

# IMPLEMENTATION OF BANGKOK RULES IN LATIN AMERICA

## BEST PRACTICES

María Noel Rodríguez  
Prison Reform Team  
Coordinator  
UNODC -ROPAN



### Bangkok Rules, a gender perspective of female imprisonment

- ▶ On December 21st, 2010 the General Assembly adopted the UN Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders.
- ▶ Bangkok Rules provide guidance to States in order to adopt concrete measures to address the special needs and requirements of women prisoners or offenders.
- ▶ Rule 1: Basic principle, **no discrimination**: In order for the principle of non-discrimination embodied in rule 6 of the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners to be put into practice, account shall be taken of the distinctive needs of women prisoners in the application of the Rules. Providing for such needs in order to accomplish substantial gender equality shall not be regarded as discriminatory.

## Bangkok Rules implementation progress



- ▶ A specialized attention program for female inmates was designed and implemented in line with Bangkok Rules.
- ▶ Special informative pamphlets were prepared for female inmates.
- ▶ Prison statistics were improved by incorporating gender variables. Parental status is recorded upon admission.
- ▶ The number and quality of reintegration activities for women were increased (education, work, vocational training, productive projects), in order to facilitate the social reintegration and eliminate gender stereotypes.
- ▶ 63% of female inmates participated in reintegration activities.
- ▶ A branch of the University of Panama was open in the Female prison in Panama City and more than 60 inmates are enrolled in various university degrees. [\(video\)](#).

- ▶ Prison staff received gender and human rights training (including the publication of 500 copies of Bangkok Rules, study visits and workshops)
- ▶ UNODC prepared an online self-paced course based on the Women Imprisonment Handbook. [\(only in Spanish\)](#)
- ▶ Women prisoners are able to exercise conjugal visits on an equal basis with men.
- ▶ Cultural activities, such as: theater [“834, vidas detrás del muro”](#), and the book of poems [“Mujeres en relieve”](#).
- ▶ Workshops on Human Rights and sexual and reproductive health .
- ▶ Two campaigns were launched :
  - ▶ “A book in prison, a window to freedom”
  - ▶ “Think before you act” [\(video\)](#)



## Review of legislation in line with Bangkok Rules

### Drugs issues:



- ▶ Act 9161 enables alternatives to imprisonment (home detention, probation, released with electronic monitoring) for women who introduce drugs into prisons, given some proof of vulnerability (poverty, caretaking responsibilities) ([video](#)).



- ▶ Reduction of sentences to people who traffic minor amounts of drugs (2014). ([nota informativa](#)).
- ▶ Pardon granted to people convicted of micro traffic (2008)

### Alternatives measures for mothers



- ▶ Home detention or suspended sentences for pregnant women or mothers with young children is a practice widely applied in Latin America. (Panama, Argentina, Uruguay, Colombia, Costa Rica).

## Housing for pregnant women and mothers with children



- ▶ Nursery and half way home, Female Federal Centre “Ntra. Sra. Del Rosario de San Nicolás” (Unit 31).
- ▶ Health programme to attend female prisoners’ children, Federal units.



- ▶ Nursery, Female Prison, San José, has a sector to host pregnant women and mothers with children under 3 years.
- ▶ Santa María Nursery, caters to children older than one year. This nursery is run by an NGO ([video](#)).



- ▶ Child Development Centre, Izalco Farm, San Salvador (150 children and their mothers). The centre was built by people deprived of liberty. ([video](#)).



- ▶ Nursery, Female Prison Chorrillo I, Lima. The Ministry of Education provides teachers, pedagogic materials, workshops for mothers, etc.



- ▶ Mother and Baby Unit “El Molino”, Montevideo, hosts mothers and children under 4 years.
- ▶ Nursery outside the prison “Pájaros pintados” to attend female prisoners’ children, staff’s children and kids from the local community

## SPECIAL PROGRAMMES

- ▶ ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME FOR ENGLISH-SPEAKING WOMEN PRISONERS, ARGENTINA
- ▶ PROGRAMMES TO REDUCE DRUG ADDICTION. ARGENTINA, COSTA RICA.
- ▶ “SERVICE DOG PRISON PROGRAMME”. EZEIZA, ARGENTINA.
- ▶ PROGRAMME “MY VOICE FOR YOUR EYES”, PANAMA.
- ▶ FACTORY PRISON (with the support of a private company) in Ciudad del Este, PARAGUAY.
- ▶ INDUSTRIAL CLOTHING WORKSHOP (with the support of trade unions), URUGUAY.
- ▶ PROGRAMMES TO STRENGTHEN THE CULTURAL IDENTITY, GUATEMALA.



## Coordination mechanisms and networking

- ▶ Inter-institutional Protocol to deal with female prisoners and ex offenders (Costa Rica).
- ▶ NGOs: [Colectivo Artesana](#) (Guatemala); NNAPES.
- ▶ Inter-institutional working group to improve female prisoners conditions (Panama).
- ▶ Regional Gender Programme (Conference of Ministers of Justice of Iberoamerica, COMJIB) <http://www.comjib.org/sites/default/files/PROGRAMA%20REGIONAL%20DE%20GENERO.pdf>
- ▶ Draft norms to facilitate the social-labor inclusion of female prisoners and ex offenders in Latin America (EUROSOCIAL-COMJIB-IJJO). These standards seek to promote the inclusion of the gender specific perspective in prison intervention to improve the processes of social and labour reinsertion of women prisoners and released women.

## Regional level

- ▶ Regional workshop on best practices in the implementation of Bangkok Rules, with the participation of Central American countries and NGOs. A regional roadmap was agreed to achieve a better and wider application of the Rules.

<http://www.unodc.org/ropan/en/IndexArticles/PrisonReform/October2014/regional-workshop-on-the-implementation-of-the-bangkok-rules-in-guatemala.html>


- ▶ Informative section on the UNODC website (Spanish only):

[http://www.unodc.org/ropan/es/PrisonReform/Reglas\\_de\\_Bangkok/presentacion.html](http://www.unodc.org/ropan/es/PrisonReform/Reglas_de_Bangkok/presentacion.html)



## Recommendations

- ▶ Inform, raise awareness, train and disseminate the Bangkok Rules among prison staff, justice officers, police agents, NGOs and the community.
- ▶ Establish or strengthen inter-agency working groups/networks to comprehensively address the needs of women in prison and ex offenders. These groups should include women deprived of liberty.
- ▶ Amend national legislation to adapt it to the Bangkok Rules, review the penalties of drug laws (based on the quantity and role of the offender), decriminalize minor criminal offences and set up programmes that address drug abuse from a gender specific perspective.
- ▶ Implement alternative measures to imprisonment for pregnant women and mothers. If not possible, create special units for mothers, nurseries and care programmes for the children of female prisoners, in coordination with the competent authorities.
- ▶ Create and promote opportunities for the exchange of experiences and regional coordination to achieve a better implementation of the Bangkok Rules.



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Voces de mujeres intensas  
Que anhelan a gritos "Libertad"

Por: Victoria Sofia Nethersole