate their abilities to manage risk if they are to work with criminal justice agencies.

One of the major challenges in the success of social enterprises is balancing the tensions between social and economic objectives. If projects are to become successful and financially sustainable, social enterprises will need to relieve such tensions, decrease dependence upon grants and develop a viable business model and address any reservations they may have regarding profit making, particularly within the current climate of social impact bonds and payment by results. Similarly, although only 40% of probation services are referring individuals on community payback orders to social enterprises (NOMS, 2009), this is likely to increase in the future if probation services are to meet the government target of 10 million hours (Home Office, 2006). Given the strength of this policy directive, the refusal of some social enterprises to incorporate community payback into their working models may limit the willingness of probation services to work with them.

Given the conclusions made with regards to desistance and the Good Lives Model in the literature review regarding encouraging offenders to take responsibility for their own rehabilitation and the significance of equal partnerships between offender and criminal justice professionals (Ward and Maruna, 2007), it is desirable for offenders to be fully aware of the way in which social enterprises are run and governed and given the opportunity to become involved in their operation and development. Only by involving ex-offenders as stakeholders in the enterprise are they likely to commit to its purpose and create a sense of ownership and value required to support them in making lasting changes to their lives.

However, to achieve this in practice will require a re-orientation away from the risk-management and control inherent and new public management (NPM) underpinning the penal system (Lacey, 2007) towards one that enables offenders to desist from reoffending of their own will rather than as a result of being coerced through monitoring and enforcement.

Social enterprises working in partnership with criminal justice agencies are at a promising stage in their development in the UK. Offering an innovative, alternative approach to offender management, social enterprise can complement other rehabilitative interventions delivered by criminal justice agencies not only by providing valuable work experience and routes into employment, but can empower individuals to address their offending behaviour by restoring self-esteem and offering a renewed sense of purpose (Graham, 2010: 2). However, until social enterprises secure the trust and confidence of prison and probation personnel, manage the complex partnership working arrangements involved, and above all demonstrate their impact on reoffending through a commitment to evaluation, they will struggle to achieve a more prominent place in the market of offender management.

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