

The 2nd ASEAN-Japan Criminal Justice Seminar: Promoting the Rule of Law and Building an Inclusive Society (OTR Session)

“Efforts to reduce reoffending in the ASEAN Region, with a focus on sharing good practices of offenders' treatment as a follow-up to the implementation of the 14th Congress”

1. Duration and Participants

- From 9 to 18 December 2025
- 14 overseas participants from 9 countries
- 2 participants from Japan

2. Programme Overview

This programme addressed “Efforts to reduce reoffending in the ASEAN Region, with a focus on sharing good practices of offenders' treatment as a follow-up to the implementation of the 14th Congress”. It considered the Core Principles of the United Nations Model Strategies on Reducing Reoffending (Kyoto Model Strategies), adopted at the UN General Assembly in December 2025 and a key outcome of the 14th Congress: “Rehabilitation and social reintegration support in correctional facilities” and “Addressing the causes of offending.”

It examined the status and challenges of initiatives to promote reducing reoffending in ASEAN countries, useful systems for offender treatment in each country and their practical application, best practices, and other information and experiences. This aimed to improve national systems and practices, promote mutual understanding among seminar participants, and build a network for continuous information exchange to enhance practices across ASEAN countries.

3. Contents of the Programme

(1) Lecturers

The following visiting expert from overseas, as well as UNAFEI faculty members, gave lectures:

- Visiting Expert
 - Dr. Audrey Opal Hickert
Assistant Professor
School of Criminal Justice, University of Cincinnati
“Building from RNR: Using desistance-oriented approaches and narratives for rehabilitation and reintegration”
- Japanese Expert
 - Ms. NONOYAMA Ayano
Counselor to the Director
Regional Welfare Division, Welfare and Insurance Department
Nara Prefectural Government
“Rehabilitation Support in Nara Prefecture”
 - Mr. OKANISHI Masakatsu

Counselor

General Incorporated Association “Kagayaki Home”

“Initiatives of General Incorporated Association ‘Kagayaki Home’”

“What I Learned as a Counselor at ‘Kagayaki Home’”

(2) Country Presentations

The participants shared the practices and the challenges in their respective jurisdictions regarding the theme of the programme through their country presentations.

(3) Observation Visits

The participants visited the Tachikawa Detention House, the Medical Correctional Center in East Japan, the Medical Juvenile Correction and Education Center in East Japan, the Tokyo-West Juvenile Assessment Center, the Training Institute for Correctional Personnel and Fuchu Prison to learn efforts and practices regarding offender treatment and rehabilitation, particularly the practical operations under Japan’s newly adopted sentence of imprisonment.

(4) Creation and Presentation of Action Plans

The participants concluded the programme by presenting their own action plans to the fellow participants and faculty of UNAFEI, focusing on the challenges they identified, possible solutions, as well as what they learned in the lectures, facility tours, presentations by colleagues and discussion. These plans focused on the Core Principles of the Kyoto Model Strategies “Rehabilitation and social reintegration support in correctional facilities” and “Addressing the causes of offending”.

4. Feedback from the Participants

Many seminar participants offered positive feedback, stating that through country presentations, lectures, and facility tours, they comprehensively learned about good practices in offender treatment—centred on efforts to reduce offending and address causes of offending across nations. Simultaneously, they found it a valuable opportunity for building a network of practitioners involved in offender treatment within the ASEAN region. Regarding the Q&A sessions and discussions among the participants in each session, the discussions were more active than initially anticipated, leading to requests for more time allocated for Q&A and discussion. We will continue to strive to improve the programme while taking the participants’ requests into consideration.

5. Comments from the Programming Officer

Among the challenges facing correctional administration in ASEAN countries are facility overcrowding and the aging of the prison population. Against this backdrop, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the United Nations Model Strategies on Reducing Reoffending (Kyoto Model Strategies) in December 2025. For ASEAN countries as well, addressing these challenges makes efforts toward reducing reoffending measures crucial. This strategy contains six Core Principles. Last year’s seminar focused on one of them: “Rehabilitation in the community and non-custodial measures”. This second session focused on two Core Principles: “Rehabilitation and social reintegration support in correctional facilities” and “Addressing the causes of offending.” Participants

shared their countries' current situations, challenges, and good practices, concentrating on developing action plans to address these issues.

These two Core Principles are interrelated. Providing rehabilitation and social reintegration support in correctional facilities requires scientifically grounded assessments and addressing the factors contributing to offending based on those assessments. While the scale and nature of these efforts vary by country, they are being implemented not only in Japan but also in ASEAN countries.

To encourage seminar participants to reflect academically on their own national initiatives, we invited visiting experts to present most recent academic research. This provided participants with an opportunity to re-examine the academic background and significance of the approaches implemented in their respective countries and facilities.

In Japan, treatment programmes under the newly adopted sentence of imprisonment began in 2025, and efforts to reduce reoffending are making steady progress. To allow seminar participants to observe these on-site initiatives, we arranged visits to all types of facilities: prisons, detention houses, juvenile training schools, juvenile assessment centres, and training centres for staff.

Furthermore, while the Kyoto Model Strategies stipulate that efforts to reduce reoffending require collaboration with local society, a visiting expert from Nara Prefecture shared insights on rehabilitation support initiatives involving collaboration between the national government and local government, highlighted the importance of cooperation not only with residents and volunteers in the community but also with local governments. This was recognized as an innovative approach by many participants, forming the basis for lively discussions. As a Programming Officer, there were a lot to learn from these discussions and initiatives.

Finally, in the action plans compiled by participants as a summary of the seminar, key areas identified for future work in their home countries included appropriate assessment and effective treatment based on the results, as well as fostering collaboration and understanding with local communities. Through compiling the action plans, it became clear that efforts to reduce reoffending are an important factor in correctional administration, not only in countries facing overcrowding issues but also in those experiencing an aging prison population due to societal aging.

The Kyoto Model Strategies adopted in December 2025 comprise six principles and 18 model strategies, serving as a reference for countries and regions in their legislative and policy-making efforts to reduce reoffending. Reducing reoffending will be a major contribution to solving challenges in ASEAN countries. Therefore, through this seminar, we intend to continue promoting the dissemination and utilization of these guidelines.