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PROBATION STAFF TRAINING

The objective of training shall be to make clear to staff their responsibilities with regard to rehabilitating the offender, ensuring the offender's rights and protecting society. Training shall also give staff an understanding of the need to cooperate in and coordinate activities with the agencies concerned.

Before entering duty, staff shall be given training that includes instruction on the nature of non-custodial measures, the purpose of supervision and the various modalities of the application of non-custodial measures.

After entering on duty, staff shall maintain and improve their knowledge and professional capacity by attending in-service training and refresher courses. Adequate facilities shall be made available for that purpose.

According to Gendreau there are precious few training programs for people interested in offender treatment.

In the UK, new arrangements have been made for the in-house training of staff. The subsequent Home Office plans to remove the

training of probation officers from university departments is bound to undermine research programmes. (Burnett 1996b: 2). There are also, few training institutes for managers of probation services.

There is no widely recognised school to prepare leaders for probation. There are no nationally recognised scholars, practitioners or administrators who can be called eminent leaders in probation [2, p. 5].

Because of the lack of educational facilities various countries attempted to deal with the growing problem of the ageing management cadre by setting up Leadership or Executive Development programs.

There is an ever increasing need for executive or management training schools-especially to further develop those who have been identified as future leaders. Clearly, there is a reciprocal relationship between continuous learning, management change and organizational performance. Constant change pressures individual managers and executives to learn new and perhaps more modern and adaptive managerial techniques while these techniques, once applied, often produce further change and growth within the organization.

There is also a very rapid pace at which organizations today must operate to keep up with the business and technology changes being forced upon them by the system and by the environment. Because of this pace, managers and employees alike can no longer expect the organization they work for to provide and tell them what they need to know to exist, prosper and grow - either personally and/or professionally. They must become 'self-learners' and take charge of the learning habit themselves.

Additionally, there is the need for organizations and the managers that lead them to promote experiential learning related to the workplace. Practitioners, by and among themselves, learn much from everyday and ordinary situations and need to have a forum to pass on the development and accumulation of this corporate knowledge, wisdom or history to others within both probation organizations nationally and internationally as well as within the criminal justice system. It is this absence of comparative corporate wisdom of practitioners that the field is missing.

Given the comments by a number of researchers and practitioners [3, 1, 4] it is clear that within probation, the leaders, managers, departmental and professional researchers and training institutes/schools have all failed to impress upon the practitioners and managers the need for a continuous learning environment and

culture - one that stresses individual self improvement, “the learning habit” and the need for knowledge transfer (for staff and leaders alike) such that it becomes integrated into both day to day routine and practice but more importantly, into the philosophy, policies, procedures and especially practices, of the organization, its leader and its senior executives. Knowledge transfer needs to become a part of the organizations culture.

Thus, schools and organizations training future probation officers may need to initially return to "basics" in order to reassess and revalidate them in light of new research, trends and technologies.

The recommended training included training in:

- conceptual skills,
- behavioral/interpersonal skills,
- analytical skills,
- technical skills, and
- contextual skills.

In the report, it was indicated that training for the next decade and beyond involved improved consultation and partnership in all sectors, better management of resources, a professional public service, better training and development, making career development work, developing a more people oriented public service, better relations with unions, better representation of women and minority groups as among their major priorities.

Reference list

1. Burnett, R. The Research Agenda. A draft paper presented at the Oxford Probation Colloquium. December, 1996.
2. Fogel, D. Probation in Search of an Advocate. A paper presented at the 13th Annual John Jay Criminal Justice Institute, New York, 1981.
3. Gendreau, P. Offender Rehabilitation: What we Know and What Needs to be Done. Criminal Justice and Behavior, 1996.
4. Harris, R. Reflections on comparative probation. In: K. Hamai, R. Ville, R. Harris, M. Hough and U. Zvekic (eds.) Probation Round the World. A Comparative Study. London and New York: Routledge, 1995.