

# **WOMEN IN THE CONTEXT OF CONFINEMENT: IMPACT OF PRISON REFORM IN FEMALE CORRECTIONAL CENTERS OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

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## **I. CONCEPTUAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK**

### **A. From Vengeful Justice to Restorative Justice**

Elio Gómez Grillo, in his presentation entitled “HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF JAIL”, indicated that: “The Prison institution appears in history of humanity as a formula of exploitation of captive labor and nothing else (House of work).” Nowadays we are not looking to make the inmate an exploited worker but a repenting sinner (House of correction)”. On the other hand Tony Marshall talks about the transition, focusing on “Restorative justice is a process through which parties or individuals who have been involved and / or have an interest in a particular crime, solve collectively how to deal with the immediate consequences of this and its implications of the future.”

### **B. Impact of the International Community**

A tally of existing national and international instruments is presented from the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, adopted by the First United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders in 1955 and approved by the United Nations Economic and Social Council in 1957, passing the Beijing Rules in 1985 by the Body of Principles for the protection of all persons under any form of detention or imprisonment of 1988, the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, the Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners of 1990, the Tokyo Rules of 1990, the Riad guidelines in early 1990, **Vienna Declaration on Crime and Justice in 2000, up to the Bangkok Rules “RULES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR THE TREATMENT OF WOMEN PRISONERS AND NON-CUSTODIAL MEASURES FOR WOMEN OFFENDERS” and its adoption in 2010.** The Bangkok Rules represent an important tool for equitable treatment of women in conflict with the law. For the applicability of the 70 rules, special programs have been designed obtaining excellent results.

## **II. DOMINICAN REPUBLIC PRISON MANAGEMENT MODEL**

The Management Model's main purpose focuses on reintegration as the main purpose of prison treatment. As a multidisciplinary team, the treatment area is comprised of professionals in the fields of education, psychology, medicine, psychiatry, sport, culture, social production and work together to achieve behavior modification and reduce recidivism through labor integration and social reintegration in a condition to meet the standards and laws.

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All prison staff are educated by the National Penitentiary School, before entering the system they have to go through rigorous recruitment and selection procedures. After passing the selection process they are included in training programs, established accordingly to the area of interest and targeted to the area of performance, automatically entering programs of continuing education and refreshing school education.

In our country, there are currently 18 CCRs of which 11 are run by women. The management team of the Model Prison Management is 60% women with a performance of regional dimensions.

### III. PRISON TREATMENT PROGRAMS

#### A. Education: Main Aspect of Treatment

The Model Prison Management facilitates the promotion and development of educational activities in Corrections and Rehabilitation Centers (RACs) at various levels and modalities. In this sense an education policy is supported by the Ministry of Education and supplemented by conducting technical and training courses provided by local institutions of vocational and technical training. Necessary institutional relations develop, both at the national and local levels (a private, government and civil society level), to achieve the support for technical assistance, logistical and financial support.

In order for detainees to access similar educational offer as to what's available in a free environment, in order to contribute effectively to their correction, rehabilitation and reintegration into society, the Model Prison Management provides, in RACs, an educational diversity that includes: formal education, technical, languages, computers, artistic, cultural, physical, recreation and sports and education in values.

Literacy training as a compulsory activity, formal education that includes basic, middle and high school levels, college education offered on site and virtual classroom modality, technical education currently offering 60 courses at this level, six different languages, computing is offered in a virtual room present at each center, special education for inmates with special conditions for learning, education in values that are keystones of the area of education:

1. **Mental Health** offers psychological and psychiatric consultations, individual therapies, group therapy, programs for reducing aggression, behavior modification, suicide prevention, hunger strike, psychiatric care program, anger management, stress management, grief therapy, traumatic stress therapies, drug addiction therapy, psychometric testing, qualification of conduct program and inside publication.
2. **Welfare** with the aim of bringing and strengthen the family unit with the following programs: family therapy, special rooms suitable for children's visits, adult visiting room, virtual visit room, reconciliation with the environment, community outreach, labor activities, activities in coordination with the Prison Ministry, assignment room to accompany their children to do their homework, home to family visits. It also has adequate space for conjugal or intimate visits and its procedure regulations, taking

consideration of the right of the inmate to have intimate contact with another person of their choice, within relationships available for life in confinement within the framework of dignity and respect.

3. **Productivity** to provide them tools with which they can earn a decent living when stepping out onto the free medium. Currently our centers have: chicken farms, greenhouses, crop in the open, pig farms, crafting of clothing items where all professional, service and security staff uniforms are made, electronics repair, crafting workshops where beds that are installed in facilities under construction are made, cabinetmaking workshop where school seats are built and repaired for the community and penitentiary centers, etc.
4. **Physical Education, Sports and Recreation** as relief therapy promoting intra- and extramural sports such as: volleyball tournaments, domino tournaments, basketball tournaments, physical education, recreation games.
5. **Art and Culture** as a mechanism of “0” leisure developing activities such as: creating theater groups, dance groups, choir, soloist, music classes, paintwork, artistic and cultural festival held every year. 2015 will be the seventh season.
6. **Physical Health** providing care to them through the programs: Healthy Life Style, Personal Hygiene Workshop, General Medicine and Specialty, Dentistry, Chronic Patients Program, Disease Control Program, Primary Care Unit, Program for food handling.
7. **Legal Aid** accompanying them in their legal process with a single file management subsystem, comprehensive information system, tracking cases, reports of Conduct for sentence execution Judges, control transfers, control inputs and outputs, as well as relapse control.

## **B. Special Programs**

### 1. Conduct Qualification Program. Good Practices for Rehabilitation

The Multidisciplinary team of professionals in the Corrections and Rehabilitations Centers perform three evaluations per year providing individualized and comparative data on the results provided by the women prisoners in each of the areas of treatment, also the monitoring of their behavior. The program objective is to induce permanent improvement of individual and collective behavior of persons deprived of liberty in the MGP. The results of these evaluations are publicly presented within accommodations and pavilions where the interns spend the night.

### 2. Free Environment and Family. Preparing for Reintegration

Once put in place and matured, the stages of observation and treatment the system introduces the concept “Free Medium” which enters into the stage of testing as part of good practice for reintegration. The aim of the Free Medium is to ensure execution of sentence in the framework of social and educational actions in accordance with the rights of persons deprived of liberty, oriented to an effective rehabilitation and social reinsertion. The Free Medium Unit is

responsible for regulating, monitoring and evaluating the implementation of plans in cases of: Pre-release period, Probation and Management Alternate measurements in prison.

3. Artistic and Cultural Festival

This activity was born in May 2009, allowing the development of artistic and cultural expressions of detainees that are inmates in the Corrections and Rehabilitation Centers of the Dominican Republic in the scheme of the New Model of Jail Management and part of incentives by the exhibition of good behavior, and also promotes healthy competition between them. *Desde su nacimiento, ha sido celebrada cada año, exhibiendo grandes avances y llegando a niveles profesionales de presentaciones que han sido presentadas en los escenarios más solemnes de nuestro país.*

4. Productive and Craft Fair

This activity takes place annually at the RACs in different settings nationwide. All RACs have in their execution Matrix to comply with annual participation fairs held locally with the recurrent date fixed for the anniversary of the center and national fairs that are held in the capital city, as the book fair, the agro-industrial fair, etc. In these shows, schools have the opportunity to showcase the products harvested and / or manufactured with the particularity that are the same inmates, which in turn serves as an opportunity for social reintegration.

5. Food Handling

They learn to establish the health requirements to be met by performers in food handling operations, while obtaining, receipt of raw materials, processing, packaging, storage, transportation and even marketing. All food handlers receive basic training in food hygiene to develop these functions and other training courses according to the schedule established by the health authorities. In addition a special medical examination before admission to any area of food processing must be performed, and every six months, among other requirements.

6. Healthy Lifestyles

It refers to a set of program activities for inmates in order to create healthy habits and to teach them to live with health conditions or situations that afflict. This program is developed with activities focused for inmates that have controlled or catastrophic illness and to protect healthy inmates from contagion, eliminating vectors and other actions.

7. Virtual Tours Program. An Equity Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation and Correction Centers currently hold approximately 5% of foreign inmates, also adding Dominican inmates with family members living in other countries or other areas outside of the site location. Prisoners in these conditions tend to suffer the ravages of loneliness and hopelessness on a larger scale, so, motivated to to offer all the same opportunities, we create for them spaces where they can share with their immediate surroundings so that it can become an element to strengthen programs to receive treatment and rehabilitation, family support through the tour. This program is being implemented.

8. Suggestions Mailbox. An Observatory for Continuous Improvement

As a way to detect and resolve situations in a transparent way to the collective but important for individuals, suggestions mailboxes have been installed, for both inmates and MGP staff,

allowing to express opportunities for improvement at any level. The objective is to analyze, empower and resolve, according to the possibilities, complaints or suggestions to the satisfaction of needs and expectations as a means of consolidating quality.

#### 9. Infrastructure. A Distinguishing Element

Understanding that this issue is of central importance when trying to implement a model where equity plays its role, the Bureau of Prison Architecture where differentiating elements between women and men are discussed was implemented before construction of a CCR. This has allowed different factors involved in this issue such as universities, civil society and prison staff. Achieving the building of structures which takes into account the chronological and gender difference of inmates, creating wards for men, women and children with their particularities in line with the minimum requirements accepted by international organizations. The implementation of a new prison model based on the philosophy of respect for the human condition of persons deprived of liberty, rests on three fundamental pillars; Construction of new physical plant or adequacy of the same, human talent and application of the new system of prison management and security are tools to support the development of treatment for rehabilitation and successful reintegration.