

<p>Institution: University of Bolton</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: UoA 29</p>
<p>Title of case study: Missing Out – Action For Prisoners’ Families</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>In 2008 Mary Cooper was commissioned by Clean Break Theatre, London and Action for Prisoners’ Families (APF) to write a short drama which would address issues particular to women in prison and their families. The drama toured women’s prisons in 2009. In 2010 Cooper was commissioned to adapt the stage play as a short film, which went on to win the IVCA Gold Award for Best Drama 2010. It is now widely recommended by leading charities and agencies and regularly used as a training tool throughout England and Wales to increase understanding of family relationships within prisoners’ families.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Action For Prisoners’ Families is a nationwide membership organisation for those interested in the wellbeing of prisoners and offenders’ families. It is well-known in the sector for the quality and innovation of the resources it produces.</p> <p>In 2005 APF received funding from the Home Office after research showed that prisoners who maintained family ties while in prison were less likely to reoffend. The research also suggested that there was little understanding of the importance of family relationships within the sector, and few resources for training professionals within criminal justice to work with prisoners’ families. APF were tasked with creating materials, for both prisoners and professionals, which could be useful in supporting and sustaining family relationships.</p> <p>In 2005, as part of this, Cooper was commissioned to write a short play looking at the moment of release from prison and the difficulties faced by prisoners and their families in readjusting to life together. This play, <i>Homeward Bound</i>, was used at a national conference to launch the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) as well as touring prisons and playing to prisoners’ families in 2005, and retouring in 2006. Subsequently, it was made into a DVD and sold from the APF website, quickly selling out its first run, and being reprinted. The play was also submitted as one of Cooper’s outputs for RAE 2008.</p> <p>The success of <i>Homeward Bound</i> led to a second commission, <i>Family Business</i>, looking at the ‘transmission’ of criminal behaviour across generations of the same family. This toured schools, prisons and Young Offenders’ Institutions in 2007 and 2008, and again was made into a DVD to be sold from the APF website.</p> <p><i>Homeward Bound</i> had been shown at two women’s prisons. These visits provoked discussion about the different impact of incarceration on women and men, and their families. For example, while 85% of men’s partners looked after their children while they were in prison, only 25% of women’s partners did so. Women prisoners ‘demanded’ a play of their own. <i>Missing Out</i> was the result.</p>
<p>3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <p>Action for Prisoners’ Families combined with Clean Break Theatre company, London, to produce the first incarnation of the drama. This was performed in women’s prisons by women who had a history of involvement with the criminal justice system.</p> <p>http://www.cleanbreak.org.uk/productions/missing-out</p> <p>The drama was then produced as a short film by Knifedge Productions.</p> <p><i>Missing Out</i> won the IVCA Award for Best Drama 2010. It was also chosen to be shown at the ‘Best of IVCA’ event at the British Film Institute and is included in the collection at the BFI.</p> <p>http://www.ivca.org/news/2010/ivca-awards-2010-winners-announced.html</p> <p>The director’s website, below, includes details of the IVCA judges’ comments.</p> <p>http://www.malcolmhadley.com/99471/875650/showreel/missing-out-short-film</p> <p><i>Missing Out</i>, along with the preceding DVDs, is still on sale on the APF website.</p> <p>The YouTube extract on the APF website recorded 796 hits (1/07/13).</p> <p>http://www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk/publications/Information-and-resources-for-families/Missing-Out-DVD/</p>

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It is now widely recommended as a training resource throughout the UK. Mention of the film occurs on the following websites: Parenting UK, the Wave Trust, The Centre for Separated Families, Prisoner Action Net, Revolving Doors, Social Care Online, and Families Outside.

Some organisations give direct links to the Youtube extract or the APF website.

<http://www.contactcsg.org/videos-page-1/>

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (www.scie.org.uk) recommends APF resources including DVDS as 'excellent' in their Children and Families Services SCIE Guide 22 'Maintaining Family Ties'.

<http://www.scie.org.uk/publications/guides/guide22/>

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

Missing Out was initially given a rehearsed reading with professional actors in Peterborough prison, summer 2008. After rewrites it was directed by Anna Herrman and performed by graduates from Clean Break Theatre's acting courses. These women have a history of imprisonment or record of involvement with the Criminal Justice system. The play toured prisons and training conferences for professionals October-November 2008 and received very positive feedback.

In terms of the immediate impact of the performance, the stage version enabled women in prison to see how former inmates had turned their lives around through the creative arts. For the actors, it provided an opportunity to have their journey acknowledged. For both professionals and inmates, it provoked discussion of crucial questions regarding prisoners' families which are very often avoided for fear of 'upsetting the girls'. In conference and training settings, the play raised questions about good practice in maintaining links between prisoners and their children, and provoked discussion about sentencing policies for women. Grandparents' and parents' group members commented that, for the first time, their point of view – that of grandparents looking after their grandchild while the mother serves her sentence – was being publically and accurately presented.

In 2009, due to further demand for the show, Action For Prisoners' Families raised funds for *Missing Out* to be professionally produced (Knifedge Productions) as a short film. Cooper worked with the director, Tom Hadley, and the producer, Jonathon Bridgden, to adapt the play for the screen. The film was very well received and entered for the International Visual Communications Award. It was Highly Commended in the Best Directors Award Category and won the IVCA Best Drama Award, 2010. As a result, it is now in the collection at the British Film Institute.

The tour of *Missing Out* to prisons led to further discussion between Action for Prisoners' Families and prisoners. One direct result of this was the decision to publish a series of leaflets, *Your children; Your Rights*, in collaboration with Rights of Women. These leaflets are now available to all mothers in prisons in the UK (http://www.rightsofwomen.org.uk/pdfs/Legal/Guide_to_Adoption_lo_res.pdf).

All three DVDS are still widely used in training. Lesley Dixon, APF Regional Development Manager for the North of England, said:

The DVDs are used all the time in training. They're used perhaps twice a week in sessions for professionals. These can include training for probation, police, health visitors, magistrates, social workers; right across the board. I've trained 60/70 people in 'training the trainer' sessions this year who are given copies of the DVDs to use in their own training.

Homeward Bound, in particular, has had a huge impact, with feedback along the lines of the following comment: 'Excellent DVD. Made me think of issues I wouldn't otherwise be aware of.'

Sandra Wells, formerly Manager of the Visitor Centre at Styal Prison, now founder and co-ordinator of the Cheshire Support Cheshire Group, said, 'The APF DVDs are the first thing I will show volunteers for the organisation. They are a brilliant way of introducing the experiences of prisoners' families, to people who may have never thought about these questions, and because they are dramas, they hit home. When I work with the Youth Offending Teams in the region I will always suggest they buy the DVDs from APF for training.'

Child Protection trainer, David Gammage, formerly responsible for all child protection training for Action for Children, previously known as National Children's Homes, commented:

I use *Missing Out* regularly in training. I must have used it with more than 500 people over the

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last three years. These are intensive training sessions for a mixture of professionals who are involved in child protection and child support; for example, family centre managers, school learning mentors, drug workers and family support workers. The film raises difficult and complex issues in a sensitive and truthful way, creating empathy, stimulating discussion and enabling professionals to review their own practice. In particular, I use it as a case study to assist professionals in analysing increasing levels of risk to children in a family setting. It's both compelling as drama and effective as a tool for change.

Action for Prisoners' families are currently considering updating the DVDs in line with recent legislation. They have also talked about a further production (pending funding) on Indeterminate Sentencing Orders. Cooper is now working on a radio drama series based on the workings of the Parole Board, and the tension between the need for cuts (shorter/community sentencing) and Home Office policy of being seen to administer 'tough' sentencing.

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

These are listed under 3, above.