

Decolonisation of Education in the Correctional Facility: A case of Mukobeko Maximum Prison, Kabwe, Zambia

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Abstract

Education in the Correctional facility is significant in the rehabilitation of inmates throughout the world. The purpose of the study was to assess on how decolonization of education has been in Mukobeko maximum prison from 2017 to 2022. The following objectives guided the study: to establish the current education the Correctional Service offers to inmates; to determine whether the type of education being offered to inmates help them to reform and settle in society and, to establish educational strategies the correctional service has put in place to help former inmates settle after being released. A case study design was used. The total population for the study was 25 participants, consisting 10 correctional officers, 10 inmates at maximum prison and 5 former inmates. Simple random sampling was used to select inmates at Mukobeko maximum prison. Purposive sampling techniques was used to select officers and former inmates at Mukobeko maximum prison. Former inmates were contacted through the use of register and mobile phones. Data was collected using interviews while analysis of data was done qualitatively using thematic analysis. The study revealed that inmates were taught practical courses which were beneficial for their effective rehabilitation. Further, the study revealed that the education inmates got helped them to reform and settled in society. The study established that teachers at the maximum prison face many challenges related to curriculum modification and adaptation. The study further revealed that decolonization of education to inmates would empower them with necessary skills and knowledge. The study recommends that teachers need to be adequately trained in practical courses that they would offer to the inmates which does not need white collar jobs. The study also indorses that curriculum adaptation and modification would be very vital for decolonization of education in correctional facilities.

Keywords: *Rehabilitation, Current Education, Maximum Prison, Reform, Settle, Society*

1.0 Introduction and Background

The study is anchored on the assumption that education is highly valued in modern day hence this paper endeavoured to establish how decolonization of education has helped in the teaching and learning of inmates at Mukobeko Maximum Prison. In the 1870s and 1900, Africa was confronted with European radical animosity, discretionary weights, military attacks, and possible success and colonization. In the meantime, African social orders set up different types of resistance against the endeavor to colonize their nations and force outside mastery. By the mid twentieth century, Africa - with the exception of Ethiopia and Liberia- had been colonized by European forces. The European colonialist push into Africa was inspired by three principal factors, economic or monetary, political, and social (Iweriebor, 2011). There is an assumed prevalence worldview that the colonizers have been kept up into the present Africa through the school educational programs that is as yet overwhelmed by content got from the colonizers (Chilimboyi, 2016).

According to Mpolomoka and Muvombo (2022) the motivation to learn may be for the purpose of acquiring knowledge in order to get established in a particular career of interest; upgrading skills on the current job for the purpose of retaining it; and preparing for a change of job at a later date. Currently, few people of the relevant Sub-Saharan African population have access to education. For inmates in prison this was not so from precolonial times in most African countries.

Correctional education since independence for most African states was mostly to eradicate illiteracy among prisoners. An example is that of Zambian prisons which its aim was to enhance social rehabilitation and reformation of prisoners. From 1974, prisoner education became part of the Zambian government's prisons programme whose vision was to empower inmates with academic, 'life skills and vocational training programmes relevant to rehabilitation, reformation and self-reliance after discharge from prison' (Zambia Prison Service, Annual Report on the Education Unit from January to December, 2012). In the recent past many programs have been made to enhance learning in the prison cells so as to help inmates develop skills that they can use in and outside prison cells. (Chilimboyi, 2016). In recent years in Zambia, the Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Authority (TEVETA) has sponsored 600

inmates in six correctional facilities across the country with various skills development training at a total cost of K1.2 million. The 603 inmates sponsored were undertaking skills trainings in courses such as auto mechanics, general agriculture, carpentry, catering, bricklaying, and electrical engineering, among others (ZPS, 2012). The authority embarked on this programme because behaviour change and skills development for inmates was a proactive way of helping them reform. However, what was not known was the extent of this type of education offered to inmates has reformed, sustained and integrated them in the society. Similarly, U.S. Department of Education (2015) revealed that in 2013, the U.S. Department of Education and the Department of Justice awarded three grants totaling \$924,036 to adult education providers in Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Kansas for innovative correctional education programs aimed at helping America's inmate population make a smooth re-entry to society through education and workforce training. Further, Promoting Reentry Success through Continuity of Educational Opportunities (PRSCEO) was a one-time discretionary grant opportunity funded by the Second Chance Act, which was administered by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, a component within the Office of Justice Programs at the Department of Justice. PRSCEO aimed to address the chronic issue of underemployment for ex-offenders and provide a more constructive use of time for those under community supervision as well as create an education continuum for bridging the gap between prison and community-based education and training programs.

According to Raj (2012) prison education seeks to equip prison inmates with knowledge and skills that may assist them to re-integrate into their respective communities and to find employment or create self-employment, and in this way to prevent future crimes. He further states that although prison education may not be the cure for crime, the general assumption is that once prison inmates are equipped with the basic knowledge and relevant skills most of them could engage in self-employment activities instead of criminal activities. In line with Raj (2012) Lukas Muntingh (2005) provides a historical background to prison education in South Africa. He states that education rehabilitation intervention targets some specific aspect of the offender with the purpose of reducing the likelihood of his or her reoffending. Burton (2014) explains that education can help reduce prison populations. He argues that through various technical skills offered in prisons in 'prisoners' lives were transformed' thereby preventing prisoners from recidivism. Although educational programmes for rehabilitation and reformation transformation in 'prisoners', very little research has been done on prison education.

Gibbon and Ray (2021) observed that, it was hard to overstate the benefits of providing post-secondary education to incarcerated students. The incarcerated population has lower average education levels than the general population, which, coupled with the stigma of a criminal record, makes it difficult for returning citizens to find jobs especially if they are Black in the United States. Individuals who enrolled in postsecondary education programs were 48% less likely to be reincarcerated than those who did not, and the odds of being employed post-release were 12% higher for individuals who participated in any type of correctional education. Further, Federal and state tuition-assistance programs play vital roles in supporting postsecondary prison education programs in the United States. Incarcerated people have median incomes 41% lower than other people their ages prior to being incarcerated, and are paid extremely low wages for their work in prison, much of which is deducted or used to pay for things such as medical care and personal necessities from commissary. Sixty-four percent of people in state and federal prisons are academically qualified for postsecondary prison education programs, yet as of 2014, only 9% of incarcerated individuals completed college courses while in prison.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Decolonization is the unlearning and undoing of colonialism (Monchalin, 2016). The colonial establishment had over the years-built schools and systems to strengthen their control and power over Africans. In Zambia after attaining independence in 1964, there has been many reforms to decolonise education to all sectors of the society. The correctional service has not been spared. There was a need to offer education to the in-mates unlike the colonial way of punishing the offenders. At Mukobeko Maximum Prison, tertiary education was started in 2013 though other types of education also existed. The Ministry of Education allowed the tertiary institutions to start offering formal education to inmates who qualified or were willing to undergo formal education. This was done because correctional formal education became a fundamental component of rehabilitative programme for inmates in the world. There has been a notable increase in emphasis of education learning in institutions including prisons. Further, Gibbon and Ray (2021) observed that, incarcerated population has lower average education levels than the general population, which, coupled with the stigma of a criminal record, makes it difficult for returning citizens to find jobs especially the blacks in the United States. However, it is unclear how education in correctional facilities in Zambia has been decolonized to empower the inmates with necessary skills, hence this study.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to assess on how decolonization of education has been in Mukobeko Maximum Prison.

1.3.1 Objectives

The following objectives were used:

- i. To establish the current education offered to inmates in the Correctional Service.
- ii. To determine whether the type of education being offered to inmates help them to reform and settle in society
- iii. To establish educational strategies the correctional service has put in place to help former inmates settle after being released.

1.3.2 Questions of the study

The following questions were used in the study:

- i. What is the current education offered to inmates in the Correctional Service?
- ii. Does the type of education offered to inmates help them to reform and settle in society?
- iii. What educational strategies has the correctional service put in place to help former inmates settle after being released?

1.4 Significance

The study might help the Correctional Service to improve on the education of officers and inmates. The information from the study might help the community to change the way it looks at ex-inmates and start employing them. Furthermore, it was hoped that the knowledge generated through the study would contribute to the existing literature in this field. The information from this study might help policy makers and other stakeholders in devising policies that would encourage government to give small loans to ex-inmates so that they could start small business once released from prisons.

2.0 Methodology

A qualitative approach was employed with a case study research design. The sample size used was 25 participants consisting of 10 correctional officers, 10 inmates and 5 ex-inmates. Purposive sampling technique was used to select officers and former inmates at Mukobeko maximum prison. Former inmates were contacted through the use of the register and mobile phones. Meanwhile, simple random sampling was used to select inmates at Mukobeko maximum. Simple random procedure made sure inmates had an equal and independent chance of being selected as a member of the sample. Data was collected using unstructured interview while analysis was done qualitatively using thematic analysis related to the objectives (Creswell, 2014). Open ended questionnaires were distributed to respondents without forcing them. The ex-inmates were interviewed during their free time at their own free will. They were all treated with respect and names were held in confidence. Credibility and dependability were used to determine reliability of the instruments for the officers, inmates and ex- inmates. Shager *et al.* (2013) adds that credibility ascertains that the study reflects the experiences of those being studied and the results could be trusted.

3.0 Findings and Discussion

Table 1
Skills taught to inmates at Mukobeko Correctional Facility

<i>Skill</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Theological and entrepreneurship courses	20
Agricultural courses	2
Mechanical courses	3
Metal fabrication	3
Carpentry and joinery courses	3
Tertiary education and literacy	5
Counselling courses	2

Table 1 above shows that 20 inmates were trained in theological and entrepreneurship courses which were compulsory courses for inmates at Mukobeko correctional facility. The majority of inmates were trained in mechanical courses and agricultural courses respectively. Meanwhile 3 inmates were trained in metal fabrication and carpentry courses. 5 inmates did tertiary education and literacy. The table further shows that psycho social counseling course had 2 inmates.

Objective 1: Types of Education Offered to Inmates at Mukobeko Facility

The study revealed that 5 inmates learnt Adult Education and Literacy. Some inmates did not know how to read and write. In order for them to understand issues, they went for Literacy which is reading and writing. This finding from the present study was in line with the study of Brazzel et al (2009) who stated that when people entered prison, they would have basic or no basic literacy. Most prisoners came from poverty-stricken homes and could not handle learning skills for their everyday lives. Literacy was important in order for them to communicate. Prison-based literacy classes were essential because prisoners were often under-educated compared to the general population and had low reading and writing proficiency.

The other type of education which was given to inmates was Vocational skills training. From the table, it showed that they learnt different skills. Respondent 'A' pointed out:

Modern education offers practical skills such as carpentry and joinery, tailoring, metal fabrication, crop production and literacy classes, theory and entrepreneurship. We get this education in order to become good citizens.

The above findings were consistent with the study results of Ellison *et al.* (2017) who added that, Zambia is geared towards augmenting prisoners' literacy (academic) and vocational literacy (occupational) skills.

Formal Education is yet another type of education which was given to inmates who had done primary and secondary education. Participant C (2022) had this to say:

Some inmates get primary, others secondary and tertiary education. Tertiary education makes them qualify for employment in the Government or NGOs though the inmates are not employed by Government.

A clergyman supported what this responded said. He called on the government to consider changing laws which forbids people who were once convicted to enter the civil service (Lusaka Times 2018). People should not be prevented from getting employment because of their past mistakes. If they are not employed, it means they are not pardoned. Let laws be equally done to all citizens.

Participant 'B' contributed: *we did not regret getting the education that the facility offered. We are doing part-time jobs because of the education we got from the correction facility.*

Respondent D (2022) added that *with human rights, everyone is now considered equal and the education helps in easy reintegration*. Prison education helped with the rehabilitation of ex-inmates and therefore it needed to be for all the inmates in prison.

Objective 2: Whether the type of education being offered to inmates help them to reform and settle in society.

The study results showed that the education inmates got helped them to reform and settle in society. They were able to raise income for the family after getting educated. The practical skills they got, made them to go into farming, do carpentry, joinery and other practical works. Further, the skills they learnt made them raise an income to sustain themselves. The present findings were aligned with the study of Szifris *et al.*, (2018) who observed that the government priority was to reintegrate ex-inmates into the society and provide vocational knowledge to them. The programs must be seen to be relevant to inmates' broader personal development goals if their interests and commitments are to be sustained. The main objective of providing correctional education skills is to prepare inmates for reintegration by making them self-reliant (OAG, 2014). Further, Chilimboyi (2014) stated that many of the ex-prisoners became economically viable and prosperous mostly due to the various forms of education that they received in prison. After their release, they found themselves in different self-employed trades which made them earn something for their families. This was made possible by the knowledge they had acquired from prison correctional activities. This sentiment was confirmed by respondent B who said that *"the ex-inmates who complete their tertiary education rarely go back to prison because they are prepared for life after"*. The office of the Auditor General (2014) also added that the Prisons Act should be revised to conform to international standards. The Prison Service should develop a strategic plan incorporating strategies on rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners. (Report of the Auditor General on the Republic of Zambia Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Prisoners July 2014). The Audit Report (2014, ix) "emphasized that inadequate provision of reintegration programmes means that prisoners are not successfully reintegrated into society upon discharge, which results in re-offending".

The findings of the present study were in agreement with the study by Chilimboyi (2014) who revealed that the negative aspect was that ex-prisoners had no opportunities to be employed in government because of the government's policy contradiction of empowering prisoners with prison education but never employing people with criminal records. According to the Zambia

Correctional Service Constitution, a person shall not be barred from consideration for employment by a public or private body by reason of having previously served a term of imprisonment. Participant 'E' approved this statement by saying: *in the deployment for 2022, no ex-inmate was taken. The Government should go back to its policies which are not segregative. Every citizen should be treated equally. Anyone can be employed as long as the person has the qualifications. The government needs to look at this and employ all Zambians it educates.*

Further, the study showed that inmates learnt theology which made them to adjust in society and become good Christians. This subject made some of them not to go back to the facility after being released and also settle peacefully in society.

Objective 3: Educational strategies to help former inmates settle after being released

The study found that the Correctional Service has a department to check on how former inmates are settling down. The parole officers are supposed to see to it that ex-inmates are settling down in society without challenges. Inmates get a lot of skills to help them settle in life, but the correction service should make follow ups after the inmates are discharged so that they don't feel neglected. This department should be proactive in monitoring the skills of ex-inmates and how they are settling down. It should also facilitate reintegration of inmates which involves connection with family, restorative justice, preparations for releases, job placement aftercare homes Zambia Correctional Service No. 37 of 2021 395).

It was also established that the education that inmates learnt was largely practical in nature. They inmates acquired various trade skills in the correctional facility. The entrepreneurship they trained in made them to do business. The Government needed to help the ex-inmates with soft loans so that those who come out of prison could start a business and settle. Respondent 'F' stated:

when I got released, I had no finances. I went to stay with my friend until I found a private school where I taught. After serving, I bought a taxi which I use for lifts. I plan to raise more income so that I can also venture into farming.

Once someone is imprisoned, they are likely to lose many rights and privileges including access to government programs. In the Western world there is federal grant which is given to ex-inmates or settling in society (Heyd, 2017). In the developing world, Zambia, there is no

grant to assist ex-inmates. The community, the Non-Governmental Organisations would from time to time come in to assist. There is a need for the Correctional facility to set aside some funds for those being released so that they are not stranded in the community.

Correctional education and skills training played a crucial role in reducing crime by providing ex-prisoners with a real alternative to criminal activities (Barnao, Ward, & Robertson, 2015). The instructors need more education and motivation so that they can improve in their duties. This is important because the curriculum for the incarcerated need to change every time.

Respondent 'G' had this to say: *I appreciated the various education skills I took in prison because it helped me to settle in society.*

The tertiary education offered to inmates made them look for employment in Non-Governmental Organisations after being discharged from correction facility because the Government did not employ any citizen with a prison record. Obtaining employment after release was particularly essential for prisoners because it provided stability, income and made ex-offenders less likely to return to a life of crime and made them qualify to look for employment in NGOs (Visher et al., 2004). The Government did not deploy ex-inmates. Former Commissioner General for the prisons (2018), said that educated inmates were more likely to make correctional facilities safer and more positive and more likely not to re-offend.

According to respondent 'H', he *affirms: ex-inmates who have done tertiary education, rarely go back to the correctional facility.*

Inmates will profit from positive socialization, and society will benefit from the ex-inmates' new optimistic contributions and reduced criminal justice costs (Tootoonchi, 1993). If tertiary education makes ex-inmates not to go back to the incarcerated facility, then it is one of the best strategies that the Correction Service should take for those who qualify or are willing to advance in their studies in order to reduce on crime.

From the study, it was discovered that theology was part of the curriculum in the correctional facility. The spiritual part prepares them to settle with their families and community. Theology

should be encouraged as a subject in prison because a human being is a spiritual being and must be encouraged leave harmoniously with others. Convicts have substantially less spiritual experiences associated with doing good (Skowroński and Domzalska, 2017). When ex-inmates come out from the facility, they are prepared after learning their spirituality to mingle with people without involving themselves in crime.

In addition, it was found out that Non -Governmental Organization meet inmates before they are released. They mentor them on life outside prison. It involves providing the opportunity for community-based agencies to meet with clients in jail before release. The ex-offenders pick up their friends and mentor them on life outside prison. They create effective partnerships with stakeholders and other community-based organisations on the reintegration of inmates on discharge from a prison or correctional center and re-entry into the community (Free Bird Publishers, 2017).

Participant I (2022) had this to say: *we have formed an NGO and we have been allowed to go to prison to counsel inmates and talk about life after prison. Our collaboration with the Correctional Service has encouraged ex-inmates to form Non-Governmental Organisations. For instance, the Prison fellowship was formed by an ex-inmate.* More organisations of such type should be encouraged.

One challenge the correctional facility face was lack of instructors. It was reported by respondent: ‘J’:

There were few adequately trained instructors in the facility. Due to this, our fellow inmates teach us incorrect staff, and most of them lack teaching skills.

The lack of qualified officers in correctional settings and the subsequent use of prisoners as teachers made correctional education appear compromised, substandard, and less attractive (Kasonde and Mulenga, 2021). The Correction Service should employ more qualified instructors to educate inmates. Limited resources such as personnel and material make it difficult to make the learning process interesting and easier for inmates. The Correctional Service need to budget for material for inmates so that teaching would be easier for the instructors.

The study also found that post-secondary education they learnt qualified them for employment but they did not have adequate infrastructure for learning in the facility. Those who learn tertiary education are committed because the cells they study from is congested because there are no classes to study from. The former Commissioner General of the Correction Service (2018), reported that providing incentives like opportunities for early release for inmates who excel in correctional education programs should be encouraged because those who do tertiary education were more likely not to re-offend the society. The Correctional service should intensify on offering degrees. Those who enter the facility without education should be given a chance until they reach the degree level.

The Correctional facility should build infrastructure and buy computers for education purpose. Responded 'L' complained about lack of adequate infrastructure for education. Prison cells which they used as classes were congested and not conducive for learning. He said that: *we used to study from the dormitories but after lights have been switched off in the evening, we used to study from the toilets.* It shows the commitment that inmates had in their education. It is also an indication that they had reformed and were preparing for life after their discharge from prison. Classes should be built if education is to be promoted.

It was also discovered from this study that Inmates needed a well-stocked library which should be managed by qualified staff to ensure that prisoners have the same level of provision as citizens outside the prison context. Pulido (2010) emphasized the importance of libraries because reading and writing is significant for education in the prison facility.

4.0 Conclusion

Decolonisation of education in the correction service has changed the way the Correction Service offers education to inmates. The Correction service has offered various types of education to inmates in order to rehabilitate and reform them. Education they learnt has helped them to settle in society. Inmates who have done tertiary education rarely go back to criminal activities. Most of the ex-inmates have become economically independent and prosperous individuals who add value to their families, communities and society. Many ex-inmates have gone away with a skill unlike the colonial education that just punished offenders without looking at their future.

4.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends the following:

- The Government and society must have policies which do not segregate citizens. They should employ ex-inmates. The policy of not employing former inmates should not be there because the ex-inmates have reformed and should be treated just like other citizens.
- The correction service should build more classes and library for inmates and employ more instructors. Teachers should be adequately trained in curricular modifications to meet the challenges that ex-inmates face.
- The government should come up with a policy on financial assistance for all those being released from the facility. The vulnerable coming from the prison facility should be aided from the Community Development Fund so that they settle in society.
- The Correctional Service should be proactive in monitoring the ex-inmates on how they are utilizing their skills.
- ICT must be promoted in prison education. The Correction Service should buy computers for educational purposes.

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