

**Group D****Presentation title: Challenges in Preventing Recidivism**


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**Summary**

Group D presented on assessment of and support for offenders to reduce reoffending. A considerable number of offenders commit crimes due to poverty, drug addiction, neighbourhood affiliations etc. Therefore, to promote rehabilitation, each offender needs to be properly assessed to identify the circumstances under which the offence was committed. Offenders can be assessed and supported at any stage of the criminal justice system. At the investigation stage, information on available services and how to access them can be provided to offenders by investigating officers. At the prosecution stage, prosecutors can refer offenders to service providers, such as psychologists, rehabilitation volunteers, and religious or community resources. At the trial stage, judges should be made aware of the benefit of non-custodial sentences and the drawbacks of the wide use of custodial sentences. In addition, assessment reports of offenders are valuable to identify which cases would be suitable for imposition of non-custodial sentences.

In prisons, offenders need to be identified and categorized according to their abilities and skills and need to be provided with training to gain skills in collaboration with vocational schools and colleges through governmental or non-governmental sponsorship. Programmes for offenders can be implemented on a small scale as a pilot project and expanded slowly with careful monitoring of progress.

Effective post-release support is also essential to reduce the risk of reoffending. Therefore, a body to administer a monitoring system for people released early from prisons is required. Preparation for re-entry prior to release and adequate monitoring after release with a clear plan to settle into life outside prison is required. In providing such support, civilian partnerships play key roles.