

OFFENDER TO ENTREPRENEUR

REDUCING RECIDIVISM AND IMPROVING LIFE CHANCES

Utilising entrepreneurship to be a better
individual, employee or future business owner

David Morgan
2018 Fellow

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I would like to thank my employer Novus, the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust and their funding partner The Rank Foundation for supporting me to travel and conduct this research.



Novus are a leading provider of training, education and employability services to prisoners and offenders. They operate in over 50 establishments, with over 80% of the provision rated good or outstanding by Ofsted. It is part of the LTE Group (formerly the Manchester College) which is a large-scale social enterprise with over 3000 employees across the six organisations in the group.

It has been operating in the justice education sector for over 20 years, with unrivalled experience and continues to be the largest provider in the sector, working with over 65,000 learners annually, with an overall achievement rate of 94% for the academic year 2017/18.

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The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust runs the Churchill Fellowships, a unique programme of overseas research grants. These support UK citizens from all parts of society to travel the world in search of innovative solutions for today's most pressing problems. Every year they award 150 fellowships. These fund outstanding individuals to travel for 4-8 weeks, anywhere in the world, researching a topic of their choice among global leaders in their field. On their return, they help them to share their global learning with professions and communities across the UK.

The Fellowship was created by public subscription in 1965 as the living legacy of Sir Winston Churchill.

The aim of the foundation is to improve the lives of people and their communities across the UK. They look to do this by encouraging and developing leadership and promoting enterprise and innovation.



It is partnering with the WCMT to support enterprise with social impacts and funded this Fellowship.

It operates a model of engaged philanthropy, combining intellectual, social and financial capital in order to maximise impact, whilst leveraging additional funding and support

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BIOGRAPHY



I joined Novus in 2011, after a successful 20-year career in the private sector working in engineering and manufacturing management. What followed was a change in direction working for a third sector community organisation for four years and qualifying as a Further Education tutor, delivering a range of qualifications to 16-19-year-olds, adult learners and corporate clients.

After working in two prisons I was promoted to my current role of Enterprise Partnership Lead and I am responsible for developing the enterprise and self-employment pathway for Novus's prison education provision. This includes recommending a range of academic and professional qualifications and developing resources to enable the learners to explore and develop their knowledge. I am the lead contact with SFEDI Awards and the Institute of Enterprise and Entrepreneurs, growing the provision over the last four years from four to over 45 establishments and enabling Novus to become an IOEE Academy. The role also includes developing partnerships with organisations that can provide additional support upon release to enable the learners to further develop their business aspirations.

I also coach learners to develop their business ideas further.

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Director — Clean Decisions
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Talent Director — Zero Model Nova
Director — Resilience Education
Program Manager — Resilience Education
Vice President — Inmates to Entrepreneurs
Co-Chair — Inmates to Entrepreneurs
Community Success Initiatives
Community Success Initiatives
Community Correction Enterprises
Founder and CEO — Conbody
Co-founder — Refoundry

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Rates of reoffending in the UK are currently at 48% (within one year of release) and the estimated annual cost of £15 billion per annum. Therefore, there is a need to find innovative solutions to tackle these high rates and enable men and women impacted by the criminal justice system to lead crime-free lives and be better versions of themselves.

The focus of the research and report is to understand the role that entrepreneurship can have and its impact on reducing re-offending rates and the overall cost to society and the individual in the UK.

Initial research highlighted examples of best practice in the United States of America which has similar rates of reoffending to the UK

44% **RECIDIVISM RATE WITHIN
ONE YEAR OF RELEASE**

68% **RECIDIVISM RATE WITHIN
THREE YEARS OF RELEASE**

In the United States, organisations and programs that highlighted figures of less than 10% were researched. The fact that 2,250,000 people are in jail compared to 82,000 in the UK was the reason for the USA being chosen.

Findings

The research covered organisations and their programs in three main areas —

- Custody
- Transition
- Community

It looked at the ways at which the organisations worked in close collaboration with the key prison and community stakeholders for the men and women to recognise and develop their entrepreneurial potential and their talents and gifts to become a better

- Individual
- Family Member
- Employee
- Business Owner
- Future Employer

Over 20 organisations were visited from the East Coast (New York) to the West Coast (San Francisco) over a one-month period. All of those visited were heavily involved in the agenda and had been able to develop robust and innovative programs that had outcomes and recidivism rates significantly lower than the US national averages. These included —

<5% **DEFY VENTURES**

0% **LAST MILE CODERS**

<3% **RESILIENCE
EDUCATION**

<2% **CHANGING PERCEPTIONS**

0% **REFOUNDRY**

By understanding the critical success factors and how they can be utilised for the benefit of the UK increases the opportunities available for the men and women seeking a crime-free future.

Key Learning Points

The programs researched provided a long-term supported approach. In the main they did not receive state funding and have the freedom to do what they do best.

A key element is for the participants to take personal responsibility for their previous decisions and actions, and to take control of their new life. It is about taking a rounded, holistic approach to the elements of their lives as illustrated below —



The programs use mindfulness, emotional intelligence, and forgiveness elements that are delivered by experts to provide a firm foundation for the personal transformation to take place.

They enable the men and women to make informed decisions about their future aspirations and careers.

The programs advocate that a stable home life can lead to a stable and sustained career.

Critical Success Factors

These can be identified as —

- Knowing yourself, utilising your talents and gifts to become a better version of yourself.
- Unlocking entrepreneurial talents and using them as an employee or business owner.
- Partnership and relationship management with key stakeholders both in custody and in the community.
- Advocacy for returning citizens and changing the message that there are no opportunities for those with a criminal conviction.
- The links with other organisations to support re-entry, finance, housing, health and wellbeing are embedded.
- People that are not family or friends are prepared to give their time and see people as a fellow human beings and those who are incarcerated are not forgotten by society.

It is underpinned by people recognising the entrepreneurial talents and gifts they have and how they can use them to unlock their potential.

Key Recommendations

An expanded version of these can be found at the end of the report.

IN CUSTODY

1. Explore the potential of embedding personal enterprise and personal leadership learning into the early stages of a prisoner's education journey. This would enable the learner to understand the need to develop and change.
2. Recognise that entrepreneurship is not just about setting up and running a business, but has a wider impact in terms of an individual's value to a potential employer and society upon release.
3. Develop a network of external organisations that can provide the specialist knowledge relating to professional and personal development opportunities.
4. Make more use of the local higher education establishments to draw on their talent pool of trainee teachers as a valuable resource to benefit both parties.
5. Explore ways to deliver entrepreneurship in vocational workshops run by the prison and / or education. This should include the use of technology and access via the virtual campus.
6. Connect with the business community and sell the value of their participation in events similar to the coaching days organised by Defy.

TRANSITION

1. Collaborate with organisations who can provide resources to a business incubator inside a CAT D (open conditions) prison or close by for release on temporary licence. This will enable men and women to test out their business idea in a supported environment.
2. Set up / collaborate with a social enterprise where the prisoners can work for a living wage, with the profits set aside for future investment (see below).
3. Develop a seed capital grant fund that learners can pitch to trustees for and therefore gain the resources required to set up their business. Ensure the fund is ring-fenced and easy to access for the successful learner.
4. Put the individual at the heart of the transition process.

POST RELEASE

1. Use learning from the Refoundry model to develop a community business that enables men and women post-release to realise their potential in a supported environment.
2. Open up the access to business start-up partners with experience of supporting individuals that have barriers to overcome to start a business.
3. Partner with organisations who can provide expertise and knowledge in resettlement activities such as housing, employment, personal finance and health and wellbeing.
4. Utilise the talent pool developed in custody to promote their value as enterprising individuals to employers.
5. Use the connections developed as part of the in-custody coaching sessions to develop the relationships in the community.

COMMISSIONERS

1. Recognise the value of a long-term approach, and the need to fund programs of this nature.
2. Place more emphasis on developing the individual using entrepreneurial skills development.
3. Explore the potential for greater collaboration with industry experts.
4. Open up the opportunities for realistic self-employment opportunities whilst in custody, and not just work experience or paid employment.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

Background

The cost of reoffending in the UK is estimated to be in the region of £15 billion per annum ^[1]. Of this, £3.18 Billion ^[2] is directly attributed to running prisons in England and Wales. With the average prison population being 83,000 at the end of September 2018 ^[2] this works out at an average cost per prisoner of £37,500 ^[3]

The data produced by the ONS for October to December 2016 ^[4] shows —

The proven reoffending rate for adult offenders released from custody was 48.3%, a slight decrease from 49.2% the same quarter the previous year.

It is worth noting that longer sentences produce lower proven reoffending rates as shown in the table below.

Length of sentence	Current Rate	Average previous 12 months	Historical Average (2005-2015)*
Less than 12 months	64.5%	64.7%	62.6%
12 months to less than 2 years	36.0%	36.0%	39.9%
2 years to less than 4 years	29.7%	30.2%	35.4%
4 years to 10 years	19.9%	20.4%	26.8%
4 years to 10 years	8.8%	9.1%	12.5%
OVERALL	48.3%	48.7%	50.2%

*The method of recording changed in October 2015, therefore caution is recommended when comparing the two data sets, however for the purpose of the report, the general trends will be utilised.

With the historic overall rates of reoffending being around 50%, the potential improvement to these figures was the driving force in researching best practice in countries that have similar challenges and statistics and to learn of the methods utilised to reduce these rates.

The research focused on the use of entrepreneurial skills development as a catalyst for the men and women to undertake a personal change and therefore impact on the potential for lowering rates of recidivism.

I wanted to comprehend the programs that were on offer, their duration, and the type of offender that they worked with and their success rates. The scope of the research would encompass programs that were in custody and in the community.

Initial internet research based around “prison entrepreneur programs” brought up several results, namely the PEP program based out of Texas. Their headline recidivism rates were less than 7% which was of great interest to me. Further research into their history and operating model highlighted that it was developed by Catherine Hoke. She left PEP and set up Defy Ventures which became the catalyst for researching the network of organisations and programs that I encountered on my USA travels.

Further research with other organisations which operate in custody and the community that were showcasing their program successes - with published recidivism rates of less than 10% - were conducted.

There are over 2,250,000 people in jail in the USA compared to 83,000 in the UK.

A breakdown of the high-level USA statistics ^[5] is shown below —

Adults — Recidivism rates since release

44% **ONE YEAR**

60% **TWO YEARS**

68% **THREE YEARS**

75% **FIVE YEARS**

4 **AVERAGE NUMBER OF RE-OFFENCES PER PERSON**

1,000,000 **ESTIMATED NUMBER OF ARRESTS**

The costs are significant ^[6]

\$36,000 **AVERAGE COST PER PRISONER**

\$82 BILLION **OVERALL PRISON EXPENDITURE**

\$1 TRILLION **ESTIMATED OVERALL COST OF RE-OFFENDING**

I was keen to understand the methods and programs being utilised by the organisations to have such low rates compared to the national average.

The relevance and importance of developing people's entrepreneurial talents as a way to be a better individual, family member, employee or future business owner will be researched. The barriers that they face and the support on offer to overcome these barriers will be included as part of a holistic solution.

My research was conducted over a month from early September 2018 to early October 2018.

In that time I travelled to —

- New York, New York State
- San Francisco, California
- Washington DC
- Charlottesville, Virginia
- Omaha, Nebraska
- Raleigh / Durham, North Carolina

I was fortunate to meet so many organisations and men and women with criminal histories and learn of their stories.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the report is to inform stakeholders in the criminal justice sector of the value of entrepreneurship as a way to reduce reoffending.

The main objectives of the project are to —

- **Inform** the reader to gain an understanding of the best practices observed.
- **Develop** long-term relationships between the US organisations and myself to be able to share the learning and stay informed of new developments.
- **Implement** programs in the UK to demonstrate the positive impact on the participants.
- **Evaluate** the achievement and the impact on reducing reoffending.

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The main purpose is to provide a platform for future discussions on how entrepreneurship can be utilised within the criminal justice system to reduce recidivism. It should provide the breadth and depth of research across prison education, through the gate services and community programs in order to develop future projects and how they need to be implemented. Not all elements of the programs may be appropriate for implementation in the UK, but examples of best practice can be drawn on and utilised. Finally, the report should also stimulate conversations with funders in the private and third sector to support the drive to reduce the overall cost of crime in the UK and that returning citizens become net contributors to their families and society.

APPROACH AND METHODS

The approaches that I used to capture the data for this report included —

- Desk top research to find organisations that operate within the scope of the project.
- Desk top research to collect data on USA and UK costs of running prisons and the wider cost to society.
- Desk top research to collect data on re-offending rates.
- Face-to-face interviews with the representatives of researched organisations.
- Engaging with in-custody programs to support the delivery to the participants.
- Face-to-face interviews with those individuals that are current or previous participants of the programs detailed in the report.

FINDINGS — IN CUSTODY PROGRAMS

RESILIENCE EDUCATION

Background

Resilience Education are based in Charlottesville, Virginia. It is a not-for-profit organisation, headed by Academic Directors and Co-Founders Greg and Tierney Fairchild. The organisation works in partnership with the Darden Business School at the University of Virginia. The courses are organised by Scott Gemmell-Davis and Whitney Johnson, in close collaboration with prison representatives. Men at Dillwyn and women at Fluvanna Correctional facilities are required to make an application and are assessed by the prison as to their suitability for the program.

Update — Since the visit, they have expanded to Columbia Business School in NYC.

Program

The program starts with an evening session where all the applicants are interviewed by members of the Resilience Education Team as well as the tutors that will deliver the courses. The tutors are current MBA students at the Darden Business School and this enables them to gain valuable experience as part of their studies.

I was fortunate enough to be part of this process and was able to meet with the potential learners. The interview was structured in such a way that the learners and Resilience are able to ascertain the appropriateness of the course. Questions include the type of business that they are thinking of developing as well as other career options. Their motivation and buy-in are challenged as the program is normally oversubscribed. At the end of the interview process, the final names are reviewed and the most appropriate course (or courses) are scheduled over the coming months.



Classroom Activity. Resilience Education®

The courses are run in the evening and the commitment test is that they are required to give up some of their free time to engage with the classroom learning as well as the out of class work.

There are three courses that the learners can undertake. On average it takes three months to complete each course and an outline of each one is shown overleaf.

Certificate in Entrepreneurship

- Marketing – Attracting customers, growing revenues, effective advertising, media mix and costs
- Strategy – Elevator pitches, business location, expansion considerations and growth
- Finance and Accounting – Start up finances and access to funding, credit considerations
- Leadership and Entrepreneurship – Leading and managing your business, talent development
- Partnership and Human Resources – Managing performance, motivation, partners and negotiations
- Business Planning – Selling your idea, writing an appropriate business plan, sensitivity analysis

Financial Capability

- Loans and credit – Comparisons with payday loans, credit cards, rent to own and personal loans
- Banking – Types of accounts and features / advantages / disadvantages
- Personal budgeting – A balancing act
- Credit agreements and car finance – Features / advantages / disadvantages
- Identify theft – How to monitor and protect, actions to take if scammed
- Property – Comparisons of rent vs buy
- Health and wellbeing – Medical and life insurance

Business Foundations

- Forecasting and monitoring – Comparing sales and costs in their impact
- Inventory and costs – Impact of different accounting methods, fixed and variable costs
- Marketing and product lines – Campaigns, types of products and impact on profitability
- Purchasing assets – Expense and depreciation considerations
- Business formation – Types and advantages / disadvantages
- Performance and HR – How to manage staff
- Work / Life balance – Considerations

The courses are taught utilising Socratic teaching methods, with a wealth of case studies available to the tutors. The lived experiences of the learners allow for informative and meaningful discussions to take place. The key to success is to enable the learners to consider their past and how to utilise their skills and gifts in a more constructive and legal manner.

The final element of the program is for the learners to write and present a business plan to their peers, tutors and Resilience Education staff, gaining valuable feedback as part of the process.

Graduates that are released are able to engage with the Resilience professional network and join a re-entry community ready to support them on the next stage of their journey.

Outcomes

500+

Number of people who have participated in the program. Successful graduates receive a Certificate in Entrepreneurship from the Darden School of Business.

200+

Number of MBA students have participated in providing a high-quality program to the learners. The students have gained valuable experience to support their professional practice and personal development.

<7%

Recidivism rate of the over the 50 plus people that have been released since the program began

Resilience Re-Entry is a new initiative that will be a resource allowing graduates to continue to receive support with former educators and other graduates through a secure platform. This removes the geographical barrier so they can move towards achieving their personal and financial goals.

The platform will have four areas —

1. Coaching (Virtual and in person)
2. Resources (Educational, financial, entrepreneurial, employment)
3. Extended Connections (Network, employment opportunities, referrals)
4. Teaching Support (Curriculum support from previous educators to inform new educators)

Key Learning Points

- Resilience Education take a holistic approach to the program and consider entrepreneurship as a way of personal development and not just related to starting a business.
- The learners therefore learn about themselves as well as business operations. This focus enables them to understand more about themselves and how they can grow into a better version of themselves.
- Learning about their own financial capability puts them on a stronger footing to be able to manage their own finances upon re-entry. This may not have been an area they gave much consideration too previously, particularly if they have been used to a cash-rich environment and budgeting not been a consideration.
- The Socratic teaching method using case studies enables the learners to have context in their learning. It also generates an inclusive environment, with lived experiences being part of the discussion. This method should be explored, but with UK class sizes in prison generally smaller than those observed the opportunity for class discussion is reduced.
- The use of MBA students to deliver the education is a great opportunity for them to gain valuable experience. It also keeps the cost of delivery lower than other models. This would be an opportunity to explore in the UK, with students that are undertaking teacher training (Cert Ed or PGCEs). It can also develop a pipeline for talent to teach in the prisons.
- Being linked with a well-respected educational establishment like the Darden Business School enables the learner to gain a recognised qualification which for most would be something they would not have the personal aspiration to achieve previously.
- The learners must take personal responsibility for their learning – in own time for classes and independent study, research and evaluation. With the course not being part of the core day it relies on the prison resources for access and movement. If the same model was to be implemented in the UK, a closed prison could be challenging, but open conditions with a free flow could work.
- The program is not restrained by public sector funding. It can focus on delivery and support and not form filling and box ticking. The outcome for the participant and not necessarily the steps to get there is important (from an administration perspective). In the UK, virtually all education programs are controlled through Ministry of Justice contracts which require significant contract management.
- There is clearly a strong sense of community across the organisation. Drive and passion by the staff at Resilience Education is in abundance, and this message is driven from the leadership.

DEFY VENTURES

Background

Defy Ventures operates as a group of affiliates that are based in Northern and Southern California, Colorado, Nebraska, New York Tri State and most recently Washington State. It was set up by Catherine Hoke in 2010, after departing her previous venture called the Prisoner Entrepreneurship Program (PEP) that continues to this day, based in Houston, Texas.

It is a not-for-profit organisation that is funded by corporate donations and partnerships and grants as well as donations from the general public.

It seeks to “transform the hustle” of the men and women it engages with and has developed a program called “CEO of Your New Life”.

Its vision is stated as

“TO END MASS INCARCERATION AND CYCLES OF RECIDIVISM BY USING ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS A TOOL TO TRANSFORM HUMAN LEGACIES AND HUMAN POTENTIAL”

Through its holistic approach, it challenges its participants, known as Entrepreneurs-in-Training (EITs) to take a different path. It provides a detailed and supported employment, entrepreneurship and personal development program through engagement with their dedicated teams as well as an established network of business leaders, investors and entrepreneurs as volunteers. In essence it is a leadership and personal development program. It commences in custody, and upon release the graduated EITs are supported firstly in sustained employment to gain a stable footing as a returning citizen, and then engage with their re-entry and incubator programs if they wish to use their skills and gifts to set up their own legitimate business.

I had the pleasure of engaging with two programs, Defy Northern California and Defy Nebraska and my experiences are described within the Defy program details below.

Note — Since January 2019 Defy Nebraska has ceased its license agreement with Defy and has launched under the brand name RISE, with the same team in place.

Program

The program runs for approximately 6 months, and depending on the location, the EITs meet between one and three times a week, and at the Omaha Correctional Centre where I visited they meet one evening a week. The sessions are for two hours.

Over the duration of the course, the EITs gain valuable interactions with volunteers drawn from the local business community. They are a vital element in the success of the program as they provide the EITs engagement with men and women that are non-judgemental and experienced employers and successful business owners.

The key elements of the program are —

Application

Defy hold a kick-off event where the level of commitment and expectation are clearly explained as well as the value and benefits of graduating from the program.

It is a comprehensive and challenging program, and not all that attend the kick-off make an application. Information from Defy Nebraska shows that on average 85% of those people that expressed an interest in the program completed the application form. Everyone that completes the application form is accepted.

Study programs 1 and 2

The EITs undertake a detailed study program, utilising blended learning techniques and attending classes in their own time. Topics that are studied include —

- The journey of an entrepreneur
- Fear of failure / self-limiting beliefs
- Personal presentation / character development
- Forgiveness and consequences
- Realistic expectations
- Employment coaching / career plans / networking
- Making a strong impression / personal statement and personal branding
- Cover letters / criminal records and employment
- Preparing for interviews and job offers
- There are also 3 events for the EIT's to gain coaching from volunteers.

I was able to meet with EITs from Omaha Correctional Facility for the first event hosted by Defy Nebraska and organised by the Events Manager, Brittany Burling. They had been engaging with the program for a couple of months and were at a point where they had developed their personal statement and were taking the initial steps in articulating their business idea. The event was kicked off by Defy Executive Director Jeremy Bouman and members of the Defy Nebraska team and peer mentors (previous EIT graduates) along with myself who were invited to listen to the men and provide feedback that they could use to refine their statements and to consider for their business idea. What was evident was that the men were very articulate and displayed many of the interpersonal skills that would be an asset to any potential employer in the future. They made good eye contact, were confident (yet humble in relation to disclosing their offence), spoke clearly, took the feedback as constructive and acknowledged our contribution to support them on their journey. Being able to have that engagement was an asset to their learning and development.

I witnessed a very powerful element of the day in demonstrating the transformational work of Defy. One of the team members supporting the EITs was Jason Kotas. He was recently promoted to the role of re-entry specialist after working as a program associate. Jason was a Defy EIT at Omaha previously and this was the first time he had returned and was able to meet with some of his former EIT classmates. Being able to articulate the personal journey that he had been on from incarceration to a respected and valued member of Defy was a testament to his own determination to be a better person. It also showed that Defy live their own values.

I had the opportunity to interview Jason during my week with Defy, which can be found in the re-entry section of the report.

Coaching Day

I was fortunate enough to join 30 volunteers to meet with EITs at the Correctional Training Facility, Soledad for the second event as a guest of Defy of Northern California. They were halfway through their program and were ready to present their resume, personal statement and their business ideas. This event was organised by Carrie Simon – Executive Director who was my main point of contact and a tireless ambassador for the program.

The day began with the EITs greeting the volunteers with an energetic “high five” tunnel and a meet and greet session as an icebreaker for everyone to get to know something about each other. It can be a daunting prospect for the EITs to meet the volunteers and vice versa. It was important to break down any potential barriers as early as possible so that the maximum benefit could be gained.

A unique element of the “formal” volunteer introductions. I was required to dance to the front of the assembled audience to high energy music and give my own 20 second elevator pitch. This initial session set the tone for the day, and there were a number of activities that enabled a close bond and empathy to be developed. This enabled honest and open feedback to be given and received on the EITs personal statement and business idea. This valuable interaction enabled the EITs to get a balanced opinion from six different volunteers as the activity progressed.



High Five Tunnel. LauraTurbow®

The Defy Norcal staff were ably supported by prison mentors who were graduates from previous courses. Lunch was provided by Defy that enabled further conversations and a greater understanding of each other to be established.

A vital part of the Defy program is to get the EITs to better understand who they are, where they have come from, how to forgive themselves and others and develop ways to “Be the CEO of their new life”.



Meet and Greet! LauraTurbow®



Coaching Session. LauraTurbow®



Step to the line. LauraTurbow®

At this point in the program, they expressed these thoughts and feelings with each other, and an activity called “Step to the Line”. This is to develop a deeper empathy between the EITs and the volunteers. By asking a series of questions, the participants step to the line if their response is a YES. It was a way to demonstrate how similar peoples lived experiences are, and how their lives have been shaped by the way they have dealt with the experiences. It was one of the most powerful activities I had been involved in. There was considerable emotion in the room, and I felt a sense of deeper understanding of the lives the EITs had encountered and how they are taking steps towards a new life.

After this event, the EITs work to complete —

Study programs 3 and 4

The topics that are studied include —

- Meaningful apologies / guilt & shame
- Dealing with depression and anger
- Business strategy
- Time management
- Motivation
- Financial modelling and structuring your business / launching with less than \$1K
- Personal finance and budgeting / personal taxation
- Business and social etiquette
- Introduction to marketing and market research
- Risk management
- Pitching and public speaking
- Leadership qualities

During the final phase of the in-custody element of the program there are two more events —

Business Pitching Practice

At this event the EITs are required to pitch their ideas to volunteers to practice for the business pitching event that gives the opportunity to gain funding to support them upon release. Prior to the formal competition, the EITs are able to practice with their peers and Defy staff.

I was able to observe and participate in this when I visited the Nebraska Correctional Facility for Women in York as a guest of Defy Ventures Nebraska. Fifteen women had reached the end of their program and were making the final preparations for the competition the day after. I was fortunate enough to be able to meet the EITs and learn of their experiences and plans for the future. Being a random Englishman in York was quite the talking point and the ladies were as equally as eager to learn what I was doing there as much as I was keen to learn their ideas. There was a range of ideas ranging from catering companies, dog behavioural services to therapeutic dance. There was a degree of nervous anticipation from the EITs as they sought to refine their pitches.

Business Pitching Competition and Graduation Ceremony

This day is the culmination of the in-prison program. I was lucky enough to be part of this amazing and inspiring day, following on from my previous day at the York Correctional Facility. Over 30 volunteers from the business community had agreed to give a day of their time to support the program. The day started with the volunteers being greeted by the “high five tunnel” and icebreaker activity to get everyone to know each other.



Meet and Greet! McKenzie Hildreth Ring®



Coaching Session. McKenzie Hildreth Ring®

Once everyone was settled, the main business of the morning took place. This was where each of the EITs pitched their business idea to the volunteers in small groups. Valuable, constructive and supportive feedback was given by the volunteers for the EITs to refine their pitch for the next group. Over a series of pitches, the EITs were whittled down to eight to progress to the semi-final, and pitch again to get the opportunity to make it into the final five. This meant that they could pitch to family and friends in the afternoon session.

The afternoon session started with the loved ones and family members joining the event. This was an emotionally charged start to the session and set the tone for a supportive and engaging session. The “high five tunnel” was again utilised to tremendous effect.



Final 5. McKenzie Hildreth Ring®

The final 5 EITs were announced to everyone and they were given one further opportunity to make a final pitch to win the IOUs of up to \$500 that can be used upon release to support their re-entry. Every person in the room was able vote anonymously for their favourite pitch, and then the votes were counted ready for the final reveal. After a tense count the winners were revealed to much joy and jubilation.

The EIT with the winning pitch wanted to set up a therapeutic dance studio as a safe place for children with emotional problems to come and express themselves. The pitch was based on the EIT's personal experience and was full of emotion, passion, resilience and good business principles.

After all the joy and excitement of the pitching completion, the ladies were able to prepare for the graduation ceremony so that they could receive their certificates in career readiness from the University of Nebraska Omaha's School of Business Administration as well as their Defy course.



Winning Pitches. McKenzie Hildreth Ring®



Graduation. McKenzie Hildreth Ring®

Each of the EITs were invited on to the stage, to share this experience with their families and loved ones. It was amazing to be part of such a positive and uplifting day and to give the ladies a platform for their future.

Outcomes



Warden Denise Davidson. McKenzie Hildreth Ring®

The outcomes of the in-custody program can be demonstrated in two main ways —

- 1 — The personal achievement of completing an intensive process and growing substantially as an individual. This was highlighted in a conversation with the Warden – Denise Davidson (see above). She informed me of the personal journey that a number of the EITs had been on. She had noticed a transformation in the behaviour of a number of ladies from prior to being on the Defy Program. She told me that they were consistently resistant to the regime and were very disruptive. As prominent individuals their behaviour was modelled by other prisoners, causing further disruption. As they progressed, their understanding of themselves and the need to change become a more prevalent. Others modelled this behaviour, resulting in a calmer disposition.
- 2 — Gaining a professional qualification recognised by a university, which for most EITs would be their highest academic qualification.

Defy publish their impact on their website, and the figures below are correct as at March

2018. In prison statistics

NATIONAL

Current Enrolment — 1,168
 Cumulative Enrolment — 3,503
 Cumulative Graduated — 1,298
 Cumulative Graduated/Completion Rate — 52%
 Currently Enrolled Retention Rate — 85%

For the two states that I visited

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Current Enrolment — 290
 Cumulative Enrolment — 1,124
 Cumulative Graduated — 320
 Cumulative Graduated/Completion Rate — 54%
 Currently Enrolled Retention Rate — 79%

NEBRASKA

(Defy Nebraska is now a new organisation RISE, they have recently updated their statistics, and the figures below are accurate at the end of January 2019)

Current Enrolment — 105
 Graduated in Prison — 231

Key Learning Points

- Being primarily funded by philanthropic donations from individuals, grants and organisations (and therefore no state funding) enables a degree of freedom in the delivery of the programs.
- Clearly there is a risk to the longevity of the program due to uncertainty of funding and the executive directors are working all the time to engage with the business community and grant makers.
- The average cost for one EIT is around \$1500 (£1200) which for the length and depth of the program is good value for money. With classes generally being over 25, brings in an economy of scale. With UK prison class sizes significantly lower, the average cost per person for a comparable program would be higher. The challenge is allocating funding from a limited education budget and having access to the learners for that amount of time.
- The use of volunteers helps to spread the message. This is a strategy to increase in-kind donations and financial commitments that is vital for the continued success.
- Volunteers that engage are a mixture of employees and business owners. The high energy entrances, meet and greet and icebreakers are there to break down barriers and are there as much for the EIT's as the volunteers. Would this work in the UK? Are we as naturally outgoing and would therefore respond positively to this experience or would we shy away?
- At the end of events there is always a Defy Pitch for financial support and a clear connection to how much it costs to run the programs and what impact a donation can have.
- There is an emotional buy in after the events, as there is clearly a connection that is developed between the EITs and the volunteers.
- The events enable a sense of "What makes us human – we are all one" to be developed. The EITs feel a sense of connection and self-worth, and that they are not forgotten and that people care about their future. I see this as a vital connection that would need to be developed to underpin the potential success of any UK-based program that aligns itself with the Defy model.
- The financial impact on the economy and recidivism rates are clearly stated on each organisation's website. A connection between second chances and better use of tax dollars is made.
- In the UK we could make more use of this type of marketing to engage the public and the business community. There is significantly more focus from the Ministry of Justice to publicise this at present.
- The program needs buy in from EITs. Vigorous entry requirements means not everyone is able to start, and early on in the programs people do drop out due to the rigours of the course material.
- The program material is of high quality, developed and refined over a number of years. It has its own brand identity and this is something worth considering for the UK. Programs do exist, but without a strong brand identity can get lost in all the other elements of prison.
- Significant elements are around a personal journey and how to develop as an individual. Clearly the focus is developing a firm foundation for a new life in whatever that may be.
- Humbleness, forgiveness, almost a spiritual element to help to overcome previous lived experiences that have had a negative impact are explored. This element is a fundamental area for success and in the UK is not always explored as part of a business start-up / self-employment program. There needs to be a way to implement this in the UK.
- The success of the program is in part due to the peer mentoring and group support and sense of community with the EIT's. Learning communities are not well established in the UK and could be developed.
- The reliance of strong partnerships and relationships with prison staff enable the programs to be successful. Arranging classes and events is time consuming for busy staff. Defy work hard on this and there is a mutual desire to make things work. Close collaboration and relationship management is an area that works in prisons in the UK as long there is a common goal and effective communication.
- Having the buy-in of the warden (equivalent of #1 Governor) across all the sites support this agenda.



Post-graduation celebration. McKenzie Hildreth Ring®

LAST MILE CODERS

Background

This is a program run out of seven prisons in the US, including San Quentin Jail in Northern California. It was borne out of an idea by Chris Redlitz after he visited the prison back in 2009. He went to talk to a group of men about business and entrepreneurship and was impressed with their business knowledge. Working with his wife Beverly Parenti they originally set it up as an intensive program that lasted six months and harnessed the participants' entrepreneurial and business skillset to create a business that balanced a technology and social element.

Program

Through engagement volunteers, guest speakers and leaders from the business community the participants learn about three key elements —

Business function

How businesses operate, the departments and functions needed and how they all interact to make achieve their goals.

Personal development

Teamwork, effective communication, accepting criticism and how to gain confidence in the ability to grasp new ideas. They also learn to understand how to change when they are heading in the wrong direction.

Coding

They are able to be introduced to the latest technology without access to the internet. This is achieved through Last Mile Coders developing a bespoke platform that simulates a live coding experience. The curriculum enables the men to learn HTML, JavaScript, CSS and Python. In the future it will be expanded to include web and logo design.

Each of men gain over 2,000 hours of experience, and the program lasts in excess of a year.

Outcomes

Since its inception, over 200 men have graduated the program and gained essential skills and knowledge to develop a career in coding. There is a projected shortfall of one million software engineering jobs in 2020 and being able to access skilled and experienced coders is of value.

Men that graduate the program can engage with TLM Works inside San Quentin. It employs the graduates as software engineers and using its bespoke platforms can develop websites for a mixture of not for profit organisations and businesses. Its proceeds are re-invested back into Last Mile Coders.

The employees are paid industry comparable wages, which are dictated by the Employment Development Department. Earning between \$15 and \$17 an hour whilst still in prison is a significant increase on prison wages and enables a financial footing to be established.



Meeting Hayley. David Morgan©

As the men move closer to re-entry the start to engage with The Last Mile re-entry team. I was able to meet with Hayley Benham-Archdeacon (Business Development Co-ordinator) in San Francisco where I learned of the successes in the men gaining employment. We discussed the program and how it helps to prepare the men for the world of re-entry, and utilising their entrepreneurial and technical skills seek paid employment with tech companies. Potential employers are able to see first-hand the work the men did and gain testimonies about their work ethic.

Hayley informed me that 50 people have been released since the program began and was proud to say no-one had re-offended and been sent back to jail. She attributes this success to the strong employer links and the men and women taking control of their future.

Key Learning Points

- The program focuses on developing skills that are market led. This innovation delivers programs that can support plugging the skills gap and the need for high quality coders in the future.
- It demonstrates that technology can be utilised in a custodial setting with the right controls. There are just a couple of instances in the UK - Code 4000 for example - and developing digital skills has always been a challenge. The success is derived from the tenacity of the leadership team.
- Organisations can see the value that the program graduates can add to their business. Being able to be enterprising and showcasing their talents and gifts increases the personal confidence of the participants.
- Community engagement increases knowledge and understanding of re-entry barriers faced and strong through the gate support drives success.

CORRECTION ENTERPRISES

Background

The organisation is based in Raleigh, and it works within the Northern California Department for Public Safety. It is a not-for-profit organisation which provides the opportunity to develop employment skills and job readiness training for men and women in 30 prisons across North Carolina. 2,600 people are in their workshops daily learning valuable skills in 18 different industries which can be utilised upon release.

Its mission statement states

“TO PROVIDE MARKETABLE JOB SKILLS AND TRANSITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR INMATES IN A PROFESSIONAL AND SAFE WORK ENVIRONMENT WHILE PROVIDING QUALITY GOODS AND EXCELLENT SERVICE TO OUR CUSTOMERS AT A SAVINGS TO THE CITIZENS OF NORTH CAROLINA”

I met with Anthony O.Vann (Director of Support Services) along with Michael Lockamy, Joseph Styles and Rhonda Miller at their offices to learn of their program and successes.

Program

Correction Enterprises operates workshops that employ people in industries such as laundries and sewing as well as re-upholstery, furniture manufacturing, signage and specialist training such as braille. They receive the standard prison wages for being employed. They also offer propriety products for sale to state employees and organisations (such as cleaning products) that offer competitive pricing due to their buying power from its suppliers. It also has an optical plant that produces prescription glasses for government employees at reasonable prices.

The men and women can gain valuable vocational skills as well as being able to develop personal and social skills that are needed in their transition back to the community.



Sample recliner. David Morgan®



Sample fire pit. David Morgan®

They also offer an apprenticeship pathway as well as running an initiative called Prison Industry Enhancement Certificate Program (PIE). This is where companies can partner with Correction Enterprises and use the talent pool to provide additional capacity when seeking to expand their production output. The employees are paid prevailing wages and get other worker's compensation coverage. The companies cannot displace their own employees. It is an opportunity to gain a living wage whilst in custody to reduce the financial barriers upon release.

There is a first class re-entry team run by Michael S. Lockamy that utilises a network of over 200 companies to match candidates with vacancies that lead to a sustainable career. The support on offer includes training in financial literacy, employability skills and letters of introduction. This is underpinned by specific re-entry support that includes information, advice and guidance on topics such as housing, education, health and wellbeing.

Outcomes

As a program, Correction Enterprises does not draw on state funds to be sustainable. It was able to generate sales revenue of over \$92,000,000 in the trading period 1st July 2017 to 30th June 2018.^[7]

It had an operating income of just over \$7,000,000 and after transferring \$6,000,000 to the state to cover prisoner wages and other costs it had an operating profit of just under \$1,000,000.

This outcome enables this not-for-profit organisation to be a net contributor to the state of over \$6 million (as stated above) and giving meaningful work to over 5,000 different men and women each year.

It enables men and women to learn new skills in various industries leading to thousands of men and women gaining employability skills market to employers in the future. I was not able to gain specific information in relation to the number of people that had secured employment post-release. There are case studies contained in their latest annual report.^[7]

Key Learning Points

- Developing the skills of a large-scale workforce will provide people with better opportunities in the future. It opens up a potential talent pool to employers.
- Exposing people to the world of work will provide valuable experience. In effect, it is a long-term job interview. Employers can gain valuable insight and knowledge of a person's work attitude.
- Knowing how to demonstrate your personal value to an organisation will develop self-esteem and sense of self-worth through increased confidence.
- Being an enterprising person at work will show your added value to potential employers.
- Relating back to the UK, there are a large number of prison industries that men and women engage with on a daily basis. They produce a range of products for internal and external markets. Due to the nature of prison finances, each operates for the prison they are in. They don't benefit from the economies of scale in relation to administration functions and purchasing power.
- CCI have a sustainable social enterprise business model, engage men and women with purposeful activity at NO cost to the taxpayer. In fact it is a contributor to state funds. They have a consolidated business model that works together and not in isolation.
- The fact that they have a viable business model and longevity is due to the long-term planning and strategies in place. As they operate within the justice system but a separate organisation means that they can think long term.
- Changes in UK justice system and the creation of the New Futures Network provides an opportunity to engage with employers to develop industry workshops in line with their own commercial operations.

TRANSITIONAL STORY – “AMY”

Defy Ventures Nebraska

EITs that graduate are able to gain support as part of their transition back into the community.

An example of this work can be highlighted in a case study of Amy who was a graduate of the York Correctional Program.

Amy was now placed at Omaha Community Correctional Facility as part of her transition plan. The facility is similar in nature to English open conditions prisons (CAT D) in that both men and women are able to access work, education and rehabilitation programs prior to release. She had spent 12 years in custody and was working towards her release in around 18 months' time.

Jasmine Harris (Program Manager) and I picked Amy up and we headed over to University of Nebraska Omaha (UNO). She was attending classes with Further Education students who were studying business. There were two other Defy graduates also attending. Amy, by her own admission, did not have many qualifications and was seeking to upskill and improve her knowledge and increase her job prospects.

All of the students were accepting of the situation and it was great to see interactions taking place, where Amy's lived experiences made a valuable contribution to class discussions. At the end of the class I had the pleasure of talking to her about her Defy experience.

Amy said that she enrolled with the Defy program to develop herself. She understood that a felon with a 14-year conviction would need to find ways to navigate her re-entry into society. Amy saw the program as a way to increase her employment opportunities and start to build a new career and turn the barriers and her lived experience into a positive way forward.

Amy was a great advocate of the program saying that it helped her to know herself and showcase her skills and gifts and being able to know how to present herself and have an “awesome resume (CV)”. She felt confident to articulate her story due to the mock interviews and coaching sessions she had attended and was open to various occupations as a means to earning a legitimate income.

Her longer-term career plan was to develop her business idea for providing beauty services that she had developed as part of the program. Amy understood the importance of a stable income through paid employment was the best chance of a successful re-entry, and this is positively encouraged by Defy.

Finally, I asked her for a quote that I could attribute to her as part of my research, and after a little thought said

“INVEST IN YOURSELF FOR YOUR FUTURE”

FINDINGS —

POST RELEASE PROGRAMS

L'CHAIM FOODS

Background

L'Chaim Foods is the brainchild of Alex Shandrovsky and is based in San Francisco. He set up the business to produce artisan kosher food for corporate clients such as Google, as well as private events such as weddings, bar mitzvahs and at-home celebrations. It is a company with a strong social mission and supports returning citizens by developing their culinary skills and providing opportunities. This was developed due to his volunteering experiences with Defy Ventures and realising the value to the individual and society to provide second chances to returning citizens.



Alex Shandrovsky. L'Chaim Foods®



Sample menu. L'Chaim Foods®

Program

I was able to meet with Rebecca Charles, the recently appointed CEO, and we were able to discuss how the program started and is evolving for the future.

Returning citizens apply to be part of the L'Chaim Academy. It takes the participant through vigorous training program that focuses on two key areas —

Interpersonal and Entrepreneurial Skills Development

The program seeks to develop skills such as teamwork, communication, time keeping, customer service, personal presentation as well as developing an entrepreneurial mindset in being forward thinking, seeking opportunities and thinking creatively. Some of these skills are already present, they just need refining and reframing into a legal context. The content also covers elements such as costing / budgeting, sales and marketing and how to start a business.

Vocation Skills Development

Being immersed in a commercial kitchen is a challenge, and being able to produce high quality foods to meet exacting customer demands requires a high level of culinary skill.

The program takes the participants through a vigorous program under the tutelage of Mario Vasquez (Executive Chef). This includes elements such as knife skills, food hygiene, preparation, presentation and quality control. Layered on top of this are the specific requirements of maintaining a kosher kitchen.

Key Learning Points

- The program is not just about cookery skills. It seeks to develop a range of skills that the learners need to have a successful re-entry.
- There are significant elements related to business and entrepreneurship – looking at aspects of running their own business. It is no good just being a great chef if you are not aware of the business requirements.
- The holistic and supported environment are driven from the life experiences of Alex and Rebecca. They both have gained experience in the re-entry market through their links with Defy and Delancey Street (Alex) and with Edwin's Restaurant in Cleveland (Rebecca) which are examples of best practice.
- The recurring success factor of great community links and strong leadership is evident.
- Catering and hospitality is a significant focus of education in UK prisons, with opportunities to gain a range of qualifications and gain work experience in prison kitchens, staff messes and visit halls.
- There are already links with organisations such as Pret-a-Manger and Greene King that recognise the skills and talents that can be unlocked to provide a talent pool for future vacancies, which is identified as an area that will have a skills gap in the future.
- Being an enterprising individual, either as an employee or as a small business owner will be a factor in being successful. The challenge for the UK is to find more ways of embedding the business element into a vocational program. Knowing how a business operates even if it is not your own will enable the learner to understand what makes a successful operation and how they can contribute to that success.



Meeting Rebecca Charles. David Morgan®

DELANCEY STREET FOUNDATION

Background

The Delancey Street Foundation is a non-profit organisation that has been in existence since the 1970s and enrolls participants on a minimum two-year supported living program. They work with substance abusers, the homeless and returning citizens. The participants gain vocational, administrative and retail skills whilst being supported to overcome their personal challenges. It describes itself as —

“AN EXTENDED FAMILY AND AS A COMMUNITY IN WHICH EVERYONE IS AN IMPORTANT GIVER AS WELL AS RECEIVER IN THE PROCESS OF CHANGING THEIR LIVES”

I visited their site in San Francisco to see for myself the work they do.

Program



Delancey Street Community. David Morgan©

The facility in San Francisco is a purpose built complex of over 300 accommodation spaces and retail outlets built by previous residents, completed in 1991. Potential residents must commit to be part of the program a minimum of two years and that time period access support to tackle their barriers to successful integration back into society. It is a self-governing society with councils of residents and does not have any paid staff.

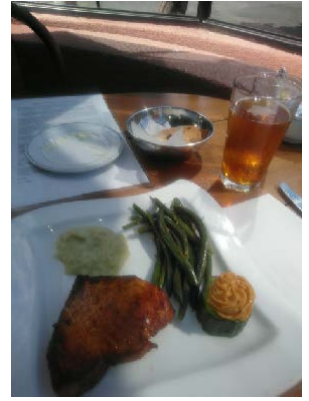
The program focusses on their health and wellbeing, as well as developing their work-ready skills. The residents gain valuable work experience in the wide range of workshops and retail outlets. These include tailoring, car maintenance, art, removals, gardening services as well as culinary skills in a cafe and restaurant.

They gain specific vocational skills, interpersonal skills and employability skills. They also access educational programs, underpinned by peer teaching from the residents.

Whilst visiting the foundation I was shown a range of the workshops and showrooms that showcased the high-quality workmanship developed by the residents. They work on the principle of economic development and social entrepreneurship to drive the organisation.

There are also social spaces where the residents get together to make meals, put on events and learn how to interact in a more socially acceptable way.

The income generated from the retail outlets is reinvested in the Foundation, and the café and restaurant are popular destinations for the general public. I was served a delicious dinner by knowledgeable and skilled waiter. He was full of praise of the foundation and the way it had supported him to transform his life.



Example products. David Morgan©

Outcomes

Each of the residents achieves a minimum of a high school equivalency degree and may continue into college.

They also gain three marketable skills including manual / clerical or computer and interpersonal ones.

Over 14,000 people have graduated into society, and examples of employment include truck drivers, salespeople, mechanics, a fire department captain and a deputy sheriff.

There are also wider benefits to society, and this is quoted in the impact statement from their website.

“THE LONG-TERM IMPACT AND STRUGGLE FOR SUCCESS AT DELANCEY STREET IS ALSO REWARDED BY THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF OTHERS THAT ALTHOUGH THESE SOCIAL PROBLEMS ARE PERVERSIVE, THEY CAN BE SOLVED, AND THEY CAN BE SOLVED WITHOUT HIGH COSTS OR HIRED PROFESSIONALS; THEY CAN BE SOLVED BY THE VERY PEOPLE WITH THE PROBLEMS. EVERY TIME A CUSTOMER EATS AT OUR RESTAURANT, READS THE BACK OF THE MENU, AND SHOWS PLEASANT SURPRISE TO LEARN THAT THEIR FRIENDLY WAITER ONCE HAD SUCH PROBLEMS AND THAT INDEED THE ENTIRE VENTURE IS CONDUCTED BY FORMER FELONS, DRUG ADDICTS, AND HOMELESS PEOPLE, AN ATTITUDE IS CHANGED”

Key Learning Points

- Delancey Street is able to take a long-term view for successful re-entry, as it is self-sufficient in accommodation, personal development programs and its commercial enterprises.
- Its longevity is down to the leadership and vision of its founder, and her influence on the local business community and policy makers.
- It has a clear plan to support the residents to tackle the barriers to re-entry and utilises its peer-to-peer learning to great effect.
- The residents learn about life skills in their own community and can take ownership and personal responsibility.
- As the resident develops their life skills, they can work on the personal enterprise and develop entrepreneurial traits as they work for the wide range of industries in-situ.
- Developing marketable skills for employment and being involved in the running of the organisation as they progress exposes the resident to valuable experiences.
- They get to know how to add value and be a positive contributor
- The scope and scale of Delancey Street now is significant. Any potential to offer such an offering would be a considerable challenge, particularly in terms of financial support.
- Developing a viable business model will be a considerable undertaking. There would be start-up costs and expenses that would need covering before any commercial income could be generated. Starting a small-scale local operation with the support of the local council or UK government could be an option.

DEFY VENTURES

When a graduate of the program is released, the support continues.

I was able to take some time to sit with two people that had gained the support of Defy Nebraska, to learn of the impact on their re-entry journey.

The first person is Jason Kotas. He is the re-entry specialist working for Defy Nebraska.



Jason Kotas. Laura Turbow®

Jason first encountered Defy when he was an inmate at Omaha Correctional Facility. By his own admission he had “not been good person” prior to engaging with Defy. He had a history of drug and alcohol misuse and that had led to considerable family problems, resulting in his being denied access to his children and a prison sentence. He engaged fully with the program and graduated in July 2017 and was a peer mentor for future programs until his release in June 2018.

Upon his release he engaged with the re-entry program and was asked to meet with Jeremey Bouman (Executive Director). Jason was offered a role in the Nebraska office supporting a program manager, which came as a shock to him. Jeremey is quoted saying

“WE HAVE BEEN INTERVIEWING YOU FOR 2 YEARS SINCE YOU CAME ON THE PROGRAM”

Jason is open and honest in that his re-entry journey has not been easy, he has to manage his time to ensure he meets his parole requirements and work commitments as well as continuing to develop himself with further studying.

That tenacity and resilience, coupled with his complete commitment was rewarded in September 2018 when he was promoted to his current position of re-entry specialist.

Jason was clear on the value of how he transformed his hustle and became the CEO of His New Life. He said

“DEFY OPENED UP THE OPPORTUNITIES TO ME AND ENABLED ME TO MOVE PAST WHO I THOUGHT I COULD BE”

Having stable employment and a renewed focus is also paying dividends in his personal life, with him starting to reconnect with his children.

In my time with Defy, I was able to observe first-hand the unswerving commitment he has to Defy and the EITs on the programs and those who are returning citizens. It is a potent mix of his drive, empathy and humbleness that truly demonstrate the transformational power of Defy.

It was my pleasure and honour to have met Jason.

The second person is David Kuckinsky.

He was first introduced to Defy by meeting with Catherine Hoke on an introduction day in March 2016 at Omaha Correctional Facility. As he was being released in the June of that year he wasn't able to engage with the program whilst in custody.

He recalls how it took him three attempts to get his application submitted and was finally accepted with the support of program managers, Jasmine Harris and Maria Mereno. As with all Defy graduates, finding stable employment is a key factor in having a successful re-entry, and he has been employed in a sales position for over 2 years. This has enabled him to have a regular income and develop his business idea alongside his job.

In order to develop this he has been studying to increase his knowledge and is currently working through a series of "belts" developed by Defy. They are —

- White — Ideation: Completion of CEO of Your New Life
- Blue — Incorporation and Trading
- Purple — Scale up and investor support

The business he developed is providing low cost supported housing to returning citizens. The model works on a graduated rent, starting at 25% of market value, increasing in 25% stages to 100% over a period of around 12 months. His own experience of trying to find suitable accommodation upon release gave him the idea.

He currently has one property with tenants which was gifted to him through a family inheritance and he decided to use that gift for the good others. He realises that one property and low initial rent is not a long-term sustainable model, so is using this experience to develop a network that could be utilised in the future to scale his business.

He is very aware of the journey he is on and said

**"WITHOUT DEFY I WOULD NOT BE HERE TODAY TO TALK TO YOU.
THEY ARE THERE WHEN YOU NEED THEM TO TALK TO AND SUPPORT YOU"**

I found David to be an engaging person, clearly finding his way in the world of employment and business. He has a clear vision for the future, informed by his past, but not held back by it.

Defy publish their impact on their website, and the figure below were correct as at March 2018

NATIONAL

Current enrolment — 193
Completed post-release programming — 354
Number of businesses founded — 139
Employment rates — (not currently available)

<5%
RECIDIVISM RATE

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Current enrolment — 36
Completed post-release programming — 28
Number of businesses founded — 19

<5%
RECIDIVISM RATE

NEBRASKA

Current enrolment — 17
Completed post-release programming — 1
Number of businesses founded — 1

<5%
RECIDIVISM RATE

(Since becoming a new organisation RISE, they have published the following statistics that are correct as at end of January 2019)

89% OVERALL EMPLOYMENT RATE FOR GRADUATES

100% EMPLOYMENT RATE FOR
COMMUNITY CORRECTION GRADUATES

Note — Employment rates do not include unknown statuses of graduates

Key Learning Points

- Considerable focus on developing entrepreneurial skills for the future. Graduate EITs are encouraged to find paid work as a platform to a successful re-entry.
- Use the knowledge gained to be a valued employee and build a career and not just be content with low paid unskilled work.
- Access to staff – Re-entry specialist, program managers and executive director. All committed to supporting the individual.
- Although I was not able to observe full range of support services on offer, it was clear that the offer is substantial. Defy Nebraska (now RISE) offers program graduates case management support upon release. Post-release services include a business incubator, re-entry planning, job readiness training and transitional housing.
- The use of the Community Correctional Facilities (similar to UK Cat D Open conditions) enables access to further education and employment opportunities.
- The skills and talent unlocked in the prison program are used.
- Currently in the UK, the resettlement services are normally part of the probation remit, either as a community rehabilitation company for low to medium risk offenders, or the probation service for high risk offenders. Having a method of working together with the education provider can sometimes be difficult due to the way contracts are managed.
- Having the ability to work in close collaboration for the benefit of the individual can be challenging. Most education providers now offer employment services as an added value element. Linking up the strands of personal enterprise, entrepreneurship and employment and its value need be more robust.

INMATES TO ENTREPRENEURS

Background

The program was started by Brian Hamilton and is based in Apex, North Carolina. It is funded by the Brian Hamilton Foundation that was set up when he sold his successful SAGEWORKS business. His involvement stretches back to the early 1990s when he went into prisons to teach inmates how to start their own small businesses.

Its mission statement reads

“TO ASSIST PEOPLE WITH A CRIMINAL BACKGROUND IN STARTING THEIR OWN BUSINESS BY PROVIDING RESOURCES AND MENTORSHIP”

Its vision is

“TO REDUCE THE RATE OF RECIDIVISM IN THE UNITED STATES BY PROVIDING A PATH TO FINANCIAL STABILITY AND SUCCESS”

They provide a range of classes, resources and mentorship that enable men and women to work towards a path to economic opportunity. The program focuses on setting up businesses that require low start-up capital – less than \$1000. The courses are currently run in five locations: Raleigh, Charlotte, Greensboro, Wilmington and Fayetteville in North Carolina.

They also run one day city-based conferences that give an overview of the key elements to start up and run a business.

I was able to meet up with Jacklyn Parker (Vice President of Programs) and AJ Ware (Co-Chair) prior to attending a session, to thank them personally for allowing me to gain an insight into the organisation.

Jacklyn was also a great source for local contacts and was able to facilitate connections with correction enterprises and community success initiatives that will be described later in the report.

Program

It provides formerly incarcerated men and women the opportunity to learn the practicalities of setting up and running their own small business. The participants are taken through a series of workshops that cover the following topics:

1. Getting started – Entrepreneurial traits, business names, types of businesses and legal requirements
2. Business attitude – Business skills and mindset to be successful
3. Marketing – Types and methods to attract and retain customers
4. Sales – How to sell, relationships and traits of a successful salesperson
5. Customer Service – What is it, how to provide a VIP service
6. Business Finance and Risk – Start up, budgeting and monitoring, cashflow
7. Fine Tuning – Operations, your time and your money

I was able to attend one of the sessions (*Business Finance and Risk*) in Raleigh. It was facilitated by one of the Directors – Lawrence Carpenter who owns Superclean Janitorial Services and ZBS Trucking. His insights into running a business and the importance of financial controls were very powerful to the men. As a formerly incarcerated individual he was also able to develop a great rapport with the class, providing examples of his failures and how he learned from them, both as an offender and businessman. Being able to relate to the men and their barriers meant some great interaction and the feedback at the end of the session was very positive and gave the men a realistic picture of how their future could be.

Their website provides a wide range of short videos that provide additional information and insights for budding entrepreneurs. The topics include —

- How do you start a business with no money at all?
- How do you get your first customer?
- How do I get over the fear of starting a business?

Outcomes



Airport advert. Inmates to Entrepreneurs®

The program worked with over 700 participants since its inception.

It has enabled the participants to gain valuable knowledge and recognise their own talents. They may not have gone to start up a business but it put them on a path to employment through developing their entrepreneurial skills.

70+ NUMBER OF SMALL BUSINESSES ESTABLISHED

These include —

- Trap Burger- Burgers and More
- Rose Gold Beauty Supply
- Heads Up Beauty Supply bases in Raleigh
- Sheer Elegance Events

Key Learning Points

- Not being funded by state resources means it can operate without restrictions and can develop its programs based on what is needed and not what funders need to see as evidence.
- It benefits from the generosity of the Brian Hamilton Foundation, in both financial support and time.
- The lived experiences of some and mentors provides a connection with the learners and can provide empathy and understanding of the barriers faced.
- The core focus is on setting up and running a business with low capital start up. The issue to raise start-up funds here in the UK, particularly if you have a poor credit rating reduces access to funds. By starting a low capital business, the owner can start earning relatively quickly.
- With regards to the course content, it is more of the key elements of running a business, with less emphasis on personal development. This is down to the length of the course. It is more concise and focuses on business than other programs seen.
- This enables a large number of people to access the support across multiple locations. These locations are in the heart of local communities supporting collaborative learning.
- The program offers a wide range of online and face-to-face support post completion, critical to its success.
- Having a shorter, more focused program for ex-offenders in the community here in the UK would increase participation. The delivery cost would be lower than longer programs, but would need to develop community links for ongoing support.

COMMUNITY SUCCESS INITIATIVES (CSI)

Background

CSI is a not-for-profit organisation based in Raleigh, North Carolina and is led by Executive Director Dennis Gaddy. Its mission is

“TO HELP MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE THROUGH PROGRAMS THAT HELP INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES BE AWARE OF PERSONAL GROWTH AND “SUCCESS” PRINCIPLES, INSPIRE OTHERS TO REACH THEIR POTENTIAL, AND HELP TO BUILD VIBRANT HEALTHY COMMUNITIES”

Dennis believes that development through personal leadership and goal setting is a key driver for success and the organisation delivers programs to returning citizens based on these key principles. CSI are also heavily involved in criminal justice advocacy and they work closely with state and federal organisations to champion the rights of formerly incarcerated men and women.

I had the opportunity to meet Dennis and be hosted by a member of his team, Dr. Ho Haraydi, who has developed one of the key programs “Project Managing Your Life”.

Program

Dr Ho has developed this program as a tool for people to develop strategies to take action in their lives. It works on mixture of project management and coaching techniques. Dr Ho puts it succinctly

“GETTING THINGS DONE AND MAKING THINGS HAPPEN IN YOUR LIFE”

The program focusses on identifying the steps needed to make a positive change in the person’s life. They must be clear on the outcome they wish to achieve and how to do so, by breaking it down into manageable steps and a realistic timeframe. The program supports the person to take accountability for their actions and upon completion of their “personal workflow” they are able to access one-to-one coaching with Dennis, Dr Ho or other staff members to enable them to achieve their goal.

CSI also offer entrepreneurial training through a variety of community partnerships. They offer business skills training for small businesses, home-based businesses and non-profit entrepreneurs. This is under the “Second Chances” Initiative.

Its re-entry curriculum is wide ranging, including services such as housing and health and wellbeing. There is a underpinning focus on personal development which includes:

- Goal Setting
- Cognitive behaviour training and workshops
- Spirituality
- Mindfulness

Its key message is based around Dennis' 15 principles of personal growth and development

1. You become what you think about
2. Maintain character and integrity at all times
3. Discovering your spirituality and putting it into practice
4. Develop and maintain a positive mental attitude and pleasing personality
5. Establish worthy goals and review them daily
6. Spend quality time with family and those that mean the most to you
7. Establish a sound financial plan
8. Take care of your body and overall health
9. Read daily and increase your knowledge, skills and vocabulary
10. Learn to laugh and have a sense of humour
11. Be a giver
12. Establish and maintain the habit of self-control
13. Always look for ways to improve
14. Understand the principles of leveraging and compounding
15. Take time to measure your activity and progress

Key Learning Points

- The programs have a strong personal development and accountability focus. This enables people to see that in order to move on they need an end goal, and the steps needed to get there need to be identified. It gets people to think like a business and be process driven.
- The process model has its roots embedded in continuous improvement models and using it for personal development in this setting is not something I observed at other organisations.
- The use of skills and talents in a productive way to be a better citizen is re-enforced.
- There are many parallels with leadership and management courses, as this is about personal development and leading participants on a different path.
- The use of community links for re-entry supports the individual. Being in the same physical location as some of the other organisations makes it easier for people to access the range of services on offer.
- It is an advocate for policy change and uses its experiences to leverage the returning citizen agenda to local and state politicians.
- There are considerable opportunities to embed this type of process learning into education and resettlement services in the UK. The sell is in its uniqueness in this environment. It can be easily replicated and is relatively simple to teach to others. The challenge, would be the coaching and follow up as the person would need support to ensure that they stay on task to achieve their goals.

ASPIRE / CHANGING PERCEPTIONS / CLEAN DECISIONS

Background

The Aspire program is one of the few programs that I engaged with that is state funded. It was originally managed by the Department of Small Business and Local Development (DSBLD) in Washington DC. After the first cohort, the funding was allocated to Changing Perceptions, a not-for-profit organisation which supports formerly incarcerated individuals with therapeutic and business development programs to prepare them for career pathways in employment or as a business owner. Kate Merand-Sinha from DSSBLD introduced me to Kimberley Nelson (Executive Director) to gain a personal insight into Aspire.

Program

Kimberly informed me that Aspire is a six-month program for men and women in the community that seek to set up their own business. They are known as Aspirants.

All sessions start with meditation and a check-in and finish with daily insight and closing gratitude. A focus of the early sessions is around therapeutic development, looking at subjects such as navigating re-entry, humbleness, empathy, mindfulness and completing personal assessments such as the 'strength finder' which is a psychology assessment that helps the user to identify what they naturally do best and how to develop their greatest talents.

As the program moves into the second quarter, there is more of a balance between therapeutic and business development. There is focus on business and financial planning, licensing, customers and marketing. There are also sessions on accessing help and support and engagement with the Mayor's Office of Returning Citizens and the range of services on offer. It is still underpinned by working with the participants to understand and develop their gifts and become more resilient to the challenges of re-entry and business start-up.

The final half of the program has more of a business focus, with topics such as supply chain, funding, customer segmentation, licenses, business pitching practice and business formations.

The program culminates in a graduation ceremony where I was invited to join graduates, their families, members of the local business community and representatives from the DSBLD.

It was inspiring to hear of the business ideas, to see the sense of pride on the graduates' faces and their families and friends. Witnessing this was humbling and I could see first-hand the results of the hard work of all concerned.



Graduation ceremony. David Morgan®

After the ceremony we were treated to a range of food produced by two program graduates that showcased their skills, and a chance to network.

The support does not stop at the end of the course, with ongoing access to mentors and community partners who can work to support a sustained transition into the community.



Meeting Will Avila. David Morgan ©

Clean Decisions is one such partner, set up by Will Avila, a former graduate of Aspire. He is a formerly incarcerated individual with first-hand experience of transition back into society, with all its highs and lows. Will is a tireless advocate and works in close conjunction with Kimberly. I met up with Will at the graduation ceremony and again when seeing Kimberley. He is humble yet focused and determined to succeed.

Clean Decisions is a for-profit organisation providing a range of cleaning, event support and general labour to a wide range of companies in the DC area. Like any business owner, his employees are a reflection of his organisation and not only do they provide employment opportunities, they provide therapeutic and supportive services. People need training and counselling to successfully transition.

This is where the partnership really adds value across the organisations.

Outcomes

ASPIRE

There have been four cohorts since the program started, engaging with 60 people. 50 have graduated and have started a business including catering and a learning centre.

2% **RECIDIVISM RATE**

Typically, the cohorts have the following profile at the end of the program —

1/3 **EMPLOYED**

1/3 **TRADING**

1/3 **PREPARING TO TRADE**

CLEAN DECISIONS

Over 30 people have been employed full or part time by the company.

0% **RECIDIVISM RATE**

Both of the above show great “hard outcomes” with virtually zero recidivism. The positive impact on the person, their family and the community they live and work in is not always clear, but I could see for myself the attitudes, behaviours and sense of pride and purpose of all those the programs had impacted.

Key Learning Points

- Local government backed rather than private investment or donation funded. It therefore can be a long-term program not a short-term fix reliant on grant funding.
- Its success is built on personal development with aspirants rebuilding themselves through personal confidence and resilience.
- Its holistic and supportive environment and ethos are underpinned by its values and beliefs.
- It encourages personal and business entrepreneurship and financial capability.
- As a full time program it can offer a detailed curriculum, making great use of peer-to-peer learning as well as working with the business community.
- Like all successful programs, it offers additional support and signposting to like-minded organisations to overcome re-entry barriers including the Majors Office for Returning Citizens.
- The graduation ceremony is a way to celebrate success and showcase the gifts and talents to friends, family and program stakeholders. It enables the graduates not to hide behind being formerly incarcerated but use it as a USP.
- In the UK, to develop and operate a similar model has potential. The requirement would be to harness the support of the local or regional government to secure funding. There are a number of start-up programs that draw European funding also, so if that resources could be accessed it would open up the opportunity further.
- Pulling together the support that is particular for a person post release would be a challenge. Getting multi-agency co-operation and funding that support this agenda does have potential.

ZERO MODEL NOVA

Background

This company is run by Katie Leonard and Lisa D'Alonzo out of Alexandria in Virginia. It is a not-for-profit incubator to enable the men and women who engage in their services to utilise their entrepreneurial skills as they pursue their employment, business and independence goals. It achieves this as second chance employer and does all its hiring through its own staffing company called Jobwise. A quote from their website by Katie explains their vision.

“IN THE CONTEXT OF COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ZERO MODEL NOVA IS A COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION VEHICLE. AS AN ORGANIZATION, WE UNDERSTAND THE BARRIERS THAT WOMEN AND MEN FACE UPON RE-ENTERING THEIR COMMUNITIES POST-INCARCERATION; WE UNDERSTAND THE POWER OF A LIVING-WAGE AND GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT. BY PROVIDING THE RESOURCES, TOOLS, STRUCTURE, AND ENVIRONMENT THAT SPUR CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION, WE NOT ONLY EMPOWER OUR ENTREPRENEURS AND STAFF, BUT ALSO POSITIVELY IMPACT OUR COMMUNITY.”

I was able to meet with Katie and Lisa at their new offices in Alexandria. They were in the middle of a fit out that was being completed by a team of craftsmen that were also program participants. They were completely refurbishing and refitting the space to exacting standards. I observed high quality painting, decorating, plumbing, tiling, electrical installations being undertaken by a motivated team. They had a sense of pride and purpose in their work and were working towards the grand opening of the new offices. Katie explained that this would be an opportunity for their partners and members of the local community to see for themselves the quality of the work and the social and economic benefits of engaging with Zero Model Nova.



Office refurbishment. David Morgan[©]



Meeting the team. David Morgan[©]

Program

Potential employees apply for the program and are interviewed by Lisa D'Alonso in a three-stage process. Part of the criteria is considering the risk and offending behaviour. If accepted, they work with Lisa to develop and agree a 10, 30 and 90 day re-entry plan that maps out the expectations and requirements for both parties. This support is offered as part of their outreach program. As an employee they receive a living wage of \$16.90 per hour. They can be contracted out to partner organisations to enable them to gain experience of multiple sectors and organisations.

It has three core elements that define its success —

Entrepreneurship — The model enables engagement and partnerships with entrepreneurs that have highly evolved and successful business models in sectors such as construction, clothing, landscaping and auto transport to name a few. Engaging the program participants with these organisations enables them to understand how a business operates and they can recognise and develop their own skills and talents if they are seeking to become a business owner in the future. The project offers support for those seeking this route as a future career option.

Employment — They work with their partner organisations or those that are open to second chance employments for formerly incarcerated individuals. Their primary areas are in construction and construction management. This includes sectors such as residential, industrial, commercial and the restaurant and hospitality sector. The services on offer across these sectors include layout and design, earthworks and excavations, renovations and repairs, new fit outs and exterior finish.

Advocacy — A key driver for success is being able to change the image and stigma that can be associated with people that have a criminal history. The organisation works closely with local government agencies as well as being heavily involved in the re-entry network to highlight the success stories, show the social and economic impact on the local community. This engagement helps to break down these barriers and showcase the skills and talents that can be developed and have a positive impact and be a contributor and not a taker from society.

Outcomes

Over the last two years, the program has been able to support —

150 NUMBER OF FORMERLY INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS INTO EMPLOYMENT

13 NUMBER OF BUSINESSES LAUNCHED

These are the “hard outcomes” which are easy to collate and show tremendous success. There are also individual and social impacts. Being able to meet with the team who were in the process of renovating the Alexandria property enabled me to see the pride and purpose in their work, and the value of having gainful employment in a supportive and sustainable way as a key for success.

Key Learning Points

- Focus on high-quality workmanship to promote skills and talents of the individuals.
- The marketing materials and position statement are promoting to high-end customers, therefore leading to a first-class portfolio. This positioning focuses potential customers to see the value of the workmanship and provide a contract which is not based on “doing the right thing” but on commercial and quality provision.
- It has a balance of employment and business start-up skills, with entrepreneurial talent nurtured and developed. Their incubated business builds future businesses.
- Its links with the community and construction companies support the agenda.
- It offers re-entry support to increase the chances of leading a crime-free life.
- Similar programs do exist in the UK. Bounceback is a charity and social enterprise that provides a twofold approach to reducing re-offending. It has an education and training facility in HMP Brixton, London and a commercial painting and decorating enterprise that can tap into a talent pool of previously-trained learners.

REFOUNDRY

Background

Refoundry was co-founded by Tommy Safian and Cisco Penedo, I met with Tommy at Brooklyn Naval Yard in New York to research their model for disrupting cycles of poverty and incarceration through a program based on craft, commerce and entrepreneurship. Refoundry is a not-for-profit 501 (c) (3) organisation founded in 2015, and relied on donations and private funding in order to conduct two pilot programs in New York and Los Angeles.

Tommy was a generous host, affording me a morning of his time, so I could learn first-hand of the amazing work Refoundry does. Refoundry's three-stage program begins with training formerly incarcerated people to repurpose discarded materials into home furnishings and culminates in business ownership or a professional career.

Refoundry's mission is

“TO DISRUPT CYCLES OF POVERTY AND INCARCERATION BY CREATING LONG-TERM CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR FORMERLY INCARCERATED PEOPLE TO ACHIEVE FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE AND BECOME LEADERS, MENTORS AND JOB CREATORS IN THEIR HOME COMMUNITIES.”

Its core program principles (taken from their executive summary) are

“REFOUNDRY BELIEVES EVERYONE HAS THE CAPACITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIETY. WE REJECT THE THEORY OF RAPID ATTACHMENT AS PRIMARY PRACTICE: SHORT-TERM TRAINING THAT FUNNELS CLIENTS QUICKLY INTO A LIMITED SET OF LOW-SKILL JOBS, WITH LITTLE REGARD FOR QUALITY, BENEFITS OR EARNING POTENTIAL. TO ENSURE BETTER LONG-TERM OUTCOMES WE FAVOUR THE MORE PROLONGED INVESTMENT IN INDIVIDUALS THAT IS FLEXIBLE AND DIFFERENTIATED. INSTEAD OF FOCUSING ON BARRIERS, WE IDENTIFY AND DEVELOP POTENTIAL THAT FOSTERS REAL OPPORTUNITY (VS. “SECOND CHANCES”), AND THAT PROMOTES SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CIVIC INCLUSION.”



Refoundry workshop. David Morgan®

Program

I would like to acknowledge Tommy at this point for providing me with the details of the Refoundry program, constituting the core of the next section of the report, with significant elements directly utilised from this material.

Refoundry's program is a 12-month paid fellowship in upcycled furniture, craft goods, entrepreneurship and life skills. The closest model to this would be a paid apprenticeship in the UK, although there is no funding drawdown on the Refoundry model. It aims to break the cycles of incarceration by providing people returning home with the opportunity to —

1. Earn a living wage
2. Build resiliency through learning portable craft skills
3. Develop life skills and business acumen that employers invest in over the long term

The program provides three pathways to financial independence —

- Placement in living wage job after three months
— Participants begin instruction in critical life skills such as internet literacy, financial education, health and wellness, and executive function, and are trained to repurpose discarded materials into home furnishings. This focus on craft builds self-confidence and portable skills that are resilient in the face of increasing automation and doesn't require a formal education or general education diploma.
- Placement in career-track job in a field of choice after seven months
- Participants who proceed to the second phase will narrow their focus to a professional expertise in a craft, or in a business support service such as bookkeeping, inventory and logistics, office administration, sales and marketing. Participants have access to special seminars and apprenticeships, and are assigned a personal business coach who helps them develop a business plan that they submit to an Incubation Committee.
- Business ownership for those who complete the full 12-month program.
— Entrepreneurs don't graduate to independence until they generate enough revenue to meet their business plan; the program sets aside some of this revenue for seed grants to new businesses.

Recruitment for the program is encouraged from people that have already engaged with other transitional services, both whilst in prison and post-release. Refoundry predominantly recruit from these partner agencies. The interview process mirrors the expectations of private sector employers — Candidates are **not** asked what they need, but what they will contribute to the program. The program seeks candidates who demonstrate a clear desire to do the hard work necessary to improve their professional skills and become trusted leaders in their community, and who understand and embrace program expectations.

The enrolment criteria, apart from being formerly incarcerated include —

- Basic literacy and the ability to learn basic maths
- Stable living conditions (could be transitional or staying at a friend's house)
- Generally, over 25 years old (due to requirements in outlook and emotional maturity)
-

It encourages all applications from. The nature of a previous conviction is not a barrier.

The stages of the program are detailed below —

Level 1 (3 months)

Orientation — Review program principles, expectations, employee handbook; assessment and referrals for mental health, addiction and/or other wrap-around services.

Mentorship — Paired with a participant further along in the program with a Refoundry alumnus.

Life Skills — Classroom instruction in internet literacy, financial education (including budgeting), time management, health and wellness.

Craft Training — All participants are trained to repurpose discarded materials into home furnishings, and sell their products directly to consumers in Refoundry retail venues.

Personal Development — Development of executive function and constructive self-narratives.

Financial Integration — After two pay cycles, salaries are paid via direct deposit, requiring all participants to have bank accounts. Participants also receive guidance on repairing and building their credit scores.

Employment Preparation — Classes in business principles, design, sales, marketing, and more, as well as job searching, crafting personalized resumes, and mock interviews.

Evaluation / Placement — Participants receive a thorough review and are either invited to continue onto Track 2 or are placed in a living wage job.

Level 2 (5 months)

Life Skills and Personal Development — Continuation of coursework, tailored to the needs of each individual; periodic check-ins/assessments with Refoundry clinician for treatments and referrals.

Develop Specialization — Participants narrow focus to a professional expertise in either craft or services; services can include those that support programming and/or sales, such as bookkeeping, inventory and logistics, office administration, sales, marketing.

Apprenticeships and Seminars — Select participants placed on-site for one to two week apprenticeships with partner businesses, and/or attend speciality seminars/training to develop further expertise in their specialty.

Business Coaching/Business Plan Development — Each participant receives a one-on-one business coach, who helps the EIT further monetise their specialty and develop a business plan.

Evaluation / Placement — Participants interested in pursuing business ownership, present and defend their business plan to an incubation committee. Those approved continue on to Stage 3; all others are placed in career-track jobs in the field of their choice/specialty.

Level 3 (4 months)

Continued Specialization — Instruction, seminars and apprenticeships to develop required skills to implement the business plan, and continued check-ins/assessments with a Refoundry clinician for treatments and referrals.

Refine Business Plan — Continuation of business coaching, including refining business plan and review of business Compliance.

Brand Identity — In conjunction with brand marketing specialist and/or professional volunteers, develop business name, logo, and initial branding for launch.

Independent Business Launch — When revenue and other critical thresholds are met, transfer to independent business ownership.

The candidates receive a wage of \$15/hr, which equates to between \$6,500 and \$7,500 over the three-month period. There is an opportunity also to earn commission on products / sales that they craft as part of the program. In return the candidate is targeted to generate revenue in the region of \$1,500 per month, which offsets a portion of their wages and some is retained in the business for running costs.

As there is the potential for the candidate only to complete phase one, there are still valuable outcomes of this phase that can support the person with their re-entry and increase their potential for securing paid employment and reducing recidivism. These can be summarised below —

Improved Life Skills in

- Time management
- Self-monitoring, self-regulation and decision making
- Health and wellbeing
- Self-advocacy

Financial Education:

- Bank account
- Credit builder
- Personal budgeting and asset management
- Savings plan

Employment Skills

- Computer and internet literacy
- Financial literacy and education
- Essential business skills
- Craft and commerce
- Resource management and problem solving

Self-Improvement

- Mission and value development
- Co-operative learning
- Problem solving
- Esteem building and social engagement

Employment Readiness

- CV writing and telling your story
- Interview preparation and presenting your value

Program measurements

Refoundry has teamed up with the Incarceration Public Health Action Network (IPHAN) at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health, to develop a new set of quantitative and qualitative measurements, defined not by funders or programmers, but by the people the organisation serves. Together with the Washington, DC-based research firm Giving Science Dimension (GSD), IPHAN and Refoundry will run focus groups to determine the most critical components for social, economic and civic inclusion, and then IPHAN and GSD will independently measure Refoundry's performance on these outcomes, as determined by the people on the program, over three to five years. All measurement design, metric analytics and outcomes will be open sourced, so that other criminal and economic justice stakeholders can access the longitudinal study.

Pilot outcomes

The pilots that were completed in New York and Los Angeles were able to engage with the 12 candidates.

Note — The pilot was a five-phase 18-month program. The learning from this has led to the 12-month model which is described in the report.

10 Incubated businesses created, employing a total of 125 people

2 Number of candidates pursued a career in a related business as employees

0 Number of people returned to prison

\$200 Furniture sales generated for every \$100 invested

\$17,000 Tax contribution generated per person during training

\$100,000 Net tax benefit per year per graduate (represents estimated savings on re-incarceration costs, reduced reliance on public subsidies, and increased tax revenues from income, payroll and sales taxes)

10 TONS Waste per month diverted from landfill and being repurposed

Key learning points

- The program is a fully immersive and supportive pathway. Its success is built on the skills and knowledge of the leadership team. They are clearly committed to leading the cause.
- The success is derived by developing personal, craft and business skills in equal measures. The emphasis is on craft skills developed in custody and / or previous work experience
- The pathway is clear for the participant. Upfront detail provides clarity and direction. The expectation is clearly set in terms of achievements and time required.
- The challenge to implement comes in the funding mechanism, both in the US and in the UK. It requires significant start-up costs to support capital expenditure and running costs in the first six months where outgoings will be higher than income earned through the sales of goods.
- There is an opportunity in the UK for an apprenticeship style program to be developed. It would need to be community-based like Refoundry because of the restrictions around apprenticeships in prisons.
- Offering paid wages underpins the retention of the participant and reduces risk of reoffending. This certainty of a regular “living wage” whilst training clearly pays dividends.
- The challenge for similar programs in the UK is to be able to find a sustainable business model that can support this level of pay. Apprenticeships can draw funding that can offset some of the costs, but there is still a large gap in the finances.
- In relation to re-entry support such as personal finance and banking, the program is able to provide the participant with the ability to take control of their finances and understand the concept of budgeting. This would be relatively easy to deliver as there are a wide range of courses on offer as well as significant work being done by banks to develop financial literacy in the education sector.
- The phases are structured to replicate the stages a business goes through when starting up. By building sales from zero the participant can learn first-hand of the challenges and successes.
- The ability to learn from their mistakes, but not be significantly financially hampered by the safety net is a safe environment.
- The take up of the offer to transition support to go to incubated business is around 85% which is a very high conversion rate. The success of the other incubated businesses leads them to support the newer businesses to become self-sufficient.
- There is potential to replicate this model in the UK. The development of craft skills and bespoke skills can be developed in the prison system as a firm foundation. The challenge is to build in the wrap around support services, as there are financial restraints and finite resources to monitor and deliver resettlement services.
- Combining the employment / self-employment pathway has a high potential to succeed. The challenge is to pull the resources together in a coherent strategy.

Graduate Stories

Gene Manigo

Gene was referred to the program by his case manager as a way to develop the skill and talent for woodwork he developed whilst incarcerated. He had spent 30 years in prison and now runs his own business Kambui Custom Craft and is no longer on parole.

He runs his incubated business at the Brooklyn Navy Yard and can be seen at the weekly Brooklyn Flea market selling his custom products as well as taking commissions. After being recommended by the Navy Yard management to another organisation, he is currently in negotiation to take over another business and workshop, which should be complete by summer of 2019.

James Eleby

James was a graduate at the same time as Gene. He previously has spent over 20 years of his life in jail at various times and has been out of jail now for two years, the longest time since he was a teenager. He has set up Eleby Designs and his range of products include custom tables and chairs made from reclaimed wood. His most recent client was a local restaurant in Brooklyn. Tommy rates James highly. James has generated around \$10K per month in revenue. However, he reverted to bad habits, and has since struggled with addiction. This highlights the need for ongoing monitoring and support from specialists in order to refer to specialists to offer pre-emptive therapies.

RE-ENTRY VENTURES

Background

Re-entry Venture is an entrepreneurial program developed by two partner organisations — From the Block to the Boardroom and Open for Business Ventures (OBV). I was introduced to CJ Meehan from OBV by Kate Merand-Sinha whilst in Washington DC and we had an opportunity to discuss the role of entrepreneurship in reducing recidivism and the work he is doing in this area.

Programs

CJ informed me that there is a blended learning approach to their programs. There are a range of online courses available that include videos, e-books and audio books and online assessments. The course most appropriate is 'For Beginning Re-entry Citizen Entrepreneurs'. This offers insights into the key areas of entrepreneurship including —

- Business Ethics
- Communication and social media
- Negotiation
- Marketing
- Managing your finances
- Funding

There is also an online community where students can connect with each other, share their experiences and learn from like-minded individuals.

As with other programs, it is underpinned by the value of unlocking someone's entrepreneurial talents. A great quote from the Re-entry website reads

"ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING CAN IMPROVE THEIR PERFORMANCE AS EMPLOYEES AND HELP PEOPLE PROACTIVELY ENGAGE WITH THEIR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES, WHETHER THEY GO ON TO BECOME ENTREPRENEURS OR NOT"

Outcomes

They have recently been delivering several programs with impressive results as shown below —

Pilot Program with Mayor's Office of DC

- 15** Returning citizens trained post-release
- 15** Businesses launched
- 43** People employed through those businesses

Incarcerated Program with DC jails

- 30** students (currently in DC jails)
- 28** Completed
- 2** Students have been released and have launched businesses

ENTREPRENEUR STORIES

MARCUS BULLOCK — FLIKSHOP

I learnt about Marcus whilst attending a re-entry conference in San Francisco. He was a guest speaker sharing his story of the barriers faced whilst in custody and as a returning citizen. His success is based on utilising his entrepreneurial skills to the full; in essence finding a gap in the market, finding a solution, taking a risk, monetising the solution and scaling it.

Marcus informed the conference that being incarcerated as a teenager and being put in an adult jail was a tough introduction to the criminal justice system. He talked about his struggles to cope and being supported by his mother who hit upon the idea of sending him letters and pictures of life outside so he knew that someone cared. By his own admission he says how important those letters and pictures were to his wellbeing and being able to get through his sentence.

After his release he spent a number of years setting up a successful construction company but was mindful of others still in custody and how they could benefit from staying in contact. He knew that trying to keep in contact with a number of people would be time consuming: getting a picture processed, writing a personalised letter, getting envelopes and stamps and then posting it. This was on top of mail restrictions imposed by the prison service.

As a successful entrepreneur, he wanted to use his skills to find a simple and cost-effective solution. This is where Flikshop was devised. After many iterations, set-backs, rejections and difficult conversations with prison governors, Marcus eventually persuaded one to trial his product. Simplicity and transparency were the key to open the door. By downloading an app, the user could upload a picture, add a simple message and press “send” and the system would generate a postcard to be sent to the person’s loved one in jail — all for less than \$1. Flikshop now has over 180,000 users and they have sent over 400,000 postcards to loved ones.

He continually looks at ways to develop his product and is now working closely with Techstars, and its Managing Director Ryan Kuder is keen to continue their support for a tech-driven company with a strong social mission.

I was able to learn first-hand of this when I attended a tech workshop at Washington DC Start Up Week. After the workshop I was able to talk to Marcus and learn of another venture: Flikshop School of Business. This offers a range of entrepreneurship programs from one day to three weeks exploring how utilising entrepreneurial skills can support someone to be a better person and a future business owner.

The school also runs a wide range of coding, web and app design and database/server management courses.

It is clear that Marcus has not only utilised his skills and experience to build successful businesses, he is giving back to the community and seeking to move people away from crime by offering education and employment for those wishing to build on their talents and gifts.



Techstars discussion: when Ryan met Marcus. David Morgan®

ENTREPRENEUR STORIES

COSS MARTE — CONBODY

I had the pleasure of being able to meet up with Coss Marte, the Founder and CEO of Conbody whilst I was in New York. Coss is a graduate of the Defy Ventures program. Whilst in prison he developed a personal workout that he was able to do in his 9ft x 6ft cell. Over a six-month period he lost 70lbs and realised that he could use this insight to set up a business upon release. He has gone on to set up Conbody which employs high-quality trainers utilising their skills and his business model.

Conbody offers a range of classes in his gym in New York City, as well as online through Conbody Live.

Almost all of his staff were formerly incarcerated and there have been no instances of re-offending and they are a valuable asset to his business.

Coss is a humble, yet driven, individual and has plans to expand his business and has recently launched an online subscription service to reach a wider audience.

He attributes the success of his venture down to offering a supportive environment for his staff, and enabling them to use the skills and gifts they have to become valued members of his team and the community. As a formerly incarcerated individual he is able to empathise with the barriers that are faced in navigating a successful re-entry.

Tapping in to their talents and their entrepreneurial spirit makes for a potent and successful business model. Coss is continually looking to develop his brand and regularly speaks at conferences to bring his message to the widest audience possible.

It was an honour and a pleasure to meet him to learn of his amazing progress.



Conbody Gym. David



Meeting with Coss. David Morgan®

CONCLUSIONS

In custody programs

Resilience Education and Defy have common themes that drive their success with extremely low recidivism rates for those who have graduated and re-entered society.

There is a significant focus on developing the individual. The ability to unlock their entrepreneurial talent comes from the personal leadership content of the programs. It enables the individual to recognise how to use their talent and gifts in a way that contributes positively to society.

A key element in enabling someone to move forward lies in self-reflection and personal analysis. Not until you know who you are, your strengths, weaknesses and what your aspirations are can you take the steps needed. Defy have a clear point of difference to other programs with the engagement of volunteers who attend the coaching days, pitching competitions and graduation ceremonies. Having other people invest their time to critique personal pitches, resumes and business ideas is a powerful message relating to forgiveness and accepting someone intending to make a better version of themselves and move away from who they were. Being able to interact with another human being who is willing to give up their time to someone who might not have a family or friendship group is so valuable. The men and women on the Defy program get to know that they are not forgotten, there is hope for the future and they can shape their future with the right support.

The use of volunteers is also put to excellent use with Resilience Education. The dual purpose of the MBA students gaining valuable teaching experience and the learners seeing that people are prepared to offer their time with a prison environment builds up their faith in re-entry. As a business model, it keeps costs down, enabling more “bangs for the buck” (so to say).

Both organisations rely on strong partnerships and personal relationships with key staff at the correctional facilities. The buy in from these advocates to their colleagues ensures a smooth as possible relationship, notwithstanding the fluid and challenging nature of the environment. This partnership is possible through the passion and drive of the staff underpinned by the leadership of the organisations.

Last Mile Coders clearly focus on digital skills, and developing the talents of the program participants into marketable skills in a sector where these skills are in demand. Their tenacity and innovation have enabled an industry career pathway that would not have been an option previously. Using graduates to work in its commercial operation whilst still in custody so that they can earn a wage to support their successful re-entry is a key driver for success. It also showcases and develops a talent pool for prospective employers to engage with. The success rate of the program with zero recidivism reinforces the importance of employment and a career pathway in successful re-entry.

The conclusions to draw from my time with Correction Enterprises is that their success is in their workshops developing employment and enterprise skills to support the workers. It enables access to a realistic world of work with deadlines, quality control, customer service and team work skills being developed. This exposure may be the first time someone has been in that environment and it enables them to know what is required to be an employee who can add value to an organisation.

Their investment in their re-entry team and employer engagement demonstrates the value that their organisation places on reducing recidivism. They could just utilise the labour workforce in the prisons, manufacture the products and sell their services which would still be a benefit to the state and taxpayer. However, they go above and beyond this to be able to place their workers in work with employers that can see first-hand the skills and traits needed for their organisation.

As with all the above, there is no reliance on state funding. This either requires donations, grants or being self-sufficient by selling their services (in the case of Last Mile Coders and Correction Enterprise).

Not having the restrictions from state funds has to be balanced with the risk of not being viable long term.

Post-Release Programs

The conclusions drawn from Delancey Street and Community Success Initiatives are that supporting the person to be a better version of themselves will increase their life opportunities leading to a greater chance for them not to commit crimes in the future. The intensive and immersive approach from Delancey requires a significant commitment from the individual, and it is in some ways like a retreat due to the fact that their needs are met within the community. The ability to engage on a full time basis for up to four years is life changing, leading to an almost 100% success rate. Having a program on this scale in the UK would be a significant challenge. Dealing with substance misuse and / or being formerly incarcerated is not a short-term program.

Having a self-contained community, with the opportunity to learn and refine marketable employability skills in their workshops and retail outlets, is a critical success factor. Learning how to be an enterprising individual, and understanding their life choices enables people to move on.

Community success initiatives focus on personal and entrepreneurial skills development. Their program success is based upon personal leadership and accountability for your own actions. Those that engage with CSI are able to develop a supported re-entry pathway, using their network of partners, many that are based in the same building therefore making a 'one-stop' solution possible. The Project Manage Your New Life program again uses sound business principles as a tool to build their success upon. I can conclude that the clear similarities between business leadership programs and coaching techniques and CSI demonstrate how transferable they are, with the participants seeking to think like a business and develop their personal enterprise skills.

L'Chaim and Zero Model Nova focus on developing exceptional skills in the catering and construction industries. The ability to develop a blend of employment and business start-up skills is clearly part of their core missions. Zero Model Nova have been able to tap into the growing construction sector, and by showcasing the skills and talents of the participants can develop career pathways. The main conclusion to be drawn is their strong marketing and brand coupled with their high-quality craftspeople is a powerful advocacy for engaging with returning citizens to add value to any business.

The potential to move onto an incubated business is encouraged for those displaying entrepreneurial gifts and talents. Having the support within the organisation to nurture and develop talent is key.

Defy have a robust and successful re-entry program. The graduate's skills have been honed on the program and they are articulately tell their story and are able to highlight their gifts and talent to potential employers. Their strategy of developing their business and community links for the prison programs strengthens their marketing position for the graduates post release. With a significant proportion of the graduates gaining employment within the first months enables them to build on a solid foundation.

The conclusions to draw from Refoundry's pilot is that quality in depth and breadth produces exceptional results with no participants returning to custody. The significant personal investment in time demonstrates the amount of effort required to be successful as an employee or incubated business. There is a niche that the program has found in being able develop craft and entrepreneurial skills in equal measures. Having the safety net of a wage for the duration of the program enables a firm financial footing to be gained. The participants can refine their skills and by having to sell their own products they can gain more valuable experience in the running of a successful business.

Recognition also of the value of the various 'jump off points' is important. Knowing where your future career is best served enables the support to be targeted at the right place. Getting to the end of the program is just the start of a new journey, either as a person on a career pathway or as an incubated business.

Aspire, Inmates to Entrepreneurs and Re-Entry Ventures are focused on developing entrepreneurial skills in order to take the path to setting up and running a small business. They all take a different approach to achieve the same goal. The Aspire program takes a longer view, with their sessions similar to Defy in developing the person first and then the business idea. Inmates to Entrepreneurs have a much shorter program and focus on the requirements of setting up and running a business. Re-entry sit somewhere in between. What is clear is that every person gains something from the engagement and can use it to improve their chances of successful re-entry.

It is possible to identify success factors across all the programs and organisations visited and researched:

- Knowing yourself, utilising your talents and gifts and becoming a better version of your previous self.
- Unlocking entrepreneurial talents and using them as an employee or business owner.
- Partnership and relationship management with key stakeholders both in custody and in the community.
- Advocacy for returning citizens and changing the message that there are no opportunities for those with a criminal conviction.
- The links with other organisations to support re-entry, finance, housing, health and wellbeing are embedded.
- People that are not family or friends are prepared to give their time and see people as a fellow human being and therefore those who are incarcerated are not forgotten by society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In Custody

1. Explore the potential to embed personal enterprise and personal leadership learning into the early stages of a prisoner's education journey. This would enable the learner to comprehend the need to develop and change.
2. Utilise the opportunities that the new Prison Education Framework and Dynamic Purchasing System ^[8] affords to find ways of funding this type of program.
3. Recognise that entrepreneurship is not just about setting up and running a business, but has a wider impact in terms of an individual's value to a potential employer and society upon release.
4. Develop a system to track the individual's progress through their prison journey that is not based on academic achievement but on personal growth.
5. When planning, consider the value to having programs that can easily be delivered in the different prison categories. Don't leave the resettlement work until the end, make a start as soon as possible.
6. Develop a network of external organisations who can provide the specialist knowledge relating to professional and personal development opportunities. High quality and experienced staff will support this agenda for the learner to recognise their talents and gifts.
7. Make more use of the local higher education establishments to draw on their talent pool of trainee teachers as a valuable resource to the benefit of both parties.
8. Explore the ability to offer accreditation to higher level learning courses from the universities identified above.
9. Explore ways to deliver entrepreneurship in vocational workshops run by the prison and / or education. This should include the use of technology and access via the virtual campus.
10. Connect with the business community and sell the value to their participation of events similar to the coaching days organised by Defy.

Transition

1. Collaborate with organisations who can provide resources to a business incubator inside a CAT D prison or close by for ROTL, which enables men and women to test out their business idea in a supported environment.
2. Set up / collaborate with a social enterprise where the prisoners can work for a living wage, with the profits set aside for future investment (see below).
3. Develop a seed capital grant fund that learners can pitch to trustees and gain the resources required to set up their business. Ensure the fund is ring-fenced and easy to access for the successful learner.
4. Engage peer-to-peer learning in the incubator and the social enterprise to make decisions on the direction of the business.
5. Identify the talent from entrepreneurs that are in custody and use their knowledge in a legal way.
6. Explore the potential for men and women whilst on work placement (through ROTL) to gain access to study programs to support their transition.
7. Collaborate with other resettlement partners in custody wherever possible.
8. Put the individual at the heart of the transition process.

Post Release

1. Use the learning from the Refoundry model to develop a community business that enables men and women post release to realise their potential in a supported environment.
2. Open the access to business start-up partners with experience of supporting individuals who have barriers to overcome to start a business.
3. Partner with organisations which can provide expertise and knowledge in resettlement activities such as housing, employment, personal finance and health / wellbeing.
4. Utilise the talent pool developed in custody to promote their value as enterprising individuals to employers.
5. Use the connections developed as part of the in-custody coaching sessions to develop the relationships in the community.

Commissioners

1. Recognise the value of a long-term approach, and the need to fund programs of this nature.
2. Place more emphasis on developing the individual using entrepreneurial skills development
3. Explore the potential for greater collaboration with industry experts
4. Open the opportunities for realistic self-employment opportunities whilst in custody, and not just work experience or paid employment.

Note

As mentioned at the beginning of the report, its purpose is to provide future discussions on how entrepreneurship can be utilised within the criminal justice system to reduce recidivism

- **Inform** the reader to gain an understanding of the best practices observed.
- **Develop** long term relationships between the US organisations and myself to be able to share the learning and stay informed of new developments.
- **Implement** programs in the UK to demonstrate the positive impact on the participants.
- **Evaluate** the achievement and the impact on reducing re-offending.

DISSEMINATION AND NEXT STEPS

In order for the knowledge gained from my research to add value to the criminal justice system and have an impact of recidivism, the following steps should be actioned —

First Quarter 2019

- Share the knowledge through showcasing the research in conjunction with the Academy for Social Justice - Manchester MMU

Second Quarter 2019

- Publish formal report at Academy for Social Justice Seminar – Ministry of Justice in London
- Engage with a research organisation to quantify and set a benchmark for measuring success.
- Share the findings with the prisons minister and their team
- Share the findings with the IOEE to provide a platform for developing new and innovative enterprise qualifications and delivery
- Seek support from LTE Group to develop cross group collaboration
- Pitch the idea of a Defy style coaching / business pitching and graduation event to businesses

Third Quarter 2019

- Share the knowledge with the senior management team at New Futures Network to utilise the learning to increase the footprint by embedding entrepreneurship in prison industry workshops
- Identify FE / HE establishments that can support the talent pipeline into prison education
- Pitch the idea of a craft / apprenticeship model similar to Refoundry
- Pitch the idea of a business incubator in a prison to the MOJ and its stakeholders

Fourth Quarter 2019

- Host a TEDx style conference in a prison to showcase entrepreneurial learning

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