
INTRODUCTORY NOTE

It is with pride that the United Nations Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFEI) offers to the international community Resource Material Series No. 74.

This volume contains the work produced in the 135th International Senior Seminar that was conducted from 12 January to 16 February 2007. The main theme of the 135th Seminar was “Promoting Public Safety and Controlling Recidivism Using Effective Interventions with Offenders: An Examination of Best Practices”.

The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners states that the ultimate purpose of imprisonment is to protect society against crime; at the same time it should also aim at offenders’ reintegration into society. Non-custodial measures are more conducive to social integration of offenders and facilitate their rehabilitation by allowing them continuous contact with the community. In 1990 the United Nations adopted the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-Custodial Measures (the Tokyo Rules), which stipulate guidelines and standards concerning various non-custodial measures.

Since the 1990s, a re-evaluation of programmes that aim at the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders has been made from the point of view of “What Works” not from the pessimistic point of view of “Nothing Works”. Thus now, a consensus is being established concerning the models of effective intervention that aim at the prevention and/or reduction of recidivism. Such effective intervention models have already been implemented in institutions, such as prisons, and in the community (for example, as part of probation), in many countries in the form of cognitive behavioural therapy, social skills training and motivational interviewing. Empirical evaluations of their outcomes have been, and continue to be, carried out.

Reflecting such insights, the United Nations adopted the Bangkok Declaration on the occasion of the 11th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, held in Bangkok, Thailand in 2005. The Declaration urges Member States to “recognize that comprehensive and effective crime prevention strategies can significantly reduce crime and victimization ... [, and] ... urge that such strategies address the root causes and risk factors of crime ...” Member States are also urged to “endeavour to use and apply the United Nations standards and norms in [their] national programmes for crime prevention and criminal justice [and] to facilitate appropriate training for law enforcement officials, including prison officials, prosecutors, the judiciary and other relevant professional groups, taking into account those norms and standards and best practices at the international level”. Therefore, it is very important to discuss and examine the experiences and practices that aim at the prevention and reduction of recidivism and evaluate their adaptability, sustainability and cost-effectiveness in order to incorporate such ideas into improving future treatment of offenders in respective countries.

Based on the above, this Seminar aimed to study best practices of the effective interventions that focus on the prevention and/or reduction of recidivism of offenders in the participating countries and provided an opportunity to examine necessary and productive measures to promote offenders’ reintegration into society through the provision of effective programmes at each stage of the criminal justice process.

In this issue, in regard to the 135th Seminar, papers contributed by visiting experts, selected individual presentation papers from among the participants and the Reports of the

Seminar are published. I regret that not all the papers submitted by the Seminar participants could be published.

I would like to pay tribute to the contributions of the Government of Japan, particularly the Ministry of Justice, the Japan International Cooperation Agency, and the Asia Crime Prevention Foundation for providing indispensable and unwavering support to UNAFEI's international training programmes.

Finally I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all who so unselfishly assisted in the publication of this series; in particular, the editor of Resource Material Series No. 74, Ms. Grace Lord.

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