Brixton Prison

Black Self Development Programme

“A programme for change and rehabilitation”

Evaluation Report

August 2006

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Firstly thank you most of all to Job Centre Plus and the London Borough of Lambeth for funding the project.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
This evaluation describes the underlying rationale of the Black Self Development Groupwork Programme currently being run in Brixton Prison by London Action Trust. It assesses how well the project has performed against targets and attempts to give some indication of the impact it has had on prisoners, staff and managers.

Underlying rationale of the programme
The current programme is adapted from earlier versions developed by London Probation staff and, subsequently, work with YOTs. The rationale underlying the group is based on the premise that exposure to the, sometimes subtle, effects of racism may lead Black people to feel alienated from, or marginal to, the larger society. If individuals internalise racist attitudes this can damage their perception of themselves and this may, in turn, have implications for their behaviour. The group, therefore, attempts to address offending behaviour by working through a process which starts with an examination of oppression related matters such as social exclusion and discrimination, then seeks to move individuals on to looking at how their own beliefs may relate to their general position in society, to their own behaviour and, in particular, to their offending behaviour.

The approach draws upon control theory which argues that factors such as the existence of meaningful roles and relationships, a sense of belonging and identity, goal orientation, the ability to tolerate frustration and a strong self-concept as a law abiding person predict non-offending behaviour far better than the presence of ‘criminogenic’ factors predict offending. The programme attempts to help participants develop a positive Black self-identity, a sense of responsibility to the larger group and provide positive images of Black achievement. All prisoners and staff are Black as this is believed to provide an environment within which participants can explore these sensitive areas of their lives. (Section 2)

The Programme in Brixton Prison (Section 3 a)
- Funded by Job Centre Plus. The London borough of Lambeth GetSet Fund also funded one worker.
- Run by London Action Trust staff with previous experience of running the programme in different venues.
- It is accredited by Open College Network London Region.
- Basic skills assessments on prisoners to determine whether assistance is required.
- Comprises 16 sessions carried out over a period of 8 weeks.

Funding and targets (Sections 3 b and 3 c)
- 130 prisoners to be recruited over a 2 year period from January 2005
- 66 to get qualifications of 2 units or more
- 26 to get jobs on release (subsequently removed)
- Prisoners with 6 months or less of sentence to serve to be targeted

Characteristics of group members (Section 4)
Before the programme two questionnaires were completed by half of the offenders starting the programme. These self reports of attitudes and perceptions of problems suggest that they are suitable for the programme.
**Black Self Development Questionnaire (Section 4a)**
A questionnaire looking at attitudes to race, self development and willingness and ability to change.

- Most had a positive view of being Black
- Most were receptive to the need for further education and training
- A very high percentage felt confident about being able to change in order to avoid reoffending
- Whilst most believed that racism impeded the development of Black people within society they appeared less likely to apply this thinking to themselves
- Most did not link their offending to being Black

**CRIMEPICS II - a standardised attitude questionnaire and problem inventory (Section 4 b)**

- Careers (68%) and money (65%) were seen as being their largest problems when assessed using CRIMEPICS II. The police (56%), housing (54%), relationships (51%) and boredom (51%) were the next most quoted problems. These are all issues covered in the programme.
- Self-esteem (16%), lack of confidence (14%) and depression (16%) were the least commonly reported problems.
- Racism was only seen as a problem by 21%.

These prisoners scored relatively highly on both the ‘evaluation of crime as worthwhile’ and ‘anticipation of reoffending’ scales of CRIMEPICS 11 suggesting they see themselves as likely to continue offending prior to the programme so inconsistencies exist. Given that the difficulties of changing offending behaviour appeared to be very much underestimated on the Black Self Development questionnaire this suggests a need for programme tutors to work with these contradictory perceptions. Unfortunately these questionnaires were not repeated at completion of the programme so there is no measure of change available. *(Section 4 b)*

**RESULTS**

**Programme recruitment and completion (Section 5a)**

- With 4 months still to go 114 of the target of 130 have already started the programme.
- 57 of the target of 66 have gained qualifications.
- Only 4% of prisoners who started the programme have left the programme voluntarily. The remaining non completers were either transferred to other prisons or released early.

These completion figures suggest that the programme is responsive to the needs of group members and that it will meet or exceed its targets.

**Qualifications achieved**

- A total of 182 units of qualification have been achieved. The target is sure to be met or exceeded. These contribute significantly to prison targets *(Section 5 b)*
Employment upon release

- It was not possible to assess whether this target has been met due to difficulties in tracking offenders after release. In addition many prisoners on the programme had longer than 6 months to serve with obvious implications for the employment target. In acknowledgement of these issues, Job Centre Plus, subsequently removed the employment target. However not meeting the employment target continued to be an issue as this had been incorporated into a Service Level Agreement that remained in place. *(Section 5c)*

Impact of attendance

- Responding to a standardised questionnaire the majority of prisoners who completed the group felt that attendance would impact upon their likelihood of offending in the future. *(Section 5d)*

- Prisoners reported attaching great significance to their attendance on the programme and a high degree of satisfaction with it in relation to their initial expectations. *(Section 5d)*

- When asked about their satisfaction with the individual sessions those most commonly rated ‘Excellent’ or ‘Very Good’ were Equal opportunities, Uniting Black families, Writing CVs and disclosure letters, Know your roots and Healthy relationships. These appear to reflect the breadth of the programme. *(Section 5f)*

Feedback from group members *(Section 6)*

As part of the end of programme assessment group members were asked to say what they thought were 3 good things about the group and 3 things they would like to see improved.

- Feedback was very positive in terms of both the content and their experience of the groupwork process. Black history is the item most frequently mentioned.

- Group members report feeling more confident, motivated to learn more and as having greater self knowledge.

- Effects on the likelihood of reoffending were rarely mentioned. This may be of limited importance given that the theoretical model argues that pro social attitudes are better predictors of non-offending than anti social attitudes are of offending.

- Most improvements group members wanted to see involved the word ‘more’; longer programmes, more people on the programme, more history and the availability of something similar in the community.
Stakeholder feedback on the success of the programme *(Section 7)*

Staff running the programme, their managers and the Head of Learning Skills from the prison were interviewed regarding their views of the success of the programme and any issues that had been raised.

- Prison staff viewed success as the meeting of targets though the importance of other outcomes was acknowledged, for example, prisoners completing some education when there had been no previous learning.

- LAT staff felt the enthusiasm of the participants was a measure of the success of the project. Current group members talking to other prisoners had resulted in a waiting list of prisoners wanting to go on the programme. Also prison officers asked for prisoners to be placed on the programme.

- Some ex group members had voluntarily contacted group leaders after release in order to update them on their progress. Staff saw this as another indicator of impact.

- When interviewed one group member expressed concern about prisoners who initially seemed to be doing well on release but who were subsequently appeared to be moving backwards

Emerging Issues

Some issues emerging from this project were specific to it whereas others would equally apply to similar projects. In this section we seek to draw out those learning points that we think organisations contemplating running future programmes might need to consider.

- **Targets, recruitment, funding and the nature of the programme**
  The project did not always target prisoners with 6 months or less to serve as agreed which resulted in problems meeting the initial employment target. This apparent ‘drift’ reflected decisions by programme and prison staff to put men on the course where it was believed they could benefit from the non employment components of this multi faceted programme. Funding will always, understandably, involve meeting targets. But this is likely to lead to problems with programmes like this that seek to empower individuals to change their lives as, by definition, set targets dictate that change should be in a pre specified direction. Adhering strictly to the target group would have meant that many prisoners would have been denied the opportunity to benefit from the non employment, but still developmental, aspects of the programme. Projects of this type have difficulties in attracting funding; LAT has been approached by 5 prisons wanting to run the programme but none have the money to do so. As long as obtaining funding remains a difficulty the chances of accepting finance from organisations whose aims do not exactly map onto the programme’s own has to remain a possibility but this has with implications for success if targets are not met. In this case, Job Centre Plus, in acknowledgement of these issues, responded by removing the employment
target thereby ensuring that the programme would meet the remaining targets.

- **Differences in ethos between voluntary and statutory organisations**
  The strength of voluntary organisations is often seen as their ability to respond holistically to the needs of individuals whereas those of statutory bodies are often seen in terms of control of resources and universal provision, often assessed by means of targets met. These differences are strongly related to the targeting issues above. The implications of these different approaches need to be acknowledged and managed if paradoxical situations are to be avoided whereby voluntary bodies are recruited for their person centred approaches but because of these fail to meet the targets set. *(Section 8 b)*

- **Closed, Black only groups (Section 8 c)**
  This appeared to generate a degree of anxiety and misunderstanding about the all Black nature of this programme. Prison staff did not appear to have a clear understanding of the course material and approach and prisoners felt there were misapprehensions amongst their fellow inmates regarding the content of the programme. There were concerns from prison staff about whether racism was being used to excuse offending behaviour rather than take responsibility for it. The all Black composition of the group could also be seen to be inherently racist. There were quality control issues as the prison authorities had no Black observers who could carry out the learning inspections required of all prison programmes. Whilst providing clear information might resolve some of these issues organisations may also need to get involved in discussions around race and racism, areas often found to be difficult.

- **Staffing (Section 8 d)**
  Selection and training of staff is a crucial area as programmes of this nature require staff who have reached a stage in their own development which allows them to deal effectively with potentially highly emotive issues that may be raised; as Black people these may resonate with their own experience. Suitability may not always be obvious at the recruitment stage. When such programmes were run in house by organisation such as the Probation Service or YOT, staff subsequently found to be unsuitable could be redeployed elsewhere but this is not necessarily true of small, voluntary organisations where people are recruited for specific projects. Whereas here LAT had staff skilled in this type of work this may prove to be an issue for future similar projects. Additionally ongoing supervision is also required.

- **Impact of running the programme in a prison setting (Section 8 e)**
  - Programme requirements had to fit within existing organisational structures of the prison, there being limited scope for negotiation; this impacted upon the length of the programme, the teaching methods employed, availability of offenders for sessions and completion rates as prisoners were transferred elsewhere or released.
- The prison also had to provide resources to support the programme in terms of admin support, moving prisoners around and finding acceptable, secure accommodation.

- Having a captive audience of prisoners who may have reached a stage of wanting to change constitutes one advantage of running the programme in a prison. However, unmotivated prisoners may attend in order to get out of their cells with their attendance impacting on the group process.

- The project contributed substantially to Brixton Prison’s educational targets both through the units of qualification gained on the programme and by motivating group members to go on and take further courses within the prison education department. The partnership with the Central School of Speech and Drama was likely to add kudos to the education profile of the prison.

- **Aftercare (Section 8 f)**
  Both staff and prisoners felt that there needed to be support after release if the advances made were to be sustained. There is an expectation that course tutors will maintain some degree of contact after release but more structured input might be advisable and establishing contact with community groups.

**Conclusions (Section 9)**
Despite the divergent preoccupations of the prison and LAT the programme has run to time and appears likely to meet or exceed its targets now that the employment target has been removed. Prison officers referring offenders to the group and word of mouth leading to a waiting list of prisoners suggest it is responsive to prisoners’ needs. Equally feedback from both group members and staff is uniformly positive. However, as this evaluation focuses on subjective views of impact it cannot, at this stage, say anything about impact upon actual behaviour.

**Recommendations (Section 10)**
The findings here suggest a range of issues that could usefully be addressed.
1) Provide clear information about the content and approach of the programme to all involved.
2) Provide a safe forum within which all parties involved can discuss issues around race and racism.
3) Maintain links with the Diversity Departments of host organisations.
4) Ensure that targets set are appropriate and measurable.
5) Consider whether outsourcing the work to external organisations may be the best way of ensuring the experienced staff base that is vital in running this programme.
6) Ensure staff have consistent supervision that can incorporate emotional demands as well as professional issues.
7) Consider aftercare, perhaps through further groupwork or links to community groups.
8) Provide further measures of outcome by repeating evaluation questionnaires at the end of the programme. Some questionnaires may need to be reconsidered.
1 INTRODUCTION
This report aims to provide an understanding of the Black Self Development Programme currently being run in Brixton Prison by London Action Trust and give some indication of the impact it has had on participants. In addition it will raise points relating to issues surrounding running the programme within a prison environment and how these have impacted upon both staff and participants. It will draw on records kept by the programme staff, feedback and questionnaire data provided by prisoners on the programme and interviews with staff from the prison and LAT.

2 UNDERLYING RATIONALE OF THE PROGRAMME

‘Black empowerment involves the sharing of information (within groups) which encourages an understanding of the importance of we rather than I. Empowerment within a probation context is applied to enable participants to look at their own situation from their own perspective and, as a result, discover strategies to empower each other to improve their situation.’

(Frances-Spence, 1994; 112 in Mitchell-Clarke, 1998)

The rationale underlying this programme is based on the premise that exposure to the, sometimes subtle, effects of racism can lead many black people to feel alienated from, or marginal to, the larger society. If individuals internalise racist attitudes this can damage their perception of themselves and this may, in turn, have implications for their behaviour including leading them into offending behaviour. The Black Self Development Groupwork Programme attempts to address offending behaviour by working through a process which starts with an examination of oppression related matters such as social exclusion and discrimination, then seeks to move individuals on to looking at how their own beliefs may relate to their general position in society, to their own behaviour and, in particular, to their offending behaviour. The programme involves focusing upon the extent to which group participants may have internalised racist attitudes and the possible ways this may impact upon their own behaviour as a first step towards promoting a more positive view of the self.

The approach draws upon Cross’s conceptualisation of the staged development of a positive black self-identity. Briefly, Cross argues that many Black people living within predominately white populations will initially internalise predominant views and may tend to deny the existence of racism. Upon exposure to racial prejudice they may begin to search for a black identity and may glorify things black and denigrate things white as a means of shedding their old self. If the person then achieves a greater security within their new black identity, this anti-white stance will tend to decline until a stage is achieved where the person achieves a secure black identity and the positive self-esteem and greater ideological flexibility that goes with it (Robinson, 1995; 104). The work offenders undertake within this programme, therefore,

'is about getting people to feel confident about their blackness and not feel negative and not engage in negative behaviour as a way of compensating for who they were. The person needs to understand
who they are and make decisions on the basis of who they are’ (interview with programme consultant).

Its scope, therefore, is broader than the majority of cognitive behavioural programmes currently being run within the Criminal Justice System, which tend to focus predominately on thinking skills.

A further theoretical underpinning of the programme is taken from Control Theory which argues that factors such as the existence of meaningful roles and relationships, a sense of belonging and identity, goal orientation, the ability to tolerate frustration and a strong self-concept as a law abiding person predict non-offending behaviour far better than the presence of ‘criminogenic’ factors predict offending. The programme aims to foster these positive attributes through helping an offender deal with the impact of racism on their own lives and develop a positive black self-identity, a sense of responsibility to the larger group and provide positive images of black achievement. In order to do this it must:

‘…assist the individual in his/her understanding of the historical, social, economic and individual factors which have and will impact on the process of change, aid in the setting of realistic and achievable goals and assist in removing negative traits of behaviour. The individual must also be provided with an opportunity to identify strategies for coping with events that influence his/her lifestyle but for which he/she does not have ultimate control for change.’

(Duff; 2000)

Early versions of the current Black Self Development Groupwork Programme were initially developed and run within London Probation. In order to develop practical strategies whereby offenders could ‘empower each other to improve their situation’ an education and employment element was added to the initial work on Black history and looking at racism within society as a means of fostering self development. A version more suited to the needs of young offenders was subsequently developed by London Action Trust for use in Young Offender Teams. The version currently being run within Brixton Prison combines elements from both the previous versions. When adapting the programme it was necessary to reduce the length of the programme in order to ensure that it fit within the prison environment.

Adopting a holistic approach the programme tutors aim to provide support, knowledge and guidance in an attempt to bring about changes in perspective. The programme starts by looking at racism and the effects this can have upon the individual especially the extent to which they may have internalised racist messages. Sessions covering black history provide a positive image of black achievements which they may not have experienced elsewhere in the school curriculum or the media. It then moves rapidly on to identifying the issues that may have been raised for the participants and how they can move forward. The focus, therefore, is on accepting responsibility for your own behaviour, choosing whether or not to make these changes and identifying what changes these might be. To quote the programme consultant:
‘In Black Self Development we look history, we look at offending, how do you feel about that offending? You relate the offending to how you see yourself. How much is it about finance? How much is it because you don’t think there is another way? Where did you get those messages from?’

The holistic approach helps prisoners bring together parts of their experience that they may previously have looked at in isolation from each other. Topics covered range from Black history, institutional racism, social skills, the family, sexual health, education, self presentation, issues around employment and decision making skills. A variety of approaches are used. For example, LAT has formed a partnership with the Central School of Speech and Drama who had received money from the Learning and Skills Council to work with disadvantaged groups as part of a knowledge transfer project. Their sessions on role play helps prisoners to work on their presentation skills in terms of voice and body language skills they can apply in interactions with people or for a job interview. Some offenders continue to work with the Central School of Speech and Drama and take certificates.

The aim is to instil in the prisoners a sense of pride in themselves and, as this grows, to help them chip away at entrenched attitudes, attitudes that may be related to continued offending. It is hoped that a shift will be helped by analysing the skills attendees use in offending and getting them to see how these could be transferred to legitimate employment. Teaching group members about how to evaluate themselves and their skills and how to make changes will hopefully motivate them to seek employment or training on their release. An important feature of this programme is the gaining of qualifications, a tangible outcome and, for some attendees, their first ever. Overall, as the Basic Skills Tutor interviewed as part of the evaluation said ‘the primary objective with them is try and make them think more positively and then take responsibility for their lives’.

2 a) Why an all black group?
It has been argued that this very sensitive work focusing on black identity and experience can only take place within an all black group. Research findings suggest that effectiveness and positive anecdotal outcomes are best achieved if all members including facilitators are black (Mullender, 1991 in Mitchell-Clarke, 1998) as benefits are linked to a commonality of experience shared by group leaders and members. A mixed race group looking more generally at self-development could merely perpetuate existing inequalities. Black members of predominately white groups, instead of gaining support and strength and sharing common feelings and aspirations have reported finding themselves feeling isolated and exposed (Ahmad, 1990 in Mitchell-Clarke, 1998).

Initially, however, it may be necessary to overcome an understandable degree of scepticism amongst prisoners concerning any criminal justice agency’s interest in their well-being and their possible assumptions that anyone white or a social institution dominated by white people may potentially act against their best interests (Mitchell-Clarke, 1998; 38). Group participants are likely to come into the Criminal Justice System knowing that black people are over-represented at every stage of the criminal justice process compared to those who are white (Hood, 1992; Smith, 1997). Additionally they may believe that the groupwork practitioners have limited expertise
in their problems and/or a belief that the system is the main contributor to the problem (Solomon, 1976; Morales & Sheafor, 1992 in Mitchell-Clarke, 1998) regardless of their ethnic background. The fact that this programme is run by London Action Trust, an organisation located outside the prison system, may help to allay these anxieties.
3) THE PROGRAMME IN BRIXTON PRISON
Information relating to the rationale underlying the Black Self Development Programme and a summary of the content is included as Appendix 1.

3 a) Characteristics of the programme
The programme as it is currently being run in Brixton Prison incorporates the following features:

- It is an accredited programme. In order to meet accreditation criteria the programme had to be linked to the Open College Network London Region (OCNLR). As developing social and life skills modules to accreditation standard would have eaten into the time available for running the programme, off the shelf programmes developed by OCNLR were selected in addition to basic skills units. Adopting this approach meant that the time involved for the accreditation process was kept to 6 months, an important consideration when funding is limited.

- Run by London Action Trust who brought skilled staff with a clear interest in this type of work and who had previous experience of running the programme in other organisations. The team is comprised of a project manager with 8 years experience of this programme having been involved in its early development within Probation, a basic skills tutor with 15 years experience of basic skills, an administrator who had been with the project for 3 years and a groupwork tutor with 2 years experience of running the programme.

- Good documentation of the theories underpinning the programme.

- Portfolios of offenders' progress are kept.

- Regular assessments of the attendance, work achieved and attitudes of offenders.

- Basic skills assessments are completed on all offenders in order to provide a baseline and determine whether added support would be needed to complete the programme. One to one support is available for those with limited skills.

- Where necessary offenders are encouraged to take further courses once they have completed this one. This can include basic skills for those in need of this input.

- A degree of aftercare is built into the project. There is an expectation that course tutors will contact prisoners on the programme after release in order to provide ongoing interest and support.

3 b) Funding and targets
The project is funded by Job Centre Plus and the London Borough of Lambeth. Whilst the programme always had an education and employment element this route
of funding arguably placed significant emphasis on the employment targets. Job Centre Plus initially specified the following targets

- 130 prisoners to be recruited to the programme over a period of 2 years from January 2005 to December 2006
- 60 to get qualifications of 2 units or more. On the removal of the employment target below, this was subsequently amended to 66.
- 26 to get jobs on release. This target was subsequently removed.

3 c) Targeting and recruitment of prisoners
Given the employment focus of the funding prisoners recruited to the programme were expected to have less than 6 months of their sentence left to serve. Offenders were recruited to the programme through:

- A personal approach by group leaders going on to the wings. This meant that inmates would be able to meet part of the team who would be delivering the programme. Equally this approach allowed group leaders to form some opinion as to who might benefit from the programme.
- Prison officers referring prisoners they feel might benefit from the input.
- In practice, word of mouth led to prisoners asking to go on the programme after discussing this with existing group members.

Participation on the programme is voluntary, with group leaders being clear that there should be no coercion as this might set up resistance.

This section of the report has provided a brief picture of the basic characteristics of the Black Self Development Groupwork Programme as it is being run in Brixton Prison. The next section will go on to determine whether the programme has delivered against the objectives set.
4) CHARACTERISTICS OF GROUP MEMBERS
As was shown in the previous section of the report there is an underlying rationale to the programme that suggests that certain types of offender would be likely to benefit from the programme. Prior to starting the programme offenders were asked to fill in two questionnaires that allowed for their characteristics to be profiled in order to determine whether those attending were appropriately selected.

Two questionnaires were completed by offenders. The researchers received 46 questionnaires completed by prisoners who had started the programme. This comprises less than half of the total number of starters.

- A Black Self Development Questionnaire asked prisoners to respond on a 5 point scale from ‘Strongly Disagree’ to ‘Strongly Agree’ on a number of items that aimed to assess were they stood on issues surrounding race, their own development and willingness and ability to change.

- CRIMEPICS 11 is a questionnaire designed to assess attitudes towards offending and the extent to which individuals perceive themselves as having certain problems, problems which research has shown are related to the commission of crime.

4 a) Black Self Development Questionnaire
The researchers received 46 questionnaires completed by prisoners who had started the programme. Table 1 provides a summary of the percentage of those offenders who either ‘Agreed’ or ‘Strongly Agreed’ with each of the items in the questionnaire.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BLACK SELF DEVELOPMENT – pre group assessments</th>
<th>% agreeing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BLACK SELF IDENTITY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am proud to describe myself as a black person</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important to challenge all forms of racism</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migration of Black people to settle in Britain has brought many benefits to British society</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RACISM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that being Black does affect the way I am treated in society</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think the effects of racism on my life will not hinder my ability to be successful in the future</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due to racism it is difficult for a black person to make progress in this society</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a connection between my offence and being black</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Need for Further Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important for me to take up training or pursue more educational qualifications</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a Black person my education is not complete</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Black history provides you with stability for the future</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My chances of not reoffending will be improved by knowing more about education, training and employment opportunities</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Ability to Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am confident of my ability to alter things I want to change without reoffending</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making changes can be a frightening experience but I am prepared to have a go</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I recognize that life is a challenge but that I can change others and myself</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Self Awareness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I recognise that I do not have all the answers and that it’s OK to ask others for advice</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am fully aware of my knowledge and skills that can be used to obtain a career</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am able to communicate my views effectively without losing control</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am capable of achieving success if given the right opportunities</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
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### Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can identify strategies that will help improve the quality of the relationships I have with others</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will set myself goals that I can achieve without offending</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have important plans for the future</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to deal with obstacles that get in the way of my plans</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Personal Responsibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important to makes choices that do not cause harm to others or myself</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have individual responsibility to make a difference to my future life</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I recognise the important benefits or exercising my rights in a positive fashion</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can identify my legal rights and am fully aware of my social responsibilities</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What the scale above shows is a group of men with a positive view of being Black and the contributions Black migrants have brought to British culture. Most do, however, firmly believe that the way people are treated in society is influenced by race and that this can affect the ability of Black people to succeed within the society. Interestingly, they do not apply this to themselves; 72% do NOT believe that the effects of racism will hinder their ability to be successful in the future. What is not present, however, is a general belief that their offending is related to being black. It does not appear, therefore, that this group of men are using racism as an excuse for their offending. It might, however, mean that group members have not yet made connections between their experiences within society and their offending behaviour.

The men here obviously recognise the advantages of further education and training and largely recognise that this could reduce their chances of reoffending. They are also very positive about their ability to change. However it has to be said that the high degree of agreement with most of the items relating to change, self awareness and strategies for change has to be cause for concern in a group of imprisoned men as it suggests a likelihood to underestimate the problems they are likely to face in bringing about change in their own lives. Had this questionnaire been repeated at the end of the programme it would be interesting to see whether agreement with items would have decreased in line with more realistic expectations.

4 b) CRIMEPICS 11

As stated earlier CRIMEPICS 11 is a questionnaire designed to assess both the criminal attitudes of offenders and the problems they perceive themselves as currently experiencing.

4 b i) Problem inventory

Chart 1 provides a summary of the percentage of group members who felt they had either ‘a problem’ or a ‘big problem in each area.

Chart 1: Problems reported by group members

- Careers and money are seen as the being the biggest problems experienced by group members (68% and 65% respectively). Also reported as a problem
or a big problem by over half of the starters are the police (56%), housing (54%), relationships (51%) and boredom (51%).

- In keeping with results from the Black Self Development Questionnaire (Table 1) self-esteem (16%), lack of confidence (14%) and depression (16%) come a relatively long way down the list of problems.

- Racism (21%) is not seen as a large problem in comparison to the other domains.

Arguably this profile of perceived problems would suggest that the group members should be open to the education, training and employment aspects of the programme as these could provide a means of addressing those areas of need that they see as most pressing.

4 b ii) Attitudes to Offending
The other component of CRIMPEPICS 11 is a 20 item questionnaire that assesses an individual's attitudes towards offending. As part of the development of CRIMPEPICS 11 the questionnaire was administered to a large number of offenders on probation and their scores recorded. This makes it possible to put the results obtained from this group of prisoners into context and allows us to make some judgement of how they compare to similar offender groups. Items on the CRIMPEPICS 11 questionnaire are clustered into four different dimensions, each of which reflects one aspect of attitudes to offending.

- **General attitudes to offending** – the profile of scores from this group of prisoners was very similar to those obtained from the probation group tested during the development of the questionnaire. It would appear, therefore, that the prisoners on the group do not have more pro-criminal attitudes than a roughly comparable group.

- **Anticipation of re-offending** – the group members tended to score somewhat higher on this dimension of the questionnaire than those in the comparison group used during the development of the questionnaire. This suggests that they see themselves as likely to carry on offending. This goes against the very positive picture given by the Black Self Development questionnaire which appears to underplay problems the group members think they might encounter in trying to stop offending.

- **Evaluation of crime as worthwhile** - the members of this group scored higher on this scale than members of the comparison group. This may well mean that group leaders will have a relatively difficult task in persuading group members to give up what they see as a potentially lucrative way of earning a living.

- **Victim hurt denial** – the scores on this dimension were relatively low suggesting that this group of prisoners might be somewhat less likely to deny the harm caused to victims than members of the comparison group.
Looking at the results from these questionnaires overall it would appear that the prisoners attending the programme would be open to the type of input provided. They perceive themselves as having problems around careers and money and the need for further education, and with the police and relationships. These are all areas covered by the programme. They report themselves as being open to, and able to, change. In fact the scores were so high here as to suggest unrealistic optimism and an underestimation of the difficulties they might anticipate in trying to change. Alternatively it might, to some degree, reflect a stage of development where they feel themselves to have reached the end of the road with offending and genuinely desire a different way of life. Importantly, they acknowledge the existence and impact of racism but do not appear to use this as a way of explaining, or excusing, their offending behaviour.

It has to be remembered that the researchers only received questionnaires from approximately half of the people who had started the programme. There is no way of knowing whether these views are representative of the other half from whom we received no questionnaires. However we have no reason to believe that they would be different. Given that these questionnaires provide a useful baseline regarding some of the attitudes and beliefs held by the men attending the programme it is unfortunate that they were not repeated at the end in order to provide a measure of change.
5) RESULTS SECTION
The results covered in this section will draw upon figures surrounding programme recruitment and completion and other targets explicitly set by the funders. It will also cover feedback from prisoners completing the programme and from certain key stakeholders. Issues arising from these results will be outlined in the subsequent discussion section.

5 a) Programme recruitment and completion
One of the basic tenets of the effective practice agenda that drives work within the Criminal Justice System is ‘responsivity’: the capacity of a piece of work, in this case a programme, to respond to the needs of the offenders who attend it. One of the best measures of responsivity is programme completion, the extent to which individuals choose to continue.

- To date there have been 114 prisoners who have started the programme: this includes some 17 attendees currently attending a group. The programme only needs a further 16 individuals to start before the end of December 2006 for the recruitment target of 130 to be met or exceeded. Taking performance to date this should not constitute a problem.

- 97 prisoners have attended groups that have now run to the end. Of this 97, 57 have gained qualifications of two units or more (59% of the group). This means that only 9 more people will have to gain qualifications before the end of the year for the qualifications target of 66 to be met.

- Of the 40 who did not complete 16 (16%) were transferred to another prison, and 19 (20%) were released early.

- Only 4 of the 97 had left voluntarily. This constitutes a mere a 4% of the total number of people who have started programmes that have run to the end.

The overwhelming majority of those who did not complete the programme, therefore, left for reasons that were beyond their control. It is, obviously, not possible to know how many might have left voluntarily if they had been available for the full duration of the programme. However the number of voluntary drop outs is very small indeed and suggests that the programme is holding the attention of prisoners. In the terms defined above it would appear that the Black Self Development Groupwork Programme is very responsive to the needs of those who attend it. In order to put these results into context it would have been useful to compare these drop out rates with those for other programmes run within the Prison. Unfortunately these figures were not available as the database recording it was not yet fully populated with data.

5 b) Qualifications achieved
As stated earlier targets stated that 66 of the projected 130 group members (46%) should get 2 or more units of qualification.

- A total of 182 units of qualification have been achieved.
• All 57 of the those who have already completed the programme have achieved at least 2 units of qualification, some have gone on to achieve 3 units and a few have achieved 4.

When the offenders on the current programme are included it would appear highly likely that this target for qualifications achieved will be easily met or exceeded. The fact that all completers have achieved the required 2 units is impressive. The system for setting targets changed as at the end of July 2006. Under the Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS), the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and its providers will now be responsible for delivering learning and skills to offenders.

Table 2 places the achievements of the Black Self Development Programme within the context of the basic skills and work skills targets set for Brixton Prison. This is not a straightforward comparison as the period covered by the the Programme extends beyond the financial year by a few months.

Table 2: Contribution of BSDP to Brixton Prison’s basic skills and work skills targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Entry level units of qualification</th>
<th>Level 1 units of qualification</th>
<th>Level 2 units of qualification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brixton prison targets for 2005 – 6 (1 year)</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSDP figures (over 18 months)</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even allowing for the difference in time periods it can be seen that:

• The Black Self Development Programme has contributed significantly at entry level.

• Prisoners on the Black Self Development programme achieve 84 units of qualification at this higher level, more than were achieved at either of the lower levels.

Whilst a broad range of educational projects have ensured that the basic skills targets set for Brixton Prison have been exceeded, it can be seen that the Black Self Development Programme has contributed significantly. It remains an open question as to whether it would have been possible to engage the men involved on the programme in other educational activities offered by the prison. Arguably by offering an ‘in’ that reflected their current interests these men have been stimulated to both become involved in learning and achieve at a relatively high level.

5 c) Employment on release

Originally, one of the funders of the project, Job Centre Plus, set an employment target of 26 prisoners gaining jobs upon their release. In practice it was difficult to assess this target as, not surprisingly, it is difficult to track offenders once they have left the confines of the prison and so it is often not possible to know whether they are in employment once released. Initially it was intended that only offenders close to release were to be targeted. In actuality many of the prisoners attending the programme still had a considerable amount of their sentence left to serve. The
reasons for this will be explored at some length later in the report but, briefly, this broadening of the target group reflected both programme tutors’ and prison staff’s beliefs about who would benefit from the programme. In recognition that other aspects of the programme might be effective in moving prisoners down the road to employment Job Centre Plus agreed to remove the employment target altogether, a significant move by an organisation focused on getting people into employment. This changing of targets could, arguably, be conceptualised as a move towards accepting increased employability as an outcome rather than employment.

With the removal of the employment target it appears more than likely that this project will exceed the targets set for it at the outset and will have contributed significantly to the pre August 2006 targets for Brixton Prison.

5 d) Post Programme Measures

5 d i) Post Programme Questionnaires

Post programme questionnaires were available for 26 of the group members who had completed the programme. Part of the reason for this shortfall was that the report was being compiled whilst groups were still being run; others had simply not been completed.

Table 3: Impact of attendance at the Black Self Development Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>% agreeing or agreeing strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Attending the Black Self Development Group will help me avoid offending in the future</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My chances of not reoffending have improved by knowing more about my identity, careers, education, training and employment opportunities</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I have many important plans for the future and know how to deal with the obstacles</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Have you made positive changes to your lifestyle since attending the group?</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Have you made positive changes in your relationship with your family since attending the group?</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Have you made positive changes to your education/ employment prospects since attending the group?</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Have you made any positive changes to your education since attending the group?</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Have there been any positive changes to your self confidence since attending the group</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This questionnaire asked attendees to rate the extent to which they agreed with a number of statements about the programme and its impact upon them. The results in Table 3 show a positive response to most of the items on the questionnaire. It is, however, difficult to interpret those regarding employment and family relationships as these will mainly be realised on release. At this stage, therefore, it is possible that they only reflect intentions rather than any changes in actual behaviour.

5 d ii) Significance of the group to attendees
As a further measure of impact group members were also asked to rate how important attending the Black Self Development Group had been to them on a 1 (not at all important) to 10 (very important scale).

- Of the 26 group members who completed the post programme assessments no-one scored lower than 7 on this scale (12% scored 7; 15% scored 8; 19% scored 9; 54% scored 10).

It can be seen therefore that the programme figured significantly to those who completed it. Again this information was only available for 24 of those who completed.

5 d iii) Expectations of the programme
On a similar 10 point scale group members were asked to rate the extent to which their expectations of the group had been met.

- The spread of responses was greater than for the previous question (8% scored 1-2; 19% scored 4-5; 15% scored 6-8; 58% scored 9-10).

Despite this larger range over half of attendees who filled in the post programme questionnaire reported that their expectations had been met to a very high degree.

5 e) File reading
In an attempt to flesh out the questionnaires a sample of 15 prisoners files were examined. Of these, 8 offenders had achieved 3 units (53%), 4 offenders had achieved 2 units and 3 offenders had achieved 4 units. Eight of the 15 reported wanting to go back to college or continue with their studies in the next year and 10 out of the 15 wanted to achieve goals in relation to careers and employment. The regular reviews by tutors had 11 of the 14 offenders assessed in terms of good, very positive and fair to good. Three offenders had periods where attendance needed to be improved but who then went on and settled down to the course.

5 f) Evaluation of individual sessions
Completers were also asked to rate their satisfaction with individual sessions. Chart 2 collapses the scores into a) ‘Excellent or Very good’  b) ‘Good’  c) Fair   No-one scored any of the sessions as ‘Poor’ (Chart 2). The results suggest a very high level of satisfaction with the content of the programme. Those most commonly rated ‘Very Good’ or ‘Excellent’ were:

- Equal opportunities
• Uniting black families
• Writing CVs/disclosure letters
• Know your roots
• Healthy relationships

Chart 2: Evaluation of Programme sessions

The range of these responses is interesting in that it suggests that attendees are responding well to all aspects of the programme. The responses to the sessions relating to race are particularly interesting given that racism did not appear to be a major preoccupation in the pre programme questionnaire. These are findings that will be further explored in the next section which looks at feedback from group members.
6) FEEDBACK FROM GROUP MEMBERS

Feedback from group members was assessed in two ways. Firstly one component of the post group questionnaire asked attendees to write what were 3 good things about the group and what were 3 things they would like to be improved. For the two most recent groups, however, the evaluators trained two ex group members to conduct a structured group interview with those on the programme. It was felt that this would provide a way for these two men to augment their range of skills and thus to be in keeping with the empowerment focus of the programme. In addition it was felt that seeing ex group members exercising these skills would send a valuable message to the current group members. A more practical concern was that there were no Black evaluation staff available to conduct the interview. (Collated results are included as Appendix 2).

The questions asked by these 2 interviewers were exactly the same as those in the questionnaire, good things and improvements. The wording of these questions is important as they are completely open, do not suggest any line of response and therefore help to ensure that group participants respond with their own views. This approach does, therefore, flesh out the more direct questioning that had been included in the questionnaires. The results from this interview are included as Appendix 3. As can be seen there are striking similarities with those collated from the written questionnaires.

In keeping with findings when the group was run within London Probation (Durrance et al, 2001) the results were very positive. Group members found the sessions informative, particularly in relation to their improved understanding of history which appeared to feed into thoughts about identity. They appreciated being listened to and the supportive, all black, structure of the programme which allowed them to explore issues in safety. They reported that attendance gave them greater confidence and increased self knowledge and motivated them to learn more. For some there were practical considerations like improving grammar or interviewing skills. Interestingly only one person mentioned getting a qualification.

The likelihood of the programme reducing their chances of reoffending was rarely mentioned. Given the programme is aimed at moving individuals away from offending this could well be seen as problematic. However given that Control Theory argues that the presence of meaningful roles and relationships, feelings of belonging and a positive identity are predictors of non-offending we remain relatively unconcerned by the lack of references to offending as it appears that attendees may have moved to a place where they are focusing on the future rather than looking back at the past. Gove (1985) has argued that increasing comfort within social relations and an increased concern for others within the community rather than self absorption and increasing concern with issues regarding the meaning of life are linked to desistance from crime (Gove, 1985, in Maruna, 2000, p. 34). The items generated from these feedback sessions could be seen as reflecting this larger picture.

The general high level of satisfaction with the content of the programme was reinforced by comments generated by the question of what ‘improvements’ they would like to see. The word that stands out here is ‘more’; a longer course, more on Black and Asian history, more funding, more books, more videos. Of the few
criticisms, one person found a degree of repetitiveness and another wanted more one to one support. There were also issues around group members being moved before they could finish the programme. But overwhelmingly group members wanted greater input in terms of a longer course, its availability both in other prisons and in the community. They would also like to have similar input available to them after release. Whilst group members appear to value the practical aspects of the programme, overall the impression is that it is the developmental aspects relating to themselves as black men that are particularly valued. Especially when combined with the very low rate of drop out not related to early release or being moved to another prison, this feedback suggests very strongly that the programme is meeting the needs of the group members.

7) STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK - defining success
A range of staff involved in the project were interviewed in order to get a rounded view of the perceived success of the project and any issues that had arisen. These were the 2 programme tutors, the programme administrator and their manager from London Action Trust, two LAT directors and the Head of Learning Skills as Brixton Prison. Perhaps inevitably views regarding success tend to vary depending upon where one sits in relation to the project and the demands of the particular work role.

Inevitably the first concern has to be with meeting the targets set for the project. At the time of interview the Head of Learning Skills at Brixton Prison was concerned about the project not meeting its employment targets:

'we have to define outcomes in terms of stats. It hasn't met its employment targets which is a difficulty'

Without these figures she found it difficult to provide a view as to whether or not the programme had been successful. However as we have seen earlier this employment target was subsequently removed by the funders. Unfortunately this was not the end of the issue as the original target had been incorporated into a Service Level Agreement. As the Head of Learning Skills was not informed when this was removed the SLA was not changed and, so far as the prison was concerned, the target remained.

One of the LAT director also defined success in terms of targets. He stressed the timeliness of the project which had never been behind schedule, this being unusual as projects tended to fall behind in the initial start up period. Other LAT staff understandably saw the reaching of other targets as important indicators of success, a view also endorsed by the Head of Learning Skills:

'if there has been no previous learning then completing is quite something'  
(Head of Learning Skills)

The enthusiasm of group members was taken by staff as a further indication of success. As one of the LAT directors pointed out, by the time the second group had started there was a waiting list of prisoners who wanted to go on the course. They had not needed to work hard at promoting the course but word of mouth had spread
information about the course amongst inmates. This was echoed by the course administrator:

‘I think it’s effective in terms of the enthusiasm people show when on the programme and the way they talk about it to other inmates...it shows the programme has an effect on the people and it’s almost like recommending it....the end of programme celebrations are an eye opener when people make their speeches because they recognise the empowerment and want to use it’

Equally an unexpected outcome for an LAT Director was the way the prisoners talked about wanting to share and pass on their learning to family, particularly children and how it seemed to inspire the prisoners to continue with their learning. There was a general feeling that the course had fired the imagination of those who had participated. The LAT Executive Director also spoke of a recent end of course presentation and how much the qualification had meant to someone who had never obtained a qualification before.

Particularly to LAT staff, concepts of success reflected their more holistic approach and were more likely to be defined in terms of meeting the needs of the individual rather than in meeting particular targets.

‘It’s about them getting in touch with themselves, who they really are, not necessarily just about reoffending’ (Programme Tutor)

These staff reinforced the message that prisoners have their own targets other than employment and education and what they learn and choose to pursue at the end of the course may not fit other agencies’ agendas. In addition when they get out of prison they often have other issues to deal with which may preclude immediately getting a job.

Perceived changes in attitude were also taken as some indication that the programme was having an effect. When asked whether they have any measures of changing attitudes on the course, the Basic Skills tutor said it was hard to give figures as they do not have contact with people after the programme, ‘we don’t know what they are doing with their lives and we don’t have the opportunity to get hold of them’. This lack of ongoing contact to some degree reflected his role which only covered work throughout the duration of the programme.

In contrast, the role of other programme tutors involves a degree of aftercare with staff being expected to maintain contact after release from prison. This did in fact materialise with ex group members getting in touch after their release.

‘It’s definitely been effective because those who have been released from prison have made contact with us whether that’s by phone call, physically making a visit to the office or writing a letter; there is some kind of correspondence from the ones that I feel were ideal for the programme.’ (Course Tutor)
The same tutor spoke of some prisoners who had been released and where she had heard about what had happened to them afterwards:

‘There were quite a few older guys who had ongoing drug issues, their main thing was to get themselves into rehab and cut off from the environment and certain associations that they had been influenced by their whole lives and a few of them actually have done that...there was another young man who was really into theatre production, he was focused and did every course available as well as the black self development. Once he was released he got in touch with me and was still focused towards his goal of theatre, which is actually what he is doing now......it’s about them getting in touch with themselves, who they really are, not necessarily just about reoffending.’ (Course Tutor)

This was about ex group members taking the time and trouble to make the approach themselves not staff chasing them up. Inevitably, however, things do not always work out as one would hope.

‘When I walk on the street I still see some of the people that have completed the programme and have been released. I have seen the improvement in them but they have since gone steps backwards.’ (Course Administrator)

Overall, one of the LAT directors who supervises the project felt that the Black Self Development Projects was ‘one of the most successful projects that we (LAT) have done’. When asked what LAT had got out of running the project, the LAT Director felt that the morale of the organisation had been raised by having a good project that was making a difference. It’s raised their profile, they have good relationships with the partners of the project and they have been approached by other prisons. The Executive Director said it raised their profile with other organisations and gives them more credibility because they can show what they can do, particular as he is a white manager but the project is run by black staff. In their newsletter they have showcased the project and it helps to create an ethos around the work we do and boost morale when we can talk about a successful project where we are doing it well.

‘It is different and innovative. I don’t know of a project like it and we do it well. We are good at the more quirky stuff.’
8) EMERGING ISSUES
A number of issues have emerged from this evaluation some of which are specific to this project, others will, however, be more generally applicable. In this section we seek to draw out those learning points that we think organisations contemplating running similar projects might need to consider.

8 a) The relationship between targets, recruitment and funding
Initially because the project was partly being funded by Job Centre Plus employment targets were, understandably, classed as an important outcome. In order to meet this target it was important that offenders should be approaching the end of their sentences. The stipulation was that recruitment should be focused on prisoners with 6 months or less of their sentence still to serve. In fact this did not occur and prisoners with considerably longer than this left to serve were accepted on to the course. One problem with recruiting prisoners who had a long time to serve was that they were very likely to be transferred to another prison and therefore not be able to complete the course. Equally when prisoners on remand were accepted onto the programme there would be completion problems as they were unlikely to return to the prison after their cases had come to court. As the Head of Learning Skills put it ‘they have adopted a scattergun approach to recruitment’, something that would need to be addressed if targets were to be met in order to meet the SLA all were working towards.

In actuality, however, this ‘programme drift’ appeared to flow from a mismatch between the stated project targets as they then stood and the multi faceted, holistic nature of the programme. For staff running the course changing thinking was the prime purpose of the programme rather than getting prisoners into employment and inmates were accepted if it was felt they could benefit from this aspect of it. Moreover it was not only LAT staff who felt that the target group should be wider as prison officers referred prisoners to the programme when they felt it could help with issues they were facing regardless of whether or not they fitted the criteria.

At the time, therefore, it appeared that other sources of funding might have better reflected the focus of the programme.

‘Job Centre Plus is wanting figures and evidence around employment whereas our main interest is around reoffending and changing behaviour. Funding with a more holistic approach (would be) preferable.’ (Executive LAT Director)

It is to the credit of everyone concerned, particularly Job Centre Plus, that the employment target was subsequently removed. This appears to reflect an acceptance that increasing employability through influencing attitudes towards employment could provide a valuable step along the way to eventual employment.

However an issue remains around obtaining funding for projects like this that focus on Black issues. LAT has been approached by five other prisons who want to run the programme but no one has money and taking this forward will depend upon getting funding from somewhere. An approach to the Learning and Skills Council had been rejected because the programme was not seen as sufficiently inclusive.
Yet as we have seen this type of work is best approached, and possibly can only be approached, within an all Black environment. So long as securing finance remains a particular problem there will always be a temptation to accept funding from bodies whose priorities do not entirely map onto the characteristics of the programme. This, in turn, may lead to key targets not being met as was the case here until the funders responded by amending them.

8 b) Differences in ethos between voluntary and statutory organisations
A further dimension of this debate relates to common differences in ethos between statutory and voluntary organisations and their different approaches to how targets should be viewed. Voluntary organisations are generally seen to be more flexible about how services are delivered and more likely to be organised around a holistic response of an individual’s needs. This is seen as their strength and, often, the reason they are employed in the first place. In contrast, statutory organisations’ strengths are seen in terms of control of resources and more universal provision rather than responding to the issues pertinent to particular individuals.

Arguably all the prisoners were suitable in terms of being able to benefit from the developmental aspect of the programme but some were not suitable in terms of meeting the short term employment targets as originally envisaged. The targeting of this programme could, therefore, be viewed as the staff being flexible and focusing on the needs of the individual or it can be seen as programme drift in terms of the expectations of the funders. The funders and commissioner of this project were initially focused on the academic and employment related outcomes of the course. Whilst these are valuable outcomes they are not its main focus in terms of the underlying theory of change. Though the situation was resolved here by removing the employment target there may be problems in the future with similar projects if these different foci are not fully acknowledged and managed. Otherwise a paradoxical situation may arise in which external bodies are recruited for their person centred approaches, approaches which by their very nature will lead to problems with meeting strictly defined targets.

8 c) Closed Black only groups
A degree of disquiet regarding the all Black and closed nature of the group also emerges from the evaluation. This appears to emanate from a number of different sources. Firstly it appears that there are misunderstandings as to what the programme is about or how materials were used. This was a theme in the offenders’ interviews with reports that some prisoners had misunderstood, thinking it is just black history, a perception that might attract some but put others off. Equally other prisoners thought it was about negative black history, a perception that might not be corrected if they drop out at an early stage.

Staff’s experience of the misuse of other all Black groups did not help to allay suspicions that this group was being used to allow Black prisoners to use racism to explain and excuse their behaviour. These issues were raised by the Head of Learning Skills:
‘All our courses are about people taking responsibility for their own behaviour and we are concerned if we think that any of them are not based on this. It’s OK for racism material to be used as context but we need to ensure that people move beyond this to accept responsibility for their own behaviour.’

This, of course, reflects the exact aim of the programme. But because there were problems around access for inspection purposes it was not possible to deal with this type of anxiety. The prison has an obligation to inspect any course within the prison unannounced but it did not have black staff and LAT felt that it was only appropriate if there were black observers. This problem was recognised at the time and led to the Head of Learning Skills contacting Tower Hamlets College with a view to them providing a black staff member who would be qualified to observe the group. Unfortunately there was no such person available so rather than place a non black observer within the group the observations were not carried out.

The subject matter of the course itself is difficult because it accepts the reality of racism. The course aims to help black people challenge racist behaviour and to be more assertive as well as seeing the positive contribution that they as black people can make to society.

Interestingly programmes of this type can themselves be seen as racist because they exclude white prisoners, staff and supervisors. The head of Learning and Skills in the prison had initially opposed the project as, on reviewing the literature, she felt there was a lack of empirical evidence to support the need for separate provision (Calverley et al, 2004). However once it had been agreed that the programme would go ahead it received the full backing of the Learning Skills Department. She had also heard from Feltham that the project had been rejected as racist.

‘We used to have an accredited black history course – we are required to meet the needs of all the prisoners here. We saw this as good because it was not exclusive to black offenders – white offenders could go as well.’

(Head of Learning Skills)

Whilst understandable, this thinking does not fit easily with what the Black Self Development Programme is trying to achieve. Staff working on the programme speak of how it is only in a completely black group that some feel safe or are able to be open about their feelings on racism and other issues. This is reinforced by the feedback from offenders who obviously appreciate the opportunity that being in an all Black group gives them to explore new issues around race. Thinking back to the all women groups in the 1970s and 80s provides a potentially useful parallel to understanding how Black offenders might feel.

The consultant to the group outlined the issues clearly, particularly the need for a forum within which offenders can discuss the effects of racism but also in regard to white people’s fear of the unknown and what was happening behind closed doors from which they were excluded:
'you don’t want to offend your white probation officer because you don’t know what the repercussions will be, you can’t have the conversation with your white friends, so we were saying we need to have the conversation, we need to have the debate. But it’s not a ‘let’s beat up white people’ forum. Part of the issue in terms of selling it was to get our white colleagues to understand that we were not getting the next Black Panther movement.’

Some of the issues here reflect relatively straightforward misunderstandings regarding content of the programme. Discussing issues relating to race, however, often causes discomfort and considerable courage is likely to be needed if views and anxieties are to be adequately identified, acknowledged and aired by representatives from different organisations. Ironically, for this to happen, staff would need to feel supported in the same way as the offenders attending this programme. It is possible that disquiet around race is related to the reported difficulties in securing funding.

Equally getting prisoners to look at their experience of racism is likely to cause some reaction and there needs to be discussions as to what these might be and how they might be handled by all staff. Strengthening links between programme staff and the prison’s Diversity Department might prove the most productive way of taking this forward.

8 d) Staffing - recruitment and supervision
Dealing with the impact of racism on one’s development and daily life is not only an issue for prisoners but may also resonate with staff members who may have had similar experiences. Because of the nature of the programme staff need to have reached a stage in their own development where they feel confident in dealing with whatever issues may be generated by group members. The selection and training of staff is consequently a crucial issue. The developers of the programme are very clear that this is not a programme that can be delivered by any member of staff but suitability is not necessarily obvious at recruitment. When programmes were run within organisations such as London Probation or Youth Offending Teams staff who were subsequently found not to be suitable, or who decided this for themselves, could always be diverted to other work. This is not true however in the voluntary sector where staff are recruited to a specific project and have nowhere else to go within the organisation. In the case of this particular project, employing an external agency with a track record of running groups of this type has brought staff with the requisite expertise and experience but if similar groups were to be run elsewhere this would not necessarily be the case.

There is also a need for skilled supervision in order to ensure that staff receive adequate support throughout the duration of the programme. In the case of this project this has been provided by a relatively informal arrangement with a staff member from London Probation, an individual closely involved with the development of the programme and with an extensive understanding of its aims and delivery. Arguably this has not been as consistent as it should have been due to her other commitments. Ideally supervision and support should be formalised in order to ensure consistency.
8 e) Running the programme within the prison
A number of issues around running the programme within a prison environment were also raised, some were felt to raise particular challenges but there were also some advantages.

- **Different priorities and procedures** - the project involved LAT staff working within an environment that inevitably had its own agenda and procedures, the programme essentially being an island within a larger host organisation. This can mean that there may be little scope for changing the local working environment to reflect what is needed in order to run the programme.

- **Amending the programme** - the programme had to be reduced to 8 weeks in order to fit it within a time period that would allow prisoners to complete the course. Criticisms of this reduction in the size of the programme came from offenders, a great number of who felt the programme should be longer in order to allow them more time to learn and reflect. The skills for life / basic skills tutor also felt it was difficult to deliver his elements within the 8 weeks he had available.

- **Impact on teaching methods** – programme staff did not manage to obtain the appropriate security clearances necessary to bring resources like tape recorders and computers into the prison. This impacted upon the teaching methods used.

- **Communication** - as in any large organisation communication channels between LAT and prison staff were sometimes problematic.
  - Prisoners who had been identified to prison staff as suitable for the group did not always end up on the list of attendees passed back to programme staff.
  - There was no mechanism for providing programme staff with the post release contact details necessary to provide aftercare.

- **Security and staff shortages** - prisoners were sometimes unable to attend the programme because there were insufficient staff to get them to the classroom. This interfered with the dynamics of the groupwork process and was experienced as disruptive by staff and group members. Some members perceived these disruptions as a reflection of the value placed on the group within the prison.

- **Transfers** – a criticism voiced by both tutors and prisoners was that prisoners were often not able to finish the course because they were transferred to other prisons even though its duration had been reduced.

- **Adapting prison routines to meet programme needs** – the prison also has to employ resources in order to support the project.
  - It had to find admin support for the project.
- Getting prisoners to the classrooms was something that had to be incorporated into the routine of the prison.
- It was not always easy to find suitable safe and quiet accommodation for the programme. Part of this problem was that the number of prisoners who continued to attend required a considerable amount of space therefore it was sometimes difficult to find rooms large enough.

**Advantages of running the programme in prison**
- Having a captive audience of men within the prison that may have fewer distractions than those in the community.
- To quote the Basic Skills tutor, ‘prison is where people actually reflect on their life and I think that from that perspective, the programme sinks into them.’

‘Because there is no other course like it in the prison and the prisoners have time to learn while in prison, I think this course appeals to them in a way that didn’t happen with the younger participants from YOT. These prisoners were older and in a different place in terms of where they are in their life.’

**Unmotivated group members**
- set against the motivated group was an element that came onto the course to get out of their cell rather than being motivated by the subject matter.
- the offer of a job within the prison that paid more than the £1 attendees were paid to attend could distract prisoners from finishing the programme.

**Project's contribution to the prison**
- The presence of relatively large numbers attending the programme was useful when Home Office visitors looked in.
- Attendance on the programme appeared to motivate prisoners to go on to further courses thus adding to overall prison targets.
- LAT’s partnership with the high status Central School of Speech and Drama is likely to add kudos to the Education profile of Brixton Prison.

Despite these conflicts there was a feeling that many of the participants had enjoyed aspects of working together. Against the possible barriers, good communication and working relationships can help make projects work to provide good outcomes for participants. When interviewed the person charged with providing consultancy to LAT staff running the course argued that this type of relationship between two organisations was like a marriage. Some issues could be resolved but some just have to be lived with and worked round.
8 f) After care
Both staff and prisoners were concerned as to ongoing support after the programme. As shown above programme tutors were in contact with some prisoners after release and could provide some ongoing input. However what prisoners appeared to want was something more structured, an additional part or another programme for when the were out in the community and facing reality. This appeared to be particularly important given that the duration of the programme had been truncated to 8 weeks which was generally felt to be not enough time to make changes. When talking with the LAT Executive Director he spoke of the optimism of the offenders he had met and how this was good because it gave them motivation and hope. But the reverse of this were the dangers of being let down when outside the prison and not being able to get the breaks. What appears to be needed as part of a resettlement plan would be links to organisations working with offenders outside the prison.
9 CONCLUSIONS

Despite the divergent preoccupations of the prison and LAT and the need to reconcile the demands of two very different organisation, this project has run to time and met or exceeded its objectives once the employment target had been removed. Not only has the feedback from people taking part in the programme been positive but enquiries have been received from other prisons interested in running the programme themselves. Prison officers have asked for inmates to attend the programme and word of mouth communication from group members to other prisoners has led to a waiting list of people wanting to participate. Taken together these suggest that this programme is responding to the needs and preoccupations of some prisoners, prisoners who might have been unwilling to engage in more mainstream approaches. Furthermore the participants’ performance on the programme, in terms of both numbers and levels of units of qualification achieved point to the programme motivating the prisoners to take forward their learning. These positive responses echo those found in an evaluation of a former version of the programme run within London Probation.

Inevitably this report has only been able to deal with interim results, recruitment, completions, educational achievements and the subjective feedback from prisoners, staff running the programme and managers both from LAT and the prison. In order to gauge its long term impact it would be necessary to know the extent to which it has led participants into employment on their release from prison and, ultimately, whether they go on to reoffend.

The experience of running the programme within a prison has highlighted differences in approach that statutory and voluntary bodies tend to bring to their work. Statutory bodies tend to judge performance in terms of the meeting of targets whereas voluntary bodies are more likely to adopt a holistic approach which responds to the disparate needs of individuals. The Black Self Development Groupwork Programme is, essentially, an empowerment programme that seeks to bring about change in offenders who will have their own ideas as to what the nature of this change needs to be in their own lives. So empowering individuals to change their own lives will always sit awkwardly with set targets that, by definition, dictate change in a specific direction. If different types of organisation are to work together this type of issue will need to be explored. Some may be resolvable, others may simply have to be acknowledged and worked round in whatever way is found to be possible.

Race is a difficult area for many people to address as it raises all manner of anxieties at both an individual and organisational level. Consequently embarking on the type of work demanded by this programme could be seen as an act of considerable courage regardless of whether this relates to a prisoner or tutor involved in the groupwork itself and the people supervising them, the prison department commissioning the programme or the organisation prepared to fund it. We believe that in the case of this programme this effort has been fruitful as these initial findings suggest that this approach constitutes a ‘promising lead’ in leading individuals to look afresh at themselves. Whether this can subsequently be translated into sustained behaviour change remains to be seen.
10 RECOMMENDATIONS
The findings here suggest a range of issues that could usefully be addressed.

1. Ensure that all parties who have any involvement in the programme have very clear information about the approach and what the programme is trying to achieve.

2. Part of 1) above will involve raising the issue of race. We think that it is necessary to provide a safe forum within which all individuals involved in the programme can air issues and concerns around race.

3. Strengthen links between Programme staff and the Diversity Departments of host organisations.

4. Ensure that targets set are appropriate and measurable.

5. As an experienced staff base is vital in running this programme this might be better achieved by outsourcing the work to an organisation that can provide a consistent high level of expertise.

6. Ensure that staff involved with the programme have consistent supervision that can, if necessary, deal with the emotional demands of the programme in addition to more straightforward professional development.

7. Attention needs to be paid to how ex group members could be supported after the end of the programme either through an extension of the input or providing contact to community groups. How this is done will obviously vary depending upon the client group.

8. Repeat evaluation questionnaires at the end of the programme in order to assess changes in perceptions. Reconsider the use of the Black Self Development Questionnaire as the heavily positive nature of the responses do not appear to distinguish between individuals.
11 REFERENCES


Black Self Development Programme
“A programme for change and rehabilitation”

SUMMARY
BLACK SELF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Background

The Black Self Development Programme builds on the principles of Effective Practice and the Probation Service’s research of ‘What Works’. It uses intensive educational input to promote awareness, development and attitude change.

Combined with an intensive social skills component the programme brings about and sustains rehabilitation. Participants will engage in detailed examination of their responsibility for offending, giving specific attention to the victim’s perspective and the associated risk factors. Participants will also learn new skills, identify future goals and make use of extensive focus on education, training and employment.

Why have a separate provision for Black Offenders?

This rehabilitation programme is the culmination of fifteen years work by probation officers seeking to reduce the reconviction rate of Black offenders. Based on previous groupwork programmes the evidence suggested that a professionally designed course would enable selected Black offenders to examine their own behaviour and their own needs and develop credible strategies for change.

An understanding of the impact of institutional racism and social exclusion provides a motivational background to tackle in tangible ways, barriers created by discrimination. The Black Self Development Programme moves participants on to explore alternatives to offending by making constructive use of the extensive input on education, training and employment to maximise opportunities for the future.

Effectiveness

This current programme evolved from a pilot BSDP project for adult black offenders that was delivered by London Action Trust and the London Probation Area in 7 inner and east London boroughs in 2000/2 and from which 29% of participants gained employment and 22% went into full time education.

Building on this success, the programme was delivered to Inner London Youth Offending Teams between 2003/5 and it is currently being successfully delivered in HMP Brixton. The delivery of the programme is regularly reviewed and monitored by London Action Trust and a programme evaluation is currently being undertaken by London Probation Service.
Black Self Development Outline

- Rooted in the concept of Black perspectives
- Developed by Black Criminal Justice Workers and colleagues over the last 15 years
- Based on use of intensive education to promote awareness and delivers enhanced social skills that combines to create enlightenment / motivation to bring about change
- Devised from research into humanistic and cognitive psychological approaches
- Based on proven social groupwork and experiential techniques
- Provision of education, training and social life skills
- A programme of Sixteen sessions spread over 8 weeks, consisting of 90 hours contact time with 60 hours of self-learning

The BSDP Model of Change

In this section we identify the theoretical rationale, which underlies the approach adopted by the BSDP. There are five aspects to its theoretical rationale.

1. Control theory is used to explain the position of many Black people within British society, issues surrounding identity and the mechanisms whereby one impacts upon the other.

2. The connection between a positive Black self-identity and change is supported by research done by Cross and is exemplified by his five-stage change process. Cross ideas is supported by work being done on developing a Black perspective.

3. The utilisation of Social Group work, life /social skill development as a fulcrum for change is based on over fifty years of social group work and counselling practice.

4. The explanatory and curative notions of humanistic psychology alongside experiential learning theories inform programme design and guide the BSDP facilitation.

5. Notions of working from a trans-cultural perspective are used to bridge gaps between the various cultures that comprise the Black communities.

Methodology

The BSDP methodology rests on three pillars.

First, there is use of social groupwork as a supportive and dynamic forum for change. Social groupwork when operated by trained and skilled facilitators is a powerful tool for behavioural modification.
Second, the delivery of content uses an experiential approach, which is primarily ‘a holistic, integrative perspective that describes learning as a combination of experience, perception, cognition and behaviour,’ (Sinclair & Lapompe, 2000). Group participants gradually learn to take personal responsibility for initiating change in a supportive and challenging forum.

Third, there is a heavy emphasis on the development of socially useful (life, employment) and interpersonal skills. As a holistic programme all dimension of an offender is examined and s/he is helped to acquire empowering attitudes, socially relevant behaviour and rehearse the skills required to put them into practice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A Black Self-Development group will give Black Offenders opportunities to:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience a positive group culture that promotes self responsibility, legitimate work and success orientated attitudes;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a better comprehension of their culture, history and contemporary analysis of society;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn through interaction with group members, from education inputs, social skills programme and self-learning tasks;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss areas such as masculinity, self-abuse, life styles, violence, sexual health issues and criminal behaviour;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge and confront negative behaviour in a positive way; try out new ways of behaving, develop healthy attitudes and social skills within a safe environment;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop education knowledge, assertive techniques, negotiating and decision-making skills;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop behavioural skills in order to better manage their relationship (family, work, professional etc) and learn how to cater for their own needs, desires and aspirations in legitimate ways.</td>
</tr>
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Facilitation Methods

The programme adopts a humanistic approach, which takes as its central tenet a belief that ‘each person possesses the innate capacity to move towards maturity and grow in a positive direction’. This is mirrored by the use of an experiential learning approach, ‘a holistic, integrative perspective that describes learning as a combination of experience, perception, cognition and behaviour’.

Self-Learning encourages participants to engage in set homework tasks, including research, communication, and report findings at the appropriate sessions.
Simulated learning (role-play) provides an opportunity to act out “real” situations/issues and explore/identify productive problem solving techniques.

Experiential learning recognises that participants learn through concrete experiences. Group participants are encouraged and assisted in constructive sharing of their different life experiences. All participants engage in a positive learning process. This form of learning involves imparting new knowledge.

Skill development enables participants to examine skills they possess or use, including those which they use for the commission of offending.

**BSD Programme Delivery: Sessional Framework**

The sessional framework outlined below is intended to serve as an example of the sixteen sessions. The core elements of each session consist of an introduction, summary of previous session, aims and objectives, outcomes, activity (sessional content), verification and self-learning exercise.

**BSD Programme Content**

| SESSION 1 | **Introduction to Black self development groupwork.**  
The programme is explained and young people inducted into its format. |
| SESSION 2 | **Knowing my roots**  
Enable participants to recognise links between their history, society and identity. |
| SESSION 3 | **Taking charge of my past**  
Participants to connect to their historical roots and establish ownership of that continuity. |
| SESSION 4 | **Black people’s migration to Britain.**  
To understand reasons for and impact of migration of black people to Britain. To identify that many of the current issues surrounding Black British is not new. |
| SESSION 5 | **Accepting responsibility for my offending**  
Recognise the links to participants’ personal history and criminal behaviour. Examine victims and community perspectives. |
| SESSION 6 | **How to change my behaviour?**  
Identify nature of behavioural change, what motivates it and how can it be started. Exploration and identification of individual decision-making process. |
| SESSION 7 | **What are my skills and interests?**  
Assist participants to identify personal qualities, interests, abilities and skills, and match these to future goals. Participants explore important traits and knowledge that make people successful. |
| SESSION 8 | **Understanding my family.**  
To improve participants understanding of family relationships. |
SESSION 9  **Sexual health and drug/alcohol abuse issues**  
To explore matters of personal relationships (love, commitment and friendships). To explore health related issues including lifestyle, hygiene, illegal drugs and sexual infections.

SESSION 10  **Reclaiming control.**  
Developing participant’s communication, assertiveness and better self-management. Explore masculinity, parenting and fatherhood.

SESSION 11  **Writing my experience.**  
Assist participants to identify information relevant for a CV and how to compile their own.

SESSION 12  **How to cope with interviews?**  
Learning to prepare for interviews.

SESSION 13  **Seizing the opportunity.**  
How to make constructive career and lifestyle choices?  
Future plan based on SMART objectives.

SESSION 14  **Healthy relationships.**  
Identify and practice skills which participants might find useful in developing their personal, work and social relationships.

SESSION 15  **How can I market myself?**  
Participants identifying personal aspirations / goals and being able to assertively present those to a variety of audiences.  
Participants present individual plans to group members, including why it is realistic, clarifying coping strategies

SESSION 16  **It is my future**  
Exploring issues around self-evaluation, identifying process and skills required.  
Completing programme evaluation whilst undertaking a self-evaluation.
BLACK SELF-DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The BSD programme consist of five components as described below

- A comprehensive group work programme
- Skills for Life and Dyslexia assessment and tuition
- 1:1 ETE guidance and advice
- ICT tuition and support
- Post release support from the Employment, Education and Training Officer to secure employment or further education/training
APPENDIX 2 – FEEDBACK FROM GROUP MEMBERS – QUESTIONNAIRE

ITEMS
The order of the items below are not presented in any particular order.

Positive things about the programme
1. Good presenters
2. Information is easy to understand
3. An opportunity to integrate with each other and share views x 2
4. An incentive to continue in a positive way from a black perspective
5. Everyone should have this
6. Everyone is black, no white people
7. Learning to express ourselves
8. Having freedom of speech
9. Motivates you
10. They listen to young black men like myself
11. Knowing about the past helps you cope with who you are today
12. Listening to other people’s life experience and opinions
13. Gives you self confidence x5
14. Helps you develop your identity
15. Lots of black history x 9
16. Very educational
17. Inspiring
18. Helpful tutors who make you realise we can achieve goals for the future
19. Gave me enthusiasm
20. Learn about people who have not had their achievements recognised
21. Your realise that the Caribbean is the back garden of Africa
22. You learn about yourself x 4
23. Lets you understand yourself as a black man – very good for young men to know
24. Seeing how society treats you
25. More awareness of your roots
26. Learning to ask yourself questions in order to express yourself and develop individually
27. Role play – both participating and watching others in situations that I could relate to
28. A wake up call – reminds me of what I am capable of
29. Makes you’re realise that as a black man you need to be positive , determined and hard working
30. Encourages me to live a law abiding lifestyle on my release (I redefined my talents – drew up an up to date CV x 2
31. Will enable me to have some job vacancies and liaison on release
32. Helped my analysis my thoughts, feelings and emotions with regards to family, offending and drugs
33. Getting to know the pain and suffering my ancestors went through
34. The facilitators respect you
35. Learn to speak your mind
36. Learn about your strengths and weaknesses
37. Learn how to present myself
38. Good interviewing skills
39. Good relationship awareness
40. Helps you develop your identity
41. Learned to consider the feelings of others
42. Gives me qualifications

**Improvements**
1. More on racism in Britain
2. More on Asian culture
3. More information
4. Collect all the information into one booklet
5. A larger group – more classes – male and female
6. Make it a compulsory class in education x 2
7. Employ these people full time
8. More funding – this class could bring about a huge change in the way young black people think x 3
9. More time for the course x 10
10. More recognition amongst other classes
11. Sometimes it felt like we had a teacher rather than a tutor
12. More accessible to more people x 5
13. White people should be invited to learn about the discrimination that black and Irish people went through
14. Own class rooms
15. Visiting lecturers
16. More history x 2
17. More on ancient African history x 2
18. More verbal discussion than writing x 2
19. More books
20. More videos on black achievements x 2
21. A more in depth programme
22. A set routine with the length with the length and people on the course being maintained. Unfortunately this is not anyone’s fault
23. 5 day a week attendance
24. Follow on support – job searching advice on release
25. More visual aids – to show the current situation on the streets
26. More extracts from Black icons eg Martin Luther King, Malcolm
27. Keep this course to Black history
28. Continue it after prison
29. More one to one tutoring
30. More practical work – especially round interviews
31. More governors and managers in the prison noticing the effects of this course
32. More facts than fiction
33. A bit repetitive
34. Students not to be moved before finishing the course
FEEDBACK FROM GROUP MEMBERS – GROUP INTERVIEW ITEMS

The feedback here was collected over 2 interviews, one with 7 prisoners, the other with 6 prisoners. In this case the items below are recorded in the order they were given to the interviewers by the programme participants.

Positive things about the programme
1. Facilitators very helpful in helping you understand
2. Makes me understand self and roots more as a black person
3. It shows me that I can make it as a black man
4. BSD programme very informative
5. I find that BSD is very helpful and helped me be aware of my black history
6. BSD staff are very helpful, considerate
7. Learnt a little history and to learn your role as a black man in the community
8. The facilitators don’t come across as authoritarian
9. Very relaxed atmosphere
10. Its reassuring that we can be united as a people
11. Good variation of facilitators with different inputs
12. Gave me confidence as a black person in British society
13. It helps people gain more confidence within the group and as a unit
14. I got better understanding of back history
15. It helped me identify my strengths and weaknesses
16. Facilitators were very helpful and easy to get on with
17. It improved my grammar and punctuation
18. Its built up my self esteem and given me a moral boost that I am capable of achieving
19. This course has motivated me to get a job upon release

Improvements
1. Should be available in more prisons
2. Should be of longer duration
3. More awareness and accessibility
4. BSD should also be running in the community and more readily available to young people
5. The course should have a more rigid structure
6. Sometimes we never get to see the end of some DVDs due to time constraints
7. More reading / literature should be made available
8. Wages could be more
9. More in depth discussions e.g. religion, black contributions in the world wide society
10. More internationally recognised certificates
11. More books, audio cassettes, DVDs , CDs on black history should be made more readily available.