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ARTICLE

## Effectiveness of Reformative Measures on Delinquent Young Person: Case Study Borstal Training Institute Abeokuta

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### Abstract

United Nations (UN) Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2009 report shows that the Nigerian juvenile justice system is in a state of 'crisis.' Existing studies on juvenile delinquency identifies operational, resource and capacity challenges in the Borstal institution as the major cause of this crisis. Lack of community-based recreation programmes coupled with the optional form of punishment for youth criminals (other than imprisonment) also contribute to these challenges. This paper propose a nexus between inefficient correctional institute and reformation. The study set out using a descriptive survey research design and unstructured interviews to examine the peculiarities of the Borstal Institute located at Adigbe Abeokuta viz-a-viz the reformative measures on delinquent young persons.



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*Keyword: Effectiveness; juvenile; reformative measures; delinquency*

## **1.0 Introduction**

Correctional institutions in Nigeria are referred to as Borstal Training Institutes and remand homes. The word 'Borstal' emanates from Borstal Village, where juvenile offenders were kept, situated close to Rochester in Kent, UK.<sup>1</sup> Borstal institutions in Nigeria have come to represent the juvenile face of federal correctional efforts. They were established following Section 31(1) (b) Borstal Institutions and Remand Centre Act of 1962.<sup>2</sup> Its purpose was to serve as a facility for the detention of children and young people who have been convicted of a crime.<sup>3</sup> The purpose of borstal institutions is to ensure that inmates become reformed and are equipped to be re-integrated into society.<sup>4</sup> However there seem to be popular consensus on the failure of borstal institutions to achieve this purpose.<sup>5</sup> The general view is that the distrust of the borstal institution to achieve its purpose might be hinged on the general dysfunctionality of many Nigerian institutions, the aim of this article is to examine the effectiveness of reformatory measures on delinquent young person.

The statutory role of correctional institution is to control juveniles from committing any delinquent act, and help in raising juveniles who have offended and those who need care and protection.<sup>6</sup> The institutions aim to protect, rehabilitate, re-educate and socialize juveniles on norms of behaviour acceptable to the society, as well as prepare them for productive and independent lives after discharge.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Situation and Needs Assessment of HIV and AIDS, Drugs and Related Health Services in Borstal Institutions in Nigeria, 2019, available online at <[https://www.unodc.org/documents/nigeria/Borstal\\_Study\\_Report\\_.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/nigeria/Borstal_Study_Report_.pdf)> accessed 1 May 2021

<sup>2</sup> Borstal Institutions and Remand Centre Act of 1962

<sup>3</sup> National Agency for the Control of AIDS and Nigerian Prisons Service, 'Situation and Needs Assessment of HIV and AIDS, Drug and Related Healthcare Services in Borstal Institutions in Nigeria 2019'(A United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and European Union sponsored study, 2019)

<sup>4</sup>Zakariyya Muhammad Sarki, Aminu Abdullahi and Jamilu Ibrahim Mukhtar, 'The Role of Borstal Homes in Nigeria: Reformation or Remaking Criminality?' (2018) 12(1) Journal of Advanced Research in Social and Behavioural Sciences

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*

<sup>6</sup>AI Oluwafemi and M Abass 'Challenges of Controlling Delinquency and Juvenile Recidivism in Correctional Centre in Ondo State, Nigeria' (2019) 2(2) Applied Research Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 18-37<<https://skies.education/arjhss>>accessed 19 December 2020.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*.

The correctional institutions also provide homes for non-offending juveniles who are victims of circumstances and are in need of care and protection, or those in need of supervision and control, such as orphans, street children and abandoned children. In addition, the main role of the correctional institution is to provide character reform of juvenile offenders through counseling, acquisition of vocational skills, education, socialization and recreational activities with the view of making them useful, self-reliant and responsible citizens, who can be re-integrated back into the society<sup>8</sup>. The role of the correctional institutions is to confine juvenile offenders who have been sentenced in the juvenile court in form of punishment, and as well as to correct the juveniles to become better citizens in the future and in the society through rehabilitation, reformation, re-integration and deterrence.<sup>9</sup>

## **2.0 Methodology**

The study employs both qualitative/quantitative research methodology to ascertain the effectiveness of reformatory measures on delinquent young person in Borstal Training Institute Adigbe, Abeokuta, Ogun State. The population for the study comprised of the entire 61 staff and 328 children in the institute. The Simple random sampling technique was used in selecting the staff for the interview in the borstal home. Thus a total of 10 staff were the respondents relevant to the study and those were the people interviewed.

### **2.1 Instrument Design**

The instruments for data collection was designed by the researcher. There are two instrument to collect data for this study which is: the interview guide for the officials in the Borstal Institution. The instrument were divided into 2 sections. Section 'A' deals with the personal data of the respondents. Section 'B', contained interview guide on the objectives of the study. Section A contained open ended and closed ended items while section B contained the interview guide. The questionnaires and the interview were personally administered by the researcher to the respondents. The researcher employed both descriptive and content analysis to interpret the responses derived from the respondents. This section presents the methodology of the study, it justifies the means by which data for this research was obtained and analyzed. It includes subtopics such as the research design, target population, methods of data collection, sources of data, research instrument and its validation, administration of research instrument, the method of data analysis, the research limitations of the project, the ethical considerations and post research benefits.

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<sup>8</sup> United Nation International Children Education Fund (UNICEF), 'AU Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child' (UNICEF 2001)

<sup>9</sup> OA Idowu, *Criminology: Deviation, Crime and the Society* (Femland Printing Press 2012)

## **2.2 Research Design**

The phenomenology research methodology which is a qualitative method of research will be used to satisfy the objectives of this study.

This research design empowers the researcher to conduct direct investigations, description of the phenomenon, depend on inferences around the targeted populace of the research and analyze data without the aid of quantification of results through statistical summary and it typically involves in-depth interviews and observations without formal measure. The investigation is comprehensively descriptive which allows the researcher to delve into the perceptions, perspectives, understandings, and feelings of the respondents who have actually experienced and living the phenomenon of interest.<sup>10</sup>

The rationale for the adoption of the phenomenology research for this study is that, with first-hand comprehensive data gathered, the researcher understands the study in a new light, makes generalizations of the findings and suggestions on how the issue of the study may be improved.<sup>11</sup>

The main characteristic of qualitative research is that it is mostly appropriate for small samples, while its outcomes are not measurable and quantifiable. Its basic advantage, which also constitutes its basic difference with quantitative research, is that it offers a complete description and analysis of a research subject, without limiting the scope of the research and the nature of participants' responses.<sup>12</sup>

## **2.3 The Population of the Study**

The population of this study consist of the entire staff of the Borstal Training Institution, Abeokuta, Ogun State in the urban region of Abeokuta, the capital city of Ogun State. The total population of the officials and the children in the borstal home are 61 and 328 respectively.

### **2.3.1 Population Distribution**

In this study, the following were considered as the factors for the population distribution, marital status, age, the length of time employed by the organisation. It also comprised of the respondents educational qualification. Given the role of ten staff in the reformative process the researcher only selected respondents assumed to be capable and reliable to give necessary information, subsequently the researcher selected a sample of 10 respondents aged 25years and above. The researcher also selected key informants who included four caregivers and two social workers. The researcher used two

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<sup>10</sup> John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among the Five Approaches*. (SAGE Publications, Inc., 2013) pp.77-83

<sup>11</sup> Judith Bell & Stephen Waters, *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-time Researchers*. (6<sup>th</sup> edn Open University Press, 2014) 182S

<sup>12</sup>Jill Collis and Roger Hussey, *Business Research: A Practical Guide for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003)

sampling techniques which are purposive and convenience sampling. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique which implies that the researcher select respondents who have a purpose to the study. In addition, the researcher purposefully observed children who were above the age of 14. Convenience sampling also called accidental or opportunity sampling was also used. Convenience sampling refers to the collection of information from members of the population who are conveniently available to provide it. The researcher used this sampling technique as she was moving around the borstal home interviewing available children and caregivers.

#### **2.4 Types of Data and Instrument for Data Collection**

The relevant data collected for this study is the primary data. The primary data was collected using the survey method by a structured research instrument to get the opinions of the respondents and collect the information about their knowledge and conviction on the objective of this study. The questionnaire for this study was designed by the researcher. Some changes in the items in the instrument were made based on the view of the supervisor. After exploring several literatures and also considering the expert's opinion the appropriate scales for assessing the adequacy and the efficiency of the reformative measures in Nigeria juvenile delinquency were extracted. The instrument was divided into 2 sections and items.

**Section A** of the instrument comprised of demographical background of the respondents such as age, marital status, educational levels, and so on.

**Section B** sought to measure the respondents' view on the objectives of the study.

#### **2.5 Method of Data Analysis**

Data were analysed manually. This was due to the small sample of the respondents. The responses from the interviews were sorted and ordered into thematic categories deduced from the theoretical propositions and research objectives. The researcher also removed irrelevant information that was gathered during the collection of data.

#### **3.0 Borstal Training Institute, Adigbe, Abeokuta**

This section presents data that was collected through unstructured interviews that took place at the borstal institute, Adigbe, Abeokuta. The institute was established in 1984 to address the total reform and educational/vocational training of children at conflict with the law before reintegrating them to society. It is one of three such institutions in Nigeria and the only one in the southern part of the country. It has a capacity of 100 students with 9 hostels and caters to student mostly from the South-South, South-East and South-West of the country. The duration of stay of the Students is usually between

one to three years. The Borstal institution in Adigbe, Abeokuta, was chosen for this study because it serves the whole of Southern Nigeria, and also as it is the newest, it reflects the challenges of publicly-funded correctional institutions in Nigeria.

The borstal institution at Adigbe, Abeokuta, started out as the Borstal Remand Centre, with the aim of correcting juvenile delinquents through the model of retributive reformation. At the time, it was owned and sponsored by the state government. Since the juvenile delinquents often spend a long time at the institution, some for a span of seven years, there was need to make the institution add value to the young people that it accommodated so that their reintegration into society would be more effective.

The question of changing the institutional outlook of the Borstal Remand Centre was even more emphasised by the need to reduce the incidence of recidivism. In 2011, the Federal Government converted the Borstal Remand Centre to the Borstal Training Institute and it took control of the institution.<sup>13</sup> The Borstal Training Institute, Adigbe, Abeokuta takes only male juvenile delinquents, just like the other borstal institutions across the country. It isn't really clear why this is so, but there is an assumption that there are more male juvenile delinquents than female, and this is hinged on the social belief that male children are more likely to be deviant than female children. This brings up the issue of gender perception in the Nigerian society. This perception is all pervading that, even without any evidence to prove that the assumption that informs the setting up of federal government sponsored correctional and reformatory centres for juvenile delinquents, yet there isn't any attempt to remedy the gender-skewed system.

The institute was constructed on an annular piece of land with chicken wire fence ringed with barbed wire, much like one would see at the prisons. Within the premises there is a library and an administrative office.<sup>14</sup> The institution has a vocational training workshop, and the school has three classrooms. The institution has a total population of 328 students and 61 staff members. The students of the institution are housed in 9 hostels namely Ja'faru Ahmed Hostel, Jemilehin AF Hostel, Obama Hostel, Babalola Hostel, Ogundipe Hostel, Lilly Ojo Hostel, Godwin Abbey Hostel, IG Lawal Hostel, COVID-19 Hostel.

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<sup>13</sup> Interview with Public Relations Officer, Borstal Training Institute (Adigbe, Abeokuta, 31 March 2021)

<sup>14</sup> National Agency for the Control of AIDS and Nigerian Prisons Service, 'Situation and Needs Assessment of HIV and AIDS, Drug and Related Healthcare Services in Borstal Institutions in Nigeria 2019'(A United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and European Union sponsored study, 2019)

**Demographic characteristics of respondents**

**Table 1: Percentage distribution of Sex and Age of the Respondents**

SEX	AGE GROUP			TOTAL
	18-24 years	25-40 years	41 years and above	
MALE	1	1	5	7
FEMALE	0	0	3	3

As shown in Table 1 above, the targeted respondents were 10 out of which 7 of the respondents were male staff while 3 were female staff. This indicated that there were more male staff than female staff at the Borstal Training Institute, Adigbe, Abeokuta. Table 1 also shows that the age of the interviewed staff ranged from 18-24 years, 25-40 years and 41 years and above. One male member of staff interviewed was in the age range of 18-24 years, while another male member of staff was in the age range of 25-40 years. Five of the interviewed male staff were in the age range of 41 years and above. The three female staff members at the Borstal Training Institute, Adigbe, Abeokuta interviewed were all in the age range of 41 years and above. These findings indicate that majority of the members of staff interviewed were male and 41 years and above.

The purpose of the Borstal Training Institute is to reform juvenile delinquents that are admitted. The admitted students are in three categories, to wit; children beyond parental control, children in conflict with the law and children in need of care and protection. Children beyond parental control are juvenile delinquents who demonstrate deviancy and are beyond the disciplinary control of their parents. The children in conflict with the law are juvenile delinquents committed by a court of law because of their status as minors. Often the magistrate issues a warrant that endorses the commission of a juvenile delinquent. Finally the children in need of care and protection are young people found homeless by taskforce officials, some of whom sleep under bridges. The

programmes in place ensure that the admitted students work in teams to build a psychology of belonging. The reformative measures involve the programmes and the training put in place to engage the students towards reformation and for the successful reintegration into society. The students aren't allowed to be idle. This is in the understanding that not engaging them could lead to the sort of interaction that would foment mischief. The programmes that they have, range from religious to reorientation sessions. Before the students are admitted into the institution, they are subjected to psychological evaluation. There are experienced staff members such as psychologists, health officials, social welfare officers, vocational trainers and teachers who operate within their capacity to see the successful reformation of the admitted students. The reformative measures include support groups, parent-interfacing, academics, vocational training, religious sessions and follow-up.

### **3.1 Psychological Evaluation of the Students**

The students, as called by the officials at the borstal institution, are first subjected to psychological evaluation as they arrive the institution.<sup>15</sup> This is to ensure that they are mentally fit to stay there. There are often cases of mentally challenged students who are deviant as a result of their mental state.<sup>16</sup> Another reason for the psychological evaluation is to determine the mental fitness of the students for the programs that they would have to be engaged in during their stay at the institution.<sup>17</sup> The importance of psychological evaluation is often underemphasized within the juvenile justice system in Nigeria, when juvenile delinquency could actually result from mental health issues. A study has shown that socio-economic status has a significant role in the incidence of delinquency in the society.<sup>18</sup> The study further found that broken family system, low family income, poverty and failure of parental control all have significant influence on the incidence of juvenile delinquency.<sup>19</sup> The impact of these factors of these young people can have be quite far-reaching. Bella-Awusah et al. found that the combined effect of poverty, broken family life and lack of educational opportunities, have tremendous consequences for the growth of young people into healthy adults.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Interview with Social Welfare Officer, Borstal Training Institute (Adigbe, Abeokuta, 31 March 2021)

<sup>16</sup> *ibid*

<sup>17</sup> *ibid*

<sup>18</sup> Raymond Adeniyi Akinlotan, Matthias Olufemi Dada OOjoo, Amos Olutunde Abisoye, OOluwassola Abiodun Aina, Martha Abua Edegbai, 'Opinion Survey on Socio-economic Factors of Juvenile Delinquency in Ketu-Adie Owe Community in Ogun State' 1(1) (2017) *International Journal of Social & Management Sciences*,

<sup>19</sup> *ibid*

<sup>20</sup> Tolulope Bella-Awusah, Olayinka Atilola and Olayinka Omigbodun, 'Children within the Juvenile Justice System in Nigeria: Psychopathology and Psychosocial Needs' 8(1) *Annals of Ibadan Postgraduate Medicine*

Olashore et al. found that there was a high incidence of conduct disorder amongst the sample of juvenile delinquents that were remanded.<sup>21</sup> Conduct disorder is a psychiatric condition that was discovered in the late sixties, and has been noted to be a psychiatric diagnosis that is quite prominent in contemporary child psychiatry.<sup>22</sup> At the borstal institution in Adigbe, Abeokuta, it was claimed that the psychiatric evaluation was taken seriously and rarely were juvenile offenders found to have mental health issues after they have been admitted into the institution.<sup>23</sup> However there is the possibility that the poor environment of the institution impacts the mental health of the students negatively.

### **3.2 Support Groups**

Idowu and Muhammed have asserted that poor socialization could be instrumental to delinquency.<sup>24</sup> Poor socialization is contextualized and it is in reference to healthy and uplifting socialization. The implementation of the support groups was to create a fundamental ground for the development of social skills for the students. The support groups are instructional mechanisms through which the students are given psychological assistance. It consists of a social gathering of the students where the students are subjected to moral instructions, and for those that have just arrived at the institution, it is an opportunity to learn the functioning processes of the institution. The support groups are considered very important since they help students integrate into the system and also to adapt to the system and understand the functioning of the institution.<sup>25</sup> In understanding whether the support groups were doing enough to help the students, there was the concern of bullying and of the interaction of students across categorizations that could lead to a further decline in a student's resolve to be reformed.<sup>26</sup> However whether the need for

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<sup>21</sup> Anthony Ademola Olashore, Adegboyega Ogunwale and Timothy Olaolu Adebawale, 'Correlates of Conduct Disorder Among Inmates of a Nigerian Borstal Institution' (2016) 10 *Child Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health*

<sup>22</sup> *ibid*

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Social Welfare Officer, Borstal Training Institute (Adigbe, Abeokuta, 31 March 2021)

<sup>24</sup> Oluwafemi Amos Idowu, and Abass Muhammed, 'Challenges of Controlling Delinquency and Juvenile Recidivism in Correctional Centre in Ondo State, Nigeria' (2019) 2(2) *Applied Research Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*

<sup>25</sup> *ibid*

<sup>26</sup> In the interview with the social welfare in charge of 328 students at the borstal institution in Adigbe, Abeokuta, he admitted that during sessions of the support groups, children beyond parental control, children in conflict with the law and children in need of care and protection get to interact with each other. This is indeed dangerous especially for children in need of care and protection and children brought by their parents on the claim that the children are beyond control as they could become negatively influenced with their peers that have become hardened to the system.

concern is predicated on the quality of supervision, which could not be ascertained by this research. This was because, despite the adequacy of staff to student ratio, the quality of supervision that could only be observed by an ethnographic study. The importance of the support groups were emphasized as necessary to ensure that students are not alienated by the system. The support groups is also a platform that allows for the exchange of experiences by the students.

### **3.3 Parent Interfacing**

Parents have important roles to play in a child's life. In the adolescent years, this role that parents have to play in a child's life is even more emphasized, as parents have to help their children navigate the turbulence of adolescence. Efren Nova found that the role of parents in a child's life is very crucial to the development of that child and very much determines how that child interacts with society as an adult. It was also found that the influence of parenting style is significant where juvenile delinquency is concerned.<sup>27</sup> The centrality of good parenting to prevention of juvenile delinquency has often been a recurring theme in early studies. It was further affirmed by Machteld Hoeve et al that there is a strong link between parenting and delinquency. The study further found that parental monitoring and some other variables held much influence in juvenile delinquency.<sup>28</sup> In further demonstrating how parenting influenced juvenile delinquency, Tapia et al found that neglectful and authoritarian parenting had significant influence on the highest levels of juvenile delinquency.<sup>29</sup> At the borstal institution in Adigbe, Abeokuta, parent-interfacing is considered as one of the measures towards reformation of the students. Especially with the children in the category of Children beyond Parental Control.<sup>30</sup> Parent-interfacing is a process that involves the counselling of parents in regard to their children at the institution, it also involves attempts at reconciling parental issues affecting students at the institution. Parental interfacing is quite important since it has been discovered that there is a high incidence of the students who come from broken families

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<sup>27</sup> Efren Nova, 'The Influence of Parenting Model Toward Juvenile Delinquency and Its Prevention in West Sumatra' (2017) 47(3) *Jurnal Hukum & Pembangunan*

<sup>28</sup> Machteld Hoeve, Judith Semon Dubas, Veroni I Eichelsheim, Peter H van der Laan, Wilma Smeenk, Jan RM Gerris, 'The Relationship Between Parenting and Delinquency: A Meta-Analysis' (2009) 37(6) *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*

<sup>29</sup> Mike Tapia, Leanne Fiftfal Alarid and Courtney Clare, 'Parenting Styles and Juvenile Delinquency: Exploring Gendered Relationships' (2018) 699(2) *Juvenile & Family Court Journal*

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Social Welfare Officer, Borstal Training Institute (Adigbe, Abeokuta, 31 March 2021)

and who have strained relationship with their parents.<sup>31</sup> Many of the parents do not understand the true purpose of the borstal institutions. The social welfare officer at the borstal institution at Adigbe, admitted that parent-interfacing is difficult as it is the case that many parents who have children at the institution aren't happy with their children and blame them, when they could have been the reason for the child's delinquency, however the institution encourage parent interfacing through visitation at least once a month and frequent calls when necessary<sup>32</sup> Parents assume that it's a retributive institution where their children go to pay for their delinquency.<sup>33</sup> Part of the responsibility of the social welfare officer's duties is to attempt to correct the perception of parents in respect of the institution. There are also incidences of students relapsing back to their delinquent behaviour upon getting home and their parents sending them back to the institution for another specific period of time<sup>34</sup>. Some of the parents come and take their children back home after few months even though there is no significant change in the behaviour of the child and are forced to bring them back when the delinquent behaviour is unbearable.<sup>35</sup>

### **3.4 Academics**

Every child has a right to education whether they are in custodial centers or not.<sup>36</sup> In 2019, a newspaper reported that at the Borstal Training Institute, Adigbe, Abeokuta, six inmates were awaiting university admission. It also reported that 15 students were registered for the JAMB exam<sup>37</sup> and that thirteen of the students had scores that were beyond 200. It further reported that the institution registers students for both Junior Secondary School and Senior Secondary School, exams.<sup>38</sup> Education at the borstal institution Adigbe is extremely underfunded. The students often have to work harder to compete with other students outside the institution, and resources trickle in from donors. The school at the borstal institution Adigbe, Abeokuta was established to address the educational needs of the students at the institution. There is

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<sup>31</sup> Interview with Social Welfare Officer, Borstal Training Institute (Adigbe, Abeokuta, 31 March 2021)

<sup>32</sup> *ibid*

<sup>33</sup> *ibid*

<sup>34</sup> Interview with Public Relations Officer, Borstal Training Institute (Adigbe, Abeokuta, 31 March 2021)

<sup>35</sup> *ibid*

<sup>36</sup> UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, art 28

<sup>37</sup> The Joint Admissions and Matriculations Board (JAMB) exam is the entrance exam to higher educational institutions in Nigeria.

<sup>38</sup> Oluwafunmilola Olukomaiya, 'Six Inmates Await Universities' Admission—Official' (*PM News*, 1 October, 2019) <<https://www.pmnewsnigeria.com/2019/10/01/six-inmates-await-universities-admission-official/>> accessed 16 April, 2021

much emphasis placed on character training.<sup>39</sup> The principal of the education section stated that the school has been one of the pillar mechanisms of the borstal institution in the reformation of the students. The parents decide what the students learn at the institution, whether they obtain formal education or train at a vocation. This is because it is assumed that there should be a high level of parental involvement in the reformation process of the students.<sup>40</sup> At the school, one model of reformation is the 'leadership by example'.<sup>41</sup> The school takes into effect the needs of different students, and so there are three categories of students and they are the junior class, senior class and the illiteracy class.<sup>42</sup> The school is challenged on many fronts. It does not have laboratories, and so the students are either studying arts or commerce subjects. The government does not supply everything at the school, some come from donors.<sup>43</sup> This means that many times the school is short on teaching resources.

### **3.5 Vocational Training**

Vocational training at the Borstal Training Institute serves the purpose of keeping students at the institution busy while equipping them with skills that would aid their reintegration back into society. There are about seventy five students who are learning a skill or another.<sup>44</sup> Students at the institution have the opportunity to learn carpentry, tailoring and barbing. Often by the time a student would have spent a year at the institution, they would have learnt some skills.<sup>45</sup> There are students who developed their skills further when they left the institute and are successful. However the students are challenged by the lack of adequate equipment. However there was a newspaper article that reported that the borstal institution at Adigbe, Abeokuta was built a vocational centre that was fully equipped as part of their corporate social responsibility project.<sup>46</sup> The purpose of vocational training at the institution was further emphasized by the gesture. The role of the government in developing the institution is often minimized and comes up in a narrative of neglect. The

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<sup>39</sup> Interview with the Principal of Education Section, Borstal Training Institute (Adigbe, Abeokuta, 31 March 2021)

<sup>40</sup> Interview with the Principal of Education Section, Borstal Training Institute (Adigbe, Abeokuta, 31 March 2021)

<sup>41</sup> *ibid*

<sup>42</sup> *ibid*

<sup>43</sup> *ibid*

<sup>44</sup> Interview with the Vocational Training Officer, Industrial Section, Borstal Training Institute (Adigbe, Abeokuta, 31 March 2021)

<sup>45</sup> Interview with the Vocational Training Officer, Tailoring Section, Borstal Training Institute (Adigbe, Abeokuta, 31 March 2021)

<sup>46</sup> Oluchi Chibuzor, 'Stanbic IBTC Sets up Vocational Training Centre for Young Inmates' (*This Day*, 7 January, 2021)

<<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2021/01/07/stanbic-ibtc-sets-up-vocational-centre-for-young-inmates/amp/>> accessed 16 April, 2021

officers at the vocational training acknowledged that there is a great need to expand the variety of skills available at the institution as vocational training could be the motivation for many of the students to stay away from a life of crime.

### **3.6 Follow-Up**

The follow up is a process that tries to evaluate the effectiveness of the work of the borstal institution. When students are released and ready to be integrated back into society, the institution tries to remain in contact with them.<sup>47</sup> The experience has been that recidivism is likely to occur if the cause of the delinquency is not addressed; factors like environment, parental attention and peer influence could take students back to the life that made them get committed to the borstal institution.<sup>48</sup> There have been quite some successful cases, some who are either in universities or who are doing well as artisans.<sup>49</sup> In following the progress of the students, it was discovered that often they are stigmatized by people in their community.<sup>50</sup> This affects their social integration process. It also causes them to feel a lack of belonging and could drive them towards old friends who could reintroduce them to deviancy. The stigmatization of students who have been released for reintegration into society is based largely on public misconception about the borstal institute and what work it does. It was observed that the retributive character of the Nigerian criminal justice system could be responsible for the negative public perception of correctional institutions like borstal institutes. This negative perception of correctional facilities and their institutional processes isn't just by people in the society, but also by people in government circles.<sup>51</sup> The follow up is necessary for an assessment of the measures at the borstal institution. One of the greatest challenges of the follow up is with parents who bring their children to the institution.<sup>52</sup> They sometimes come back to pick their children who might be feigning to have been transformed by the system, and then after they are out of the system, they go back to being deviant. For those who left

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<sup>47</sup> Interview with the Principal of Education Section, Borstal Training Institute (Adigbe, Abeokuta, 31 March 2021)

<sup>48</sup> Interview with Social Welfare Officer, Borstal Training Institute (Adigbe, Abeokuta, 31 March 2021)

<sup>49</sup> Interview with the Public Relations Officer, Borstal Training Institute (Adigbe, Abeokuta, 31 March 2021)

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Public Relations Officer, Borstal Training Institute (Adigbe, Abeokuta, 31 March 2021)

<sup>51</sup> Interview with Public Relations Officer, Borstal Training Institute (Adigbe, Abeokuta, 31 March 2021)

<sup>52</sup> Interview with the Principal of Education Section, Borstal Training Institute (Adigbe, Abeokuta, 31 March 2021)

the institution to go to the university, some keep in touch with the institution and they brief on their progress.

### **3.7 Perception of the effectiveness of reformative measures at Borstal Training Institute, Adigbe, Abeokuta**

Generally, ex-students and parents of children in the borstal institution reported reformative measures were poor and inadequate. They attributed this to insufficient manpower and equipment which could not match with the population of students. They also reported that health services were minimal and not able to cater for extensive health issues. Students accessed medical care through their sick bay or the institution's clinic. The sick bays were ill-equipped, short-staffed and lacked facility to admit ill students in most of the institutions. Students were not permitted to treat themselves other than take medications prescribed from the sick bay.<sup>53</sup> The sick bays received limited supplies of drugs from government for common illnesses such as malaria, Non-common illnesses such as asthma, tuberculosis are left unattended to by the government, the institute placed heavy reliance on donations from parents and good spirited members of the public in meeting such needs.

Interview with ex-students also revealed that the kitchen utensils were inadequate. The kitchen needed adequate cooking utensils like pots, cooking spoons, grinding machines, bowls, and deep freezers to store edibles. A bigger kitchen and standard dining hall that will occupy all the students during meal period is also required. Regular supply of disinfectants, detergents, chemicals, mowing machines and mosquito nets to protect students from contagious diseases are required. Fumigation equipment and accessories to curtail the menace of insects and rodents in the institution is needed. The furniture for the classrooms and offices are long overdue for replacement. There was also a shortage of manpower, hence the institute need to engage more personnel in academics and a librarian to manage the library. The Information Communication Technology (ICT) unit of the institution should be upgraded and equipped with computers and accessories for effective information management.

Maintenance and repairs of electrical appliances in the classrooms, offices and dormitories is required. More skilled trainers/ instructors are needed especially in the carpentry unit. Replacement of obsolete and worn equipment and regular maintenance, services and repairs of equipment to sustain the available facilities is required. A standard showroom can be built to display finished products and motivate the students. There is need to upgrade the sports facilities in the institution with modern sports equipment. There should

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<sup>53</sup> Interview with an ex-student, Borstal Training Institute (Adigbe, Abeokuta, 31 March 2021)

be specialization training for the sports officers in sports academies/institutions. Trophies should be awarded for sports competitions to encourage adequate participation by the students. The institution should be sponsored regularly by government, non-governmental organizations and donor agencies in sports competition.

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

This study found that borstal institutions are not well equipped enough for the purpose of their establishment as there are structural and administrative deficiencies plaguing the institutions. The structural outlook of the borstal institution is deficient because there seem to be some confusion between retributive objectives and reformative ones. The study further established that borstal institutions have been severely underperforming, because they are critically underfunded. Most of the time they have to rely on charity organizations for their needs and this has a negative backlash on the reformation of delinquent young person. In actual fact, the present structure of the borstal institution, which is characterized by powerlessness and neglect, fosters formation of gangs.<sup>54</sup>

The admission of children without parental care into borstal institutions show that there is a serious problem with the system as some of these children might later be negatively influenced by their peers in the system who are hardened. The perception of society taints the reformation process if there is any success at all. The societal stigma that comes with having been in borstal institution is a reality with far-reaching consequences on reformation as these students could easily find solace in the company of people who could lead them back to crime.

The perception of the society on these people have tremendous effect on the effectiveness of the reformation process as the students could be preparing to be reintegrated into a society that is not willing to accept them. There seem to be an inadequacy of trained officials at the borstal institution that could help with catering for the mental and physical health needs of the students. For instance a report on the Borstal Training Institute reveals that 'there were only two teachers (a National Certificate of Education and Higher National Diploma holder) in the whole establishment catering for different classes of

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<sup>54</sup> FK Auwalu, SN Oluigbo, ML Sagada, 'Inmates' Perception of the Built Environment in Borstal Training Institution, Ilorin, Nigeria' (2016) 9(1) ATBU Journal of Environmental Technology

learners.’<sup>55</sup> The critical under-staffing and quality of staff at the borstal institution reflects on the outcomes. The structural inefficiencies at the borstal institution also affect the reformation process in the sense that they present formidable limitations to the kind of skills that the students can attain. This also has effect on the academic capability of the institution to offer adequate value to those of the students who are undergoing formal education there.

For borstal institutions to achieve their purpose of being established, there has to be some radical interventions to their current administrative and public relations status. Firstly, changing the social perception of borstal institutions would help with eradicating the stigmatization of students who have gone through the system. The social perception of borstal institutions can be changed by public enlightenment on what the institution aspires to achieve. Institutions like the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime can partner with the government in ensuring that the public is enlightened about borstal institutions and how negative social perception can affect their work significantly. There could be television and social media advertisements on why there shouldn’t be a stigmatization of young people who have once been in borstal institutions. Furthermore, letting successful young people address public spaces as ambassadors of the institution would further help with shaping social opinion on the work of the borstal institution.

Governmental support for borstal institutions has to increase to be commensurate with the efforts of charity donations from the private sector. This is because the subhuman conditions that the students live in is a threat to their wellbeing and to their mental health. The critical infrastructure needs of the students and how it affects their development is a threat to their ability to be re-integrated into society since they might be lacking the right kind of skills to cater for their needs when they leave the borstal institutions. Besides the financial support, there should be government interest in the activities and in the outcomes of the institution.

Structural Inefficiencies counter the progress of any institution, and the effect on an institution like the borstal institution is very evident in its relationship with incidences of recidivism. Structural inefficiencies are so devastating to the borstal institution that there are no measurements of their successes and failures. Therefore there is no quantitative knowledge within institutional repositories to assure of their progress. A study found that the configurations of correctional institutions have the ability to influence the increase or

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<sup>55</sup> National Agency for the Control of AIDS and Nigerian Prisons Service, ‘Situation and Needs Assessment of HIV and AIDS, Drug and Related Healthcare Services in Borstal Institutions in Nigeria 2019’(A United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and European Union sponsored study, 2019)

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decrease in the risk of recidivism.<sup>56</sup> The structural limitations of the borstal institutions, especially at Adigbe, Abeokuta is the lack of skilled hands in the daily operations of the institution. The capacity of the deplorable conditions to impact negatively on the psyche of the students is very high, yet they do not have a professional psychologist beyond the social welfare officer, who is only a social worker by training. There need to be a comprehensive review of the system and how it can be sustainably funded. There doesn't seem to be evidence of any good government funding of the borstal institution and many of the students do not look different from those in the adult prisons. If the borstal institutions are going to yield any significant outcome in their operations government must step up to the financial commitment of private corporate responsibility efforts in the borstal institutions.

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<sup>56</sup> Ana Morales Gomez, 'Individual and Structural factor Affecting Recidivism: The Role of Prisoners, Prisons and Places in the Chilean Context' (PhD thesis, University of Manchester 2017)