

TURNAROUND NEWSLETTER



2012: Volume 23

NCS: Status of the NCS Service 2008-2012

Called **Chance to Change**, NICRO's non-custodial sentencing service (NCS) began in 2008. NCS did have earlier roots in the form of a Justice pilot in 2007, but the NCS service really gained momentum under funding from DFID UKaid.

This monthly newsletter showcases the progress of the NCS project and discusses relevant issues.

Now about to enter its a fifth year, the **Chance to Change** project has reached the following milestones and targets:

- **Non-compliance rate: 12%**
 - **Number of community members reached: 8 191**
 - **Number of NICRO staff trained: 1 119**
 - **Number of court stakeholder trained: 4 040**
 - **Number of offenders referred to NICRO: 4 563**
 - **Number of offenders sentenced to NICRO: 3 434**
 - **Number of offenders receiving programmes and services: 3 017**
- **Number of NCS sites: 44**
 - **Number of active court stakeholders: 347**



Heading Towards Year 5

We are now about to enter the fifth and final year of the DFID-funded NCS project.

The DFID project comes to a formal end in March 2013. NICRO will continue the NCS service beyond that period on the basis of other funding.

Reaching the end of the DFID project is a major milestone, and one that NICRO can justly feel proud of.

The independent impact evaluation will begin in April 2012 and the results, focusing on recidivism, will be released in 2013. Let us pull out all the stops so we can close the DFID project with a bang!

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Special points of interest:

- Editorial gives an update on NICRO's current situation
- Latest NCS statistics
- A NCS offender writes to NICRO about her experiences
- Meet Michelle Davis

Editorial

NICRO ended 2011 on a low note, where a number of staff involved in diversion and offender reintegration regrettably had to be retrenched. The reality of the funding environment as well as the global and local economy meant that retrenchments could no longer be avoided.

As part of this cost-cutting process, NICRO closed down a number of its service delivery points. We have closed all our offices in the North West due to inadequate funding.

Although this is a huge blow, we must see the change in as positive a light as possible. Centralizing satellite offices means being able to focus more on service delivery quality and allows us to use our infrastructure and office resources more effectively.

Given these changes, it is understandable that some court stakeholders may question NICRO's ability to continue service delivery.

NICRO's commitment to delivering a high quality service remains as strong as ever. The courts should continue to refer to NICRO, and if they have any questions about capacity, they should make contact with the local NICRO supervisor and set up a meeting.

NICRO has committed to deliver NCS services and will continue to do so. The NCS service continues and will continue beyond the end of the DFID-funded project. The current situation requires careful

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planning in order to ensure staff and resources are used as effectively as possible—but the NICRO service remains in place. In most areas, even though the old NICRO office is no longer there, the staff continue to render services by operating from the nearest nodal office. This allows us to cut back on overheads and duplicating resources and infrastructure in certain areas.

We are looking carefully at the existing vacancies in the NCS service, and hope to be able to make appointments by April 2012.

We wish to assure all our stakeholders that NICRO remains committed to delivering high quality NCS services, as well as diversion and prison services. We ask that our stakeholders continue to work alongside NICRO as we navigate our way around these limitations which are beyond our control.

Let us instead turn our attentions to what we **can** do.

We are relocating some of the old NCS sites to different locations closer to established nodes. We have 29 functional NCS sites around the country. The

remaining 16 sites are not fully functioning due to current vacancies and relocations still being underway. We hope to have addressed the vacancy issue by April 2012. We have committed to servicing 45 courts.

NICRO is certainly going through a rough patch at present, but with a 100 year history, we have gone through similar rough patches in the past and have always come through successfully. There are several exciting new developments planned, which will allow us to diversify and generate our own income.

Let us all concentrate on what we can achieve with the resources at our disposal. Every single referral to us is a step in the right direction, away from prison.

Thank you.

Regan Jules-Macquet
NCS Project Manager



NICRO News

Venessa Padayachee and Arina Smit are working on a research paper entitled “**Criminal Cognition as a Risk factor for Recidivism**”.

This paper will be published in the Open Society Foundation’s Monograph.

NICRO also attended the public hearings on torture in prison, which was held at Parliament in November 2011. You can access the report on PMG’s website [here](#).

NICRO has also recently assisted with a deaf and mute inmate in prison who was referred to us by a case worker at the Judicial Inspectorate. The 24 year old man was serving a short sentence for housebreaking and is due to be released. NICRO is assisting with his reintegration process.

On the basis of this and one other recent case, NICRO is looking into the prevalence and situation of mentally and physically handicapped inmates in correctional centres. If you have any relevant information on this subject, please communicate with [Venessa](#).



Indigenous Justice Pilot Project

The Indigenous Justice Pilot, based in Eerstehoek, will begin training mentors in March 2012.

The mentors have been drawn from the local community and some of them are traditional leaders. The first Journey programme is planned for the school holidays in April 2012. To date the pilot has 36 referrals and 28 clients in services. The purpose of the pilot is to integrate traditional African practices into the work that NICRO does with offenders.

To assist us in engaging with the local community, we have developed a brochure in Siswati, which is now available.

We would also like to welcome Zelda Makhubela, who has recently joined the pilot as supervisor. We would also like to welcome back Claudine Mare who has returned from maternity leave.

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Provincial NCS Statistics

The performance of the provinces regarding non-custodial sentencing referrals (2008—present) is as follows:

Gauteng: 1 352

Limpopo: 182

Mpumalanga: 202

North West : 160

KwaZulu-Natal: 367

Free State: 224

Northern Cape: 328

Eastern Cape: 1 326

Western Cape: 422

National Total: 4 563



Meet The NICRO Staff



My name is Michelle Davids. I have been employed at NICRO since 2009. From a young age I always had a passion for helping both people and animals. I have had many strong role models in my life who have made me strive to always do my best. My favourite thing in my life at the moment is being an aunt but I won't get started on this topic as I could go on for hours.

My passion is therapeutic work which I channeled into studying psychology, gender studies and social work. Whilst completing my studies I worked in the field of child protection which opened my eyes to youth at risk and the absence of a father figure in the lives of many youth. I then had my first encounter at Polsmoor Correctional Facility and it was here that my interest in NICRO's work grew.

I started off at NICRO in the field of youth diversion in the Atlantis to Porterville area. This exposed me to small farming communities with few resources, poverty, high alcohol and drug abuse - however there was also a strong sense of community in these areas. I was then fortunate to also assist the Cape Town node with youth diversions which also opened my eyes to the strong contrast between the rural and urban areas in terms of the higher education, higher socio economic status and more resources. In experiencing this contrast I was able to see the great importance of a thorough assessment process and psychosocial histories.

In 2009 I began to specialize in the area of non-custodial sentencing at Cape Town Court. When going into such a field, one realizes that not all offenders belong in prison and the importance of examining criminal thinking and the risk and needs of the client, victim and community. It is striving for a balance within that very triad which can bring about a very positive change.

My goals are to complete a course in family mediation and further my studies in clinical psychology. I would also love to travel and my ultimate destination would be Egypt.

NICRO has truly opened my eyes to how easy it is to overstep a boundary and be in trouble with the law and the importance of taking responsibility, knowledge of the law, one's rights and also of support systems. It is not an easy job to be a social worker, but when your client thanks you for helping them make a change in their lives, then you remember the reason you went into this field.

Chat Live with NICRO!

We are going to be testing a live chat session on our website, starting at the end of February 2012.

The purpose of the live chat session is to allow members of the public to engage more directly with NICRO, access and advice and ask questions.

We will have a NICRO staff member online twice a week for an hour each.

Visit www.nicro.org.za at the end of February on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2pm—3pm.



Letter to NICRO from an Offender



I am a female of the age of 22, from a small village in _____. On the 29th of November 2009, I and a girl called ____, we had a fight about a boyfriend, but it was not my intention to fight. It is just that there were three on me. So the court sent me to NICRO.

At NICRO I attended sessions for anger management and how to deal with conflict. The new skills and knowledge that I learnt from NICRO is how to deal with anger and how to deal with someone who tries to fight me.

I really changed a lot since I came from NICRO, because NICRO has inspired and motivated me to the situation I have been faced with. There are so many changes in my life and I now know that fighting does not solve any problem. I now think things differently and life is so impressive.

I am now able to manage conflict better because I now talk to someone who tries to fight me not to fight her or him back. I now started playing netball to release the anger I got from my parents and friends since I

come from NICRO. And now if I have something that has upset me, I just talk it out. NICRO really inspired me.

I am really thankful to the magistrate who sentenced me to NICRO and not to jail, because at NICRO there are so many things I have learnt about the mistakes that I have done. I did not go to jail because at NICRO they taught me to deal with anger and conflict without a fight. I sometimes think that if I had gone to jail, there would not have been any sessions or anger management that I would have to attend. I am really thankful to the magistrates who referred me to NICRO.

What I would like to say to the magistrate who needs to be encouraged to use sentences like mine, is that he or she can refer a person who only did the same or other mistakes like mine to NICRO. But only if it is for the first time, not for the second or third mistake because NICRO really helped a person who did a mistake unintentionally. What I would like to say to the magistrate is that you cannot regret sentencing a person to NICRO because if that person really needed help, he or she would learn from their mistakes. They would never do those mistakes again in life because NICRO really helps.

I would like to say to the person like myself is that fighting does not help if you have something that upsets you. You must just

find someone you trust or talk to the social worker about your problem so that they could give you a better solution to solve that than fighting.

My plan for the future is to become a soldier or work under the municipality. But what disturbs me is the criminal record of assault, because in so many application forms I got, they say no person with a criminal record may fill the application forms in.

What I should like to say to someone who has been hurt by my actions is that they will never be hurt again because now I am a new person since I come from NICRO. I really have learnt from my mistakes and I am sorry for what I have put you through.

But now I am a better person and new to my homeboys and girls, because I am not that much on the streets and with my friends. I attend church each and every Sunday and during the week I play netball rather than fight with other people. Now when my cousins and my younger brother had a fight on the streets, I just went and told them that fighting does not help.

I am really grateful to NICRO, I appreciate and am thankful to NICRO. It really helps me. I wish they could do that to others, and not only to me.

Thanks NICRO.

**YOU REALLY HELP THE
CRYING PERSONS!**

NICRO

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Started in 1910, NICRO specialises in reintegrating offenders back into society. NICRO works closely with courts and schools to access children and adults who are in need of services.

NICRO's specialises in behaviour change programmes designed to reduce reoffending. NICRO's main service streams include diversion, non-custodial sentencing and prison work.

NICRO's ultimate goal is to create a safer South Africa for all.



www.nicro.org.za

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