
INTRODUCTORY NOTE

It is with pride that the United Nations Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFEI) offers to the international community the Resource Material Series No. 84.

This volume contains the Annual Report for 2010 and the work produced in the 147th International Senior Seminar, conducted from 13 January to 10 February 2011. The main theme of the 147th Seminar was “Community Involvement in Offender Treatment”.

Community involvement is an important element of both institutional and community-based treatment of offenders. Detained offenders will sooner or later return to society. In order to smoothen the reintegration process and to make it sustainable, it is essential that offenders are provided with an opportunity to achieve economic independence and with a motivation to reintegrate.

The core elements of economic independence are a secure job and accommodation. As government or correctional authorities cannot directly provide these elements, this responsibility has to be shared with the community.

Similarly, measures to encourage offenders and keep them motivated throughout the process of reintegration are also essential, yet rehabilitation and social reintegration can take a substantial period of time, and hardships are to be expected. As families, friends, and colleagues can provide help and prevent offenders from becoming mentally isolated, restoring such relationships, or building new ones, will be a very effective crime prevention measure. Support from self-help groups and volunteers can serve similar functions, and measures to enhance their involvement are also worthy of consideration.

The advantages of community involvement are not limited to facilitating the reintegration process. Many of the correctional programmes and interventions, in both institutional and community-based settings, can be administered more effectively and efficiently with help from the community.

For example, the involvement of business entities in vocational training provided in prisons can increase the relevance of these programmes, updating their content and responsiveness to market needs, and in turn enhancing the employability of offenders.

NGOs, individual experts and volunteers may have more experience and expertise in dealing with particular types of offenders or offender needs, and therefore may be able to make a substantial contribution to their rehabilitation, such as via drug and alcohol addiction programmes, for example.

Other advantages can be derived from the participation of private enterprises in the administration of correctional institutions. They may have creative ideas and business know-how, otherwise unavailable to prison authorities, that can result in substantial cost-savings.

The importance of community involvement in offender treatment has long been recognized and repeatedly mentioned in various standards and norms of the United Nations, including the United Nations Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners and the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-Custodial Measures (The Tokyo Rules). More recently, the Workshop on “Strategies and Best Practices against Overcrowding in Correctional Facilities”, organized by UNAFEI in the framework of the Twelfth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (Salvador, Brazil, April 2010), discussed and examined various measures against prison overcrowding such as diversion, sentencing alternatives to imprisonment, and early release programmes. The Workshop agreed that the co-operation and understanding of the community were essential in implementing these measures, and reflected these sentiments in the Workshop’s recommendations.

However, engaging the attention of the community and enhancing their involvement in the treatment of offenders is not an easy task. General fear of crime, aversion to offenders, and indifference are some major obstacles to be addressed. Creating incentives for businesses to employ offenders, and

providing them with coverage for potential financial loss caused by their reoffending, may have to be considered as well. Moreover, a framework within which the government and the community can create a partnership has to be established.

In order to achieve these goals, governments need to develop strategies to promote their communities' understanding that: 1) many offenders are willing to make good-faith efforts to re-enter society; and that 2) the ultimate beneficiary of successful offender rehabilitation is the community itself because it will achieve the important criminal justice goal of reducing crime.

UNAFEI, as one of the institutes of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme Network, held this Seminar to explore various issues that relate to community involvement in the treatment of offenders.

In this issue, in regard to the 147th International Senior Seminar, papers contributed by visiting experts, selected individual presentation papers from among the participants, and the Reports of the Seminar are published. I regret that not all the papers submitted by the participants of the Seminar could be published.

I would like to pay tribute to the contributions of the Government of Japan, particularly the Ministry of Justice, the Japan International Cooperation Agency, and the Asia Crime Prevention Foundation for providing indispensable and unwavering support to UNAFEI's international training programmes.

Finally I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all who so unselfishly assisted in the publication of this series; in particular, the editor of Resource Material Series No. 84, Ms. Grace Lord.

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