

First of all, on behalf of all UNAFEI staff, I am very grateful to the Ministry of Justice of the People's Republic of China, the Institute for Crime Prevention, Beijing Municipal Bureau of Justice, the Bureau of Justice of Chaoyang District and other concerned agencies for inviting me here.

UNAFEI is a training institute established under agreement between the Japanese Government and the United Nations, so it is not exactly part of Japanese Government itself. But since all the staff of UNAFEI, including myself, are from different sectors of the Ministry of Justice of Japan, and I am the only representative from Japan, I would like to talk about the Japanese halfway house.

For better understanding, I would prefer to outline entire system of rehabilitation services in Japan, but as our time is limited, this will not be possible. Please have a look through the leaflets distributed earlier.

Here I would like to emphasize just two things in our rehabilitation system.

The first is that two bureaus under the MoJ are responsible for the treatment of offenders. One is the Correction Bureau, responsible for the institutional treatment, and the other is the Rehabilitation Bureau, engaged in community-based treatment. Both bureaus deal with juveniles as well as adult offenders.

The second is the extensive use of volunteers and the voluntary sector in community-based treatment. We have a unique system of volunteer probation officers, who supervise offenders living in their neighbourhood on day-to-day basis.

In fact, our rehabilitation service originated from private citizens, not the government.

Even the halfway house has its origin in citizens' voluntary activities.

Such voluntary action has a long history: 120 years, long before the MoJ started taking care of offenders.

In Japan, the official term for a halfway house is an "Offenders Rehabilitation Facility" but here I will refer to it as "halfway house" for the convenience. Recently we have also established a system of national halfway houses called the "Offenders Rehabilitation Promotion Centres". I will touch upon it later, but it is not mentioned in other parts of my presentation since it is run by a totally different organization.

The halfway houses mentioned in my presentation are all privately run unless otherwise specified.

Most of them are managed by Juridical Persons for Offenders Rehabilitation Services.

A Juridical Person for Offenders Rehabilitation Services is a special corporation acknowledged by the Minister of Justice. Until few years ago, no other organization had been managing a halfway house. Recently, however, other kinds of special corporations and an NPO have begun to cater for the various needs of different types of offenders.

But even before these corporations took up the management, halfway houses had been in operation as family businesses or a part of religious missions. Actually even now quite a few Juridical Persons for Offenders Rehabilitation Services are in form of family businesses and therefore most halfway houses in Japan are considerably small. The average capacity is 22.6 persons.

The primary function of a halfway house is to accommodate offenders with nowhere to go and no one to support them. The halfway house provides them with a place to sleep and meet their basic needs.

Though this is the basic function, the halfway house is not an ordinary dormitory. It must facilitate discharged offenders

Therefore both the staff of the halfway house and probation officers provide the residents with guidance, instruction and various programmes.

The residents of the halfway house are divided into two groups: the first are supervisees, which means probationers and parolees; the second are discharged offenders not under supervision, such as those who left prison at the expiration of their term or those whose execution of sentence is suspended.

The first group are required to live in a halfway house by the conditions of their probation or parole. They cannot change their residence without the permission of the director of the relevant probation office.

On the other hand, members of the latter group are basically free to go anywhere they wish. These non-supervisees can stay in the halfway house for six months after release. If necessary, the period can be extended for another six months.

The ratio of the two groups varies in each halfway house but on the average more than 65 % are supervisees. In some houses they account for nearly 99 % of residents.

The average occupancy rate is 75 % because it is necessary to maintain some vacancies in case of urgent need. But in urban areas, many facilities are almost full all the time.

There are halfway houses for juveniles and adults, males and females, and those for mixed groups as shown in the chart.

We have 104 halfway houses all over Japan. I have already mentioned that there are only 102 management bodies, but two of them run two halfway houses each.

Different kinds of treatment are offered in a halfway house. Each house has its own way of treatment methods according to the needs of its particular residents.

The Social Skills Training (SST) and Substance Abuse Programme are popular treatment programmes adopted in most halfway houses.

They address the two biggest needs of the residents; interactive skills, including the skills to find and retain a job; substance addiction including alcohol addiction. Some halfway houses invite external speakers, facilitators or supervisors to participate in these treatment programmes.

There are a variety of other programmes. Some houses give residents a kind of financial diary to monitor their spending, others provide health and hygiene education, and others provide collage therapy.

The majority of the budget for halfway houses is covered by the government subsidies.

The sum is calculated based upon the actual number of accommodated residents.

The activities and financing of the halfway house is inspected by the relevant probation office.

Residents can stay in a halfway house completely free of charge for the first 60 days. After that they usually have to pay only for food.

As for personnel, there is generally one manager, one guidance chief, from one to ten guidance staff and one or more clerical staff.

Most of them employ a cook, but in smaller halfway houses clerical staff also cook, or they employ an external catering service instead.

Managers, guidance chiefs and guidance staff are usually retired probation officers or correctional officers, and sometimes retired police officers or teachers. One reason for employing such retired officers is that special skills are required to deal with offenders, while it is also true that many halfway houses are not financially stable enough to pay a sufficient salary for younger people to sustain a family. Recently, however, the number of young people involved in the work of halfway house has been increasing little by little.

In order to address the increasing needs of elderly and handicapped offenders, it is necessary to employ certified social workers in certain halfway houses specially designated for them.

As you can see in the map, the halfway houses are scattered all around Japan. There is at least one in every prefecture.

Unlike correctional institutions, which tend to be built far away from residential areas, they are located in or near the town or city centre for the clients' convenience in finding a job and going to work.

Now I would like to show you some photos of the halfway house.

It is stipulated by law that no more than four people can be accommodated in one room and the minimum surface per capita is 3.3 m².

Newer houses are likely to have more single rooms while older ones have more rooms with Japanese-style tatami mats which can accommodate as many as four people.

Hygiene regulations require halfway houses to have bathrooms.

They also have an interview room or a counselling room.

Some are equipped with a sand play therapy kit for residents with special psychological needs.

Group treatment sessions such as SST, group meetings and recreational activities take place in the multi-purpose hall, but the dining room can serve that purpose in smaller halfway houses where there is no specialized hall.

Many houses leave their halls open for public use, such as a children's gathering or a local volunteers' meeting.

This is also useful for maintaining a good relationship with community.

Of course the halfway house also must have practical facilities, such as a boiler, kitchen and storage area.

Last but not least, I would like to mention the Offenders Rehabilitation Promotion Centres, or the national halfway houses. This is a new project and the first national halfway house was established only in 2007.

The private halfway houses have been criticized for accepting only low-risk offenders. The problem is that we officers cannot force them to accept problematic or high-risk offenders, because they are independent and not under the direct control of the Ministry of Justice. Therefore there was a call for national facilities to take care of those offenders rejected by private halfway houses. But as Mr. Jerry Vrough mentioned in his presentation yesterday, it is unrealistic and virtually impossible to have a halfway house exclusively for sex offenders or arsonists. In future we are planning a facility for

such very difficult offenders, but for the moment we are focusing on those in need of vocational skills and intensive treatment instead, because they are also a targeted group of offenders in our criminal justice policy.

Probation officers stay in the centre 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. There are three national halfway houses so far. One is for offenders who need intensive treatment. It accommodates offenders for three months. The other two offer vocational skills training, especially in the field of agriculture. One is for juveniles, to train them for one year, and the other for adult offenders, and accommodates them for six months.

We are still in the course of evaluating the effectiveness of these national halfway houses.