



BEYOND THE PRISON WALLS: OFFENDER REHABILITATION FOR THE COMMUNITY GOOD

In a country seeking to rectify the imbalances of the past, Mangaung Correctional Centre in South Africa must balance the safe and secure accommodation of nearly 3,000 maximum security inmates with a duty for care, rehabilitation and community outreach.

Since the political metamorphosis of 1994, the South African Government has increasingly put the rehabilitation of offenders at the centre of its reforms of Correctional Services. It represents a paradigm shift from institutions of punishment to places of new beginnings.

The ultimate aim is to reduce re-offending and – in breaking the cycle of crime – contribute to a crime-free and morally regenerated country. Socially responsible interventions can also make a difference to a community still living with the legacy of the nation's past. And

a reduction in reconviction rates has a knock-on effect for prison overcrowding, regarded by the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) as its most important challenge.

Mangaung – the second largest private prison in the world – has played its part in addressing the immediate need for accommodation of an increasing population of maximum security and long-term offenders. But its size brings an obvious challenge for delivering effective rehabilitative regimes. And the pursuit of improved opportunities for offender rehabilitation must not compromise public safety.

It's a crucial balance of requirements faced by G4S in its day-to-day management of the facility. One for which it had prepared long before the doors opened in 2001.

Securing Your World



The unique socio-political development of South Africa has resulted in the nation's offender population as a ratio of actual population being amongst the world's highest.



Innovation has been 'built-in' to Mangaung. The project was the first Private Finance Initiative (PFI)/Public Private Partnership (PPP) to be developed in South Africa, leveraging the know-how of both public and private sectors. G4S was part of the consortium responsible for the design, construction and financing of the project and now has a 25-year contract to operate the facility on behalf of the Department of Correctional Services.

An emphasis on "development and rehabilitation" as opposed to punishment had always been part of the plan. So too, was an active involvement in community initiatives in order to facilitate the effective reintegration of offenders in society as part of a long-term strategy of crime prevention. This approach was inherent in the design itself.

While the age and design of many correctional facilities in South Africa severely limits the space available for rehabilitative activity, Mangaung has been purpose-built. The environment created includes a school, a chapel, academic facilities and industrial workshop areas to allow for activities such as agriculture.

Through extensive consultation, G4S has ensured that the provision for the facilities to allow for controlled interventions is coupled with the tightest security controls. These are commensurate with the seriousness of the offending of those incarcerated. As a result, custody and rehabilitation coexist within a secure, safe and humane environment.

Here, G4S managed staff aim to develop skilled and reformed individuals who are capable – with the appropriate attitudes and competencies – of successful reintegration into society as productive, well-adapted and law-abiding citizens.

Frikkie Venter, Managing Director of G4S Care and Justice Services (South Africa) explains: "The rehabilitation of offenders through human development, and secure, safe and orderly custody are two sides of the same coin. Everyone is capable of change given the opportunity and resources. But the security controls in any correctional centre are paramount."

At least 40 hours of purposeful activity – educational and vocational skills-based programmes – is provided for each inmate per week; almost double the 24-hour target set by the UK Government for the Prison Service. This is enshrined in a needs-based, personalised development plan for each offender. The emphasis on the work done by inmates is primarily to enhance their employability upon release. To date, more than 4,620 independently accredited skills certificates have been awarded. Indeed, Mangaung's large adult learning education centre "Liberty" ranks as one of the best educational institutions in the country, with a pass rate exceeding 90 per cent over the past three years.

Venter adds: "It's aptly named. Education can regenerate social norms and values and reduce the risk of recidivism – a return to crime."

The interventions also seek to address the restoration of an offender with the community. One of G4S's most important



principles is to reach out to society through a series of appropriate poverty alleviation and social development projects.

Its goals are twofold. Firstly, to engender social responsibility in the offender population whilst building their self esteem and life skills. Secondly, to raise awareness and understanding of rehabilitation itself, undo the stigmatisation of offenders and promote their reintegration back into the community. To be successful, rehabilitation necessitates community and societal involvement in crime prevention.

More than 75 tonnes of produce from the horticulture gardens tended by inmates has been donated to soup kitchens, AIDS houses, houses for the elderly and children with cancer, and other charities in the local Bloemfontein community. The Sewing and Tailoring Training Centre provides clothes for the needy children within the area. And a furniture restoration programme has provided over 1,015 desks to local schools in the last three years – drawing children from the street to the classroom in support of the Government's drive to keep them out of prison.

Indeed, for two consecutive years, the Premier of the province has awarded G4S the award for the private sector company that has done the most for community development. G4S follows this approach in its recruitment policy too. The company employs more than 86 per cent of its almost 500 personnel from previously disadvantaged communities within 100km of the facility. And close to 30 per cent of its staff are female.

The positive relationship between staff and inmates – in an environment that is potentially threatening – has also received high praise. Crucially, G4S combines its extensive experience in the care and management of people within a secure environment with a thorough understanding of South African realities; the consequences of the nation's past reverberate through society and many offenders come from communities and families plagued by poverty, hunger, unemployment, absent figures of authority and care, a distorted value system and general hardship.

G4S has achieved the necessary socio-security balance – between the provision for rehabilitation and the protection of a safe society. And it has proved the feasibility of running a facility of such size in a secure, safe, humane and orderly fashion.

Mangaung has since been heralded as embodying the 2005 White Paper on Corrections in South Africa, the principal strategic document to direct the management and service provision of the department over the next 20 years and beyond. That it was opened long before the Paper's publication is testament that G4S has made a fundamental contribution towards the new system of corrections and the transformational objectives of a democratic South Africa.

Inspecting Judge Deon van Zyl, said: "Much of the success of private prisons may be attributed to the management regimes under which they operate. You have developed a superb facility and a model of what correctional service should be."

In a world increasingly full of risk, most of us focus on the downside. At G4S however, we believe that in every security challenge there is an opportunity to unlock real benefits. Just as we have done in making a genuine difference to the lives of those on both sides of Mangaung's secure perimeter.

The key to releasing wider benefits for our clients is to always look at the bigger picture and consider solutions that transform performance. To do this, we deliver world class project management that brings together our expertise in logistics, technology, managing one of the world's largest international workforces, and the knowledge derived from providing offender management and rehabilitation services in the justice sector in diverse regulatory environments around the world. By doing this, we offer government agencies and businesses secure solutions that deliver more than the sum of their parts.

By looking at the challenge of managing and rehabilitating the offender population more holistically, we contribute to a secure justice system which provides value-for-money quality and ensures the safety and welfare of those within the justice system.

The most secure and beneficial solutions come from understanding the challenges of effectively managing the offender population and the interdependence of parts. Let us help you to see the opportunities that exist in the challenge of securing your world.

**Transforming challenges
into opportunities.**

