

REPORT
PRESENTED TO ABLE INTERNATIONAL

QUALITATIVE STUDY

THE REHABILITATION PROCESS CALLED
“THE WAY TO HAPPINESS”¹
AND THE INMATES OF
THE WOMEN’S CENTER OF SOCIAL ADAPTATION (CEFAS)

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¹ **CRIMINON®** ABLE International

ABOUT CRIMINON and ABLE INTERNATIONAL

Criminon International is an international, not-for-profit organization based in the United States. It has the mission to address those factors which produce and precipitate criminal behavior; to rehabilitate and redirect criminals and delinquents into pro-survival patterns of thinking and acting by restoring common-sense values, providing educational tools and life skills, and by providing drug rehabilitation and education to those incarcerated in prisons around the world and to those on probation or parole and to young people at risk of engaging in criminal behavior. And, in addition to this, to assist criminal justice systems to bring about reforms which will accomplish these aims.

The Criminon program is supported by the Association for Better Living and Education (ABLE) International which is a not-for-profit organization based in the United States. ABLE assist programs such as that of Criminon as well as programs in the fields of education, drug rehabilitation and drug prevention and general improvement of the moral standards of our societies. Both the ABLE and Criminon programs utilize the secular technologies for social betterment developed by L. Ron Hubbard.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Patricio Barriga, a Latin-American social scientist, has served in several countries during the last 20 years as communications and social marketing specialist, education advisor, researcher and lecturer. His main concentration has been in the following sectors of development: formal and non-formal education, project design and implementation for rural and depressed urban areas, primary health care with emphasis in community organization, children/women rights, agriculture and natural resources and adult literacy.

Among his numerous research products in Central and South America are:

Principal Investigator for the study “Sexual Behavior Of Adolescents And Young Adults”. German Government Technical Assistance (GTZ), Honduran Government and SIDACOM PROJECT. January 2002 through September 2003.

Principal Investigator And Coordinator For The Special Studies Of Educators”. Improving Educational Quality Consortium (IEQ). Honduras. April 2000–May 2002.

Principal Investigator for the “Infant Lethality Study In Honduran Hospitals”, Ministry of Health, Agency for International Development (USAID). Identification of main responsible of infant deceasing, both, at the community and hospital level. November 1999 - May 2000.

Consultant for the “Behavioral Strategy Training For Health Sector NGOs Managers And Technicians”. BASICS, CARE, USAID. Ecuador, February - March 1996.

Mr. Barriga's publications include:

- *The Educators Seventh Grade, English and Spanish*, IEQ, EDUCATODOS, 2002.
- *Factibilidad Institucional de Telebásica*, English and Spanish, IEQ, Tegucigalpa, 2001.
- *Letalidad Infantil en Hospitales de Honduras*, Ministry of Health, Tegucigalpa, 2000.
- *El Comportamiento Individual, Grupal y el Mercadeo Social*, Tegucigalpa, 1998.
- *ARI Communication Plan*, Tegucigalpa, Honduras, 1988. [ARI stands for Acute Respiratory Infections]
- *ORT Communication Plan*, Tegucigalpa, Honduras, 1988. (Co-author). [ORT stands for Oral Rehydration Therapy]
- *Education Component for PREMI*, Quito, Ecuador, 1985.[PREMI stands for Infant Mortality Reduction Program]

▪ EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report focuses on the impact of the Criminon program intervention – a series of courses including, importantly, a life-skill course entitled, *“The Way to Happiness”*— on a group of women who are in a jail in Honduras, Central America, called the Women’s Center of Social Adaptation (CEFAS is its acronym in Spanish). The study is qualitative and uses an ethnographic methodology with in-depth focus groups and interviews. During the formulation and design of the study it was found that this intervention is based on L. Ron Hubbard’s philosophy and technology expressed in his extensive bibliography covering the rehabilitation of individuals who have transgressed. His words, *“But I will not admit that there is a naturally bad, evil man on Earth”* illustrate the humanistic approach of the technology studied.

It was found that during the intervention in CEFAS, the Criminon program was custom designed and implemented in a manner to fit the inmates’ requirements for rehabilitation and the institutional circumstances. The intervention was flexible and adaptable to unforeseen incidents that took place in the detention center. The contents and procedures of the intervention had been previously established by Criminon; nevertheless, the people in charge of the process made decisions as they went along to give the contents and activities the greatest possible relevance and applicability. The study focused on the changes, both physical and emotional, that took place in the inmates due to this intervention.

In regards to Criminon’s methodology which was studied over a period of several months, the findings indicate that the rehabilitation process occurred in a relatively fast manner, through a dynamic balance between the following elements:

- a. obtaining new data about the best ways to coexist with other human beings;
- b. reflecting on their lives in the light of those data; and
- c. trying and adopting new behaviors.

In the literature read by the author of this report it was found that L. Ron Hubbard emphasizes the importance of restoring self-respect in the criminal as the basis of his or her rehabilitation. He emphasizes that the person becomes a criminal when he stops respecting and trusting himself or herself. He says that when a person has reached that point, he or she is no longer willing to pay attention to his or her own actions, nor to consider their consequences.

It is considered that this is the reason that the processes studied here strongly emphasize the recovery of the person’s self-esteem. In other words, the individual who has transgressed, instead of being stigmatized for his or her crimes, receives help to regain his or her self-esteem. This process takes place through a series of exercises done in human relations workshops, which are combined with data about the rules of human coexistence which, predictably, many interviewed inmates had forgotten or had never known. In this way, they gradually improved their ability to trust themselves and others, in addition to improving their communication skills and learning, at the same time, to respect agreements and make decisions.

The Criminon rehabilitation process has various components which are done in sequence. First, a course on “learning how to learn” provides basic tools for use in study and effective ways to improve comprehension.

Second, a course on basic rules about coexistence or getting along with others provides them with an ethical direction for behavior based upon an understanding of the advantages of acting in such a manner. The course, as well, includes many fundamental survival skills for daily life.

Third, the women were involved in a production project which enabled them to work within the jail and feel productive. “*When the person feels unproductive, his or her self-esteem decreases and he or she feels unproductive,*” said the person who delivered the Criminon intervention.

Fourth, the inmates actively participated in a communication workshop in which they not only improved their oral expression and human relationships skills, but also embarked on a process of knowing themselves better by utilizing tools known as “training routines.” These helped them to develop control of themselves and over their environment so as to better achieve the goals they had set for themselves in life.

Finally, the intervention included a workshop to train some of the inmates in the skills and abilities needed to, themselves, deliver the program. This was done for the purpose of developing a number of inmates who could continue the Criminon intervention in the CEFAS. That is to say, this was a process of training of leaders, who developed the skills necessary to repeat and maintain the rehabilitation program in the Center.

The author noted that the effectiveness of this intervention was supported throughout 2003 and 2004 at the CEFAS in Honduras by guidance by the mother Criminon organization and its licensor, ABLE International.

The study found that the Criminon method is viable in Honduras, and therefore, it will likely be viable in any group of Spanish-speaking people. Accordingly, the Criminon methodology is recommended for application in other jails, prisons and penitentiaries.

INDEX

Executive Summary	3
Index	5
Acknowledgements	7
Qualitative Study	8
1. Introduction	8
2. Background	9
3. Purpose of the study	11
4. Methodology of the study	11
5. Context	13
6. Characteristics of the Criminon intervention	17
7. Description of each step	18
7.1 The technology of study	18
7.2 The workshop course, <i>The Way to Happiness</i>	20
7.3 The process of production	23
7.4 The training routines (TRs) workshop	24
7.5 Workshop for the training of trainers	24
8. Findings	25
8.1 Viability of the method: its efficacy and the responsiveness of the users	25
8.2 Incorporating new practices	26
8.3 Greatly increasing self-esteem	27
8.4 A systematic process for rehabilitation	28
8.5 Application in other detention centers	30
8.6 Testimony about critical areas for the women	38
9. Conclusions and recommendations	46
9.1 Evidence of results	47
9.2 Ingredients of the results which were achieved	48
9.3 Consolidation of the achieved gains	48
9.4 Spreading the results	49
9.5 A system of production and marketing	51
9.6 Toward a systematic process of rehabilitation	51

ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustration 1: THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNING TRIANGLE	pg. 22
Illustration 2: STEP BY STEP	pg. 26
Illustration 3: THE SYSTEMATIC PROCESS OF CRIMINON REHABILITATION	pg. 30
Illustration 4: BEFORE AND AFTER	pg. 33

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1: HONDURAS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

APPENDIX 2: ACRONYMS

APPENDIX 3: DESCRIPTION OF “THE WAY TO HAPPINESS”

APPENDIX 4: HONDURAN VOCABULARY

APPENDIX 5: INSTRUMENTS

APPENDIX 6: BIBLIOGRAFY

APPENDIX 7: TOWAD A SYSTEMATIC REHABILITATION PROCESS

APPENDIX 8: GLOSSARY OF THE CRIMINON INTERVENTION IN THE CEFAS

APPENDIX 9: PROJECT “FLOURISHING-WELLBEING FOR ALL”

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The main investigator (MI) thanks Rubina Qureshi of ABLE International for having entrusted him with the execution of this qualitative investigation, for giving him the opportunity to go into Ron Hubbard's philosophy and the methodologies of Criminon and ABLE for the rehabilitation of individuals who have transgressed, and also for giving him the opportunity to examine and document the results obtained at the Women's Center of Social Adaptation (CEFAS)².

He is grateful to Mariano Pedersoli and Howard Gutfeld for their comments and contributions to the rough drafts of this report. To Elvira Muñoz, who delivered the Criminon intervention and conducted the process called *The Way to Happiness*, for the interviews given and for her patience with the inmates and the members of the study's team.

To all the members of the penitentiary police who work at the CEFAS, starting with its director, Lt. Nolvía Sorto, who collaborated with him and with the study's team for allowing them access to the inmates providing the appropriate logistic facilities. He also thanks them for sharing their own viewpoints.

To the two investigators, Tamia Barriga and Georgina Banegas, who collaborated in the study, especially during the first stage (November 2004) and transcribed the testimonies of the inmates, both from the focus groups and the personal interviews. But, most of all, he thanks the inmates who—with simplicity and trust— contributed to this study sharing their perceptions, ideas, cognitions³, joys and fears. Without their opinions and anecdotes, often moving, this study would have been impossible. The author hopes to have done justice to their testimonies so that other people, deprived of their freedom as they may be, can benefit from the Criminon rehabilitation process.

² See Appendix 1: HONDURAS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, Rubina Qureshi, September, 2004

³ See Appendix 8: GLOSSARY OF ABLE'S CRIMINON INTERVENTION IN THE CEFAS.

QUALITATIVE STUDY

THE REHABILITATION PROCESS CALLED “THE WAY TO HAPPINESS” AND THE INMATES OF THE WOMEN’S CENTER OF SOCIAL ADAPTATION (CEFAS)

1. INTRODUCTION

This is the final report on the qualitative study conducted by the main investigator (MI)⁴ and his two assistants in November and December of 2004 and March of 2005. The subject of the study was the impact of the rehabilitation intervention by Criminon, an organization licensed under the Association for Better Living & Education (ABLE) International. The intervention was called here “*The Way to Happiness*”⁵ and was carried out on a group of inmates of the Women’s Center of Social Adaptation (CEFAS) during said time.

The conceptual foundation of the intervention studied. It is based on the philosophy and technology of L. Ron Hubbard⁶, expressed in his extensive bibliography about the improvement of individuals through self-knowledge --which includes those who have transgressed--. One of his quotes expresses the humanistic⁷ orientation of the Criminon intervention in the CEFAS: “*I admit that a human being can become so aberrated as to constitute a menace to the bulk of the society and that in such a case it is necessary to reacquaint him with society. But I will not admit that there is a naturally bad, evil man on Earth.*”⁸

The effects of this intervention are described and analyzed in this document.

As to the manner of implementation, the main characteristic of the Criminon intervention in the CEFAS is that it was custom-designed and implemented. That is to say, it was adapted to the inmates’ rehabilitation requirements, to their concerns and circumstances. It even was able to adjust to unexpected incidents which occurred during the intervention in the prison center. The basic contents and procedures of the intervention had been previously established by Criminon, nevertheless, the individuals in charge of directing the process were able to make decisions as they went along to give the contents and activities the maximum possible relevance and applicability.

Even though the study was initially designed to concentrate on the “*The Way to Happiness*” course, it ended up including other essential components to the rehabilitation of the inmates. These components were the study technology course, the production process, the communication or “training routines” (TRs) workshop and the workshop to

⁴ See Appendix 2: ACRONYMS

⁵ Called this because of the first component of this process. See Appendix 3: Description of “*The Way to Happiness.*”

⁶ While L. Ron Hubbard is widely recognized as the Founder of the Scientology religion, the author found the materials used in the Criminon program to be wholly secular and noted that the intervention did not proselytize for Scientology or any other religion.

⁷ Understood as a vital attitude based on an all-embracing conception of human values.

⁸ “Ron, The Humanitarian, The Road to Self-Respect.” 1996. ISBN 1-57318-022-X .

train people to train others. These new stages of the Criminon intervention had an organic evolution, as the management personnel detected the needs of the group of inmates who participated. In any case, these components were foreseen in the original Implementation Plan, even though the dates and the order of their execution⁹ had not been fully established. This qualitative study covers all the stages implemented through March 2005, although the program continued to be implemented. The present study focused on the changes, both mental and physical, which took place among the inmates due to this intervention.

The findings described here are based on statements made by the interviewees and on the direct observations made by the PI about the inmate's behaviors and that of the penitentiary police within the CEFAS. This report contains a summary of the statements expressed during the focus groups and interviews-in-depth, written evaluations of each workshop and the PI's inferences based on the information gathered during his visits to the CEFAS. The PI had the opportunity to visit the CEFAS facilities several times in order to gather data from the inmates. He interviewed the director of the CEFAS three times and the person who delivered the Criminon intervention on several different occasions.

The perceptions of the individuals interviewed which have been transcribed and commented on in this report express, according to the author, the feelings of most of the interviewees and best describe the scene which was studied. Some of the opinions voiced by the interviewees are confidential, due to the delicate (and, in some cases, ambiguous) situation of the prisoners. For this reason, some of the written testimonies are kept anonymous. In any case, the statements – that come from the analysis – and that are expressed here, as well as the conclusions at the end of the documents, are the sole responsibility of the author.

2. BACKGROUND

Honduras is one of the countries most affected by violence and poverty in the Western Hemisphere. Its population manifests an enormous political naivety and apathy about the realities of political and socio-economic conditions. Thus, it is a priority to find the best options, both to answer to the overwhelming impoverishment and to find the optimum methods to rehabilitate those who have transgressed. This study hopes to contribute to both.

In November 2004 at the request of Rubina Qureshi, Vice-President of ABLE International, this investigator designed the study of the impact of the intervention for rehabilitation called "*The Way to Happiness*."¹⁰ The purpose of the intervention was to recover the social capabilities of the inmates and to provide them with skills to function efficiently inside and outside of jail. The initial course, given by Ms. Elvira Muñoz, was followed by additional interventions described below, which were also addressed in the

⁹ See Appendix 1: ABLE Implementation Plan, work mentioned.

¹⁰ See Appendix 3: DESCRIPTION OF THE WAY TO HAPPINESS

study. All of these were oriented to contribute to the rehabilitation of the CEFAS' inmates. Therefore, in this document we refer to the subject of this study as "the Criminon intervention in the CEFAS."

The notion of "*steel door justice*," which is indisputably the main policy of the State to fight crime in Honduras, has been applied in the whole country for several years, especially with young people. It seems that this policy is greatly supported by most citizens, according to the results of recent independent surveys. Nevertheless, the author considers that those opinions can easily change in favor of rehabilitation as the main policy of the justice system.

L. Ron Hubbard's reasoning and the Criminon intervention in the CEFAS offer a pragmatic alternative to the current policy or, at least, a complementary approach. This can be seen in the Introduction to the article "The Criminal College", by L. Ron Hubbard, published in the book "Ron, The Humanitarian, The Road to Self-Respect"¹¹.

For all the talk of "steel-door justice" and "get tough on crime"¹², the majority of those working within the prison system have thoroughly decried the fallacy. "If we continue with our vengeful attitude toward criminals (poor minorities, the mentally ill, those who have nothing to lose)," wrote *Prison Life* editor Richard Stratton, "the violence will only get worse until there is an all-out war between the haves and have-nots." While more simply, and rather more to the point, [L. Ron Hubbard] declared: "The effect of punishment on a criminal is to confirm that behavior, and cause him to insist upon it." As revealed in this previously unpublished essay from 1938, the concern is not a new one and [Mr. Hubbard's] views have long remained firm: However else we define a penal institution – a reformatory or a house of correction – these are first and foremost places where the criminal is molded where he is as thoroughly stamped with the imprint of his "college" as any ivy-league alumni. Upon his graduation, and regardless of his particular major, he is almost certainly prepared "to prove himself worthy of the only fraternity which ever took any interest in him."

The Criminon intervention in Honduras began in July 2004 with the course, *The Way to Happiness*, and progressed little by little, to new stages, due to the enthusiasm of the Honduran authorities, the inmates' acceptance and especially the decision of the country's First Lady, Mrs. Aguas Ocaña de Maduro.

¹¹ 1955. ISBN 1-57318-022-X

¹² The underlining was made by the author of this report.

3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to look for evidence showing the impact of the Criminon intervention on the inmates of the CEFAS. Overall, this intervention, in this document, is called "*The Way to Happiness*"¹³.

By "impact" we mean the possible contributions to the rehabilitation of the inmates, during the time they carried out their jail sentences.

By "rehabilitation," the author means the development of the ability of each inmate to take responsibility for her actions and the consequences of her interaction with other people, with the objects around her and with herself. This includes having respect for herself again and to possess the clarity to analyze life's situations here and now and, then, make the best decisions for her survival.

The main questions this study sought to answer were:

- To what extent and how did Criminon accomplish the rehabilitation of women deprived of their freedom in the CEFAS?
- How feasible is it to extrapolate the experience to other jails in the country and in the region?
- What adaptations can be introduced to achieve the best effect in the rehabilitation of individuals who are deprived of their freedom?

Simultaneously, this study noted part of the Honduran vocabulary through the interviews done. The vernacular terms often show cultural characteristics that help to understand the reality studied.¹⁴

4. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

After preparing the instruments for the collection of data, the main investigator and his two assistants proceeded to develop and pre-test the instruments necessary for the collection of data. Having verified the validity and pertinence of the questions, we carried out the focus groups with inmates selected among the group known as "paisa"¹⁵. The focus groups were programmed for a duration of 45 to 60 minutes, but they actually took up to two hours due to the enthusiasm of the participants.

¹³ "*The Way to Happiness*" is also the title of the book written by L. Ron Hubbard and the course given at the CEFAS.

¹⁴ See APPENDIX 4: HONDURAN VOCABULARY

¹⁵ "Paisa" is the name the inmates have given themselves to differentiate themselves from those who belong to the gangs called "maras."

The in-depth interviews with the informants chosen , both inmates and penal guards, lasted from 30 to 90 minutes.¹⁶

There were four focus groups with inmates who participated in the Criminon intervention: two at the beginning of the intervention and two others three months later. No inmate participated in more than one focus group.

The inmates who attended the focus groups were those who participated in the *The Way to Happiness* course and in the subsequent activities.

In all fifteen interviews were done with:

- a. inmates who participated in the CRIMINON intervention;
- b. inmates who did not participate in the CRIMINON intervention;
- c. prison guards; and,
- d. other people, such as the person who delivered the program and the CEFAS director.

In two interviews, a penitentiary police officer stayed close to the interviewer and the interviewee, complying with safety regulations of the jail. However, in the focus groups and in most of the interviews there was no one present other than the members of the study group and the inmates. The Criminon facilitator was never present or near the location where the focus groups and the interviews took place.

Besides the interviews and focus groups, direct observation of the inmates' behavior within the CEFAS was done, always in the social areas that the main investigator was authorized to visit. The investigators did not visit the modules where the inmates sleep and eat.

The collection of data was done in two stages. The first one during November 2004 and the second one during January and February of 2005.

The methodology used was that of qualitative investigation. In other words, the main emphasis was placed on the nature of the phenomena studied rather than on statistical aspects. However, certain elements of magnitude such as "most," "all of" and "a few interviewees" are expressed in some sections of the report.

With this information the situation was described as accurately as possible so the reader gets a clear idea of the reality studied: the impact of the *The Way to Happiness* intervention in the rehabilitation process of these women, who are deprived of their freedom.

Even though it was not this study's intention to make "before and after" the intervention comparisons, the fact that the collection of data was interrupted during Christmas recess

¹⁶ See Appendix 5: INSTRUMENTS FOR THE COLLECTION OF DATA, INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

allowed us to establish certain changes that had taken place in what the participating inmates did, thought, and felt.

This means that we obtained clear evidence that certain changes which occurred in them can be said – with great certainty – to have been produced by the Criminon intervention. These changes are documented in the Findings section.

To better understand the subject of the study, the main investigator collected and analyzed data and, simultaneously, compiled a general approximation to the reality to which the CEFAS belongs, the prison system and the Honduran society. For this purpose, he studied:

1. recent documents that analyze the Honduran reality¹⁷;
2. bibliography about the social economic aspects of the country;
3. documents produced by ABLE International.

5. CONTEXT

It would be impossible to reach the objective proposed for this report without understanding the reality of the country. For this reason, we describe in this section some aspects of the Honduran society that are directly related to the rehabilitation of people who have transgressed and have been confined to prison. Awareness of the country's conditions validates the efforts of the First Lady, the penitentiary authorities, Criminon and ABLE International to improve this scene.

5.1. Justice System

Most of the Honduran inmates of the CEFAS are people of scarce economic resources and a low education level. In Honduras, wrong-doers with greater purchasing power, the “white collar criminals,” seldom go to jail and, if they do, they are soon freed. And this is not a secret. The handling of the most recent embezzlements in public entities, drug trafficking and corruptible customs employees have demonstrated that some of the officials of the three pillars of the State (Executive, Legislative and Judicial) make freedom easy, directly and indirectly, for those who transgress. Even the actions of some senior officials have given reason for the media and human rights organizations – national and foreign – to question their integrity. It can be stated, then, that the justice system is still very weak despite the efforts of the President of Honduras and of international help organizations to strengthen it.

5.2 Toward an Occidental Mentality

The first impression that a foreigner gets of Honduras is usually a very pleasant one. A soft landscape without great (apparent) contrasts, a kind and accessible population, cities

¹⁷ See Appendix 6: BIBLIOGRAPHY

relatively organized. The observer can even be convinced, on an external view, that the institutions are functional, that they have the ability to respond, to a large extent, to the challenges of the new millennium. There are even routine procedures that turn out to be very expeditious, such as the acquisition of a driver's license, the renewal of a resident's visa and the payment of indirect taxes. But, little by little, perhaps in only a few days, the conscientious visitor notices that only the forms of this society are occidental. "Occidental" in this context means seeing the world as an interdependent whole, with observable causes and effects, both in the social aspect and in the physical world.

5.3 A beautiful landscape

While Honduras is noted for the beauty of both its physical landscape and of its people, through years of close contact with the society, the author is also aware of many substantial problems. Both social and structural factors have contributed to the societal problems which exist today. These problems create especially difficult challenges for the young people of Honduras today.

The population of individuals younger than 25 years of age has increased substantially, due in large part to the effective strategies used for childhood survival, implemented toward the end of the past century. But the institutions and families in Honduras were not prepared to satisfy the new demand. A study in the health sector indicates: "*The decade of the eighties, besides dramatic political occurrences in Honduras (and Central America), brought to this country an event little appreciated by the following generations: the substantial reduction of childhood mortality. From 85 dead for each 1,000 born alive (in 1985), the death rate of children younger than 5 years of age dropped to 39.8 in 1990 (ENESF, 1992). Considered an extraordinary accomplishment, Honduras... showed the world what an integrated program... can accomplish. Nevertheless, while becoming the champion in the region on the subject of children's survival, Honduras accomplished modest advances in the subject of increasing basic education, homes, job opportunities for young people and adults, self-managed companies and, especially, the reduction of fertility.*"¹⁸

5.4 A State of Apathy

Honduras has a weak economy and depends greatly on the United States of America, a country which has been its financial and political partner for over one hundred years. Its institutions are still fragile; the agreements for coexistence, which is to say the laws, regulations and statutes do not always apply equally to all the social groups. The harmony among the different sectors is increasingly frail and the perception of corruption is very wide. The extreme poverty of 75% of the population, the low productivity and the polarization among social groups show the vast majority to be in a state of hesitancy and apathy made worse by horizontal aggression.

¹⁸ Barriga, Patricio. Report of the study "Sexual Behavior of Adolescents and Young Adults in Workers' Communities," Tegucigalpa, 2002.

The gangs, known as “maras,” that have caused so much pain to the entire society, are a social phenomenon inspired by the gangs of New York and Los Angeles. But also from the North come, expressed in different ways, hope, noble behavior and righteous and honorable thinking. This intervention in the CEFAS is an example of that.

5.5 Poverty

“Balance Honduras 2004”¹⁹, prepared by the Social Forum of Foreign Debt and the Development of Honduras (*Foro Social de la Deuda Externa y Desarrollo de Honduras* or *FOSDEH*), describes the current situation as follows:

“If living in Honduras is hard, surviving is even harder. According to CEPAL (La Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe or The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean), at least seven out of every ten families live in poverty and four of them in extreme poverty, and that is not a simple play on words. Extreme poverty is absolute marginality and about two million people who make less than two dollars a day are in that condition. To them, the official indications that the economic crisis is almost behind them are not credible.”

Honduras subscribed to an agreement to fight against poverty with very specific goals. Let us see what the United Nations Program for Development (PNUD) report says:

“If Honduras fulfilled the Goals of the Millennium that it subscribed to in the year 2000, along with other 188 nations, by 2015 it would have had to reduce to one half the amount of people that suffer hunger in this country, and the boys and girls in a state of malnutrition would represent 17.5% but the advances don’t point in that direction: from 1991 to 2001 the malnutrition rate in children increased from 34.9 to 36.2% and, if the trend continues, in 2015 it will have increased to 38.1%.”²⁰

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL) has concluded that ***“considering the current indicators for Honduras, it would take 240 years to reach the Goals for the Millennium”***.²¹

5.6 Delinquency and Corruption

The opinion of Honduran people, according to LatiNetwork Dichter & Neira²² regarding delinquency and corruption, indicates that ***“For most Hondurans, delinquency and corruption are still the country’s main problems. Delinquency is considered the main problem by 24% of the population and corruption by 19%. In the next to the last survey, done in September 2004, delinquency worried 18%, but now it increased to***

¹⁹ FOSDEH, Col. Alameda, Av. Tiburcio Carías Andino, Casa No. 1011, Apdo. Postal 1248, Tegucigalpa, Honduras. Phone/fax: (504) 239-2110. E-mail: fosdeh@calecolor.hn Web page: www.fosdeh.net

²⁰ Programa de Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, 2003. (PNUD).

²¹ Pedro Morazán, 2004, CEPAL.

²² Published by *El Heraldo* on February 7th, 2005.

24%, which indicates that, despite penal reforms, the sense of social insecurity is present in the citizens of Honduras.”

“As to corruption, the situation seems to be similar, leaving a bad taste in Hondurans’ mouths knowing that impunity and larceny continue from the structure of the State. The subject of corruption concerns the citizens of the capital, Tegucigalpa, as well as San Pedro Sula’s inhabitants²³, but insecurity concerns people even more in San Pedro Sula... Corruption worried 13% of the population in May 2004, 16% in September 2004 and currently 19.4%.”

5.7 Magical Thinking

Most of the population’s thinking is magical²⁴. This statement, which might seem exaggerated, is a proper description necessary to understand the different social phenomena that disconcert the middle class in Honduran society and the external observers. There is the generalized belief that only a stroke of luck can help one prosper. Using this thesis it is possible to approach -- with a possibility to understand it -- the current reality, where extreme poverty is endemic despite the natural riches of this territory. The average Honduran suffers from a deeply rooted dependence on destiny and maintains the firm conviction that success depends, to a great extent, on chance that is out of his/her control. This is a social characteristic widely spread throughout society. Due to this, the population of six million is easy prey to dogmatic religions, venal politicians, and snake charmers.

One of the characteristics that is most striking to the visitor is that, in Honduras, the population of all different strata is always expecting to receive permanent donations. The origin of this attitude probably traces back to the many years of international handouts given to solve the problems of the population, the state sector and even private sector companies. During the first days of gathering data, the main investigator was asked for donations by the inmates. These requests only ceased when they realize that they would not achieve anything with them.

To this magical mentality we must add the powerful desire – considered legitimate by most – to obtain a fortune in a quick and effortless manner, just the way the mass media present it. This attitude has contributed to the exodus of millions of young individuals to the United States of America and to a search for profitable activities selected without great scruples or ethical restrictions. The increasing number of people deported and confined to prison confirm this fact.

²³ San Pedro Sula is a city known as the industrial capital of Honduras, for its strong enterprising spirit.

²⁴ That is, depending on fate, fatalist.

6. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CRIMINON INTERVENTION

6.1 Stages of the process

The Criminon intervention in the CEFAS was initially planned to offer only the “Way to Happiness” course. However the successes achieved by the inmates – and the evident progress toward their rehabilitation – encouraged the national authorities and the executives of Criminon and ABLE to expand the program. As was stated in the beginning of this document, all of these subsequent developments were brought about by ABLE and Criminon providing the Criminon rehabilitation technology.

By the end, the following components had been implemented as part of the rehabilitation process with the inmates of the CEFAS.

- a. “The Way to Happiness”
- b. “The Technology of Learning How to Learn”
- c. “The Process of Production”
- d. “Communication Skills” and
- e. “Teaching of teachers”

6.2 A custom-made intervention

The most important attribute of the Criminon methodology is that, as part of the Criminon approach, each activity delivered to the inmates had been customized in its use. Accordingly there was no waste of energy or uncoordinated actions needed to fill in missing pieces. Rather the facilitator actively and closely directed the application of the technology, constantly adapting it, among other things, to the objectives of rehabilitation and to the problems and upsets of the inmates. Each session was directed toward the achievement of specific objectives so that each inmate would be able to recover or achieve skills in getting along with others.

6.3. Methodological rigor and flexibility

Far from contradicting each other, these two attributes of the Criminon process complement each other. The simultaneous management of these two factors is probably critical in the achievement of the results testified to by the inmates who participated in this study. These variables are:

- a) the exact use of the Criminon technology; and
- b) a flexibility in its application

These two factors focus directly upon the rehabilitation of the inmates in their existing situations, always avoiding excessive emphasis on theory. Although addressing pre-existing conditions and incidents is important in the process of achieving self-acceptance, the greater emphasis is placed on learning to control current life situations, which, in the final analysis, is where new patterns of conduct are observed among those inmates who

have been involved in this rehabilitation process.

6.4 Individual necessities and those of society

Putting these two variables into play, the facilitator engaged in a constant exercise of the planning of activities, making decisions concerning the proper procedures for the implementation of the activities, while always keeping in mind the precise technology of Criminon. In this manner, each component of the intervention was adjusted to the needs of the inmates and to further the welfare of the society. The Criminon intervention takes care that each step taken in this process will benefit the person undergoing rehabilitation as well as the society which that person is going to reenter.

7. DESCRIPTION OF EACH STEP

7.1 The Technology of Study

The introduction to the process of Criminon rehabilitation is the course, the “Technology of Study,” which helps the participants to understand the basics of learning and provides them with exact skills to overcome the barriers which they will encounter while studying.

The Technology of study “is not speed-reading or memory tricks. These have not been proven to raise one’s ability to comprehend what was studied or to raise literacy. Study Technology shows how one studies in order to comprehend a subject so one can apply it.”²⁵

This component offered the inmates skills for studying, skills which this study found to be fundamental in their process of rehabilitation. If one does not understand the written word, they will progress very slowly in learning more complex skills. This innovative component, furthermore, provides the capability of distinguishing between highly theoretical learning and practical learning, which is what these women need above all else.

In the beginning sessions of the Technology of Study, the women learned that the first obstacle which they had to overcome is that “you cannot study a subject if you think you know all about it to begin with.”²⁶

Next they learned about the barriers to study, an essential subject to address difficulties in learning.

²⁵ ²⁶ ²⁷ THE TECHNOLOGY OF STUDY, Based on the works of L. Ron Hubbard, Bridge Publications, Inc. Los Angeles, CA, 1994 ISBN 0-88404-978-7

The first barrier, the absence of mass.

This means that an inmate will have difficulty learning something without having contact with the physical object or objects which comprise the content of the specific subject. The example given in the book shows a person studying about the operation of a tractor without the presence of the tractor. Such an absence of mass will make the inmate feel squashed. “Photographs or motion pictures can help because they represent the promise or hope of the mass...”²⁷

The inmates, who have very little experience in schools, stated that the greater part of their learning had been theoretical and, at times, incomprehensible, leading, consequently, to difficulties in application.

The second barrier, too steep a gradient.

If one moves suddenly from a simple subject to one that is too complex, this indicates that he has hit too steep a gradient. Thus, in order to be able to learn effectively, a gradual, step by step approach to the material being studied is necessary, moving from the easy to the difficult, from the simple to the complex, from the objective to the subjective. Too abrupt a jump from one step to another can cause confusion and interrupt the learning process, regardless of the age or intelligence of the inmate.

Making a comparison with their own lives, many of the inmates in the CEFAS came to the conclusion that **“we have skipped a step, because we were impatient and did not wait to follow the correct paths to achieve our objectives.”** This point was truly revealing for them, as during the Technology of Study course, they realized that, when breaking the law, they had produced an emptiness in their lives which had led them to jail, thereby making it difficult for them to achieve their personal and familial goals.

The third barrier, the misunderstood word.

“An entirely different set of physical reactions can occur when a person is reading and goes past a word without understanding its meaning. A ‘not-there’ feeling and a sort of nervous hysteria (excessive anxiety) can follow that. The confusion or inability to grasp or learn comes after a word that the person did not have defined and understood.”²⁸

The most important aspect of this component was that the inmates learned to solve the problems related to study. That is, by identifying the barriers to study, they learned to solve whatever study problems might present themselves in the future.

²⁸ The Technology of Study. Op cit.

7.2 The workshop course, “The Way to Happiness”

This is another critical component of the Criminon intervention and fills the function of orienting the participants to the context on which they will build their rehabilitation. The author has described this as a “workshop-course” because simultaneously the inmates were given information and carried out exercises relating to that material.

The author has concluded (based on interviews with the facilitator and his reading of the Criminon texts) that in this intervention many elements are combined which focus directly on increasing the level of survival – understanding this to mean living better, and, in the instance of the CEFAS, literally surviving. Accordingly, the workshop-course offers not only data necessary for emotional and physical survival – as expressed in the 21 precepts of the book – but also it gives the inmates confidence that these precepts of *The Way to Happiness*, without the slightest doubt, will help them obtain a more fulfilling life.²⁹

The activities were carried out in two groups, one in the morning and the other in the evening. The program lasted for seven weeks, with three weekly workshops of three hours each for each group. The course took the participants through the twenty-one precepts which are laid out and discussed in the book, *The Way to Happiness*, written by L. Ron Hubbard in 1981.

During the course the participants were exposed to basic data with which a person can live in harmony with herself, and with her social environment and her physical surroundings. According to the author of the book: “This is the first nonreligious moral code based wholly on common sense.” Each precept was explained with the practical benefits which it affords to the individual who follows it, rather than as a dogmatic command. The logic of each precept was fully and completely discussed in the context of the workshop. The facilitator used numerous illustrative examples which enable the participant to see clearly the way in which each precept operates, with its nuances, connections and applications. Also addressed were possible erroneous interpretations which might be occasioned by the local culture or individual aberrations. Only when the precept had been exhaustively discussed and absorbed by each participant would the facilitator continue on to the next precept.

The course took place with a high level of participation from the inmates who attended. Initially in their eagerness to achieve maximum participation, the CEFAS authorities had stipulated that attending the course would be mandatory. However, they quickly changed this decision and announced that such attendance would be voluntary. Thus the inmates attended because they had clearly understood the benefits of learning this material.

Fifty-six inmates regularly attended *The Way to Happiness* course. Most of them did not miss a single session. When someone, due to outside circumstances, missed a workshop, they were rapidly caught up, using *The Way to Happiness* book. One copy of this book was supplied to each of the participants. The facilitator was extremely satisfied with the level of achievements they reached. The method she used to share the content of *The Way*

²⁹ See Annex 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE ROAD TO HAPPINESS. Op cit.

to Happiness involved a high level of participation, but its main attraction was the connection which she established between the precepts and the personal reality of the CEFAS inmates. The human relations skills and the rapport of the facilitator were fundamental factors in the success of the course.

Using the technique of anecdotes and examples, the facilitator succeeded in getting them to see practically their own histories and references to their daily lives in the material which she presented. The attention and dedication which the inmates brought to the course, according to the observations of the Principal Investigator, were ample both in quality and in the amount of time given. At the final step of each workshop (called talk, or chat, by the women) one could hear complaints that the meeting had ended.

A Learning Community

From the beginning of the program, the facilitator created a relationship based on trust and rapport³⁰ between herself and the participants. In this way a space for work and interaction was established which could be called a **“learning community”**. This agreement served as the basis for the entire social process which would occur and constituted a fundamental element in the inmates’ personal development.

After each workshop or session it was common to see the inmates insisting that the facilitator continue with her presentations. Also, it was observed that some of the inmates sought private meetings with the facilitator in order to have personal consultations. It was clear that a strong bond was established between the inmates and the facilitator. She explained that **“in order to truly help them it was necessary to be with them completely. That implied helping them with whatever was needed in order that they could become causative and not at effect... I tried not to create dependency, I never gave them money or things.”**

The **“learning community”** played an important role in the process of rehabilitation, as it created, little by little, a “culture of redemption” for past misdeeds. At the beginning of the process it might have seemed shocking that some of the inmates had actually decided to conduct themselves well. Some did not want to admit, for example, that it was necessary to respect official authority. But within the **“learning community”** the women were able to express themselves freely without being judged. Each knew that she had much to learn and in that environment they were able to practice their first conduct in accordance with the precepts of *The Way to Happiness*.

Rapport, Agreement and Two-Way Communication

The backbone of the “learning community” was the rapport (or empathy) established between the inmates and the facilitator. In order to create an environment conducive to learning – and for the trying out of new behaviors – Criminon provided an atmosphere based on trust and in which agreements were always kept -- that is, the facilitator was always present at each moment of the workshops. There were no delays or forgetfulness

³⁰ From the French word, a relationship based on harmony, agreement and affinity.

nor “reasons why”, which are very common in Honduran society. On top of this, was verbal two-way communication (which was always “two-way”) so that each of the inmates always had the opportunity of getting explanations about whatever matter she did not understand.

These three elements (two-way communication, a climate of trust and agreements which were met) allowed the terms of the learning community to be established; a community in which new interpersonal relations underwent a positive change that the inmates and anyone who observed them could easily perceive. These three elements became a tool which, at times, served as a constant point of reference or, one could say, as a stable datum.

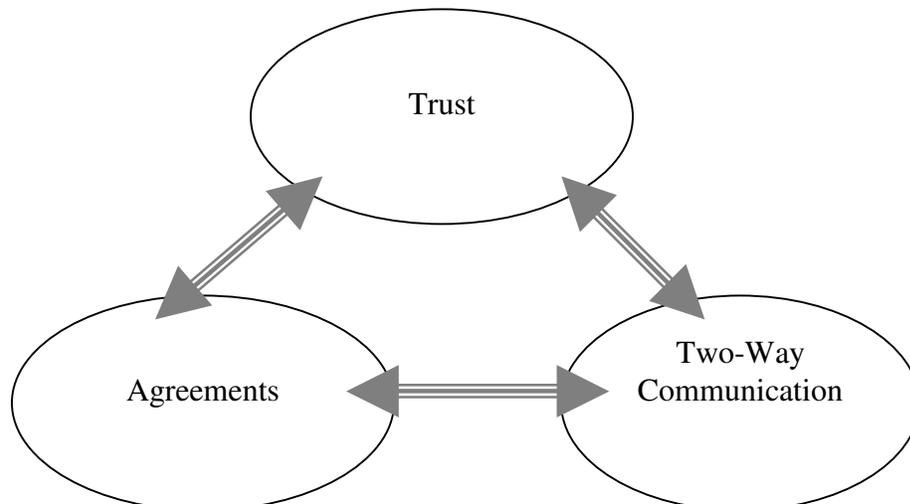
The atmosphere of trust contributed to a productive and empathetic relationship between those who participated in the process of interacting with other human beings. This found expression in emotional aspects such as congeniality, respect, cordiality and, as said previously, rapport.

The agreements among the members of the learning community included those of the facilitator and the inmates’ efforts to remain unwavering in their new behavior. These also applied to situations in which there were disagreements, conflicts and oppositions. These were handled appropriately to avoid causing increased difficulties and, even more, to find ways to enrich their relationships.

Two-way communication was indispensable in order to achieve the understanding and synergy among the members of the learning community. Such communication established a mature and productive interchange of ideas, emotions and actions to create a healthy and productive environment that, little by little, took the inmates away from their sometimes harmful behavior.

“The interaction among these three categories,” the emphasized facilitator, “makes a civilized and productive coexistence possible.” And the views of the inmates showed that when they applied these lessons, “everything goes better.” (See figure 1.)

Figure 1 THE TRIANGLE OF THE LEARNING COMMUNITY



Recognition of participation

The Way to Happiness course, just as all of the courses offered to the inmates, ended with a simple ceremony in which, by way of recognition, they were given diplomas that acknowledged the participation and accomplishments of each of the inmates who attended. These diplomas, it should be noted, were greatly appreciated by the inmates because, in addition to the recognition which they entailed, they were used at times to obtain certain privileges such as conjugal visits (if certain other requirements were met), telephone calls and other benefits.

The principal investigator can attest that the diploma for this course was particularly appreciated by the inmates. Questioned about this, they said that although the formal recognition of their acquired skills was greatly appreciated, more important was the learning, the cognitions which they had obtained concerning their own lives and how the world works.

7.3 The process of production

When, through the process described previously, the participants reached the point of assuming responsibility for their actions, and when they had developed new understandings concerning their situations as prisoners, as mothers, wives and friends – and even as lamentable protagonists and accomplices of crime – the process of rehabilitation reached a new stage: production.³¹

This component played a very important role in the process of rehabilitation because the remunerated work brought with it a new understanding of one's personal worth. Each person interviewed told of feeling newly productive when they began the production step.

The manufacturing of various items allowed the inmates to feel productive again. This is extremely important in the recovery of the person's emotional balance lost (in almost all cases) when the person was sent to prison.

The professional experience of the facilitator enabled her to conclude that there is no possibility of rehabilitation unless the person feels productive. She said to us: "Feeling unproductive, the person falls in self-esteem and loses self-confidence."

In effect, production changes the way they see themselves and the world around them because it is a way to interact with it again. We note that through the fact of being incarcerated, these women moved involuntarily into a state of alienation from society. Paid work reconnected them with the society.

Additionally, and no less important from the economic aspect, the manufacture of objects required by the community made it possible for one to obtain some income. This work was carried out in the free time of the inmates, which was substantial.

³¹ See Attachment 9: BEGINING TO FLOURISH – SUCCESS FOR ALL

In light of what has been explained above, the facilitator organized some activities directed to the attainment of funds which would give them the start-up capital for the development of articles which the inmates were capable of producing during the process of rehabilitation.

All of the inmates who were involved in this production group had previously completed *The Way to Happiness* Course with the result that they had attained new views of life which enabled them to be successful in their small businesses.

The inmates who participated were seen to be very motivated and committed to the production process. One of them, interviewed in 2004 told us: **“There is something which is very important about work that has been addressed in the course. Donations can be given so that the inmates have materials for work and they can make a profit. They would be, let’s say, micro-businesses. Although there are people with certain skills – I am one of them, I can weave – but if I don’t have enough money to buy the materials, how could I possibly work? I must have materials to do the work. Then, if I am given a donation, it is possible, right? The material (is very important) in order to work and make a profit, even to be able to eat. It is very necessary.”**

At the time of this writing, there are efforts underway to obtain financing for the initial capital needed, which will yield profits within a short time. The author thinks that, once the inmates produce and sell their first products, a form of cooperative will be formed to administer the funds, obtain the necessary material and distribute the profits among the producers. The component of the commercialization of the products is critical for the success of this undertaking.

Some production areas are already established in the CEFAS. There are workshops for dressmaking, embroidery and tailoring. There is a beauty salon and a bakery. The participants in these activities, some supported by national agencies and some by national or foreign organizations, are enrolling in the course, if they had not done it previously. (See the section on Findings.)

In addition to the existing workshops, the facilitator, together with interested inmates, is developing other opportunities for production, such as a pastry shop, making crocheted articles of clothing, and other beautiful handicrafts.

7.4 The Training Routines (TRs) Workshop

This workshop began in early 2005, after the Christmas and New Year’s recess and after *The Way to Happiness* Course had been finished. The activities called training routines, commonly called “TR”, are exercises which improve the handling of diverse situations in the life and, particularly, the development of the ability to live in the present. It is recognized that those who constantly return to memories of the past or worry excessively about their well-being in the future, lose the ability to focus on the “here and now”. As a result, their mind is not able to operate in an optimum manner and cannot provide them with the satisfaction they so arduously seek in both material and spiritual matters.

Consequently the TRs are a fundamental complement to be able to live well and to practice the precepts of *The Way to Happiness* Course. During their last weeks of study, the inmates had become familiar with two TRs, which they spoke about. (See the section on Findings.)

7.5 Workshop For The Training Of Trainers

The purpose of this workshop was to develop the skills and abilities of some inmates so that they could continue the Criminon intervention in the CEFAS. It could be called the training of trainers who would develop the necessary skills to repeat and maintain the rehabilitation process inside of the CEFAS.

This component was also known as the step of “leadership development” because it sought to develop the skills which the inmates needed in order to lead the rehabilitation processes and help the people, both inside and outside the CEFAS.

The selection of the participants was accomplished in a spontaneous manner, that is, by their own interest in enrolling in this phase of the process. The facilitator, after inviting them to participate, delivered the workshop to the enrolled inmates. The people who had been regularly attending the work sessions were the ones who were part of this endeavor.

Various aspects were emphasized in this portion of the Criminon intervention:

- a. How to express oneself in public.
- b. How to develop self-confidence.
- c. Applications of the training routines (TRs)
- d. How to be more effective in interpersonal communication.
- e. How to maintain self-control.

For the design and development of this component – as was the case with the earlier components – the Facilitator used the technology of L. Ron Hubbard.

8. FINDINGS

8.1 Viability of the method: its efficacy and the responsiveness of the users

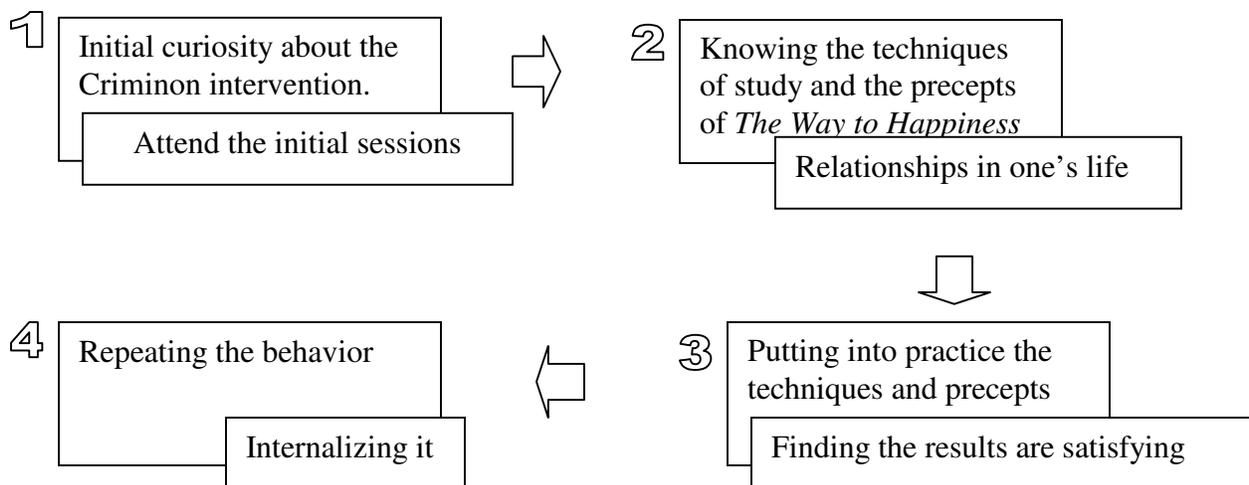
The methodological viability³² of the Criminon intervention was a subject of constant interest and analysis throughout the study. Since the first interviews and focus group, we had been asking ourselves “Does this really work?” and, if so, “Can it work in other prisons, similar to the CEFAS?”

³² By “viability” is meant the degree to which the employed methodology operates in the experience of the CEFAS and goes beyond that to be replicable in other rehabilitation centers.

Given this concern, the fundamental finding – from the perspective of the author – is in regard to the viability of the Criminon technology for rehabilitation in the context of the CEFAS, particularly, and, by extension, in the women’s prisons of this country. This viability became real and tangible upon observing the coincidence between the effectiveness of the methodology and the receptive attitude of the inmates. Perhaps the key to this lies in the fact that it is a sensible step by step process. (See figure 2.)

It is necessary to point out the enthusiasm of the participants was generated from the benefits that they had obtained beginning with the first sessions. The start of the Criminon intervention was crucial, as it was here that the inmates’ confidence in the method was established. The initial enthusiasm was manifested as curiosity, which prompted them to be involved in the process, the same curiosity that culminated in the adoption of new conduct, based on the techniques and precepts learned (or recalled) during the process.

Figure 2 STEP BY STEP



In the beginning, many of the inmates (Figure 2) attend the course solely because of curiosity (1). Then they become familiar with the study techniques and the 21 precepts of *The Way to Happiness* and connect these matters with events in their own lives (2). The content acquires personal relevance for each one and, by repetition, in a spontaneous manner some of the precepts of *The Way to Happiness* and the study techniques become daily practice (3) and they find that they obtain satisfying results. Generally they begin by practicing apparently simple things, such as personal cleanliness, greeting one’s companions cordially, and avoiding confrontations with the prison guards. Regarding the study techniques, they immediately apply the barriers to study, especially, the “skipped gradient”.

8.2 Incorporating new practices

When the inmates realize the benefits of the newly tried practices, the natural tendency is to repeat that practice and, when they can see that this continues to be rewarding, they adopt the behavior (4). Then we can say that the specific behavior has been incorporated into the daily conduct of the inmates and that the practice is unlikely to be discarded.

Here are some statements of inmates about the impact of knowing the precepts of *The Way to Happiness* (given four weeks after the start of the Criminon intervention):

“The chats about The Way To Happiness woke up my mind and I have learned much and it has helped me much.”
Reina Margarita Burgos.

“[We are] changing our way to do better for me and for my fellows, because by doing badly I harm myself, my family and my companions. So I understand that I must do good and change from doing bad. I know that this is possible because to want it is the power and all is possible.”
Maria Elena Serrano

“In addition to the fact that the book, The Way to Happiness, deals with common sense, it is very easy to understand and teaches us to have moral values that, the moment we apply them to part of our life, we increase our self-esteem, morality and our decency in our daily life.”
Ana Trejo

“The book, The Way to Happiness has helped me to be able to think well about things before doing them, to remember the worth of life, to be more responsible and friendly, to understand better the people with whom I live and to achieve a better way of life.”
Claudia Gonzalez

8.3 Greatly Increasing Self-Esteem

The question presented to the reader is: Why is the Criminon methodology workable at the individual level? The answer is: Because it substantially raises the self-esteem of those people who are exposed to this rehabilitation process. From the beginning of the intervention, the Principal Investigator observed early that achievements were being produced in the person, herself, her character, her emotional state, and her willingness to communicate. Upon investigating these matters it was found from the beginning that the Criminon intervention impacted on how these women saw themselves, including in their prior relationships with other people, which was definitely what brought them into prison.

It can be said that they rapidly began to sense an interior voice that said to them, “I am worthwhile”. These results were easily perceived because the improvements in their ability to function socially were immediate. The observers (their companions in the cell block, the prison guards, and these investigators) noticed these changes without needing to make much in the way of inquest efforts, as the changes were evident, extending even to the appearance of the inmates. Of course, the participants, immersed in the process,

themselves, also became aware of their gains in personal improvement which they were achieving. We could see this in what the inmates told us in this regard.

“What have I learned now? I have learned to listen. To control any situation. To handle depression without medication. I have learned to handle the emotional tones.” Rosa Peña

“The teachings of the teacher have brought us to ...taught us to value ourselves ... for example, (when we are using) drugs and alcohol it is like when one is blind and thinks that these things solve the problem and then one is lost. But when one faces the problem, it begins to change ... the neatness of our body and our bed is a part of loving oneself, to smell clean is healthy. Do not steal anything that is not yours because, by that very act, one dies or goes to prison.” Carminda Cruz

“We have learned to know ourselves better. We have learned to say the truth. We have learned to trust in ourselves and to demonstrate to other people that we can do things better. That we can be better for our society each day, that we can let people see that we are able to fight for what we believe in and we can be great winners, so that in the future we’ll accomplish new deeds through our examples. Live life with happiness and follow a happy road.” Aurora Solórzano.

“It has helped me a lot to realize the value of liberty and that I have to take care of my freedom when I am able to recover it again. And to be able to care for my children and teach them all the good things that I have learned with these chats about this book. Because there were things that I did not know and thanks to you (the facilitator) we have learned them. Thanks also for your time and your understanding. Thanks for your patience I have realized that all is not lost despite being in this horrible place where one meets people of all classes, selfish, envious, bad and some good, but very few....”

Cinthia Duarte

8.4 A systematic process for rehabilitation

It was found that Criminon’s efforts lead to a systematic process of rehabilitation. The initial and ending conditions of the people involved can be clearly identified.

The following were found to be the prevailing conduct and attitudes of those who started the program:

- **Confusion with respect to the situation in which they lived. Some had not yet adjusted to the condition of being women deprived of their freedom, despite the fact that they had been in prison for many years. They did not accept that reality.**
- **Despair with regard to their future and that of their families who are outside or in other prisons. This feeling was more painful when they did not receive appropriate legal attention.**

- **Depression, which caused a very poor state of mind and quite often leads to antagonistic relations with other inmates, especially those in their own cell block.**
- **Apathy, which is a frequent state of mind among the inmates. It leads them to idleness and indolence regarding their surroundings.**
- **Other negative emotions and attitudes, such as arrogance, anger toward themselves and others, a dislike toward other people inside and outside of the prison, desire for vengeance, distrust of authority and of other inmates.**

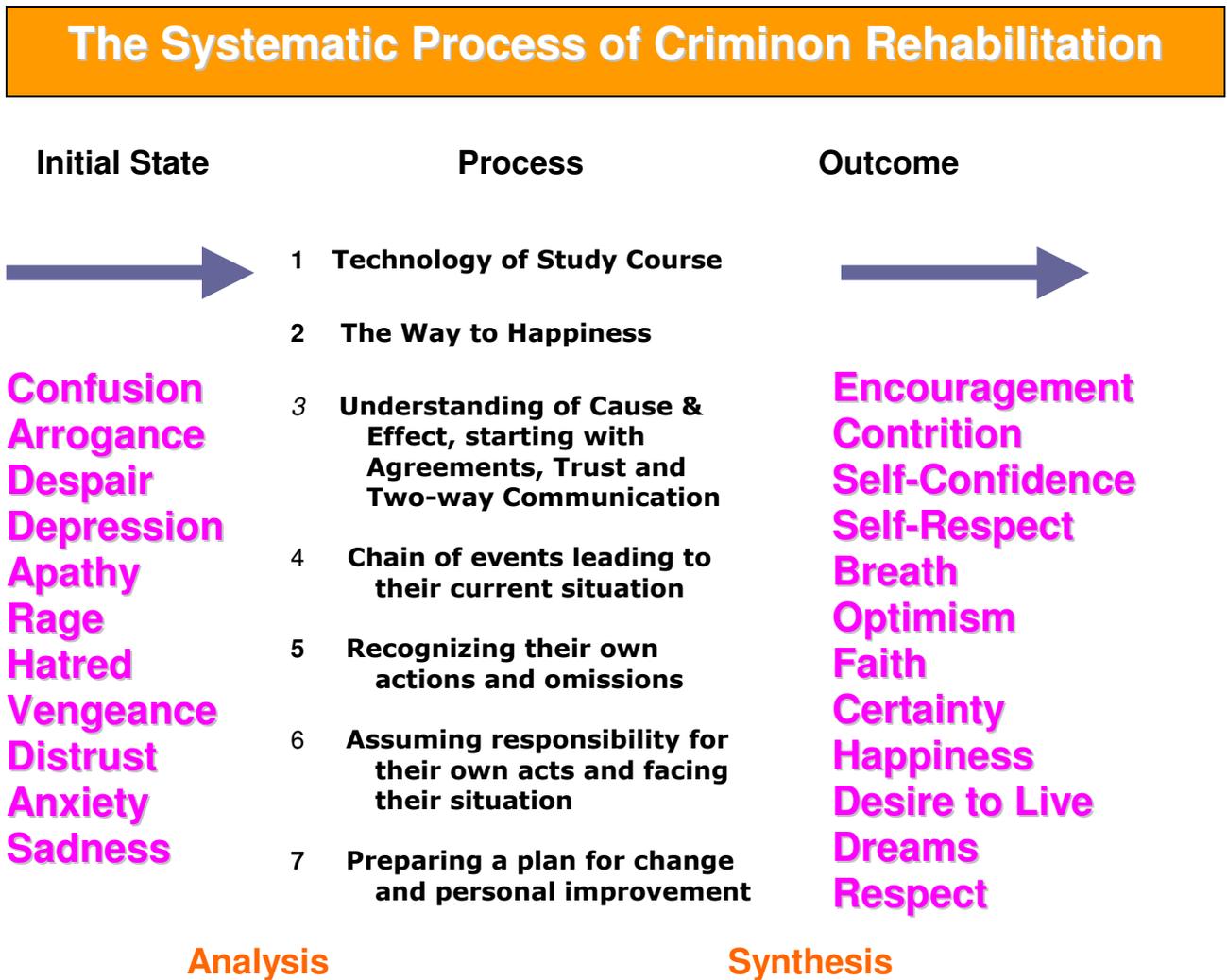
As they underwent the process of rehabilitation, the women who participate in the Criminon process came to change their attitude and even their appearance was visibly softer. They adopted new mannerisms, gestures and posture which revealed a state of mind different from that held earlier and often, the opposite of their initial state. Among other things, the following can be seen:

- **Contrition. Although few say it verbally, in various ways repentance is demonstrated in their actions and their new forms of socialization.**
- **Self-confidence. They reaffirmed their condition as human beings and their capacity to decide “I can.” Many openly admitted, for the first time, that they had broken the law.**
- **Self-respect. They were constantly repeating “I am worthwhile”, despite all their previous experiences which had undermined their self esteem.**
- **Encouragement. It is as if they had obtained more oxygen, as if an interior force had inspired them to continue forward. All of them enrolled in productive activities sponsored by Criminon and the CEFAS.**
- **Optimism. They exhibited a new attitude toward life and their condition as prisoners, including even those with very long sentences.**
- **Faith. They showed confidence in the prison system even though they always believed that their living conditions and conditions for rehabilitation could have been better.**
- **Certainty. The believers reaffirmed their religious convictions and participated more actively and conscientiously in the services offered by the different denominations.**
- **Happiness, the desire to live. They loved life, again. Even some who had previously considered suicide, looked toward the future and demonstrated daily contentment.**
- **Dreams. Especially their desire to become free and to rejoin their loved ones again. Their children, especially, represented for them a dream that they could make a reality in short and medium terms.**

- **Respect.** This could be seen in the observance of the norms of group living established within the CEFAS. Also increased respect was observed toward other inmates and toward the prison guards.

(See Figure 3, below.)

Figure 3



8.5 Application In Other Detention Centers

It is estimated that the technology used here would also be applicable in similar prison centers in other parts of the country and in other countries of the region. In truth, it will be applicable with any prison population of Hispanic culture. The author's confidence that this technology will be feasible in other latitudes is supported by these following criteria:

- a. It uses flexible and fast-acting methodologies which enable it to offer the participants immediate and tangible results;
- b. The process of rehabilitation includes three areas, doing, thinking and feeling; consequently it is less likely that these procedures will remain only “intentions”
- c. The process of rehabilitation has been adapted to the circumstances of the Latin American culture with its special manifestations and patterns of thought; and
- d. The changes achieved in the behavior of the inmates are permanent and forward-looking into the future, not being limited to the prison environment.

The criteria described, which are, at the same time, achievements, must be integrated within the methodology itself.

The interviews with the inmates who participated in the process showed that almost all of them immediately put into practice the skills acquired on *The Way to Happiness* course. They affirmed, without exception, that they felt more comfortable with their new way of acting, compared to their previous patterns. At the conclusion of the first phase of the Criminon intervention, one of the inmates, known as a difficult person to deal with, answered the question, “How has the course helped you?” as follows:

“In all aspects, because now I no longer need the police to force me (to comply with tasks)... they told us that they were going to have me mop the corridor and all of that. Now I voluntarily go to course. Now, we feel that it is good for us, we do not make objections in order not to go to course. I already have my ‘diploma of the happy woman’ and I feel good, because I can see the results.”

Perception of benefits

In the beginning of the program attendance at the Criminon activities in the CEFAS was announced as obligatory, but very quickly, the prisoners and the jailers realized that this rule made no sense. The realizations and wins (as the positive results were called) were so evident to the participants, from the beginning that it was not necessary to continue to insist on the importance of the women attending the Criminon workshops. The wins realized by the inmates can be presented in volume but the most dramatic are those which relate to the very character of the participants.

This is the case of a young woman sentenced to twenty years in prison who was asked which exercise in the workshop helped her most:

”I believe the (communication exercises) with the eyes open, well ... for example I had the habit of looking at the floor when I talked with a person. This has changed now, so I believe, then, that this is going to help me. I believe that it is going to help me a lot... Always when I was going to talk with someone, I was not able to look at their eyes. So I looked at the floor all my life. Even when I was before the court, the public prosecutor said that she found guilt in me because I looked at the floor when

she spoke to me... but all my life I had been looking at the floor when I spoke. This has changed now – don't you see I am now looking at your eyes? Yes... (she thinks) because when I, when I was not imprisoned, when I was outside and talked with someone, I did not have the courage to look in his eyes. And, so, the prosecutor said to me,... I believe that was written... she said that I was found guilty because, as I said, I was not able to look anyone in the face. Always, when speaking, when the judge asked me a question, I looked at the floor. But that has changed and I like it... This seminar is helping us a lot.”

Acceptance of the mistakes made

We can say that the impacts identified by this study are centered in the dynamic process by which the women identified where they had failed in perception or actions and, immediately, they could put new conduct to the test, the results of which were encouraging, to a greater or lesser degree, but always (or almost always) encouraging. In other words, the women had the opportunity (some for the first time in their lives) of identifying where they had failed, by omission or commission.

This identification of errors occurred in one or more of the learning contexts that we called doing, thinking and feeling – that is to say, their behavior, thought and emotions.

It was found that the intervention had reached deeply into each of the participants in each of the five components:

- a. The Technology of Study Course,
- b. *The Way to Happiness* workshop-course,
- c. The process of production,
- d. The workshop of communication exercises (training routines); and
- e. The workshop for training of trainers.

The atmosphere of “doing” is extremely important in the process of rehabilitation, but this must be linked with the capacity of putting this action into a moral context which was provided for from the beginning by the Criminon intervention. The content of *The Way to Happiness* Course is, precisely, what offered these points of moral reference. Consequently the first task in achieving rehabilitation was to achieve the internalization of the idea that all behavior has antecedents and consequences. Possessing this idea, the women were then able to visualize which were their actions that brought them to prison.

In its first stage, the emphasis of the Criminon process was specifically to help them understand why they were in prison, far from their homes. Just as this might be unreal for the reader – and initially it was also unbelievable for the Principal Investigator – the majority of the women were not aware of the reason why they had lost their freedom and, therefore in reaction had been adopting defensive attitudes in order to avoid responsibility. This appeared to be a natural attitude and not a sign of emotional problems. But when they dared to look inward, they began to admit to themselves that they had committed one or more mistakes.

Through observation of the meetings between Criminon and the prisoners, it was observed that the facilitator did not impose value judgments nor did she adopt moralistic postures toward the prisoners. Rather, the subject of behavior was approached from a practical point of view so that the person could reach the understanding that all actions of human beings have consequences in the physical world and in that which may be called the spiritual environment, which is intangible and subtle.

Once the participants in this rehabilitation process understood that the world operates on a cause-effect basis, they had reached the position of being able to identify the errors that they had committed and which then produced their loss of liberty. The author had the opportunity to talk extensively with at least six inmates at the beginning of the intervention (November 2004) and spoke with the same inmates two months later (January 2005).

Presented here are some of the changes which the Principal Investigator observed in the process of analyzing each of the women. (See figure 4.)

Figure 4 **BEFORE AND AFTER**³³

BEFORE	AFTER
“They accused me unjustly and condemned me for a crime I had not committed ...”	“After the course I understood that I had skipped a gradient and therefore I am here.”
(She did not look into my eyes nor permit me to establish a dialogue with her.)	“The truth is that I had been ashamed and therefore had not been able to look at a person’s eyes. Now I know that I committed a mistake and I am paying for it.”
“The truly guilty one walks – is my very son who killed his wife and then blamed us (my husband and me).”	“With the TRs, I came to understand that I have responsibility (for my actions) and now I realize why I am here.”
“I let myself get taken [swayed] by the gang to which I belonged... it was because of bad companions.”	“The responsibility is mine, it is not the fault of anyone else.”
“I am here because I had bad luck. Others have done the same, including the police, but they don’t arrest them...”	“I have come to understand (now) that I am responsible for myself, no one else will be responsible for me. If I am here it is because I committed a wrong and I am paying for it.”

³³ These statements were made before and after *The Way to Happiness* Course.

However, these changes do not occur in a spontaneous manner. On the contrary, experience shows that a prisoner must have a strong purpose in her mind to change from criminality. To achieve that, it is necessary to see the systematic Criminon rehabilitation process (Figure 3) as the creator of these changes.

The information collected about these steps demonstrated that to achieve success in rehabilitation these steps must be presented in the order described. In this manner they will obtain sustainable results and the newly learned behavior will be lasting.

For each of the women, to make the connection between the errors of their actions and the consequences of those acts was the beginning of a new way of thinking, in which logic took precedence over magical thought. The analysis of these events connected up not only the awareness of the errors committed by the person but also the external circumstances which landed them in prison.

Thus it is through the new vision of these events (based on *The Way to Happiness*) that the person came to understand her situation from a perspective of interrelated events and circumstances. It enabled her to visualize her role in this context. Frequently the inmates found that they had been the effect of the will of other people and they described how Criminon helped them to change their role from “**effect**” in order to be “**cause**”. One immediate product of that change was the improvement of their self-esteem and their new ways of behaving toward others and toward themselves.

Also, in the field of “doing”, they found productive activities which not only kept their hands and mind busy but also, well organized, these activities became a source of income for the individuals and for the CEFAS (and can become more so).

Although the CEFAS already was offering a series of workshops in order to keep the inmates occupied and for the learning of new skills, *The Way to Happiness* Course gave this a new dimension. It created a positive impact on the motivation of the inmates to use the facilities which the CEFAS had been offering to them. These facilities are: the sewing of clothing, painting of fabric, embroidery, crocheting, a beauty salon, and a bakery.

There are many statements in which the increased interest of these women in participation in these workshops can be seen. One of the inmates who participated in *The Way to Happiness* course confessed: “**Before (*The Way to Happiness* Course) it made me sad and depressed, now I have a great interest in making clothes, blouses and other things...**” Similar testimony is repeated constantly.

When we interviewed inmates who did not attend the course, we also found perceptions which support the previous statement. María Eugenia Villafranca, who did not take the course because “I have no time” said the following:

“(I like it) because there have been changes in some of the inmates. Previously these people did not like to do things. When they said, ‘all to the beauty shop’, no one

wanted to go. She (the Criminon facilitator) has given a great deal of spirit to the people. And, personally, I love it, I love her approach, her thinking, to make things change. She has the green light – the green light means that now they do things with spirit, that everything is positive, that there is nothing negative in her and she passes that to each one.”

Change in the form of thinking

The change in the form of thinking meant a great deal for the inmates: logical thought (which was new to some of the women) became the backbone of rehabilitation. It was because of these analytical skills that the women were capable of building a new structure for their lives. Recognizing the reason that they were incarcerated began an on-going path of learning which enriched their interior world and gave a successful perspective for their lives. After learning to assume responsibility, they were able to maintain control over themselves.

During this process the inmates obtained a great deal of basic data about survival. These basic data were fundamentals, which they needed to achieve full and satisfying lives. Based on the interviews carried out, the Author of this report considers that thought which excuses ignorance or knowledge which distorts this data leads to crime.

The majority, if not all, of the content of the Criminon course is based on the book, *The Way to Happiness, a common sense guide to better living*,³⁴ In these pages the writer presents 21 practical precepts which originate in the accumulated experience of man through the ages. The author of this little book, stated the following:

True joy and happiness are valuable.

If one does not survive, no joy and no happiness are obtainable.

Trying to survive in a chaotic, dishonest and generally immoral society is difficult.

Any individual or group seeks to obtain from life what pleasure and freedom from pain that he or they can.

Your own survival can be threatened by the bad actions of others around you.

Your own happiness can be turned to tragedy and sorrow by the dishonesty and misconduct of others.

I am sure that you can think of instances of this actually happening. Such wrongs reduce one's survival and impair one's happiness.

You are important to other people. You are listened to. You can influence others.

³⁴ See Attachment 2, op. Cit. “This is the first non-religious moral code based wholly on common sense. It was written by L. Ron Hubbard as an individual work and is not part of any religious doctrine.”

The happiness or unhappiness of others you could name is important to you.

Without too much trouble, using this book, you can help them survive and lead happier lives.

While no one can guarantee that anyone else can be happy, their chances of survival and happiness can be improved. And with theirs, yours will be.

It is in your power to point the way to a less dangerous and happier life.

As these data become converted into a guide for action and reflection for the inmates who participated in the course, it is apparent that they obtained a standard on which to base their thoughts and by which to judge their own actions.

The interviews demonstrated that the majority of the inmates were people who had not had the ability to reflect on the possible consequences of their criminal acts. Some underestimated the ability of the police to apprehend them or the justice system to condemn them. There exists a generalized belief in Honduras that criminals do not pay for their crimes and, in the worse case, that sooner than later, they will again be free.

Regarding feelings

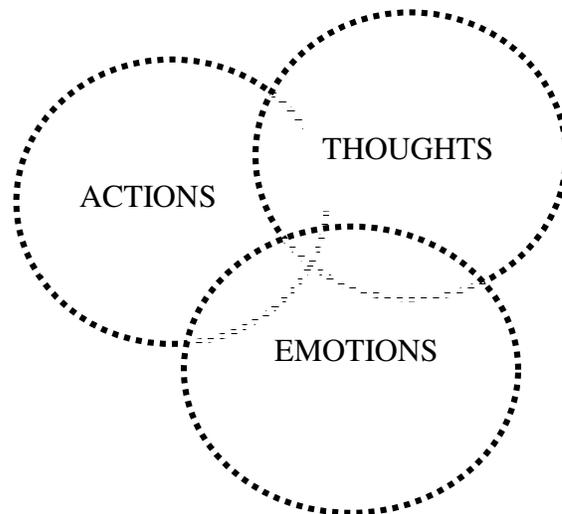
The emotional part of the rehabilitation process is very important. But in practice, often feelings are addressed just as themselves while many times they are found to be in conflict with the person's actions and thoughts. A great deal of this conflict, as presented in the inmate interviews, was between what they had learned from childhood as correct and what has been successful in practice. An example is lying.

In one of the focus groups with new prisoners, all admitted that they had learned to lie from an early age. In one exercise during the study they were able to spot, with candor and bravery, their first lie before they were seven years old. Each one described that her older relative (grandmother or mother) had taught her by words and example that lying was necessary in order to live (survive). This idea, in fact, caused considerable damage in the mind and emotions of each of those interviewed. It is easy to appreciate the joy that they had during *The Way to Happiness* Course when they discovered the mistake that they had been living.

In this manner the inmates became aware of these contradictions and developed the skills to change the situations they faced. The goal, although not explicit, of the rehabilitation model studied consisted of making congruent their deeds, thoughts and feelings, in a way that did not interfere with the functioning of the prisoner and enabled her to make appropriate decisions.

Evidence was found that the inmates learned to take responsibility only when they had grasped the idea of cause and effect. Otherwise their conduct, the product of their emotions and thoughts, was found to be disconnected. In a simple diagram we can show

that that for a person to function efficiently, it is necessary that there be agreement among their actions, thoughts and feelings, as is demonstrated graphically, below.



The impact of responsibility

To assume responsibility for ones actions seemed to be the central point of *The Way to Happiness* Course, in particular, and of the Criminon intervention in the CEFAS, overall. At the beginning, before the course, the inmates did not clearly understand why they had lost their freedom. In the first interviews of the visits for the study, most of the women denied they had committed any crime. And two months later, at least three of them admitted – in private interviews – that they had committed the crimes for which they had been charged.

Additionally, the Principal Investigator found that the inmates in the second interview were more peaceful, had less anxiety and were more willing to talk about themselves and their new dreams.

Some spoke openly about this particular change:

“Before I did not accept that I had done something bad and ugly. What happened is that I had skipped a gradient and wanted to achieve something without knowing how to wait. But since I accepted that (the crime), I feel much better. Now I know that I should rehabilitated myself and this course is helping me greatly ...”

Accepting responsibility for their actions, without having to undergo external coercion seems to be one of the keys of the rehabilitation process. Elvira Muñoz, the facilitator, put it in these terms:

“What is it that the government or ministers of justice or the prison system consider is rehabilitation? Do they think it is to have better equipped workshops? Do they think that is going to prepare inmates for re-integration into society? Do they think

it is to finish school? Well, none of that will achieve (actual) rehabilitation. I know presidents of my country that had work, that had a profession and today they are in prison. So that has nothing to do with criminality or with the rehabilitation of criminals.

“The rehabilitation of criminals is a whole rehabilitation, but the base of rehabilitation is not more workshops nor to have better institutional conditions. It is that the person takes responsibility. Why? In most prisons – not only in Honduras, but in the world – the recidivism rate is enormous. It seems that it is the same group who always return to prison. There are very few people who are criminals when they are children... But the recidivism that we have is something that does not appear to have an end. So we have a person who is jailed for a small robbery, the second time the crime is aggravated robbery and the third sentence is for homicide.

“What happened here? If it is supposed that we have a rehabilitation system, then there should not be recidivism. This is the problem. If I achieve rehabilitation, then I automatically stop recidivism. Then here is where I truly stop criminality and the percentage of criminal recidivists begins to decrease.”³⁵

8.6 Testimony about critical areas for the women

About their children

“Elvira came to teach us how to communicate better with our children because there are times when one does not treat one’s children well.”

“I am the mother of a girl, already seventeen years old and I feel proud, but sometimes I feel sad because I failed her as a mother. Before I did not realize this. But now I do and I am going to change this one day, God willing. What makes me feel very proud is that she is older now and she has met a family who love her a lot and although they are not of the same blood, they love her a lot. She is already moving on a basic plan with the help of her mother.”

“This section of the course has changed me greatly inside because despite the very great grief I have within me, at the same time it makes me move forward. I know that I will not always be here, but that I am going to have to struggle for myself and for my children. The idea of moving forward has given me more strength to survive.”

About communication

“Yes, I believe (after completing *The Way to Happiness* Course) we achieved unity among all of us. We have better communication among the inmates. That is very interesting because in these places it is necessary to be united. And before we had not

³⁵ Interview with Elvira Muñoz, 30/11/2004

done that – I am not going to say that now we are 100%, okay? – because truly it has been only a little while that she (Elvira) has been here.

“Well, if she (the facilitator) would be able to be here perhaps a little longer ... I believe that with her manner of doing things, of working, I believe that 100% unity among the inmates would be achieved.”

About production

“Sure, because, remember, there are prisoners here who do not have visits at the beginning. There are prisoners, also, who have babies here and they, also, need to have visits with their children. It is necessary that those who have a little bit assist those who do not have. In this place, generally, if one does not have their family (to help her) one has to learn to work in order to survive.”

“Because we do not have enough with that which we are given. Definitely we need not only food but we also need certain things for ourselves, things like footwear and clothes. It may be that we are given food and, logically, we do not pay for light, water nor household rent, but we need clothes and shoes. And many women who do not have visits must work to get what they need to be able to buy a pair of shoes.”

“Well, here (in the CEFAS beauty salon) services are at affordable prices. Since we do not have economic solvency. So a wave and a blow-dry regularly cost 30 to 40 Lempiras (one and a half to two dollars), maximum. Nails, manicure and pedicure, which includes decorated nails, costs 30 Lempiras. Because, as I said, here the population (of the penitentiary) is not economically solvent. Thus, in order to sell what we have at affordable prices, so other inmates can have access to the services.”

(A female guard of the CEFAS). “More than just for their work, I see them as human beings. They are paying for what they have done in a different way. Speaking as one of the police, I would like for them to change, to improve their behavior. Then there be no problems, neither for them nor for us. The truth is that there are some who do not want to change, but there are others who are accessible. They do their part. Because here there are workshops where they work, and everything... Now that you help them to produce, they can earn the money to support their children outside.”

(A female guard of the CEFAS). “They have opportunities here. Several of them have gone free and since there has been the tailoring course they are working outside doing that. They are able to sell their crocheting outside – something that helps them very much. But outside it is difficult. A course costs so much! It is very expensive. So here they have many opportunities. Only those who do not want to improve are left behind. We, the guards, would like to have the opportunity to learn all that is being taught to them (the inmates) here but we cannot because we must do our work.”

(A female guard of the CEFAS). “Sure, I would like to have the opportunities that the inmates have. Because I cannot do crochet, I cannot embroider nor do the computer course which I would love to do. If I quit this job, I would like to know something of what they know, to help myself. They (the inmates) have this opportunity.”

(A female guard of the CEFAS). “(It would be good) if we could require them (that they go to work in the workshops) as I was telling you, but we cannot because of the human rights issue and they would complain.”

(Three women guards answered the question about the orders to work that they could not give to the inmates.)

“We cannot (ask them to go to the workshops) because if one asks them to comply with something, some of the women react with swear words... and it is better not to make enemies.”

“Yes, it is better to avoid trouble and better to let them do what they want.”

“There are some inmates who clean the corridors but also some do not comply with what they are told to do...”

About *The Way to Happiness* Course

“That (the instinct for survival) is what is called the guardian angel. It is something which tells us to move away when we are in danger... that is called survival and is what we learned on *The Way to Happiness* Course.”

“Now, when my sister-in-law calls me, I say, thanks to God, I feel well because I have been taking this course – it is a help which they are giving us. As I describe it, it is an aid for the mind which puts us in a higher place and now we are not going to die like before... Our families are always waiting for us.”

“Well then, here we go. What I have learned is love, to treat people better. If it were earlier, I would not be like that. Before I felt bad here. I only cried. When I received my first phone call, I only cried. I was only crying. Now I feel braver, after the course ...

“I understood (it impressed me) that we should not mistreat our children and should always treat them well. And we should not do everything that our children want but should always help them, that if they want to play, we should play with them and we must make the time for that – not only say to them that we are going to play but actually play.

“Also, all of the time, I like it because they give good advice... My boy is three years old and my daughter is nine. His father cares for my girl and my mother cares for the boy.”

“I noticed that many of my friends, when we began the course often looked down, after they all finished the course they ended with their heads up and speaking of realities...”

About the leadership course and TRs

“Before I used to feel shy about standing up in front of an audience and having to speak. Now I know that I can do it and reach the entire audience and put them all on one level on the tone scale. That I have achieved with the training that Elvira gave us. I had been reading *The Way to Happiness* Course and I realized that it is not just another book because it causes us to reflect on things that before we did not know.”

“Elvira helped us to change on the tone scale. We were at the level of grief, of apathy. We believed this place to be the end of life... now our families hear us being more confident on the telephone.”

“They (my relatives who visit) listen to me so well that they believe that I am in love with a policeman and I tell them, ‘Not at all, it’s because someone will be coming to deliver a course to us and we can have a better world. We learn that we are able to change, that we can remove what caused us so much harm, that caused us to end up here. We can be better people.’”

“The advantage, the gain for us is the fact that, as *The Way to Happiness* says, we are falling in love with the Supreme Being and we know that we are special, that each time we respect ourselves more, and that we know that better days will come. We are learning to value ourselves, to know ourselves better, to know the reality of life...”

“It taught me to know more about people, to know how she is, how he is ... that is, to know each one, truly. And so, to develop myself. If one does not know how to speak with a person... well, we learned to introduce ourselves to different people, to talk a little yet not feel so much fear ... because for me it was difficult even to ask questions and when we were here on the course, I did ask.. They answered me well and I felt good. So I learned that...”

“I liked that exercise (she laughs) of looking at the other (person), the one that is called TR. But what really caught my attention was the one where we closed our eyes because I felt that I arrived at my house, that I was there, that I talked, I saw the little street, the patio of my house, I thought about my mama and I kind of looked at her with my mind. (The TR exercise) showed me how to transport myself to other places. (laughs).”

“We learned to read our friends, during the leadership course, because we learned to recognize where we are on the tone scale. Who of them was in apathy, who was really free. We were also able to analyze who had really been influenced by the course, which is to say, the graduates know who can say, in the absence of Elvira, ‘let’s unite’.”

“So we can see if so-and-so or any of us can stand up and to say, ‘Girls, how have we felt this month?’ We can review (we have learned to do that) and overcome the dangers, the fears. We don’t fear anything. We can face the authorities and are able to deal with them. We behave, but you respect us.”

About rehabilitation

“Before no one liked to be involved in the thing. When they said, ‘everyone to the course room, almost no one wanted to go. She (the facilitator) has given spirit (purpose) to the prisoners. And personally, I love it, I love her way of making one change. She has the green light. The green light means that she can do things with spirit, that everything is positive, that there is nothing of the negative in her and that is transmitted to others.”

“In total I attended (*The Way to Happiness* Course) about five time, but it was in a relatively short period of time. But I was very enriched because in that little bit I was

able to get, they were speaking of the personality structure of people. It is very interesting. I even read the book, *The Way to Happiness*.”

“We here feel very proud because we have your support. We are able to learn many things. There is something good in this place despite it all...”

About the changes which occurred in them

“Now I no longer need the police force me (to comply with tasks)... they told us that they were going to have me mop the corridor and all of that. Now I voluntarily come to course. Now, we feel that it is good for us, we do not have any reason to refuse to come to course. I already have my ‘diploma of the happy woman’ and I feel good.

“Here we are learning only crafty things which are going to be good for us, good crafty things for us.”

“When we leave this place, we want to leave changed. If we were ... already we will leave different.”

“Well, people generally do it (go to a psychologist). I do not go to a psychologist because, thanks to God, I believe that I ought to be my own psychologist. But not all have the ability, we do not have the courage to be our own psychologists. And we are learning that in this course (*The Way to Happiness*).

(The precept that had an impact on me) “it was speaking about children. Because I do not have children, I did not say anything. And also the one about love for one’s self because for one who does not want herself and respect herself is going to disrespect others. In that we all have something to learn and to change.”

“No one of those who are here (in the focus group) are sad. We are all very high on the tone scale.”

“Before I had come (to the course) I did not like myself. But when Elvira began the new classes (January 2005), I came. I like myself.”

“Yes (I have seen changes in my companions), because I see them to be more motivated. They are a bit more sure of themselves because they have recovered a little of their trust. Because one is here, one should not say she is dead, no. Some day we are going to leave and we are going to enter the society and our families and we are going to continue living the life which we left interrupted outside.

“Let’s see, what do I plan to do (when I leave here)? I think about doing many things. When we talk about leaving here, we talk about how (I want) to be independent, to start my own legal business in my country again, to resume my life. Once I had a restaurant which I left because I became interested in other things. Then, when I shall return to my country, God willing, I am going to see if I can build up my local money and work hard to see if I can rebuild my capital... But this restaurant must have capital in order to do more business.

“So, if I had been a little bit careful... (it doesn't embarrass me) only I have a little girl. I say to my girl that she should always be careful as her mother should have been careful. Because I don't want that one day... and while I am still in this place, I do not want her cuddling (raising a baby). She says to me, “no mommy. And I give thanks to God... I am forty-two years old and the course (*The Way to Happiness*) helped me greatly to be content with myself.

“What we changed was to show love to the other prisoners. To live more united. To treat ourselves better – both ourselves and our companions. If some day there is a problem I will try to understand. And if the person does not do that, it is necessary to move them aside and not be like that, right?

“Change comes from inside, from understanding the reality of things. Knowing Scientology can change us. I believe that there was something L. Ron (Hubbard) learned and knew inside himself how much he could achieve for freedom, because here we know now that Elvira's course is like a vitamin that they give you for your head.”

“I can control my violence. Yes, I was violent. I had a strong character and most of the time I had lived in apathy and did not like to associate with other people. But now I live in strong interest, which means I have changed completely... When I was in apathy, I did not want to do anything, most of the time one is gone mentally. ‘Interest’ is when everything interests you, everything that can benefit you. Everything that can me, benefit me, interests me. I have already left the stage of boredom. I did not want to be seen because it bothered me. I would speak little, that sort of thing.

“We feel the days are shorter in this place because we are interested. We try to know when they say something we do not like, we act with intelligence and analyze it. We think about it. We say: There are alternatives. Give me just a moment. I am going to analyze it’ or ‘I am going to think about it’.”

(We have learned) “To be, as my friend said, attentive. We know we are here, but we know that we ought to be conducting ourselves like you are (using the TRs). It has become common in the corridors, here, that often when we see someone, they say to her, ‘How are you doing, friend? How are the TRs going? Are you high toned?’”

“If we see someone happy, we know that all is going well for that person and, more importantly, we know that it is clear that *The Way to Happiness* Course and all the other courses we have taken with Elvira have benefited us, for our own survival, to be able to handle the fears, our own violence. They can tell me what I want. A companion insulted me. She told me what she wanted and when she finished, I said, ‘What a pity that you always live in apathy. You are sick. You need Elvira's course. You should beg God that she doesn't leave soon that you can know yourself.’ My attitude changed. She continues being the same, but I have changed.”

(Female CEFAS guard) “At least when (the inmates) are here on (*The Way to Happiness*) course, they make jokes, they make faces, I have seen them sing and dance and at least for that time, they forget the place where they are. They think differently. Because there are some who live very sadly. They do not have visits from their families and at least for that time they move away from that, they think about other things and they joke and they say things and they forget their confinement... they laugh and all.”

(Female CEFAS guard) “I see that the participating inmates have friendship because they do things with their other inmates. Then the group (doing *The Way to Happiness* Course) unites them even more in that they are here, locked up. It makes them go on. At least the spirit helps them a little to change. Because, at least for a little while – as they say – it makes their lives happier.”

(Female CEFAS guard) “Of course they have a lot of help. Look how much the First Lady helps them, how much she pays attention to them. She has helped some of them with their cases, for others she has facilitated getting a pardon letter or bails. She brings them clothes, food and all... So she has been attending them. Not too long ago she gave them a donation so they could send their children to study in Spain. So it has its advantages.”

(Female CEFAS guard) “On the other hand, one is not given the opportunities which the inmates have. ‘Life outside is hard,’ I say to them but they do not understand. The problem is when they leave, since it is very difficult outside. Because they are here they have several opportunities and that helps them. They have lots of help. Some organizations come here where they are. They help them as much economically as morally.”

About life in prison

“The police open up the water at four in the morning for those who want to bathe and use the water to wash (clothes) and afterwards, return to bed if they wish. At eight they open the doors so that each can go to their place, if they want to. They can go to the workshops or to the school if they are interested. We do not force them to do anything.”

“The doors are open at four in the morning because they have their tasks, also. They do their workshops... neaten up the rooms, they have their tasks and also they want water. They want to clean themselves, to clean their dormitories. We open the doors so early because there is only water from four in the morning and to eight in the morning. In the afternoon they have water from four to six.”

“They have a schedule and then they can walk through the corridors of the CEFAS or whatever they wish. Some, who do not go to the workshop, spend the day strolling. They have an obligation to go to some workshop. What is that they don't comply... and they don't like it if we demand that they do something.”

“Yes, I miss it very much because the food is atrocious. At my place we hardly eat tortillas and, here, purely tortillas. (She laughs). It bothers me a little but we’re okay.”

“I am in a nervous stage. And I feel sad, fearful... and I have come here (to the leadership course) in order to try to forget a little what is happening to me. One of my daughters died a month ago. She was seven years old and I don’t know yet how she died.” (There was a long silence.)

“I have been here a little more than one year. Yes, I have gained a little (weight) due to the operation they did on me. They operated on my gall bladder and, as there is not much exercise done here, it is a sedentary lifestyle... My work is done standing or seated. So I have grown a little fat...”

“I am not interested in soccer. I am a basketball fan. In my youth I belonged to my country’s basketball league. But I injured my knee and could not continue. Something that would be good and healthy is to implement a workshop or gymnasium with the basics, at least. Because there are many young people here who have repressed energy. So, having a gymnasium and having a good group of sports, or something like that – people will be much more active.”

“My friend said that she was very sad, because they are violating her rights. We can see when they are violating the rights of a friend. Before the course, we lacked courage because we believed that the authorities were who had control. But no, the authorities have control in order to control us here, but really, the universe, the air we breathe, the blessings and all that comes to us, comes to us because it is before our great presence and they have to respect us because of our behavior and our position with them has changed. So we have an agreement. We behave but also they have obligations to respect us as human beings, not as criminals. Because the judge sent us here to carry out a prison sentence, not to receive humiliations, because the era of slavery has passed. And now that is not how it is here.”

“Yes, we learned a lot. Now we are able to defend ourselves. We do not let them humiliate us, because we now know in what way we are going to speak to the person we have in front of us. Before we did not know that. They would only say, ‘If you do such a thing, eh, you will be punished.’ And, then, we are not able to fight. But now, we know what rights we have and that they can comply with them even though we may be deprived of liberty.”

“Now my tone scale is so high that I turn around and, what? I say, ‘Hello, what’s up? How are you? I imagine that you’re well because I am super. I go to my classes at the bakery (everyone in the focus group laughs)... Today I was selling, when I never used to be able to sell. I walk around selling my meringues. My friends commented on how pretty I looked, and all that... I say to them, no it is the happiness you’re seeing. The radiance that I’ve had in me, the discovery of my tone scale, the discovery of what I am going to give to my friends.”

Testimony of the female police

“The most difficult job here (in the CEFAS) are the missions – that of going to the hospitals, to the courts. They are great risks.

“I am a single mother. I have four sons, ages 17, 15, 12 and 11.

“They (my sons) take care of themselves. I live here in “El Carrizal”. As I am a single mother, I sacrifice myself for them. I have two in high school and two in school.

“I have a woman from here (the neighborhood) who watches after my sons (while I am working here). That neighborhood (El Carrizal) is very dangerous as are all the others.

“I am not afraid that they might go with a gang. I give them examples of what happens to those who go bad.

“I’ve had to raise my sons, alone and here I am.

“The father of my sons does not help me at all.

“I left him when my youngest was two years old and I have not seen him since.

“I have never asked anything of him. I thought from the beginning that if I demanded something from him, he was going to try to bother me and I found myself in a very difficult position, and I decided to struggle alone for the sake of my children.

“I have been with the police for 10 years. I have adapted.

“It is not necessary to be hard all the time. One can smile as long as it is done with respect.

“Here there are people with all types of crimes. (But) no one has acted badly toward me... so far.”

9. Conclusions and recommendations

As was explained at the beginning, the main question of the study is: How far and in what way did the Criminon intervention in the CEFAS achieve the rehabilitation of the imprisoned women? In the following, the Principal Investigator has attempted to answer in the most objective way possible this question and the subsequent questions: “How feasible is it to spread the experience to other penal centers?” and “What changes can be introduced to improve this rehabilitation methodology?”

In some cases – to the end of giving the reader the major elements of the analysis – the conditions, ramifications and determining factors of the events studied are discussed. The descriptions of the findings and the corollaries and the recommendations are the exclusive responsibility of the author, who served as the principal investigator.

The intervention, which is still being implemented, had been in existence for six months (October 2004 – April 2005) during the time when the results which are described and discussed here were obtained.

9.1 Evidence of results

The main conclusion is that it can be categorically stated that the Criminon intervention has fulfilled the initial proposition of implementing a viable methodology for rehabilitation of inmates of the CEFAS, and, consequently, for the rehabilitation of prisoners in other penal centers of the country.

Based on the methodology of L. Ron Hubbard, Criminon has put in place a flexible and dynamic process in order to restore temporarily lost abilities. This process, which is supported by a moral code³⁶, achieved the following in a period of six months:

1. Developed a custom-made intervention designed for the participants and the circumstances which were found both in the prison and in the society.
2. Captured the attention and interest of the prisoners in order to obtain their regular attendance and enthusiastic participation.
3. Achieved the participation and involvement of the inmates in the process of rehabilitation without exercising any pressure.
4. Resolved and/or overcame the problems and conflicts which presented themselves in the negative views and mindsets of the participants.
5. Conducted the rehabilitation process without interruption (except for Christmas and New Years) with the full participation of the inmates who underwent each step of the process.
6. Incorporated a number of crucial elements for rehabilitation such as production, communication and learning how to learn.
7. Established an intervention that empowered self-respect and the raising of personal responsibility.

³⁶ *The Way to Happiness*, op. cit.

8. Resulted in sensible changes in the behavior of the participating inmates, which were seen both by other non-participating inmates and by the authorities.

9.2 Ingredients of the results that were achieved

The author, who has evaluated numerous efforts directed at changing the behavior of group and individual behavior, considers that the results achieved by Criminon in the CEFAS are due, above all else, to three factors:

The openness of Honduran society to the incorporation of changes directed to personal and collective improvement. This social permeability and capacity to be surprised confer on the inhabitants of Honduras a certain candor and transparency.

The availability of a number of the inmates of the CEFAS (56) who undertook the rehabilitation process from the beginning, without objections and with a high level of trust. "After all," one of the women said, "here we have nothing to lose and everything to gain."

A very relaxed – even friendly -- atmosphere existed in the CEFAS. Despite the tension between gang members and non-gang members, a social atmosphere was maintained. A large part of the methodological success of the Criminon activities is due to the fact that they have concentrated on developing a system of rehabilitation custom-made for the CEFAS inmates, taking into account the cultural elements of the country and the prison conditions.

It is felt that the results achieved will contribute importantly to the development of the institutional capability of Honduras to rehabilitate people who have committed crimes. In that way, using this methodology, the society, as a whole, will be able to begin a new step toward full development, using an inclusive policy that allows the active participation of those persons who have been deprived of liberty.

However, in order that these achievements may be sustainable and the activities may be effectively institutionalized, it is necessary that some important events take place and that some additional steps are done. The first event would be the culmination and closing of the initial stage, which we might call, "experimental". This culmination would also conclude the phase of training trainers, also called the phase of leadership development in this report.

9.3 Consolidation of the achieved gains

When the basic Criminon intervention is finished in the CEFAS, the author recommends that there be a consolidation of those elements which conform to the already developed methodology which is based on the thought of American philosopher L. Ron Hubbard. In itself, this report is the initial step toward this consolidation of the results that have been obtained. However the achievements ought to be material for analysis when the basic

intervention is formally concluded. Only in this way will it be possible to share them with for key people in the rehabilitation process.

By consolidation we understand, here, the process of affirmation of the results which have been obtained by those deprived of their liberty, among the people responsible for administering the prison and among decision-makers on various levels.

This process of consolidation needs to identify with clarity the processes under way, their ingredients, products and intended results. The consolidation should also generate a series of materials designed for the training of the prisoners and to facilitate complementary projects such as the production of items for sale outside the prison.

Specifically, the following are recommended:

- a. Prepare a manual for the trainer, which will show how to proceed to achieve the process of rehabilitation developed in the CEFAS. It should include the steps of training using the text of the booklet, *The Way to Happiness*, and the valuable experiences of Elvira Muñoz.
- b. Create an audio-visual presentation (using PowerPoint) for the introduction of the process of rehabilitation, which would be addressed to the participating inmates and would be used to introduce the course. It should include inmate testimonials demonstrating how they felt before and after *The Way to Happiness* course. This audio-visual presentation will reduce the time which is needed to start the rehabilitation process, offering the basic data which will create among the participants a positive attitude toward the process of rehabilitation.
- c. Incorporate *The Way to Happiness* course and the *Guide to study*³⁷ into the rehabilitation process developed in the CEFAS. These two booklets produced by ABLE, offer a simple system and a systematic approach to help those interested in traveling down the Way to Happiness. A very large advantage of this course and the guide is that they promote the use of “**demos**”³⁸ which enable the student to put into three dimensions what he is learning (learning to use mass while learning).

9.4 Spreading the results

It is recommended that a series of meetings be held to share the results of this study for the purpose of institutionalizing the development model. The first meeting should be set up with the assistance of the First Lady, the Minister of Security and the Director of the CEFAS. In this meeting they will share all the results accomplished in the initial intervention of six months and will plan the next meeting. It will be an opportunity to evaluate, confirm and refine the strategies used. The opportunity should also be taken to praise the Director of the CEFAS for the help he has provided.

³⁷ These two publications have been edited by ABLE International.

³⁸ Demonstration means to show or show how something works. Using blocks or objects which are symbols for the actual object, you can show how it works. A demonstration is more than a simple explanation; it provides a balance between the word and the action.

The second meeting will be broader and will be intended to create the basic agreements for the second stage of the project. Subsequent working meetings will be held to prepare a plan of action for the purpose of expanding the Criminon program into other prisons.

This meeting will offer the First Lady – and, hopefully, the President, also – and the government authorities in the security sector the opportunity to formalize the unofficial discussions which have been held regarding the successes of the inmates of the CEFAS prison.

Here the principal actors in the process will meet. They are the directors of rehabilitation centers, representatives of religious groups which contribute in a different manner to the welfare of criminals, selected decision makers from the government, the civil society, the national police, and the legislative and judicial powers. Some members of the press (radio, newspapers and television) should be there, also.

The results will be presented using audiovisual resources and, as possible, the direct testimony of some of the participating inmates from the CEFAS and some prison guards who have borne witness to the changes which the inmates have undergone as a result of the intervention.

The basic result of this meeting, it is hoped, will be an agreement among the participating organizations so that Criminon will continue to provide technical assistance for the implementation of a system of rehabilitation of criminals. At the same time, rapid mechanisms will be established so that decisions can be implemented easily, without slow moving commissions or committees which may block the efforts directed at improving the operation of the project.

It is recommended that the same meeting set up a national organization which will function as a counterpart in the process of providing the technical assistance which Criminon will offer in the immediate future. This organization will be responsible to prepare, in consultation with Criminon, a two or three year project with its own objectives and guides for the implementation, budget and evaluation of the proposed plan.

The described coordination should take place at a fixed time of two or three months from the date of said meeting and will be part of the work plan for 2005. It will consider the ideas of involved professionals and of people who have been deprived of their freedom who have demonstrated favorable attitudes and communication skills compatible with the rehabilitation program implemented by Criminon.

At this stage it will be crucial to include the professional contributions of social workers, psychologists, doctors and administrators of prisons. The author understands that in the case of the CEFAS, the professionals are already unofficially aware of the accomplishments of the program. The meeting will serve the purpose of providing them formally with the results.

9.5 A system of production and marketing

The concept of production as part of rehabilitation has been fully documented. The advantages of this policy are evident. Consequently it is now necessary to find the best way to create feasible and self-sustaining processes so that the inmates who are emotionally ready and have the skills can continue on the path.

The formation of a production cooperative would be a viable alternative to the current need of the inmates who are involved in the process of production.

The purchase and replacement of routine supplies, small tools and utensils for craft production is another important aspect which needs to be solved.

For that, it is recommended to contact an organization or a consultant which offers short term technical assistance in the setting up of cooperatives and small businesses. With this – in a time period of six to eight weeks – the design and establishment of an appropriate system of production and marketing of produced goods can become real.

This system should include the following components: accounting, balancing of the books, obtaining the raw material, managing client files, system of inventory, system of deliveries and permanent training.

9.6 Toward a systematic process of rehabilitation

There is evidence, according to the information obtained through this study, which points toward a valid process of rehabilitation which, it seems to the Principal Investigator passes through the following steps, in this order:

- a. Admitting that the precepts of *The Way to Happiness* serve to help a person achieve a full and productive life.
- b. Understanding the notion of cause and effect.
- c. Identifying the chain of events which brought the person to his or her current condition.
- d. Identifying his or her own actions or omissions which contributed to the person reaching that condition.
- e. Assuming responsibility for the consequences of these acts.
- f. Facing the situations with determination.
- g. Preparing a plan for change and personal improvement.

The author considers that these steps must occur in the order indicated in order to achieve a permanent character change and that the behaviors learned through the Criminon intervention are genuine.

Thus it is not sufficient that the inmates are exposed to the 21 precepts of *The Way to Happiness* book, but rather they need to visualize the presence or absence in their lives of these precepts over the course of the years. Understanding in an intellectual manner, that these principles work is quite easy, but it is not as easy to put them into practice,

especially for a person who has been accustomed to lie and steal in order to survive. When they put the moral principles of *The Way to Happiness* into the framework of their daily lives, these become real and their usefulness becomes evident in the light of critical reasoning. Otherwise the content of *The Way to Happiness* would remain abstract. In order to reach this point, the facilitator presented the material without moralistic baggage and discussion, much less in the tone of a sermon. She did it, rather, in a pleasant and pragmatic form.

For example: Precept 14, BE WORTHY OF TRUST, was presented to the inmates by demonstrating its real advantages in the short and medium run and long run. Then the inmates see clearly how the fact of being trustworthy to themselves and to others enables them to achieve their personal goals and to have a better life for themselves and their families, especially their children. Using the same pattern, the facilitator addressed each precept.

Becoming the rulers of their own existence, that is, starting with the most basic decisions which they face in life, is a theme which addresses the most traditional and fundamental values of Honduran society. For this reason, it is commendable that through this process some inmates have been able to utilize *The Way to Happiness* as a basic tool to reform their thinking. Becoming aware of the errors which they have committed in their lives is the beginning of a new way of thinking, in which logic replaces the magic thought that is so widespread in the society.

The analysis of the events makes clear not only the mistake committed by the woman, but also the series of mistakes and external circumstances which led the person to prison. It is through becoming aware of those events that the women are able to view their situation with a broad perspective. That enables them to visualize their situation in this context. Frequently the inmates realized how they had been the effect of the wishes of other people and how much that had influenced them and the course helped them to change from a position of effect into one of cause, raising their self-esteem and improving their relationships with other people.