

<b>Institution:</b> Coventry University		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 14		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Effective Prison and Community-based Interventions: Building Humanising Rehabilitative Environments		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2014- 2019		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Geraldine Brown	Assistant Professor	2004-Present
Geraldine Brady	Associate Professor	2004-2019
Elizabeth Bos	Research Fellow	2010-2019
Moya Kneafsey	Professor in Food and Local Development	1997-Present
Jana Fried	Research Fellow	2015- Present
Rebecca Crookes	Research Assistant	2013-19
Marilena Kyriakidou	Research Fellow	2014-18
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b>	August 2013-July2020	
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? Y/N</b> No		

### 1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)

Although rehabilitation is a key aim of all UK prisons, roughly 30% of those incarcerated reoffend. Rehabilitative interventions are of variable effectiveness and do not always enhance the lives of incarcerated men and women.

Through a collaborative approach working with Third Sector Organisations (TSOs), prison management and staff, incarcerated men and women and relevant statutory agencies, CU researchers have established the efficacy of building relationships and humanizing environments in prisons. The work has created pathways to more effective land-based, community and faith-based rehabilitative interventions. This has improved the commissioning, design and delivery of interventions, influenced public policy and contributed to better welfare of criminalised men and women.

### 2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)

A central goal of CU's rehabilitative research has been to utilise a collaborative methodological approach to identify how design, delivery and support for key stakeholders can facilitate effective rehabilitative interventions.

CU's approach to rehabilitative research began with an evaluation of the Master Gardener programme, developed by charity 'Garden Organic' ('GO') and delivered at HMP Rye Hill (Geraldine Brown, 2013-15). This pilot programme based on the development and delivery of a gardening intervention with substance misusing prisoners was instrumental in setting a framework for further studies. Findings provided evidence of the health and wellbeing benefits to participants when they had access to an environment where they could engage in purposeful activities, create therapeutic alliances, and be in touch with nature (R1). Working in the garden was an important part of participants' journey to reduce substance misuse.

### Impact case study (REF3)

Research highlighted the significance of proactively involving stakeholders in decision-making associated with the design and delivery of the garden. It demonstrated the importance of encouraging shared learning and fostering a sense of community; this effectively engages participants and our research shows how it directly impacts their personal development, acquisition of learning and employability skills (R1, R2, R3).

In 2015 Elizabeth Bos led a mixed method study to examine community land-based interventions such as food growing and construction projects, particularly in supporting transition from prison ‘through the gate’ to the outside world (R4). This study highlighted the importance of creating links between prison and community land-based rehabilitative programmes that valued building relationships and creating humanizing spaces. Findings indicated that diversity in the design and delivery of community land-based interventions offers access to a range of employment-related skills and builds individual’s resilience, which is beneficial for the rehabilitative process.

From 2015-16 Brown evaluated an intervention delivered by Bringing Hope, a faith-based organisation, at HMP Birmingham. The programme targeted black men identified as ‘gang-involved’, using small group work and one-to-one support, whilst working in the community with families. Findings showed that targeted rehabilitative programmes – in this case, both black-led, and faith-based – delivered a range of health and wellbeing benefits (R5). A subsequent study evaluated a prison and community service delivered by Kairos, a Coventry-based women’s charity, targeted at sex-working women within HMP Peterborough (2017). Findings showed the benefits of an intervention designed to have continued contact with women in prison and on release; it illuminated key areas of support and the organisational systems and processes needed to holistically meet the complex needs of this vulnerable group.

Drawing on R1 which established good practice for land-based prison programmes, from 2017-18 Brown was commissioned by the Conservation Foundation (a leading environmental charity) to undertake a study of their ‘Unlocking Nature’ programme, delivered at HMP Wandsworth (2017-18). This aimed to increase skills, employability and wellbeing through horticulture and improve the prison environment. CU research demonstrated the importance of collaborative and inclusive working, and planning for long-term sustainability in order to improve engagement and delivery of land-based programmes, and maximise their rehabilitative benefits (R6).

Behind all of this research is a theoretically underpinned evaluative model, developed to generate independent evidence, build the capacity of organisations, and support partnership-working (R3, R6). Ultimately, researchers have set out to create more humanising environments, to improve rehabilitation strategies and participant engagement.

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

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R1. Brown, G., Bos, E., Brady, G., Kneafsey, M., Glynn, M (2015) A summary report of an Evaluation of the Master Gardener Programme at HMP Rye Hill: An Horticultural Intervention with Substance Misusing Offenders, Centre for Sustainable Regeneration: Coventry University. <https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/sites/www.gardenorganic.org.uk/files/Final%20summary%20report%20HMP%20Rye%20Hill%201.pdf>

R2. Brown. G., Bos. E. and Brady, G. (2020). ‘Building Health and Well-being in Prison: Learning from the Master Gardener Programme in a Midlands Prison’. *In Issues and Innovations in Prison Health Research: Methods, Issues and Innovations*, 139-165. Edited by Matthew Maycock, Rosie Meek, James Woodall. London: Palgrave Macmillan. E-book ISBN 978-3-030-46401-1.

R3. Brown, G. and Bos, E. (2017) ‘We were there too’: There is much to learn from embedding auto/biography in the knowing and doing of prison research. *Methodological Innovations* 10: 2, 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2059799117724039>

**Impact case study (REF3)**

R4. Bos, E., Brown, G., Parsons, J., Brady, G. and Halliday, J. (2016). Supporting Rehabilitation: A pilot study supporting the role of community and land-based models. Key Findings Report. Coventry University.

<http://www.coventry.ac.uk/Global/08%20New%20Research%20Section/CBiS/Supporting%20Rehabilitation%20report.pdf>

R5. Brown, G. and Grant, P. (2018) Hear Our Voices: We're More than the Hyper-Masculine Label: Reasonings of Black Men Participating in a Faith-Based Programme, in New Perspectives on Prison Masculinities. Maycock, M. & Hunt, K. (eds.). Cham: Palgrave, p. 145-169 24 p. Palgrave Studies in Prison and Penology). Print ISBN: 978-3-319-65653-3. Online ISBN: 978-3-319-65654-0. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-65654-0\\_7](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-65654-0_7)

R6. Brown, G. and Brady, G. (2020) Collaborative research: Working together to deliver land-based prison initiatives, Methodological Innovations, May-August 2020, 1–12.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/2059799120927333>

#### **4. Details of the impact** (indicative maximum 750 words)

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The collaborative and applied nature of this rehabilitative research has informed policymakers and charities on commissioning, practice and programme delivery. Importantly, it has improved participants' engagement and experience of the interventions examined.

##### Impact on Policymakers

At a UK parliamentary debate on 'Mental Health in Prisons' in January 2018, MP Rebecca Pow used R1 as evidence to advocate for 'using gardening as a therapeutic intervention' within the justice system, noting that the research had 'discovered...the [beneficial] long-term effects' they had on prisoners' lives (S1). Likewise R1 has become a valuable resource for horticultural organisations advocating social-prescribing of gardening: 'The Food Tank', an international body for food advocates, uses it as key evidence to advise affiliated bodies on the use of land-based programmes in prisons and other secure settings (S8).

Based on her 'community-involved approaches' to interventions research (R5), in 2016 Brown was invited to contribute to the West Midlands Youth Violence Action Plan (YVAP) for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, a regional approach to creating safer environments for young people (S9). Work led by Brown to gather insights from key community organisations, individuals, and 'a core group of prisoners' was used to produce a final commission report in 2017, subsequently 'used as a model of good practice by the Home Office and other local authorities'(S9). Data collected for the report was used to underpin a successful application to establish 'the first West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit (RU)', launched October 2019 (S9).

##### Impact on Organisations Delivering Rehabilitative Interventions

CU research on rehabilitative interventions generated evidence of what works, how and why, providing a new evidence base around rehabilitation commissioning. The former Deputy Director of HM Prison and Probation Service states that Coventry's work at HMP Wandsworth (R6) not only 'broadened' their level of expertise on rehabilitative environments, but also enabled an evidence-assured approach to 'commissioning decisions', making it far easier to 'validate the use of taxpayers' money' (S6).

Charities delivering rehabilitation interventions have utilised CU research to demonstrate the effectiveness of their work to commissioners, and guide implementation. The former Operational Director for 'GO' stated R1 provided a 'validation of what we do', and improved understanding of what made interventions successful, 'helping shape and design the delivery of projects' going forward, and justify the value of interventions to funders (S2). GO 'use this research every day' to adapt programmes to a 'difficult environment' in 'any circumstances' S2). GO's former Head of Sustainable Communities noted that CU's research 'provided an external validation of the

**Impact case study (REF3)**

intervention's success...it builds confidence in commissioners that these projects are demonstrably effective' (S2).

For the former Director of Kairos, the research 'helped us to show just what impact our work has, and why it is cost-effective' within a highly competitive funding landscape (S4). Similarly, the Director of Bringing Hope notes how useful this 'objective evidence' of their intervention's effectiveness was (R5), particularly to the foundation who fund them: he praised the way 'collaboration with CU...allowed us to develop further', informing future work (S4).

The Conservation Foundation have used CU's research (R6) to further promote uptake of the 'Unlocking Nature' programme within prisons (S5). Through this, in 2019 Brown presented the research on effectiveness at the Lambeth Palace 'Green Health Live' conference, feeding into strategic work of Church of England's Environmental Group Work to encourage the use of the spaces around church buildings for therapeutic gardening (S5).

The research (R1, 4 and 5) has helped improve delivery by highlighting the importance of effective relations between staff, intervention practitioners and participants. The CU team delivered training events on best practice interventions in October 2017 and April 2019, in partnership with TSOs, practitioners and prison service representatives. These were delivered to over 70 frontline workers operating in fields including housing, criminal justice, domestic and 'gang' violence, to develop strategies for collaborative working and programme delivery (S7). After her work with researchers, a Kairos practitioner better understood that knowledge she had 'previously just taken for granted', could be used to improve future interventions (S4). Findings have been used by former Deputy Director of HM Prisons and Probation Service internationally in training material for the US 'Warden's Exchange Programme', who have shared the research 'more widely across the prisons service there' (S6).

**Impact on Participants**

Ultimately research has helped charities and prisons reflect on their rehabilitation interventions, and find ways to better support participants. Work with Kairos and Bringing Hope (R5) led to changes including more targeted support on release; the development of further opportunities for peer support; and inclusion of training to access employment (S3, S4). Although too soon to gauge the broader impact of the work, CU researchers have engaged directly with 80 men and women in prison interventions, and feedback makes clear that this benefitted their rehabilitative process (S10). Participants have reported improvements to personal wellbeing, self-esteem, and self-control ('helping keep busy and focus my mind to other areas of my life') and shared hopes that interventions could 'spread out across the prison estate' and help rehabilitate '16-21 year olds...before it's all too late' (S10).

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of 10 references)

S1. MP, Speech. 'Mental Health in Prisons' Westminster Hall Debate, 9:30am, 10. 01.18. (PDF document, Hansard, pp.9-11.)

S2. Collated testimonials, Garden Organic. (Testimonial, Former Director of Operations; Testimonial, Former Head, Department of Sustainable Communities.)

S3. Testimonial, Executive Director, Bringing Hope.

S4. Collated testimonials, Kairos WWT. (Testimonial, Former Director; Testimonial, Senior Practitioner (Prisons, Women in Community.)

S5. Collated materials, Conservation Foundation. (Testimonial, Executive Director; Article, 'Green Health Live', Church Times.)

S6. Testimonial, Former Deputy Director in Her Majesties Prison and Probation Services.

S7. Materials and Feedback from Training Events for Criminal Justice Sector.

S8. Web page. 'Prison Organic Gardening Program Reduces Drug and Alcohol Use'. Food Tank Website (2019). <https://foodtank.com/news/2019/06/organic-gardening-program-in-prison/>

S9. Collated materials, West Midlands Commission on Youth Violence. (Testimonial, Board Member, Gangs and Violence Commission; Report, 'Commission on Gangs and Violence', 2017.)

S10. Feedback from Intervention Participants