

Report of the Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services on its Visit to the Training Colleges of the Department of Correctional Services.

The Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services having undertaken an oversight visit to the Training Colleges of the Department of Correctional Services in Zonderwater and Kroonstad, reports as follows;

A. Introduction

The Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services decided that it would undertake an Oversight visit to the Training Colleges from 16 till 18 August 2005.

B. Delegation

The following members of the Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services were part of the delegation.

- Mr. DV Bloem (ANC) (Chairperson)
- Ms. LS Chikunga (ANC)
- Mr. NB Fihla (ANC)
- Mr. MS Moatshe (ANC)
- Mr. MJ Phala (ANC)
- Mr. LJ Tolo (ANC)
- Mr. ET Xolo (ANC)
- Mr. J Selfe (DA)

The following Members submitted their apologies:

- Ms. MW Makgate
- Mr. S Mahote
- Ms SA Seaton
- Mr S Swart

C. Objectives

The objectives of the visit were:

- To ascertain whether the training curriculum is aligned with the Correctional Services Act, Act, 111 of 1998, the White Paper on Correctional Services and the Strategic Plan of the DCS.
- To ensure that the new recruits at the Colleges understand the Code of Conduct of the DCS.
- To emphasise the importance of discipline and respect amongst staff within the DCS.

The Committee visited the following Colleges:

- The Zonderwater Training College in Pretoria
- The Kroonstad Training College in Kroonstad
- The Mangaung Private Prison (see report on Private Prisons)

D. Findings

The following are the findings and recommendations of the Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services:

1. Implementation of Learnership on Corrections Science – NQF Level 4.

1.1 The Aim and Mandate of Corrections Science

The aim of Learnerships at the Colleges is the delivery of basic training and induction programmes to newly appointed officials at entry and lateral level.

The colleges' mandate emanates from (i) the Correctional Services Act – Section 3 (5) (d), which states that the Department is under the control of the Commissioner, who must establish and maintain training institutions or centres for the training of students or correctional officials; (ii) The Skills Development Act – Section 2 (1) which states that (a) the Act aims to develop the skills the South African workforce (b) to encourage workers to participate in learnership and other training programmes; (iii) The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners: 1984 – Section 47 (2) Basic Training – which states that before entering on duty the personnel shall be given a course of training in their general and specific duties and be required to pass theoretical and practical tests.

Intake of New Recruits for 2004/5

06 September to 17 December 2004

Totals Zonderwater and Kroonstad Colleges											
Occupation	African		Coloured		Asian		White		Total		Disabled
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Kroonstad	287	195	24	24	4	2	2	2	317	223	2
Zonderwater	166	181	61	32	7	4	1	8	235	225	0
Total intake	= 1002										

14 March to 20 June 2005

Totals Zonderwater and Kroonstad Colleges											
Occupation	African		Coloured		Asian		White		Total		Disabled
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Kroonstad	236	205	15	21	0	0	3	0	254	227	0
Zonderwater	222	189	22	18	0	1	1	1	245	208	0
Total intake	= 934										

04 July to 02 September 2005

Totals Zonderwater and Kroonstad Colleges											
Occupation	African		Coloured		Asian		White		Total		Disabled
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Kroonstad	349	132	34	19	1	3	1	0	385	154	3
Zonderwater	347	116	11	8	1	1	0	0	359	125	0
Total intake	= 1026										

06 –24 June 2005

Abridged: Basic Training for Disabled Members at the Brandvlei Management Area.

Intake: 25 Members

The colleges will also accommodate another group of intakes of 1025 each on 12 September 2005 and on 11 November 2005, respectively.

During the period of 20 June to 08 July 2005, special shortened training was done for a total of 152 members from the Ncome and Middeldrift Management Area at Pietermaritzburg and St. Albans respectively.

1.2 Induction Programme:

- The induction programme will orientate newly employed members of the Department (up to level 12) about the Department's imperatives, strategic direction, culture, benefits offered and personnel and administrative support.
- To ensure that prospective and existing members of the DCS are subjected to a learnership on Corrections Science at NQF level 4 in accordance with the requirements of the Skills Development Act.

1.3 Curriculum of a Learnership

Overview of Correctional Services in South Africa

- The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa
- The White Paper on Corrections in South Africa
- New Acts and Regulations: Correctional Services Act, 111 of 1998
- United Nations Standard Minimum Rules

- Strategic Plan – Strategic Direction of the DCS
- Organisational Structure
- Corporate Wear
- Code of Conduct
- Disciplinary Code
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Grievance Procedure
- Personnel Performance Management
- Termination of Service
- Personnel benefits and privileges (Medkor)
- Presentation on HIV/AIDS
- Presentation on EAP
- Institutional Rules
- Rehabilitation

During the learnership programme, learners will be taught the following programmes for which they will receive credits:

- Demonstrate a basic understanding of offender rehabilitation
- Demonstrate an understanding of the human rights contained in the bill of rights
- Demonstrate an understanding of the scope and operations within the field of community corrections
- Provide a caring environment and delivery of services to special categories of offenders
- Comply with organisational ethics
- Conduct internal and external security duties
- Utilise security equipment in corrections
- Promote personal care and environmental hygiene in corrections
- Promote elementary health care in corrections
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of HIV/AIDS
- Interpret basic financial statements
- Motivate a team
- Use of a handgun and a shotgun.

30% of the Learnership consisting of theory is implemented over a period of 15 weeks at the colleges and 70 % of the learnership is practical which is implemented over a period of 29 weeks at the Correctional centres.

1.4 Human Resources Capacity at the Colleges:

	Kroonstad	Zonderwater	Head Office
Supporting staff	53	62	5
Number of trainers	31	27	0

Total:	84	89	5
Ideal:	120	120	17

1.5 Structural Capacity of the Colleges :

Facilities	Kroonstad	Zonderwater
Accommodation	540	492
Large Lecture Rooms	Three (3) = 360 seats	Four (4) 228 seats
Small Lecture Rooms	Eighteen (18) = 448 seats	Seven (7) = 252 seats
Computer Training Centre	One (1) = no workstations	Two (2) = 35 workstations
Library	One (1)	One (1)
Gymnasium	One (1)	One (1)
Mess	One (1)	One (1)

2. Human Resources Strategy of the DCS

2.1 Development and Alignment of the Human Resources Policy

There was no Human Resources Policy in DCS, but the draft policy has now been finalised and is with the Minister for approval. The draft policy integrates the policy on skills development. There is also no training policy, but only a training guideline at the Colleges.

The DCS' Human Resources strategy was reviewed to be aligned with the National Skills Development Strategy. This strategy is now awaiting final approval.

8000 Junior and Middle Management employees will have to be trained. By October 2005, 200 Junior and Middle Management employees would have been trained. Staff will be trained in 7 models by facilitators from SAMDI and the University of Tswane.

2.2 Bursaries

As part of the DCS' retention strategy, the Human Resources management do a survey before bursaries are offered, to ascertain what scarce skills and other skills are needed in the Department. Before bursaries are also advertised, internally as well externally, regions must do assessments of what skills are needed.

As of 1994, 804 bursaries have been awarded to DCS officials, but of these 604 have not completed their course of study. During 2004/5, only 56 learners have completed their studies and only 4 bursaries have been allocated. When officials begin their course of study, the monies are already paid. It is a Treasury regulation

that all monies paid, must be recovered if officials did not complete their studies. R 1.2 million has been recovered out of 210 officials who have breached their contracts. A survey has been drawn up to establish the reason for high dropouts amongst Correctional officials. The survey will look at issues such as work pressure, social pressure and financial problems.

92 Managers of DCS has attended courses at outside institutions. This has amounted to R 450 000. All approvals to attend outside courses have now been centralised.

3. Challenges

- At the time of the visit the Annual training report had to be finalised, yet it was not, because of the many challenges faced.
- The HR Department had to encompass and prioritise the training of all 36 Centres of Excellence.
- An important aspect of training for DCS officials includes the revival of the culture of service delivery within DCS. Another challenge is that of providing accredited training at the colleges. Many of the trainers at the colleges are qualified as Educational trainers, but are only recognised as a Correctional official.
- The treatment of young offenders needs to be registered and piloted at the Training Colleges.
- There are many Acting positions at the Training Colleges, because it was closed for two years.
- Whilst the Occupational Health and Safety Act requires that an ambulance needs to be on site where firearm training is being done, this is not the case at the Kroonstad Training College.

3. Staff Concerns

3.1 Promotion

A concern was raised that despite the hard work done by trainers, no promotions, rewards or incentives are offered. Trainers are on the same level as a CO1 (correctional officer grade 1). This has forced many trainers to seek alternative and better paying employment opportunities. It was also mentioned that the trainers at the colleges have a lot of experience.

3.2 Vacancies

There are a lot of vacancies at the colleges. Some posts have been vacant for as long as seven (7) years. Many officials at the centres do not want to work at the Colleges, because of the weekend incentive. It was felt that the acting positions cause a lot of dishonesty as well as disarray.

When many of the vacant posts are being filled, the trainers do not get first preference, but the public. Trainers also complained that they are not aware of what the real ratio of trainer to learner is, as many of them train high numbers of learners at a time.

3.3 New Recruits

Many of the new recruits in the employ of the DCS have previously been employed. Trainers are of the opinion that the DCS should seek to employ unemployed citizens of the country.

3.4 Timeframe of Learnerships

The timeframe for learnerships at the colleges has been shortened. The trainers complained about this as it hampers the effectiveness of their input. Not all the students' abilities are the same and it is imperative that all understand the work and the curriculum. Of grave concern to the trainers is the fact that many of the learners have never handled a firearm before and the period for firearm training has also been shortened.

3.5 Resources

The colleges lack a lot of resources e.g. medical support such as a first aid kit. This negatively impacts on the training modules as many of the learners must go to medical practitioners outside the College.

3.6 Communication

Whilst all the efforts and hard work of the new management team is recognised by the trainers at the colleges, little or no communication or assistance is received from the National office.

E. Comments and Recommendations

(1). Overcrowding is one of the biggest challenges the DCS is facing. Not only does it impact negatively on offenders, but on staff as well. South African prisons were not built to hold the current numbers and this hampers service delivery. The Portfolio Committee is aware of all the efforts and systems the DCS has put in place to deal with the situation.

The Portfolio Committee recommends that Overcrowding and its challenges be incorporated into the Training Curriculum of the DCS.

(2). The Committee suggests that the DCS takes the Skills Audit into account when it award bursaries. Bursaries should be awarded to the benefit of DCS.

(3). Rehabilitation is the core business of the DCS, but little emphasis is placed on this in the training curriculum. It should be taken into account that many of the learners are still very young and therefore easily influenced. The DCS should ensure that what is learned during training at the colleges, should be reinforced at the Correctional centres.

(4). Ethics was always part of the DCS's military training. The Committee suggests that ethics (as a subject) be brought back into the training curriculum of the DCS.

(5). The Portfolio Committee strongly recommends that the recruitment of new employees should be prioritized in areas where there were a lot of dismissals e.g. Barberton. The Portfolio Committee further recommends that the DCS give priority to those unemployed citizens of the country when advertising positions for Correctional Services officials.

(6) The Portfolio Committee recommends that trainers at colleges get first preference to apply for vacant positions at the Colleges. This scenario will only be to the benefit of the DCS as the trainers have the experience needed.

(7). The Committee was shocked to learn that the Training colleges do not have resources such as First Aid Kits etc. The Committee recommends that these problems be immediately addressed by the Head Office and that the Regional Offices(Gauteng and Free State) assist the colleges in as far as possible.

(8). The Committee recommends that an ambulance or similar form of emergency vehicle be provided at the Training colleges as per the requirement of the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

(9). The Committee suggests that trainers also evaluate the training curriculum at least every two months.

F. Conclusion

In conclusion, the Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services commends the Management and trainers of the Zonderwater and Kroonstad Training Colleges. It is through hard work such as this, that DCS operates not only effectively, but successfully. The Committee was always of the opinion that staff of the DCS is the most important aspect in achieving the goals of the White Paper and the implementation of the Correctional Services Act. The Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services will monitor measures to implement the recommendations outlined in this report and will meet with the Human Resources Directorate on a regular basis in terms of progress made at these Colleges.