

The rehabilitation and social reintegration of women prisoners in Uganda

Implementation of the Bangkok Rules



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Introduction



The primary reasons for imprisonment are to protect society against crime and to reduce recidivism. International standards make it clear that these can only be achieved if the time in prison is used to ensure the reintegration of prisoners into society upon release so that they can lead law-abiding and self-supporting lives.

It is in all our interests that prisoners return to the community with the skills and attitudes that will enable them to stay out of prison in the future. Prisoners are part of society – the vast majority will eventually be released from prison and it is therefore of benefit to the broader community, and in the interest of public safety, that they are able to play a positive role in society. If they leave prison with greater problems, and without the knowledge and skills to cope, there will inevitably be ongoing consequences for them, their families, and their communities and further costs for the state.

As the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has noted, investments in rehabilitation programs for prisoners ‘are one of the best and most cost-effective ways of preventing their re-offending, with significant benefits not only for the individuals concerned but also for public safety more broadly. Under Section 4 of The Prisons Act Cap 17 of 2006, the main objective of the Prisons Service (UPS) is to contribute to the protection of all members of society by providing reasonable, safe, secure, and humane custody and rehabilitation of offenders in accordance with universally accepted standards.

There are, however, many prisoners who do not take part in or who cannot access rehabilitation programs and many who do not benefit sufficiently from the existing projects. There are multiple reasons why prisons are unable to provide satisfactory rehabilitation programs to all prisoners. Some prisons do not have the resources especially financial and human resource shortage to implement appropriate activities while in others, existing schemes are not well tailored to individual needs, or are only available to a few prisoners. Even where good programs exist, prisoners still face significant barriers during their imprisonment or following their release, which impacts their successful rehabilitation.

Female prisoners represent a small but increasing proportion of prisoners worldwide. They face specific barriers in accessing programs and services in prisons and there are often limited rehabilitation opportunities available to them. Programs that do exist are often heavily gendered and do not cater for their particular backgrounds and rehabilitation needs. Female prisoners also face gender-specific challenges after their release from prison.

As the commentary to Rules 57–58 of the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules) notes, ‘A considerable proportion of women offenders do not necessarily pose a risk to society and their imprisonment may not help but hinder their social reintegration.’ Whilst this guide does not examine alternatives to imprisonment in detail, it should be noted that for the vast majority of female prisoners, community-based alternatives that provide assistance, support, and treatment are the most effective way of helping them build positive lives away from crime in the future.

This guide covers the different aspects of rehabilitation and identifies the key elements for successful rehabilitation of female offenders. The primary focus is on specific programmes as well as good practices for addressing the root causes of offending. As the success of rehabilitation programmes can also depend on the provision and quality of pre- and post-release support, attention is also given to these programmes and services.

Purpose of this guide



This guide is designed for use by Prison Management, Staff, Policymakers, Ministry Department & Agencies (MDAs), Non-Government Organizations, FBOS and others involved in the criminal justice process, including legislators, judges and law enforcement officials. It aims to provide practical guidance on improving existing rehabilitation programmes and services and designing new ones, looking at different country contexts and taking into account location-specific challenges and opportunities.

Whilst existing documents look at the development of rehabilitation programmes in detail, there is little guidance available specifically on the rehabilitation of female prisoners. This guide aims to bridge that gap and provide practical solutions as to how criminal justice systems can improve their efforts in this area. This is done by highlighting some of the many innovative examples of promising practices in the rehabilitation of female prisoners around the world, which can engage and inspire others. The guidance can also be used by international organizations, NGOs, and monitoring bodies in their advocacy efforts, and to provoke discussions amongst the broader community about improved rehabilitation for female prisoners.

This guide summarizes the importance of good prisoner rehabilitation and social reintegration programs and identifies the main barriers to successful rehabilitation, including the particular barriers faced by female prisoners and by specific groups of female prisoners such as foreign nationals and women from ethnic minority groups. Identifying these barriers provides insight into why additional efforts are needed to assist in the rehabilitation of women offenders.

As guided by the Prisons Act under Section 5 (b) and (c) and Standing Orders Part ii chapter 58 and Regulations 58 to 61 of Prison Regulations 2012 some of the functions of the Uganda Prisons Service (UPS) are to facilitate the social rehabilitation and reformation of prisoners through specific training and educational programs and to facilitate the re-integration of prisoners into their respective communities. This is specifically implemented by the Rehabilitation and Reintegration Department of the UPS.

It is crucial that those involved in prisoner rehabilitation understand that what works in one country, or even in one prison, will not necessarily work in another location, and a programme that is successful for one prisoner might not have the same outcome for another. For this reason, the examples in this guide are illustrative and are intended to provide ideas for the development of new programmes. In practice, and in all locations, rehabilitation programs should be designed according to the local context, taking into account the prisoner population profile, available resources and employment needs on market.

The guide concludes with a set of 10 fundamental principles for the successful design and implementation of rehabilitation programmes for female prisoners.



Relevant National Legal Framework and International Standards

The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995 is the supreme law of Uganda and it provides for the rights of all its citizens in Chapter 4. Furthermore, the Constitution of Uganda gives UPS its mandate under Article 215.

The Prisons Act, 2006 stipulates the administration, functions of UPS, and management of prisoners.

The Prisons Regulations 2012 operationalize the Prisons Act and give implementation procedures on different aspects stipulated in the Act.

The Prisons Regulations 2012 further guide arrangements for education classes, setting up libraries, engagement of prisoners in vocational training and that 'special attention shall be paid to the education of an illiterate person'.

The Uganda Prisons Standing Orders 2017 emphasize the responsibility of Prison Management to ensure that convicted prisoners under their custody undergo Social Rehabilitation and Reintegration and that "prisoners' rehabilitation needs shall be put at the fore of each placement". International standards are clear that prison systems should be rehabilitative and should take into account the gender-specific social reintegration requirements of female prisoners. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which is legally binding on all States Parties, stipulates those penitentiary systems 'shall comprise; treatment of prisoners the essential aim of which shall be their reformation and social rehabilitation'.

The Nelson Mandela Rules

The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (SMR) were first approved in 1957 and revised in 2015. The revised rules are known as the 'Nelson Mandela Rules'. The Rules reiterate that the purpose of imprisonment is to protect society against crime and to reduce recidivism, and that prison administrations 'should offer education, vocational training and work, as well as other forms of assistance that are appropriate and available, including those of a remedial, moral, spiritual, social, health and sports-based nature'. The Rules also stipulate that all rehabilitation programs, activities and services 'should be delivered in line with the individual treatment needs of prisoners.'

Rule 92 of the Nelson Mandela Rules makes it clear that the rehabilitation of prisoners should include 'all appropriate means, including religious care in the countries where this is possible, education, vocational guidance and training, social casework,

employment counseling, physical development and strengthening of moral character, in accordance with the individual needs of each prisoner, taking account of his or her social and criminal history, physical and mental capacities and aptitudes, personal temperament, the length of his or her sentence and prospects after release'.

The Bangkok Rules

The United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules) were adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly on 21 December 2010. The Rules give guidance to policymakers, legislators, sentencing authorities and prison staff on how to reduce the unnecessary imprisonment of women and meet the specific needs of women who are imprisoned, including in relation to their successful rehabilitation.

Before the adoption of the Bangkok Rules, international standards had not adequately addressed the specific characteristics and needs of women and girls in criminal justice systems. The Rules were also the first international instrument to address the needs of minors in prison with their parent. The Bangkok Rules supplement both the Nelson Mandela Rules and the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-custodial Measures (the Tokyo Rules), which were adopted in 1990.

Rule 29 of the Bangkok Rules specifies that staff should be trained to enable them 'to address the special social reintegration requirements of women prisoners and manage safe and rehabilitative facilities. Rule 40 of the Bangkok Rules requires classification methods to be gender specific 'to ensure appropriate and individualized planning and implementation towards those prisoners' early rehabilitation, treatment and reintegration into society'.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights highlights a vision of humankind based on universally agreed values and principles of human rights, human dignity, and equality. It outlines the rights and freedoms everyone is entitled to without discrimination.

The Convention on the Rights of Women

The Convention on the Rights of Female Inmates, also known as the Bangkok Rules, is a set of United Nations rules that focus on the treatment of women in the criminal justice system. It emphasizes

safeguarding women's rights during arrest, detention, and imprisonment, addressing issues such as healthcare, privacy, and the prevention of gender-based violence. The rules aim to promote gender-sensitive policies and practices within the criminal justice system.

The Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment is a United Nations treaty that addresses the prohibition and prevention of torture. It establishes principles that apply universally. The convention prohibits torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, emphasizing the right to be free from such practices.

When it comes to female inmates, the convention underscores the importance of preventing gender-based violence and ensuring that all individuals, regardless of gender, are treated with dignity and respect. Specific measures may be outlined in national laws and policies to address the unique needs and vulnerabilities of female prisoners.

The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights is a regional human rights instrument adopted by the Organization of African Unity (now the African Union). It contains provisions that address the rights of all individuals, including women within the criminal justice system.

Article 5 of the charter, for example, states that every individual shall have the right to the respect of the dignity inherent in a human being and to the recognition of his legal status. This provision applies to both male and female inmates. However, for more specific details on the rights of female inmates, one would need to consider national laws, policies, and regional protocols that may provide additional protections tailored to the needs of women in the criminal justice system.

The African charter on prisoner's rights (2006) The charter indicates that programs for physical and social rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners into community must be provided.

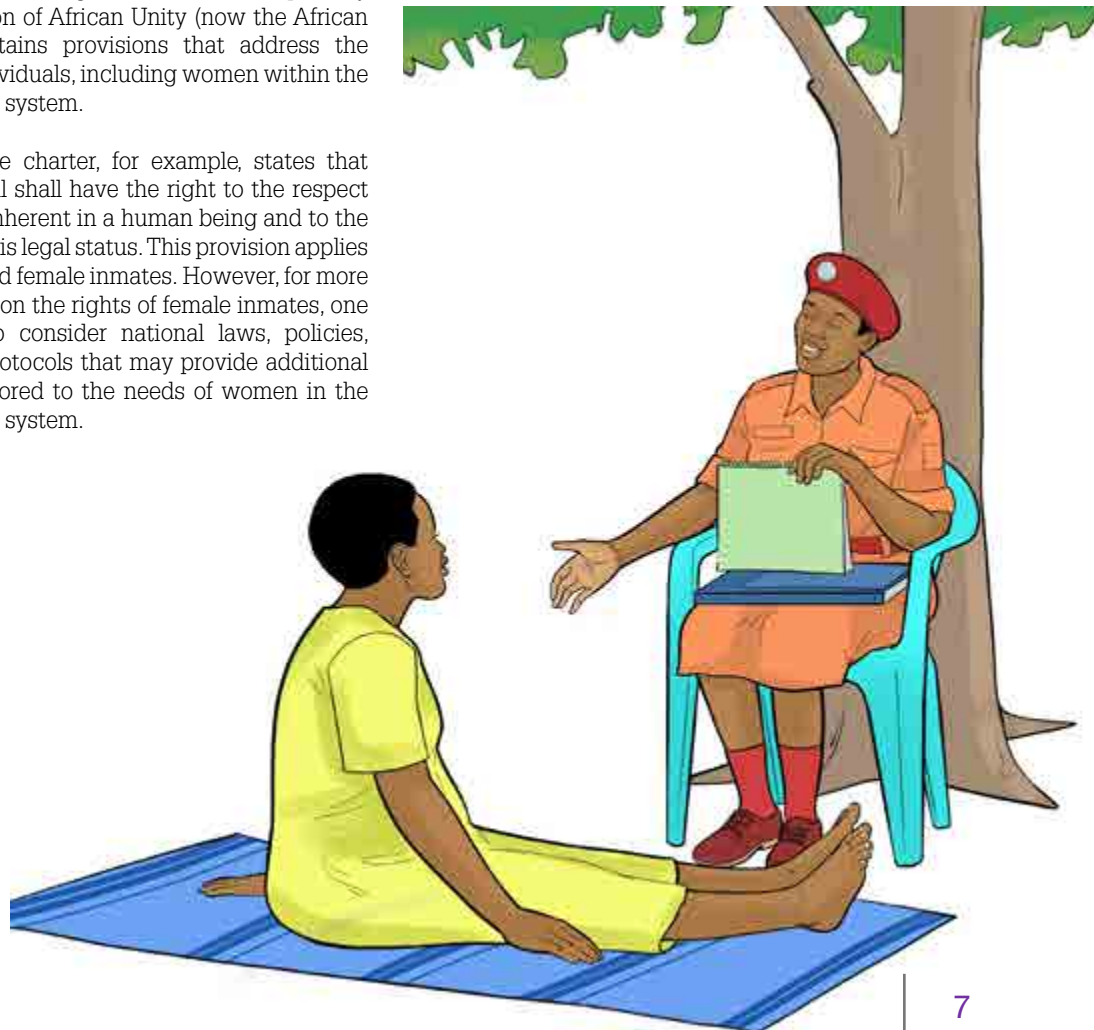
The Convention Against Torture

The African Union (AU) has a human rights framework that addresses rehabilitation and reintegration as part of criminal justice reforms.

The Maputo Protocol emphasizes women's rights within the context of criminal justice including rehabilitation for female offenders.

The UN standard minimum rules for non-custodial measures (the Tokyo Rules); The

Tokyo rules encourage efforts to raise awareness and constructive attitudes among the general public about the value of non-custodial measures as well as of the importance of the social reintegration of offenders and call for public participation in the implementation of alternatives to imprisonment to be regarded as an opportunity for members of the community to contribute to the protection of their society.



PART 1

Background and context



The Importance of Rehabilitation and Social Reintegration



Globally, there is growing recognition of the importance of rehabilitation and social reintegration programmes in prisons. The Doha Declaration, adopted in 2015 at the 13th UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, highlights the crucial importance of the rehabilitation of prisoners for achieving sustainable development (see The Doha Declaration on page 9).

As the main purpose of imprisonment, rehabilitation should include a broad range of programmes, including physical and mental healthcare, substance abuse programmes, physical activities, counselling, psychosocial support, education and vocational training courses, creative and cultural activities, work opportunities, and regular access to well-stocked library facilities.

Education is a fundamental human right that should be enjoyed by all. Vocational training and work programmes allow prisoners to engage in constructive activities whilst gaining new skills for potential future work. This improves the ability of prisoners to successfully reintegrate into society and lead crime-free lives. Providing them with education, work and training opportunities can also ‘normalize’ their time in prison, making it closer to life in the community and helping prisoners lead independent lives after release.

In addition, good rehabilitation programmes can enhance safety and control measures in the prison environment. Prisoners engaged in constructive activities are generally easier to manage and less likely to be disruptive. Providing prisoners with constructive activities has also been found to reduce levels of depression and other mental health conditions, with one study describing prisoners’ motivation to change – through participation in vocational training programmes – as instrumental in improving mental health ‘as they are more focused on goals and resilient to negative external and social impacts on their lives’. If implemented transparently and fairly, prison rehabilitation programmes – and work programmes in particular – can benefit prisoners by providing incentives that could help them to financially support their families whilst also producing resources for prison systems themselves. This could be in the form of food production for the prison, facility cleaning and maintenance, or the sale of products made by prisoners. Many rehabilitation projects can be set up without significant resources and any profits made can be invested in enhancing rehabilitation programmes or developing new ones.

After serving the respective sentences, women need to be assisted with their reintegration back into society. Effective reintegration is crucial given the fact that ex-women offenders are treated with ridicule in society. Women face peculiar and life-threatening problems after release, as they experience a lot of stigmatizations as a result of imprisonment as compared to their male counterparts. This is attributed to the fact that they are the mothers of the country with children and families to keep in line. So, imprisonment deprives them of this respect from the community.

Although many problems women face during re-entry are similar to those of men, the intensity and multiplicity of their post-release needs can be very different. Women are likely to experience particular discrimination after release from prison due to social stereotypes; they might be rejected by their families and, in some countries, may lose their parental rights. If they have left a violent relationship, women will

have to establish a new life, which is likely to entail economic, social and legal difficulties, in addition to the challenges of transitioning to life outside prison. Women are likely to have particular support requirements in terms of housing, reunification with their families and employment. Therefore, they will need assistance.

Reintegration helps in the assurance of a place of abode, and reconciliation with oneself, the family members, the victim(s) and the community. It helps in safeguarding against reoffending, preparation of the community to receive back their own and protecting her from mob justice. Reintegration should not stop at release, but aftercare programs ought to be made compulsory and subsequently voluntary.



The Doha Declaration

The Doha Declaration, adopted in 2015 at the 13th UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, called for the integration of crime prevention and criminal justice into the wider agenda of the UN – acknowledging that sustainable development and the rule of law are closely interrelated and mutually reinforcing.

The Declaration reaffirms the commitment of UN member states to implement and enhance policies for prisoners that focus on education, work, medical care, rehabilitation, social reintegration, and the prevention of recidivism.

The UNODC is leading the Global Programme for the Implementation of the Doha Declaration, which is aimed at helping countries achieve a positive and sustainable impact on crime prevention, criminal justice, corruption prevention, and the rule of law.

The four-year program focuses on four interrelated components, with one aiming at ‘fostering the rehabilitation and social integration of prisoners to provide a second chance in life’ (the pillar on fair, humane, and effective criminal justice systems).

In order to better support the rehabilitation and social reintegration of prisoners, the UNODC has developed several tools, including a Roadmap for the Development of Prison-based Rehabilitation Programmes and an updated Introductory Handbook on the Prevention of Recidivism and the Social Reintegration of Offenders. A technical guide for the development of national brands of prison products is also being produced.

The UNODC is directly supporting 11 countries in establishing a more rehabilitative approach to prison management, through technical assistance and practical support for prison-based rehabilitation programs focusing on education, vocational training, and work.



PROMISING PRACTICE

In 1994, the Uganda Prisons Service then a Prisons Department, in conjunction with United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI), initiated a Restorative Justice Approach that put emphasis on mediation and healing between offenders, victims and local communities, for purposes of repairing the harm caused by crime. This was envisaged to lead to successful reintegration back into their respective communities and reducing the recidivism rate. The project started as action-oriented research - “From Prison Back Home”.

It set out to achieve the following objectives:

- To reduce the rate of re-offending
- To decongest prisons
- To sensitize the community about prison operations
- To reconcile offenders with relatives, friends, victims and the community
- The project was subsequently integrated into the mainstream Prisons Rehabilitation and Reintegration Officers’ responsibilities of preparation of offenders for successful re-entry/reintegration into society.

Barriers to successful rehabilitation



Both male and female prisoners face barriers to successful rehabilitation and social reintegration. Some of these barriers are institutional; others relate to individual circumstances.

There is often a lack of political will and budget allocation for rehabilitation programs, and prisons are sometimes poorly equipped and lack the human and financial resources to deliver sustainable projects. In many institutions, opportunities for education and training are limited.

Consistency and quality of teaching in prisons are yet to be achieved. In some countries, the only programs available are those offered by NGOs, which are often short-lived due to funding limitations. In some prisons, security reasons are used to restrict access to education and training opportunities, including limiting access to libraries, training rooms, and computers.

The prison environment itself can run counter to rehabilitative principles especially given the fact that presence is not voluntary. For all prisoners, the experience inside prison is an important determinant of potential rehabilitation. This includes conditions of detention as well as treatment by guards and other prisoners. Separation of prisoners from families and communities and the potential loss of family, employment, and homes are experienced by most prisoners, and these factors are also likely to negatively impact their future rehabilitation.

Rehabilitation programmes are unlikely to succeed if authorities are unable to guarantee the fundamental rights of prisoners, such as providing a safe and secure environment, decent living conditions, nutritious food, safe water, good healthcare and regular contact with family and friends. Successful rehabilitation is also difficult to achieve in the absence of effective systems for proper allocation, classification and categorization of prisoners.

Prison overcrowding is one of the main impediments to developing prison-based rehabilitation programs. Overcrowded facilities struggle to provide for the basic needs of prisoners. Many are chronically under-resourced, and staff work in harsh conditions with little or no training. Under these circumstances, prison administrations prioritize basic prison management and the prevention of violence, often at the expense of rehabilitation.

Overly punitive approaches to imprisonment hinder rehabilitation efforts. The frequent use of harsh disciplinary measures, such as solitary confinement, frequent lockdown, and transfers, can severely disrupt progress toward rehabilitation, as can the withdrawal of educational privileges as a punitive measure. Prisoners classified as high security are often excluded from rehabilitation opportunities.

Life in prison is often not conducive to training and learning, with prisoners reporting difficulties concentrating and a lack of support and encouragement from prison staff. The presence of alcohol, drugs, and gang violence inside prisons can also severely disrupt prisoner rehabilitation.

Whilst prisons in lower-income countries face significant additional challenges in implementing rehabilitation programs, there are successful programs in even the most difficult situations. In addition, facilities that prioritize rehabilitation are easier to manage and cheaper to run in the long term.

In addition to the physical conditions of detention, prisoners face a range of barriers to successful rehabilitation that relate to their individual circumstances and personal histories. These might include health issues (general and mental), drug and alcohol dependency, and histories of abuse. Successful rehabilitation is therefore contingent on the delivery of programs and services that tackle these underlying issues.

Additionally, the majority of prisoners come from disadvantaged backgrounds and many have some form of learning difficulty. Previous experiences of formal education are likely to have been negative, and many offenders may not have obtained qualifications or may have dropped out of school early. Many prisoners have low self-esteem and negative attitudes toward formal education.

Given the perception, society has of women prisoners, in most cases family support is limited. This disorients the women prisoners thus failing to participate in rehabilitation programs.

There has been limited focus in designing the necessary rehabilitation program among UPS for the different categories of women prisoners.

Steady employment following release has been found to be one of the most important factors in reducing reoffending. However, employers can be reluctant to hire former prisoners, and prisoners can also face restrictions on employment and education as a result of their criminal records. Due to the problems, they face in finding work, former prisoners are often forced to take the lowest-paid and least secure jobs in the economy and can easily fall into debt. Additionally, many are not able to find suitable housing – a particular problem if their imprisonment has led to family breakdown. These factors combined with a lack of adequate post-release support make successful rehabilitation extremely difficult for many.



CONTEXT: Barriers to Participation in Prison Programs

Prison education and training in Uganda are based on the national syllabus, both formal and vocational.

A few women prisoners have embraced it. A case in point out of 20 inmates, only one woman is sitting for UCE. The education programs are usually concentrated in major urban prisons as compared to the rural Prisons.

The women want to participate in capacity building programmes which tend to have tangible benefits that will benefit their family members. They thus shun away from formal education.

A 2012 survey of prison education and training in Europe found that in the majority of European Union (EU) member states, participation in Prison Education and Training was lower than 25 percent. In developing countries, prisoners' participation in such activities tends to be much lower and there are often fewer activities available.

The findings of the 2012 survey showed that the

most common barriers to participation in these programs were lack of motivation and previous negative experiences of education. Other barriers included the fact that there were greater incentives to take part in prison work than in education and training programs, the limited number of spaces available, and learning opportunities that were not compatible with sentence duration (for example, for prisoners serving short sentences).

A 2009 study of access to education in Slovenia found that education levels attained before prison were relatively low, with the reasons given for dropping out being lack of motivation, problems with drug addiction, and learning difficulties. 19 In Bulgaria, the 'value system' of female prisoners was identified as one of the reasons they had previously dropped out of education. For many, education had not been 'part of their life priorities'.

Promising Practice

Women have also benefited from online formal education programs and have graduated in law from online studies. Even after one has finished serving her sentence before the course is completed, she is allowed back into the prison premises to enable her complete her course.

Some of the women who have completed the law courses have been employed as paralegals. Some have started their own human rights campaigns and are good mentors to other inmates.

Recommendations

- Recruitment of adequately trained staff
- Enhance budget allocation for rehabilitation and reintegration activities
- Develop a sound data management system
- Put in place adequate structures for successful and effective implementation of rehabilitation and reintegration programmes.
- Targeted and customised trainings on rehabilitation and reintegration including embracing refresher courses
- Develop a cooperation framework to aid other stakeholders to come on board
- Embrace spiritual programs and re-socialization



Pre-trial detention



Globally, there are estimated to be at least 3.3 million people in pre-trial detention on any given day with approximately 15 million people admitted into pre-trial detention over the course of a year. In some countries, pre-trial detainees outnumber convicted prisoners. Women, ethnic and religious minorities, and foreign nationals are often over represented in pre-trial detention.

Pre-trial detainees often spend months or years imprisoned before trial, sometimes spending longer in detention than those who have been convicted and often in worse conditions. Pre-trial detainees may have limited contact with other prisoners, additional restrictions on family contact, and fewer opportunities for healthcare and vocational or job programs.

The impact of detention before trial is often underestimated. As with convicted prisoners, pre-trial detainees can lose their families, their jobs, and their homes during the course of their detention. They face the same harmful social, economic, physical, and psychological consequences, and are just as likely to be stigmatized or criminalized as a result of their imprisonment.

The UN Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment has found that 'discriminatory treatment suffered by pre-trial detainees, who may be held longer than some convicts, has been justified by the heads of some facilities on the grounds that their guilt being not yet proven, there is less responsibility and obligation, and consequently less resources, allocated to care for them'.

Pre-trial detention should always be used as a last resort and for the shortest possible time. Alternative, non-custodial measures should always be considered, particularly for those suspected of minor offences. However, when pre-trial detainees are held and particularly when their detention is prolonged, prison authorities must offer them opportunities for purposeful activity, including services and activities that are available to convicted prisoners. There are many ways to achieve this, including through short or modular courses and informal learning opportunities. The Nelson Mandela Rules also state that untried prisoners should always be offered the opportunity to work and that if they choose to work, they should be paid for it.



PROMISING PRACTICE

Pre-trial detention is not unique to Uganda. There are many women prisoners in pre-trial detention. Just like convicted women prisoners, pre-trial detainees are involved in rehabilitation activities. The UPS does not discriminate against pretrial

detainees while implementing rehabilitation programs. All prisoners participate in available rehabilitation programmes such as educational, spiritual, and entertainment programs.

Characteristics of Women prisoners



Female prisoners face additional barriers to rehabilitation that are often not recognized or effectively tackled within criminal justice systems. The UN Special Rapporteur on the right to education has pointed to the lack of research on the particular educational needs of women prisoners, noting that there is, in particular, little attention paid to the number of women with learning difficulties in detention, with the majority of research focused on male prisoners.

The lack of knowledge about women prisoners' educational and other rehabilitation needs is particularly problematic given that they are usually very different from the needs of men. As a result, the opportunities offered to women are often poorly thought through and ineffective.

This section of the guide summarizes four key challenges faced by female prisoners, including challenges related to their personal situations and challenges that stem from criminal justice responses to their imprisonment.

Pathways to Prison

Men and women have many parallel and often overlapping pathways to prison. These include;

- Peer Pressure leading to Drug abuse related crime like theft, robbery among others
- Social Marginalization especially young mothers facing parenting challenges leading to crime killing their own children
- Poverty
- Mental Health Conditions
- Sexual abuse
- Broken families creating a gap in social support

There are also specific gendered pathways to imprisonment that need to be understood and tackled.

To successfully rehabilitate prisoners, authorities need a good understanding of their personal backgrounds, the circumstances that led them to prison, and an awareness of the obstacles they may face on release. Any rehabilitation programmes that do not take these factors into account and which do not provide the necessary care, assistance and treatment are likely to fail.

Many prisoners, and in particular female prisoners, have been convicted of non-violent offences. These offences are often related to substance dependence or due to economic pressure and the need to provide for children and other family members.

As the commentary to Rules 57–58 of the Bangkok Rules notes, many women are in prison 'as a direct or indirect result of the multiple layers of discrimination and deprivation, often experienced at the hands of their husbands or partners, their family and the community'. Widespread domestic violence against women and sexual abuse prior to imprisonment have been documented in many countries worldwide.

Most women in Ugandan Prisons are from disadvantaged backgrounds. They have high illiteracy levels, with very low or no education backgrounds, they are poor, and socially marginalized in their communities, from broken marriages, and polygamous relationships marred with disputes, violence and abusive relationships. All these factors contribute to women committing crimes.

The community or societal norms are also a contributing factor to the high levels of distress that lead women into crime. Their lack of legal knowledge has subjected them to high mental distress and disorders while in prison as they feel that they are unfairly imprisoned. The societal norms and traditions have also formed pathways for women in prison for example with regard to inheritance since most of them lose their property ownership rights upon imprisonment.

Poverty as a result of unemployment or lack of economic engagements as a background for most women in the prison has also greatly contributed to the crimes committed by women who in most cases are the sole bread winners for large families. This leads them into committing crimes such as theft, obtaining money on false presence, and female civil debtors which is also on the increase lately.

Emotional abuse and physical abuse, are characteristics of broken marriages. These are some of the reasons as to why women in the prisons are convicted of murder. Statistics show that most victims are people known to them or in a relationship with them. Owing to this, most crimes committed by the women in the prisons as a result of this background include crimes such as assault, theft and murder. Often women commit crimes as a result of the social structures that they are part of.

While looking at rehabilitation of the women prisoners, these pathways should be looked at to be able to give a holistic approach to the process of rehabilitating women prisoners.



CONTEXT: Reasons for Imprisonment

Whilst the crimes committed by both men and women are often closely interrelated to their personal histories and economic situations, it should be recognized that there are many women and girls who are imprisoned after being pressured or duped into participating in criminal activities, or who have been imprisoned due to their association with others engaged in illegal behavior. In some cases, women are imprisoned for crimes committed in response to coercion by abusive partners.

In 2021 research was conducted on women offenders by Penal Reform International (PRI), demonstrated that a high number of women convicted of murder had killed a person close to them, especially spouses. 19% killed a male partner due to: arguments over property, excessive use of drugs, suspected infidelity, disobedience, and refusal of sex.

A 2007 study demonstrated that the situation of women prisoners in Afghanistan posed a particular dilemma in relation to rehabilitation efforts. The report found that many of the women imprisoned were innocent but had been convicted because they had no legal assistance or because they had been forced to confess. Others had been used or framed by male relatives or were arrested because

they were with their husbands or partners when the crime was committed. As a result, offending behavior programs – aimed at addressing the underlying causes leading to crime – were not relevant because the women were victims themselves and therefore had entirely different needs.

A 2019 study of 10 women from Thailand imprisoned in Cambodia for cross-border drug trafficking revealed life histories marred by a range of vulnerabilities, including individual issues like mental ill health, relational issues like parental abuse and domestic violence, and social issues like low levels of education and limited employment opportunities. All of the women had carried drugs across international borders for somebody else. None were career criminals nor had knowledge of the international drug trade. Their offending was characterized by a lack of control and involved varying degrees of exploitation.

In a 2012 study of female offenders in South Africa, 55% of the women interviewed said they had become involved in criminal activity because they needed to provide for their families. Others reported that they turned to crime in an effort to emancipate themselves from abusive partners, spouses, or parents.

In Kyrgyzstan, one report noted that 70% of women convicted of killing their husbands or other family member had experienced a 'longstanding pattern of physical abuse or forced economic dependence'. Another study in Kyrgyzstan found that of 27 women convicted of murder or manslaughter of a male family member, 3 said they had acted to protect children, 10 had experienced sexual abuse, 14 had experienced frequent domestic violence, and 15 said that it was an act of self-defence.

One study illustrated how black women in the US had been forced to commit offences due to physical attacks or even death threats or following more subtle pressure or provocation. This included being manipulated or 'talked into' committing the offence, confessing to an abuser's crime, or committing physical assaults in response to psychological

victimization. In Mexico, it has been estimated that at least 40% of women convicted of drug-related crimes, such as transporting drugs between cities or smuggling drugs into prisons, were coerced into doing so by their boyfriends or husbands.

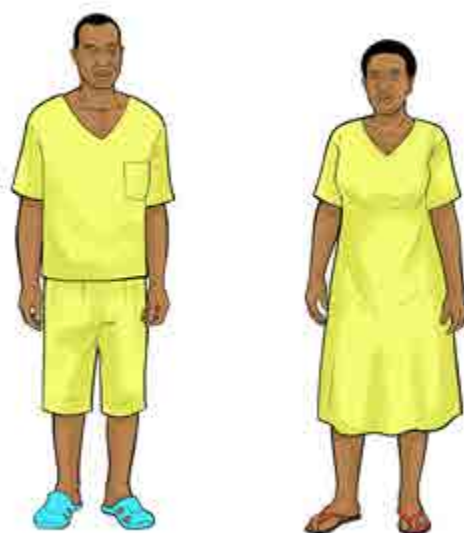
Research on 13 women prisoners at Idrizovo prison in the Republic of Macedonia found that virtually all of the women had experienced serious violence at the hands of their husbands or partners, with most of the women reporting that they felt safer inside prison than outside. The research also found that most of the crimes the women committed were related to their previous abuse.



Women in prison often come from disadvantaged backgrounds typically marked by economic deprivation, substance abuse, violence, and household disruption. Prisoners also tend to have higher rates of illiteracy and lower levels of education than the general population.

As the World Health Organization (WHO) has noted, alarmingly high rates of mental health problems are reported among female prisoners, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, and a tendency to self-harm and commit suicide.

Most women who are admitted to prison are mothers and many have primary care responsibilities for other family members. These responsibilities and relationships can play a role in women's pathways to prison and are also fundamental to their rehabilitation prospects. For mothers, separation from their children can severely impact their mental wellbeing. Prison systems must take these factors into account when designing rehabilitation programs for women.



PROMISING PRACTICE - Holistic support and advocacy in Sierra Leone:

The organization AdvocAid is the only human rights organization in Sierra Leone providing holistic legal aid and rehabilitation support to women and girls in conflict with the law.

AdvocAid was founded in 2006 and has a team of paralegals, lawyers and social workers who work with women and girls through the justice system, at police stations, courts and prisons. Their services include formal and legal education, welfare, and post-detention support for prisoners and former prisoners. AdvocAid also works on national advocacy and law reform campaigns that focus on broader issues impacting women and girls in the justice system, including conditions of detention.

AdvocAid's rehabilitation strategy is grounded in a thorough knowledge of Sierra Leone's justice system and society, as well as needs assessments of women and girls in conflict with the law. The organisation believes that rehabilitation must be approached in a broad sense, recognizing that all stages of imprisonment have an impact on the

chances of post-prison reintegration.

Advocacy Aid works with women and girls in prison through six different pillars, which aim to break the cycle of reoffending and offer better rehabilitation. The different levels of support provided are access to justice, education, vocational training and business skills training, raising awareness, and research and advocacy. In the future, they will provide psychosocial and financial support for women and girls who have been released.

The research and advocacy pillar of AdvocAid's work aims to involve and amplify the voices of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women and relay their views to policymakers and the public through photo exhibitions, documentaries and research pieces. The project offers a sense of empowerment to the participants whilst also challenging negative stereotypes and public perceptions of prisoners.

In parallel, the raising awareness pillar of AdvocAid's work focuses on educating people about the law, through nationwide public campaigns – including

songs and TV shows – with the aim of building more tolerant and understanding communities for released women prisoners to return to.



PROMISING PRACTICE - The Open-Door Policy for supporting Prisoners in Uganda

The open-door policy of Uganda Prisons Service has been of great help in promoting holistic support to inmates. At Luzira Women Prison (LWP) they work with different stakeholders to provide holistic support through engaging the Partners at different levels of rehabilitation of the prisoners' right from pre-trial to reintegration of the prisoners. These stakeholders offer legal support, education, spiritual rehabilitation, vocational skilling, socialization, life skills and social reintegration. LWP has continued to partner with an organization- Justice Defenders who offer legal support and advocacy for the inmates. They have trained paralegals both inmates and staff to help the other inmates through legal awareness and sensitization, as well as have lawyers who provide legal support. LWP also partners with Franciscan prisons ministry that support the

prison education program and vocational training, different spiritual leaders have offered spiritual rehabilitation to the prisoners as well as life skills support and social reintegration. LWP has social workers who work hand in hand with these different stakeholders to see that the rehabilitation of the prisoners is holistic. They coordinate, promote, implement and support the various programs in partnerships with the different organizations to see that the inmates are supported. They also link them with the other CJ systems like the police and courts to help them access justice and also make community visits to link them to their communities mostly in preparation for release. All these efforts and partnerships have continued to help promote the holistic rehabilitation of the inmates at LWP.

Lack of suitable opportunities in Uganda

Due to the larger numbers of male prisoners – especially in prisons that are overcrowded or lacking resources – authorities often focus on the situation and needs of men. As a result, fewer rehabilitation opportunities are available to women and those that do exist tend to be less varied and of poorer quality than those offered to men.

Many female prisoners lack rehabilitation opportunities due to the type and location of the facilities in which they are held. Female prisoners are also regularly imprisoned far from their families and communities, which is in itself a barrier to successful rehabilitation. Maintaining connections with support systems is crucial for the reintegration process into society after serving a sentence and if inmates, especially females, are not placed in facilities that consider proximity to their families and communities, it can result into negative consequences for rehabilitation.

More so lack of family connections can contribute to increased feelings of isolation, hinder social support networks, and impede the reintegration process.

Therefore, maintaining ties with families is necessary for emotional well-being and can positively impact an individual's motivation to rehabilitate and reintegrate into society successfully. Failure to address these factors may lead to higher rates of recidivism and challenges in breaking the cycle of reoffending.

Female prisoners have also noted that when training opportunities were available to them, they were not aware of them or were not given information on how to participate. In many facilities there are long waiting lists to join courses – a particular problem for prisoners with short sentences, many of whom are female.

As women represent a small proportion of the prison population, there are fewer women's prisons – and those that exist often lack good education and training facilities. As women's prisons are typically smaller, there may also be fewer financial resources and physical space available for libraries, classrooms and training workshops. In some countries, small numbers of women are housed in separate parts of male prisons, and the number of women is often considered insufficient for investment in suitable rehabilitation programmes.

Prison officers have also noted that women held in male facilities cannot participate in training and education programmes for security reasons, because the libraries, classrooms and workshops are located in the male part of the prison. In such a situation, prison authorities can consider a simple rotation system to allow female prisoners to use the facilities at specific times or on particular days. This type of system would need to ensure the sufficient separation of prisoners and provide effective supervision to guarantee the safety of female prisoners.

Pregnant women and women with children living with them in prison are often excluded from prison programmes or do not have the time to participate, due to a lack of alternative child daycare arrangements. Prison authorities should put special arrangements in place to allow for their participation.



CONTEXT: Lack of Suitable Opportunities in Uganda:

There are a few women prisoners in the Ugandan prisons who are currently undertaking rehabilitation programs like vocational skills in hairdressing, crafts making, tailoring, formal education (with less than 10% involved), life skills training, counseling and spiritual rehabilitation. However, these programs are found majorly in the few women prisons annexed to male prisons.

The women prisons also have limited spaces which hinder the implementation of some of the rehabilitation programs that could have been effective for their rehabilitation. This is mostly common for the women in male annexed prisons and even the main women prison themselves are very limited in space.

The resources such as machinery and materials for these activities are also limited in women prisons because of the small number of women prisoners as compared to their male counterparts. This means that priority is often given to the male prisons.

There is also little consideration for the deployment of professional trainers in vocational skills to women prisons as compared to the male prisons due to security reasons because most Trainers are male.

Another aspect is that there is generally very low staffing of Rehabilitation and Reintegration Officers for the female prisons. Most Rehabilitation & Reintegration Staff are placed at the male prisons and only care take the women prisons that are annexed to these male prisons.

70% of the women in Ugandan prisons are from poor social economic backgrounds and these conditions are prime factors in the history of their crimes, this then can only mean that besides formal education and vocational skills training, there is a high need for women inmates to be engaged in entrepreneur trainings to economically empower them and guide them on the available National and Community opportunities. This will be very beneficial to them since most of them are breadwinners so, they are able to return to the community well prepared to manage life outside prison.

There is a challenge when it comes to taking care of children left behind by the prisoners, most communities are usually adamant to taking up these responsibilities and since most women are primary care givers, when they are imprisoned, their children remain destitute and thus lack proper care.



PROMISING PRACTICE - Equal opportunities for prisoners in South Sudan:

The National Prison Service of South Sudan has established a vocational training centre in Juba Central Prison aimed at rehabilitation and the prevention of recidivism. The project aims to empower prisoners by providing them with self-supporting skills. Eight different trainings are equally available to both men and women in the prison. These are carpentry and joinery, building and construction, electrical installation, metal fabrication and welding, auto mechanics, agriculture, hairdressing and beauty therapy, and tailoring and

fashion design. The classes have both male and female instructors. The rehabilitation programs for the women prisoners may be gendered. Just like the men, women prisoners in the main women prisons in Uganda have equal opportunities to participate in the rehabilitation programs which include access to justice, education, counseling, vocational skilling (like soap making and tailoring), life skills, socialization, sports, education from primary to university level and reintegration. These programs are offered for both the men and women inmates.



PROMISING PRACTICE - Equal Opportunities in Uganda

The rehabilitation programs for the women prisoners may be gendered, however just like the men, women prisoners in the main women prisons have equal opportunities to participate in the rehabilitation programs which include access to justice, education, counseling, vocational skilling, life skills, socialization, sports and reintegration.

These programs are offered for both men and women inmates. While vocational training is offered to the men, the women also get opportunity to engage in vocational skilling in liquid soap making, tailoring and even sports competitions like the men, as well as education from primary to university level.

Despite the emergence of many innovative rehabilitation programmes for female prisoners, the opportunities available to them in many prisons are still heavily gendered. Programmes for women often reflect their traditional role in society or cover domestic tasks for which they are already skilled.

Further the opportunities typically provided to women in prison often serve only to equip them for the most low-paid jobs in the economy, reinforcing notions that they cannot compete with men in the workplace. This further entrenches their reliance on men, potentially compounding existing histories of dependency and abuse.

Whilst skills taught to men in prison are often designed to prepare them for employment on release, programmes available to women are less focused on providing new vocational skills. Additionally, opportunities for work outside the prison premises tend to only be available to male prisoners.



It's all about giving people a second chance...It's all about giving them a chance to tap into the economy they were not a part of before. ”

Aggrey Mokaya, founder of Change Hub, a technology-focused rehabilitation programme in Kenya.



My website, I can say, is my superpower in my business...

It helps me meet new clients online everywhere in Kenya. I learnt so many things through Change Hub. I was introduced to HTML, CSS and JavaScript.

For my website I coded everything myself. ”

Participation in the Change Hub programme (see Promising Practice below)



PROMISING PRACTICE - Access to technology for women prisoners in Kenya:

The Change Hub Innovation Centre is a technology-focused rehabilitation programme for women prisoners at Langata Women's Prison in Nairobi, Kenya that teaches women coding, web design, computer hardware maintenance and 3D printing. The programme is designed to help women access the increasingly technology-based economy on their release.

The programme was designed to counter gender stereotyping in training and education opportunities for women in prison, and to give women the opportunity to work in the field of technology.

Before the introduction of the Change Hub programme, most courses available to women in Langata prison were limited to those traditionally seen as appropriate, such as sewing and tailoring.

The classes were set up in 2016 and are taught by university graduates. Participants in the programme attend classes three times a week and have the opportunity to be paid teaching assistants for the next group of students. The participants are also building a website for Change Hub.

Sentence length

Because of the nature of their offences, women often serve very short or very long sentences,³⁸ both of which pose particular challenges when it comes to rehabilitation.³⁹

Rehabilitation programmes and work opportunities for prisoners with short sentences are usually limited or non-existent, often being considered a waste of valuable resources and a practical and administrative burden. Prison staff have also noted that it can be difficult to understand and address the needs of those serving short sentences. Prisoners serving short sentences may themselves lack motivation and feel that it is not worth their time to embark on a training or education course in prison.

Many female prisoners serving short sentences are not given adequate opportunities to participate in education and training programmes. However, there are many ways to design rehabilitation programmes for prisoners serving short sentences, so that they are better prepared for employment after their release.



CONTEXT: Limitation of Short Sentence Prisoners in Uganda

Women in Prisons serve varying lengths of sentences owing to the nature of their crimes. This has an impact on their rehabilitation.

In the Prisons, there are limited Rehabilitation programs for short-term prisoners and those on pretrial are majorly engaged in general rehabilitation programmes which include but not limited to spiritual, Music Dance and Drama, Making Contacts with the outside world, sports and counselling. This is because they are considered to be prisoners who are short-lived at the Prison and assumed to be able to easily reintegrate into the community upon release because of their short time away from the communities.

The medium-term to long-term prisoners on the other hand, get engaged in rehabilitation and they are presumed to need this service more. They

engage in life skills training, counseling, vocational skills, formal education, spiritual rehabilitation, games and sports, music, dance and drama.

Subsequently, more emphasis and resources are put into the reintegration programs for the long-sentenced inmates because they are detached from their communities for a longer period compared to the short-term inmates.

With reference to the above, it is clearly evident that the actual rehabilitation and reintegration needs of the inmates are not taken into full consideration. This is because being a short termer does not guarantee easy and quick adjustment back into the community and experience has proved that these short-term inmates are more prone to recidivism as a result of failure to successfully reintegrate back into their respective communities.



CONTEXT: Rehabilitation for prisoners serving short sentences

In order to make rehabilitation programmes available to prisoners serving short sentences, prison administrations can:

- Ensure that educational options are flexible and varied for prisoners serving both long and short-term sentences.
- Assess prisoners serving short sentences for their formal and non-formal education experience and attainment.
- Introduce short-term educational activities that can pave the way for continued education after release, including modular or unit-based courses that help prisoners gain credits for continuing education.
- Shorten or adapt existing courses to tailor them for the needs of prisoners serving short sentences.
- Make use of new technologies or e-learning to overcome the lack of continuity for prisoners serving short sentences.
- Make use of short-term motivational activities such as music, dance, drama and art courses.

Prisoners serving long-term or life sentences are often neglected when it comes to rehabilitation programmes. However, all prisoners must be given the opportunity to be rehabilitated, regardless of the length and nature of the sentence⁴⁰ – including those sentenced to death. It is important to note that any sentence may be commuted or reviewed, and all prisoners may be considered for pardons or amnesties.

International standards state that every prisoner should have the opportunity to be rehabilitated back into society. Rehabilitation is particularly important for long-term and life-sentenced prisoners who find it especially hard to adjust to life outside the prison system. In cases where release or the possibility of obtaining work following release is unrealistic, prisons should consider and prioritize non-formal learning opportunities designed to promote personal development and increase self-confidence. All prisoners should be given the opportunity to work in prison.

Post-release barriers

In addition to the challenges women face in prison, many also encounter gender-specific barriers to their rehabilitation after release. These often reflect the situation of women in society more broadly, such as expectations of their role in society, low social and economic status, and the general lack of education and employment opportunities available to women in many countries.

Most women will have already faced gendered barriers to education, training and employment before coming to prison, and these barriers can persist after their release. Women prisoners often have poor self-esteem and low expectations, with many believing that it is not worth participating in rehabilitation programmes because they will never have the opportunity to use the skills or knowledge gained.

The role and status of women in the family can also be a barrier to rehabilitation. Many women are the main caregivers for children and other family members, and their lack of financial independence means that they are often dependent on male relatives, including those who have abused them.

The ability to find permanent employment after release and escape from poverty is critical in preventing recidivism. However, women prisoners can encounter particular obstacles in finding secure employment after their release, due to the stigma of imprisonment.

Successful rehabilitation is also contingent on the presence of a safe, stable family and community environment and good post-release support. However, these are often not available to women when they leave prison. Imprisonment often leads to irreparable family breakdown, including separation/divorce, and the loss of jobs and homes. When women are imprisoned, even for short periods, their children often have to live with other relatives or go into alternative care. In these situations, it can sometimes be difficult to reunite families after release.

As they are often financially dependent on men, women are at a particularly high risk of leaving prison with no home to go to and no means of financial support. In such circumstances, it is easy for female offenders to fall back into crime. Many continue to suffer high levels of mental health problems and there is a high rate of self-harm and suicide amongst former female prisoners.

In many countries, the crimes for which women are convicted are highly stigmatized, such as sex work, having an abortion, running away from home, or so-called ‘moral crimes such as adultery. In some countries, women who have been raped are convicted and imprisoned for having extramarital sex and are later ostracized by their families and communities. This stigma impacts women during incarceration and on their future rehabilitation as well as after release. In most countries, former female prisoners face greater stigmatization than men regardless of the nature of their offence and are more likely to be ostracized by their families and communities.



A few weeks in prison are enough to lose your home, children and job and cause harm to mental health. Because women are often primary carers, when a mother is sent to prison, in nine out of 10 cases her children will have to leave their home to go into the care system or to live with relatives. ”

Chief Executive of UK charity Women in Prison



CONTEXT: Post-release barriers in Uganda

The current Rehabilitation and Reintegration programs offered for prisoners, are not holistic in the design. Prisoners are taken through rehabilitation programs, then prepared for resettlement, which is based on how well one can be reintegrated back into their community. Due to limited resources, not all inmates are considered for this reintegration programme where little or no follow-up made. It also mostly benefits the longer-term inmates who have been detached from their communities for a long time and those who committed crimes within the very families where they are to return.

There is a gap when it comes to following up ex-prisoners to assure successful resettlement, the mandate of the prisons stops after the inmate leaves the prison. Ex-prisoners are usually unable to cope or adjust and fit into the community after release due to lack of post release programs.

There is a gap in the sensitization of the communities on the need to be more supportive to the women prisoners returning back to the community. The prisoners may be prepared for release, but the community may not be well prepared to accept them back. This in turn leads to rejection and stigma which makes them reoffend. This is because

the Ugandan Society has continued to view women in conflict with the law as wayward and judges them more harshly than men, resulting into failure to adjustment and successfully fit back into their respective former communities.

Due to the fact that they are not fully accepted back by the community then they cannot easily get employment. Prisons too do not offer much in terms of startup kits according to the skills one has acquired whilst in Prison as resources are not adequate and thus only a few benefits.

On the other hand, mental health of the women prisoners after release needs to be looked into because women often return to a disentangled home with children scattered and husbands that have deserted the homes or even re-married. A case in point is that upon imprisonment most women lose their homes and so upon release they have no home to go back to.

The current rehabilitation programs like tailoring, music, dance and drama for the women are gendered and are not diverse to offer up-to-date skill sets for acquisition of jobs in the fast-changing economy.



CONTEXT: Unemployment Rate of Former Prisoners

Studies in the US also demonstrate that former prisoners have significantly higher rates of unemployment compared to the general population. A recent analysis showed that in 2018, former prisoners were unemployed at a rate of over 27% – which is higher than the total US unemployment rate during any historical period and nearly five times higher than the current unemployment rate for the general population.

The study established that former prisoners want to work, but face barriers to securing employment – particularly within the period immediately following release – including employers' unwillingness to hire former prisoners. Significantly, the unemployment rate of former women prisoners was higher than for men, with the of black or Hispanic populations even higher.



PART 2

Guidance



Baseline for successful rehabilitation

Engagement and support

All prison rehabilitation programmes require the engagement and institutional support of relevant authorities to ensure short-term success and long-term sustainability. It is very important for NGOs and other community groups to be involved in rehabilitation projects, due to their expertise and because prisoners feel they can trust them. However, projects also need the support and financial backing of authorities and close coordination of all relevant actors in order to thrive.

Before developing new projects, prison authorities should have a good understanding of the profile of the prison population, the quality and impact of existing programmes (as well as any gaps), available resources, and actual market needs. This analysis will allow authorities to devise appropriate national strategies for rehabilitation and reintegration. They should also establish structures to oversee the implementation of such strategies.

Another important consideration is the effective monitoring and evaluation of prison rehabilitation programmes to ensure effectiveness and sustainability. Such efforts should be centrally organized and managed, and should, where possible, consider the impact of specific programmes on recidivism levels, the employment rates of former prisoners, and other indicators. Monitoring and evaluation of rehabilitation programmes need to be carried out in a gender-sensitive and gender-responsive way. Equally importantly, independent monitors should have access to information about rehabilitation programmes in order to check that they are being applied fairly and consistently and in accordance with international human rights standards.

Police officials and members of the judiciary also have a key role to play in rehabilitation. Experiences of police custody can impact the rehabilitation chances of offenders, whilst members of the judiciary can exercise a wide range of powers designed to reduce reoffending, including through their sentencing and parole eligibility decisions. All officials working in the criminal justice system should receive training on the importance of appropriate rehabilitation and non-custodial measures, and to address gender-specific needs.





PROMISING PRACTICE - Human rights auditing and action planning

The Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (RWI) has – together with its correctional service partners internationally – developed a unique set of methodologies for increasing compliance with the Bangkok Rules and other relevant international standards, through internal human rights auditing and action planning.

A typical audit of a female prison will see a team of trained officers, with support from RWI advisors, visit the institution for a week to observe all aspects of prison conditions and routines, interview officers and other stakeholders, and conduct extensive reviews of available documentation. A comprehensive report is produced on compliance with the Nelson Mandela and Bangkok Rules, and the team will then remain for a second week to facilitate the development of detailed action plans, as well as sharing audit data with the prison administration to enable the development of national-level plans and policy directives.

These approaches were first applied by RWI in Indonesia and have since been adapted and intensified for use in Kenya and Sierra Leone. The approaches recognize that even small increases in compliance can have a major impact on the lives of prisoners and that meeting many standards require little or no resources, as they are primarily related to policy, procedure, training, documentation and accountability. Repeat audits at pilot institutions

have found significant improvements in compliance with the Bangkok Rules, and methodologies are also now being further developed for use with offenders serving sentences in the community, where evidence suggests that rehabilitation programmes are most effective.

In 2017, the Sierra Leone Correctional Service – with technical support from RWI and the United Nations Development Programme – introduced pilot human rights audits and human rights action planning for the country's 19 correctional facilities (male and female). This included in-depth training on and familiarization with the Nelson Mandela and Bangkok Rules, and with the audit tools developed by RWI. In the past two years, facility and deputy managers and officers made strides to implement the human rights action plans. This has resulted in improvements in file management, record keeping, separation of categories where possible, access to clean water and sanitation, improvement in diet, and improved contact with the outside world (access to newspapers, radio and television, phone calls, and visitation rights for children). Before the interventions, female prisoners had little to do, with no activities or vocational training available. However, following the audits and action planning, women have been able to participate in bakery production in male institutions (with full precautions taken for the separation of men and women), and the production of traditional cloth.



CONTEXT: Human Rights Compliance in Uganda Prisons Service

- i. In 2010 the Uganda Prisons Service established Human Rights Committees across all Prison units for both staff and prisoners. The committees are responsible for human rights monitoring in the prisons, for adherence to human rights observance to prison conditions, operations and options for redress in case of violations.
- ii. The staff implement their responsibilities drawing basis on Human Rights standards, the Bangkok Rules and Mandela Rules.
- iii. The Uganda Prisons Service has also established structures aimed at strengthening the role of the Department of Inspectorate and Quality Assurance which is mandated to ensure compliance to standards in Prison conditions, management and the wellbeing of prisoners.
- iv. These initiatives all have a positive impact on prisons management and implementation of programs including the promotion and protection of prisoners' rights.

Management Style and Staffing

Rehabilitative principles should form the basis of the whole prison approach,⁴⁹ and the best results are achieved when everyone is committed to these principles as an essential part of their duties, creating a prison-wide culture of rehabilitation. Such approaches also create more positive, safe and rewarding professional experiences for staff.

Rehabilitation is more likely to be successful if implemented from the first day of a prisoner's detention. With this in mind, rehabilitative principles should be at the forefront of all aspects of prison management and, for female prisoners, must be part of a broader gender-sensitive prison management approach. Whilst different approaches are suited to different local contexts and the needs of the prisoner population, there are some aspects of Prison Management that need to be in place before rehabilitation programs can thrive.

Good relationships between prisoners and staff are critical to the success of rehabilitation programs. Such relationships are best achieved through dynamic security approaches, through which staff and prisoners have proactive and frequent interactions, allowing staff to understand the rehabilitation needs of individual prisoners and any problems they may face.

Prison officers can be key players in prisoners' rehabilitation, encouraging them to participate in education and training activities and supporting them throughout. This can be especially important for female prisoners, who may suffer from low self-esteem and a lack of confidence in their own educational and vocational potential.

To play a positive role in this process, staff must be able to work in safe conditions, be well supported by their managers and have the opportunity and time to think creatively and engage with prisoners. They should be carefully selected and provided with appropriate and ongoing training, including in human rights and the concept of dynamic security.⁵⁰ Where possible, prison staff should also include a sufficient number of specialists such as psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, teachers and trade instructors.⁵¹

Equipping staff with standardized security and management programs including respective tools is important for successful Prison Management. The staff should continuously be trained on gender specific needs of female prisoners and their special rehabilitation programmes.

The Bangkok Rules specify that capacity building for staff employed in women's prisons should enable them to address the specific social reintegration needs of women prisoners, and that all staff assigned to working with women prisoners should receive training relating to the gender-specific needs and human rights of women prisoners.⁵² Prison authorities should also ensure that there is an adequate staff-prisoner ratio and make particular efforts to hire a diverse range of employees, including sufficient female staff. Women prisoners should be supervised only by women staff members.⁵³



PROMISING PRACTICE - Personal officers in Sweden

In Sweden, every prisoner has a personal officer assigned to them. This officer is a designated member of staff whom the prisoner should turn to with any requests and problems about their prison sentence. The personal officer is aware of the prisoner's history and their current situation and is

responsible for supporting the prisoner in positive social endeavors. The professional relationship between personal officer and prisoner helps the efficient handling of prisoner requests and is central to enhancing and supporting positive social behavior.



CONTEXT: Gender-sensitive management style

For the rehabilitation of female prisoners to be successful, there needs to be a recognition amongst prison management that women prisoners have different requirements to men and that these different needs must be reflected in the management ethos, with changes being made to management style, assessment and classification, programs offered, healthcare, and the treatment of women with children. The following have been identified as some of the requisite ingredients for a gender-sensitive management style in women's prisons:⁵⁴

- The recognition of the different needs of women.
- A capacity and willingness by prison staff to communicate openly with prisoners and use a non-authoritarian manner.
- Skills such as active listening and patience in explaining rules and expectations.
- Awareness of emotional dynamics, and the capacity to respond firmly and fairly.



Good Practice: Prisoner's Parade in Uganda

The following are good practices implemented in prisons in Uganda:

- The Officer in Charge of the Prison regularly meets all prisoners at an organized parade.
- all prisoners attend and are introduced to the Officers responsible for all Prison management aspects with clear guidelines on how to access them.
- Prisoners are provided with information relevant to their well-being in Prison
- prisoners are invited to raise their concerns and seek assistance from the Officers.
- Prisoners' management structures which include prisoners taking on leadership roles within the wards and rehabilitation programs empowers prisoners to maintain order and guards against violent vices within the prisons.



CONTEXT: Dynamic security approaches

A positive climate that encourages cooperation among prisoners and between prisoners and staff can help to improve safety and security in prisons and contributes to effective rehabilitation and preparation for release. Dynamic security approaches involve proactive and frequent interaction between prison staff and prisoners.

'Dynamic security means that basic grade prison staff are trained and encouraged to develop good

personal relationships with prisoners, to know and understand them as individuals, to provide sympathetic help with personal problems and to engage in dialogues with them. Prisoners their most frequent and continuing contacts with the basic grade staff. The nature of their daily interactions with this grade of staff greatly influences their and attitudes. Positive interactions reduce destructive behavior and facilitate constructive work prisoners.'⁵⁵



PROMISING PRACTICE - Model prison project in Thailand

In 2015, the Thailand Institute of Justice (TIJ), in cooperation with the country's Department of Corrections, established a country-wide initiative in **Thailand** called the Model Prison Project. This initiative aims to enhance prison staff's understanding of international human rights standards and encourages prison management to carry out policies and practices in line with the Bangkok Rules.

Prisons around the country are invited to join the project. They are provided with technical and then assessed against specific criteria developed by the TIJ and the Department of Corrections and based on Penal Reform International's (PRI) Index of Implementation on the Bangkok Rules.⁵⁶ The Model Prison is awarded to prisons that they have successfully adopted a gender perspective.

There are nine sets of criteria that the prisons are assessed against for Model Prison status. These include standards of hygiene and healthcare,

safety and security measures, contact with the outside world and pre-release measures. The prisons are also assessed on the way they manage foreign national prisoners, those from minority and Indigenous groups, pre-trial detainees, pregnant and breastfeeding women, and mothers with children living with them in prison.⁵⁷

The TIJ provides direct support to prisons participating in the program. This includes training on the management of women prisoners, advisory input and support from subject specialists, specific skills building for correctional staff, and opportunities to network with others working in the field of corrections.

There are currently 12 prisons in Thailand with the status of Model Prison – demonstrating that implementation of provisions of the Bangkok Rules is possible, despite common constraints such as overcrowding and limited financial resources.

Therapeutic and holistic approaches

The majority of prisoners – and women prisoners in particular – have multiple, overlapping needs and their successful rehabilitation is dependent on all of these needs being met. Rehabilitation programmes should address the root causes of criminal behavior, including those that are specific to female prisoners. To achieve this, programmes must be integrated and holistic, taking into account economic, social, physical and psychological factors. Programmes that equip prisoners with practical skills whilst at the same time providing therapeutic support can be particularly beneficial.

Due to their backgrounds and the specific challenges, they face in prison, women are particularly likely to benefit from counselling and psychosocial, cognitive and motivational programmes. Psychosocial approaches look at the combined influence that psychological factors and the surrounding social environment have on a person's physical and mental wellness and their ability to function.

There are many different types of programmes that focus on changing the attitudes and behaviors of prisoners, which have been shown to have positive effects on recidivism. These include cognitive behavioral therapy – a talking therapy aimed at helping prisoners manage problems by changing the way they think and behave and by breaking problems down into smaller parts.

Many women who enter prison have underlying mental health problems, often stemming from physical or sexual abuse. Many prisons do not have substance dependency or mental healthcare programmes in place and those that do exist are often inadequate.

If well managed, prisons can provide a safe and secure environment for women to reduce substance dependency, recover from abusive backgrounds, and receive any treatment, counselling and mental healthcare they need, which may not otherwise be available to them. Authorities should strive to expand the trauma-informed care available to female prisoners, taking into account their past experiences and their resulting coping mechanisms. Trauma-informed approaches can also be considered during the design of prison facilities. Holistic approaches can tackle other factors that lead to offending behavior, including poverty and social status.

The Bangkok Rules are clear that prison health authorities should provide or facilitate specialized treatment programmes designed for women substance abusers, taking into account prior victimization and the special needs of pregnant women and women with children, as well as their diverse cultural backgrounds.⁵⁸ Where relevant programmes do not exist in prison, there is an increased duty on authorities to facilitate prisoners' access to relevant programmes in the community.⁵⁹ Studies have shown that women prisoners who participate in such programmes are more likely to be successfully rehabilitated.⁶⁰



PROMISING PRACTICE - Working in partnership in Georgia

In Georgia, PRI works with four local partner organizations to deliver rehabilitation and support services to women prisoners (and their children) who have experienced violence and discrimination. The project was established to empower and improve the situation of women offenders through better access to psychosocial, legal and medical support services and to rehabilitation and protection.

The range of interventions is designed to break the chain of violence and inequality experienced by women prisoners, which can begin prior to their offending and continue post-release. The project seeks to address the trauma and consequences of violence and provide holistic support so that the women are resilient and empowered to lead self-sufficient, law-abiding lives after their release.

This programme also aims to improve the situation of children of imprisoned mothers, including efforts to rebuild children's contact with their mothers and to help them access psychosocial, education, healthcare and other support services in the community. PRI has opened a day nursery at the women's prison in Tbilisi, where young children up to the age of three live with their mothers.

Additionally, the project seeks to improve the technical and management capacity of government institutions, employment agencies, the private sector and other agencies working with vulnerable women and children, and to build partnerships and coordination in the design, delivery and management of support schemes. This includes regular working group meetings to identify needs

and foster cooperation between state and non-state actors working in the provision of rehabilitation services to women prisoners and former prisoners.

To date, the project has provided support services to over 600 beneficiaries, including 40 children of prisoners.

One of the partner organizations – the Women in Business Association (GAWB) – organizes vocational training courses and business education for women prisoners and former prisoners, and, after the women have completed business education

courses and prepared their own business plans, provides them with small grants for their own start-up businesses.

GAWB has also established a shelter to accommodate homeless former women prisoners, including women with young children, in order to provide them with a safe place to live until they can support themselves. The project also pays for medicine and medical services for project beneficiaries if state medical programmes do not cover the costs.



PROMISING PRACTICE - PRI's Women Empowerment Project in Uganda

PRI provide psychosocial support to the women in the prisons. This involves legal counselling, psychiatry and general physical body assessments, diagnosis and treatment.

In addition, PRI offers life skills training to selected women in Jinja and Mbale prisons. The trainings

create a path for women to succeed even after their release. Women are equipped with entrepreneurial skills that they can use to start their own businesses and become financially independent. Those who meet the criteria are given Start-up packs to help them overcome the challenges of unemployment and poverty.



PROMISING PRACTICE - Therapeutic Communities in Australia

Wandoo is a dedicated alcohol and drug rehabilitation prison for women in Perth and the first female prison in Western Australia to run an intense rehabilitation programme, known as a 'therapeutic community'. The facility can treat up to 77 selected minimum and medium-security prisoners, who must demonstrate a desire to treat their addiction.

The focus of Wandoo is to offer a supportive environment where women can break the cycle of addiction and drug-related offending.

It aims to provide 'a safe, healthy, supportive and respectful space to recover and make positive, lasting changes'. Wandoo offers dedicated and intensive trauma-informed treatment within a therapeutic community. Women are supported via multi-disciplinary case management to reduce addiction, improve mental and physical health and reduce the chances of reoffending. Women at Wandoo are also offered transitional and post-release support for their ongoing rehabilitation.



PROMISING PRACTICE - Socialization Activities for Prisoners in Uganda

Sports and recreation activities are organized for women prisoners. These help them to constructively deal with stress and anxiety. Sports and exercise are important for keeping women healthy and for their physical fitness.

The activities promote a positive atmosphere within the prisons while building the prisoner's self-confidence, and competitiveness. They also learn and improve their teamwork and collaborative skills including celebrating achievement.

Music, Dance, and Drama activities are used as entertainment for the prisoners, promoting talent, and also as a tool for delivering rehabilitation messages targeting positive behavior change, building hope, and preserving cultural identity and diversity.

Individual Assessments, Classification and Allocation

Individual risk and needs assessments are a key component of prisoner rehabilitation and are essential for ensuring that prisoners are housed in facilities that are equipped to meet their education and training needs, taking into account multiple social, legal, healthcare, and other rehabilitation considerations. They are also crucial in establishing the level of security required and reducing the risks of bullying, violence, exploitation, suicide, or self-harm. However, many assessment tools have been designed with male prisoners in mind and the needs of female prisoners have often been overlooked.

As the Nelson Mandela Rules make clear, successful rehabilitation requires individualization of treatment and a flexible system of classifying prisoners into groups.⁶¹ Rule 11 deals with the separate allocation of prisoners based on their sex, age, criminal record, and the legal reason for their detention. Other principles outlined in the Rules also rely on good classification and assessment procedures, including those related to prisoner searches, allocation, the application of disciplinary measures, and supervision requirements during family visits. The allocation of women prisoners, in particular, should take into account their care taking responsibilities, their individual preferences, and the availability of appropriate programs and services.⁶²

Prisoner assessments should be comprised of three different considerations: the risk a prisoner poses, their individual needs, and sentence planning. The latter includes the activities (such as rehabilitation activities) that a prisoner should undertake during their sentence. To be effective, all assessments must be regularly reviewed and updated, and the prisoner should be involved in the process.

The shortage of information on female-specific rehabilitation needs is closely linked to the availability and quality of individualized assessments. In many prison systems, assessments focus too heavily on the risk a prisoner poses, at the expense of factors such as mental health, previous abuse, family circumstances, and educational ability. Female prisoners, in particular, are often assigned an unnecessarily high-security level, which can severely compromise their rehabilitation prospects.

Sentence plans are the foundation of rehabilitation programs and are designed to address the root causes of criminal activity. They can include training programs as well as access to drug or alcohol dependency programmes, and can focus on issues such as personal relationships, family reconciliation and anger management. Rule 94 of the Nelson Mandela Rules calls for sentence plans to be compiled as soon as possible following a prisoner's admission. Validation of prior learning is also key to good assessments and sentence planning, as all too often prisoners are given tasks that do not provide them with new skills.

Risk assessments are essential for ensuring that prisoners are housed in facilities that are free from danger and other associated risks. Individual assessment includes consideration of the mental health of the prisoner, family circumstances, the offence committed and suitable rehabilitation programs.

Sentence planning which is the foundation of rehabilitation programs should be designed to address the root causes of criminal activity. It should include the activities (such as rehabilitation activities) that a prisoner should undertake during their sentence. However, to be effective, all assessments must be regularly reviewed and updated while involving the prisoner in the process.



PROMISING PRACTICE: Gender-informed assessment and classification tools

Women's Risk Needs Assessment in the US Recognizes that women have very different pathways to prison than men and that traditional assessment tools are male-orientated. The Women's Risk Needs Assessment (WRNA)⁶³ was developed in the US by the National Institute of Corrections in cooperation with the University of Cincinnati.

The WRNA comprises gender-responsive risk and needs assessment tools designed to respond to the specific needs of female offenders in criminal justice systems; taking into account their distinct biological, social, and psychological attributes. They include a case file review, a semi-structured

interview, a written survey, and a case management treatment plan tailored to women.

The WRNA was developed following extensive literature searches and focus groups with correctional staff, treatment practitioners and female prisoners. It takes account of gendered pathways to crime and, in particular, any history of physical and sexual abuse, trauma, mental illness, self-medication, and low levels of self-esteem and self-confidence. The WRNA is now used in at least 24 states in the US and is also being implemented in the Czech Republic, Namibia, and Singapore.

Contact with the outside world

Contact with family, friends, and community can be crucial for the rehabilitation and social reintegration of prisoners and can reduce the risk of recidivism.⁶⁴ As the main caregivers in most families, such contact can be particularly important for the rehabilitation of women prisoners.

In many cases, regular contact with family allows women to repair broken ties, reduces the risk of family breakdown resulting from detention, and allows women to participate in family decisions and discussions, including in relation to childcare. Separation from family, and particularly from children, can be particularly detrimental to the psychological well-being of women prisoners and impacts their future rehabilitation prospects.

Meaningful interactions with family, friends, and the community also help prepare prisoners for life after prison, reduce the stigma of imprisonment, and motivate them to participate in rehabilitation programs. Family visits close to the time of release are particularly important in helping prisoners and their families make post-release plans. However, many women in prison have little meaningful contact with their families. There are many reasons for this, including the fact that women prisoners are often ostracized by their families.

Where possible, prisoners should be held in prisons near their families and communities, as this aids their rehabilitation and allows for longer family visits, including the possibility of home visits. Allocation close to home also makes it easier for prison administrations to prepare prisoners for release. Rule 4 of the Bangkok Rules states that women prisoners should, where possible, be allocated to prisons close to their home or place of social rehabilitation.

However, due to the small numbers of female facilities in many countries, women are more likely to be located far from their families and the logistical difficulties and financial costs of prison visits can be prohibitive. As many children have to leave home when their mothers are imprisoned, it can also be very difficult for them to visit the prison and their caregivers may be reluctant to take them.

Contact with the outside world is particularly important for the rehabilitation of pregnant women and those living in prison with their children. Such contact can provide them with practical and emotional support and reduce their feelings of isolation.

Whilst families are key to the resettlement of many prisoners, it should also be noted that, in some cases, family members are part of the problem and may have directly contributed to criminalization. As the Bangkok Rules make clear, 'In view of women prisoners' disproportionate experience of domestic violence, they shall be properly consulted as to who, including which family members, is allowed to visit them.'⁶⁵



Where possible resettlement work should include helping the offender and his or her family maintain or rebuild relationships, an assessment of the support a family is able and willing to provide, and, where appropriate, involvement of the family in plans for release. It is important that work on family relationships provided by the prison is integrated with work done by resettlement service providers ”

Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales.



CONTEXT: The Role of Family and Friends in Rehabilitation

A 2014 report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons on resettlement provisions for adult offenders in **England** and **Wales** confirmed the central importance of family and friends in the successful rehabilitation of prisoners.

Research carried out in eight prisons, including two women's prisons, found that more than half of the research participants had returned home or moved in with family and friends on release. Those who had a job on release had mainly arranged this with the help of previous employers, family, or friends.⁶⁶





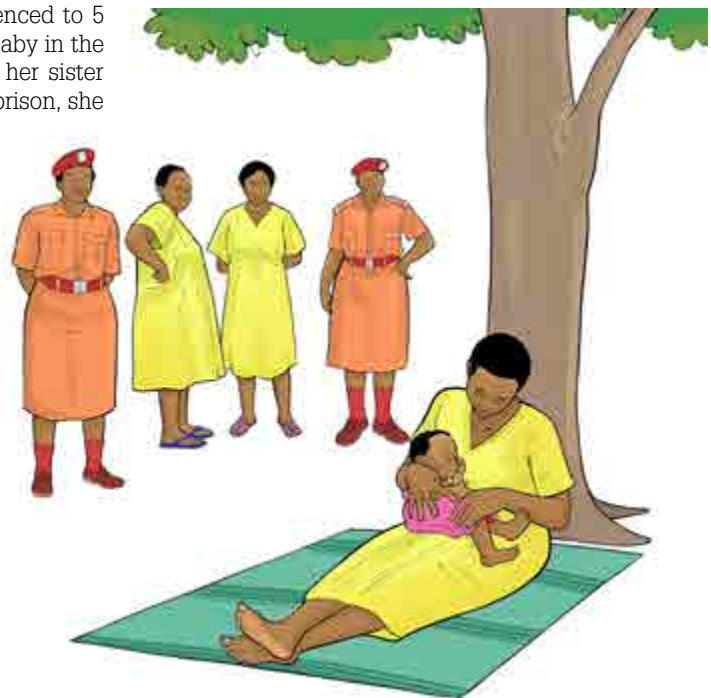
CONTEXT: Enabling law and practice on contact in Uganda

UPS derives its mandate from national law and draws from international guidelines. When a person is arrested, their freedom of liberty is curtailed but does not infringe on the freedom of association as stipulated under Article 29 of the Constitution of Uganda; Section 78 (1) and (2) of the Prison Act of 2006, and the Prisons Standing Order Part 2.

Women prisoners are allowed to receive visitors on regular basis and contacts are made to their families and friends.

PRI under the FATE project has facilitated the visitation of women prisoners in Jinja and Mbale by their relatives. A woman who was sentenced to 5 years imprisonment left her very young baby in the Community at the time of arrest. When her sister was facilitated to come and visit her in prison, she

brought for her the baby and was reunited with her child and promised to serve the remaining part of her sentence (1 year) in peace. Visitation and other forms of contact between incarcerated people and their families have positive impacts on everyone — including better mental and physical health (including reduced depressive symptoms — an important intervention for the isolated, stressful experience of incarceration) as well as reduced tendency of recidivism.



PROMISING PRACTICE - Access for justice for women prisoners

At Luzira Women Prison, women are being helped to access Justice through plea bargaining. Plea bargaining for capital and petty offences has been facilitated. Under this activity;

- Sensitization to inmates on what plea bargain is, what happens during plea bargain process, at what stage can plea bargain start and what can be offered in a plea bargain.
- Screening and making lists of prisoners willing to enter into plea bargain process and submissions made to the different courts of Law.

- Engagement with the different Legal Aid service providers like Justice Defenders, Justice Centres, Uganda Law Society, and LASPNET that help with state briefs and taking inmates through the bargaining process.

This has helped to reduce pre-trial time, case backlog and prison congestion.

Plans are underway to implement Community Corrections such as Parole and Release on License, Where female Prisoners can benefit, reunite with their families and fit back in the community.

Healthcare

The timely identification and appropriate treatment of health issues, including drug and alcohol dependency, mental health conditions and any history of previous abuse, can play a significant role in the successful rehabilitation of prisoners, particularly if complemented by post-release care and support.

When physical and mental healthcare needs are identified at an early stage of incarceration, prisoners can be allocated to facilities that can provide for their needs, including in relation to available healthcare services and medication, appropriate rehabilitation services, and work and training opportunities. Even where specialized support is not available, the identification of specific needs can help prison administrations tailor individualized treatment programmes.

If health issues are undiagnosed or untreated, or if there is no post-release care and support, former prisoners may find rehabilitation difficult and may struggle to successfully interact with others. They may also find it difficult to secure appropriate employment and housing after their release.

The amount of time prisoners can spend outside their cells is a crucial factor in health and rehabilitation. Participation in education and training should never be used by prison staff to justify restrictions on time spent outside the cell for other activities, including opportunities to exercise and participate in sports.

Women in prison have particular healthcare and sanitary needs. Rules 6–18 of the Bangkok Rules provide detailed guidance on healthcare provision for these needs. Rule 48 also provides more detailed guidance on the medical and nutritional needs of pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers and mothers with children in prison. In order to respond to the healthcare needs of female prisoners – a crucial factor in their rehabilitation – prison authorities must provide female-specific services, including sexual and reproductive healthcare, and appropriate programmes and services should be available to those who have experienced violence, including domestic violence and sexual abuse.



Education, vocational training and work



Studies have confirmed that prisoners who receive education and vocational training during their imprisonment are less likely to reoffend and are more likely to find work than those who do not receive such opportunities.⁶⁷

All programmes will work best if they are developed in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, including prisoners, former prisoners and communities. This includes consultations on existing programmes and identifying problems and deficiencies as well as opportunities for future projects.

There is often a significant overlap between education, vocational training and work programmes in prisons. However, there are also distinct considerations for each type of programme. The following section summarizes these considerations, with specific reference to female prisoners.

Education

For those who have previously missed out on educational opportunities, life in prison can provide them with the opportunity to learn basic literacy or numeracy or expand on their existing knowledge. Others can revisit subjects learned at school, gain new qualifications or learn life skills to help them after release.

The UN Special Rapporteur on the right to education has reported that learning in prison is generally considered to have a positive impact on recidivism, reintegration and employment outcomes. However, the Special Rapporteur has also pointed out that prisoners face significant and complex educational challenges owing to a range of environmental, social, organizational and individual factors.⁶⁸

Specific barriers to education in prison include a lack of suitably qualified teachers who are willing to work in a prison environment, inflexible learning opportunities, negative attitudes towards mainstream education and a lack of interest and participation, including among female prisoners. As women generally have less economic independence, they also face more economic barriers to fee-paying higher education opportunities in prison. As women in prison are often the main caregivers for their children and other family members, they are likely, where possible, to choose paid prison work over education so that they can send money home.⁶⁹

Some prisoners find that their learning is interrupted when they are moved to another institution or as a result of security measures such as frequent lockdowns. Others have reported that lessons and exams are regularly cancelled due to a lack of teachers or exam invigilators.



Learning in prison through educational programmes is generally considered a tool of change, its value judged by its impact on recidivism, reintegration and, more specifically, employment outcomes upon release. Education is, however, much more than a tool for change. It is an imperative in its own right. ”⁷⁰

Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales.

However, as has been demonstrated in many prison settings, these factors and the challenges they present are not insurmountable. For example, the introduction of modular courses that enable credits to be acquired can work well for prisoners serving short sentences and can also protect prisoners from losing their educational attainment if their learning is disrupted. In some countries, the lack of teaching facilities and staff can also be overcome through the use of distance learning courses.⁷¹

Other ways to increase interest in prison education programmes and address low levels of motivation among female prisoners is improved information and awareness raising about the opportunities available and the benefits of participation. For this to be successful, it is important that prison staff themselves have positive attitudes towards prison education and that they actively encourage prisoners to participate in the programmes.

It can also be helpful to use alternative teaching methods to those used in mainstream education and to consider non-formal and self-directed learning as a route into formal education or as a rehabilitation tool in itself. This might include teaching by prison guards, volunteers and prisoners themselves and through peer support groups. Studies have shown that whilst formal education programmes in prisons have had success in reducing recidivism, the introduction of informal learning can have additional benefits and longer-lasting effects, including improved self-confidence and motivation.⁷²

Education in prison can take many forms and, where possible, prisoners should be allowed to participate in education outside prison. Where education does take place in prison, it is beneficial to involve the outside community as much as possible.



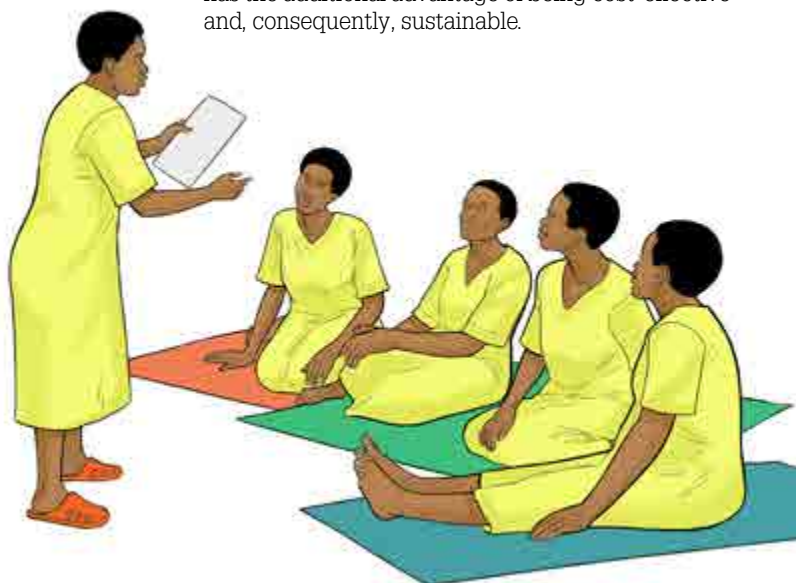
PROMISING PRACTICE - Peer Education Programs

A 2007 review of the effectiveness of interventions to address HIV in prisons⁷³ found that, based on the data and literature available, HIV education programs in prisons were more likely to be effective if developed and delivered by peers.

Researchers have pointed out that peer education may be an effective intervention approach because 'Inmate peer educators are more likely to have specific knowledge about risk behavior occurring both inside and outside the prison. Peer education has the additional advantage of being cost-effective and, consequently, sustainable.

Inmate peer educators are always available to provide services as they live alongside the other inmates who are their educational target.'⁷⁴

Peer educators can play a key role in educating other prisoners because they can tackle illegal or forbidden activities without fear of retribution and can speak openly to others. Their input is less likely to be viewed with suspicion by other prisoners and they are better placed to decide which educational strategies will work best in their prison. Peer-led education can also be of benefit to the educators themselves by improving their self-confidence and self-esteem.





PROMISING PRACTICE - Prison-University Partnerships

The increase in prison-university partnerships around the world has been hailed as an exciting developing trend in prisoner rehabilitation.⁷⁵ Such partnerships can be particularly useful in breaking down barriers to higher education for women in prison.

There are many types of potential partnership approaches between prisons and universities, and these can be adapted to meet different needs and suit local contexts. They include but are not limited to, student placements to mentor prisoners, academic reading groups in prisons, learning partnerships between prisoners and students, e-learning courses that allow prisoners to gain university credits and programs that allow prisoners to attend university on the day of release.

The African Prisons Project offers a formalized sponsorship program enabling prisoners and prison staff to study law with the University of London's international program. At the end of 2018, there were at least 50 people in prison in Uganda and Kenya studying for law degrees by correspondence and over 150 more had been trained as auxiliary paralegals. The programme is also supported by local university lecturers and law students in order to help students contextualize their knowledge.

The UNODC, in partnership with the University of Panama, has supported the establishment of the first university program in Women's Rehabilitation Centre (CEFERE), offering training in three different career paths.⁷⁶ The project enables women prisoners to obtain degrees for the first time. According to a news article published online by the government of Panama in February 2018, there were 43 regular students and 45 first-time students participating in the program at CEFERE in 2018, and 14 women graduated in December 2016.⁷⁷

Walls to Bridges (W2B)⁷⁸ is an innovative educational program that brings together imprisoned and non-imprisoned male and female students to study university-level courses in jails and prisons across Canada. By providing access to education for prisoners and through collaborative scholarly inquiry with university-based students, W2B classes offer opportunities to understand the complexities of criminalization and punishment through lived experiences and intersectional analyses. An important principle of all W2B courses is that students from outside the correctional system are not 'mentoring', 'helping' or 'working with' imprisoned students. All participants in the class are peers, learning the content together through innovative, experiential and dialogical processes. Self-reflexivity is a key component of W2B classes. All students who successfully complete the course receive university or college credit.



PROMISING PRACTICE - Education in Uganda Prisons

In UPS there are training sessions being conducted and facilitated by knowledgeable prisoners on various aspects of life. A case in point is when prisoners educate their colleagues about their work e.g. entrepreneurship i.e. how to start a business, sustain it and get profits from including record keeping.

Short term prisoners who lack literacy and numeracy skills are trained in Functional Adult Literacy programs whose curriculum reflects the way of living in their communities of origin-economically, socially, morally and how to improve their sources of income. This Programme enables them to learn how to read and write for future use.

Formal Education follows the National Education Curricula at: - Primary, Secondary and Vocational Training levels. The UPS has got a Ministry of Education and Sports Registration Number which enables the prisoners to seat for National Examinations thus being awarded Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) certificates. The

Vocational Trades are assessed by the Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT) which awards the respective prisoners Certificates of Competence to assist them in getting employment upon release.

At Tertiary and University levels, prisoners access education from both Public and International Universities. Lectures are being conducted either face to face sessions or by correspondence. Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees are awarded by those Universities upon satisfying the examination authorities of those Universities. Meritorious Certificates for Non-Academic Training Programs from Reputable Education Institutions and Organizations e.g. Prison Education Project are awarded. All Farm Prisons are training and assessment centres for Agricultural Skills. UPS has:

- 23 Inmates' Primary Schools
- 05 Inmates' Secondary Schools
- 148 Vocational Training Centres- Industrial
- 66 Vocational Training Centres - Farms/ Agricultural

- 02 Inmate University Programs
- 01 University Education –Diploma of Makerere University Business School (MUBS)
- 01 University Education-Degree (LLB/

University of London-United Kingdom).

- Partnership Non-Academic Training Programs- Prisons Education Project (PEP-USA/Uganda)-Annual Training.

Note: In all these Inmate Education Programs, female inmates are granted equal access as their male counterparts and they compete favorably. All these educational placements cater for both male and female prisoners in terms of learning space, instructional facilitation, assessment and Educators/instructors.

Impact of Education and Training in Uganda:

- Inmates have continued to acquire economically viable and life skills for self-development.
- Literacy and numeracy (Education) levels improved drastically amongst inmates thus contributing towards the realization of UN-SDGs, UN-SMR (The Nelson Mandela Rules), and National Development Plans.
- Inmate involvement in Education programs have greatly reduced riots and unrest amongst prisoners in Uganda including their resultant consequences like straining the UPS Budget in managing the riots.
- Incidences of gang crimes and violence incidences are nonexistent in Ugandan Prisons
- A successful ex-offender social reintegration regime has been realized.
- The recidivism rate has steadily decreased, and currently stands at 15.8%
- Social acceptance and confidence in the activities of Uganda Prisons by the larger society has been realized.

PRI under the FATE project has imparted skills in the women prisons of Jinja and Mbale. The women have been awarded certificates on top of acquiring entrepreneurial skills to help them start their own businesses after release.



Vocational Training

Vocational training programmes in prisons should focus on the wider development of the individual. In addition to providing practical skills, good prison training and work programmes should also aim to give prisoners the information and skills they need to find a job after release.

This includes general employment skills, enterprise and self-employment training, career guidance, job hunting skills and how to apply or interview for jobs. Women in prison are likely to benefit particularly from this type of programme as well as from programmes designed to build their self-confidence as potential employees.

Importantly, vocational training priorities must be in line with the reality of the labour market. For female prisoners, vocational skills training programmes should be chosen and designed with consideration for the types of jobs women are likely to be offered, but also with a view to breaking gender stereotypes and economic disparities in the job market.

The commentary to the Bangkok Rules contains a list of potential vocational training activities that may assist women in leading independent lives upon release, including administrative and computer skills, painting and decoration, managing income-generating community projects, and the use of microcredit facilities. While the list also includes childcare, cooking, hairdressing, dressmaking and embroidery, programmes should not be limited to activities traditionally considered as appropriate for women.⁷⁹

Importantly, prisoners should also have a choice as to the type of training programme they would like to join. They should be trained according to recognized national standards and receive accredited qualifications for their learning. Even if female prisoners are employed to do basic prison tasks within a prison, such as catering, cleaning or gardening, these could be part of accredited training programmes. The fact that qualifications were gained inside prison should not be mentioned on any certificate of learning.



PROMISING PRACTICE - Uganda Context

In general Uganda Prisons Service has 19 female sections and as a service it has contributed holistically on the wellbeing of inmates through rehabilitation programs among others.

In collaborations with external organizations and governmental agencies, a pivotal role has been played in supporting rehabilitation endeavors and these partnerships usually bring in resources, additional opportunities in order to strengthen the impact of the programs

The vocational programs that women are involved in are as follows;

- Tailoring
- Knitting
- Hairdressing
- Liquid soap making
- Weaving
- baking
- farming on a small scale

among others



Vocational Activities at Luzira Women Prison

The vocational activities at Uganda Prisons Luzira Women have been gendered over time, with inmates predominantly engaged in skills thought to be more for the female gender; these include hairdressing, crafts making, tailoring and baking. However, with the changing trends, the women are now accessing equal opportunities. The women are being engaged and trained in skills in liquid soap making, animal rearing in zero grazing of cows where they engage in the process of preparing feeds for the

animals, vaccination and treatment of the animals, milking among others. They are also engaged in building processes which include mixing the sand, plastering and painting. The Women are also engaged in shoe making and repair as a vocational skill.



PROMISING PRACTICE - Helping Women Build their Economic Freedom in Bolivia

As part of its Global Programme for the Implementation of the Doha Declaration, the UNODC is working with the Bolivian Prison Administration and a local NGO, CECOPI, on an initiative to train female prisoners in the field of construction and related technical skills. The programme is designed to help the women acquire technical skills and strengthen their rights, self-esteem, entrepreneurial skills and decision-making capacities.

The project counters the gender stereotyping that leads to male prisoners receiving skills in more profitable areas, such as accounting and mechanics, and female prisoners in less lucrative industries, such as the production of handicrafts. The project is based on research into the demands of the job market in Bolivia and equips women prisoners with skills for jobs that are predicted to be among the

highest in demand in the coming years, and which will help women build their economic freedom.

The initiative is currently being rolled out with an initial group of 50 female prisoners, who are receiving training in a range of construction-related specialties, including building, metalwork, plumbing, pipefitting, carpentry and training to be electricians. In addition, 10 of the women will subsequently become trainers to teach the skills they have learned to other prisoners.

After release, the women will receive support in joining the National Association of Women Constructors, which helps its members promote their services, find work opportunities and develop their own business.⁸⁰



Training women prisoners is part of an integral process; not only are they receiving technical training, but they are also going to be empowered in exercising their rights, and upon release they can do better work and have a higher income, which will give them a higher quality of life. ”

Director of the Bolivian NGO CECOPI, which works with the UNODC on training female prisoners in construction

Work

Prison work programmes can provide prisoners with valuable skills, confidence and improved self-esteem, and have been shown to reduce levels of reoffending.⁸¹ There are many different models of prison work, including those run by prisons and state enterprises as well as individual or private-sector initiatives. All prison work programmes need to be carefully regulated and monitored to avoid corruption and exploitation of the workers. They should be based on research into actual market needs so that there are clear pathways to sustainable employment after release.

The Nelson Mandela Rules state that prison labour must not be afflictive in nature, that prisoners should not be held in slavery or servitude, and that no prisoner should be required to work for the personal or private benefit of any prison staff. The work provided should allow a prisoner to maintain or increase their ability to earn an honest living after release and, within limits, prisoners should also be able to choose the type of work they wish to perform.⁸²

Prison work⁸³ should be a way for prisoners to gain new skills and feel confident in the job market. Work opportunities should be determined on an individualized basis, taking into account the specific or additional obstacles that women in prison might face and the physical and mental fitness of a prisoner.⁸⁴ There should be 'a system of equitable remuneration of the work of prisoners' (Rule 103 (1) of the Nelson Mandela Rules), good occupational health and safety provision for working prisoners, and the organization and methods of work should resemble as closely as possible those of free workers.⁸⁵ When private companies are involved in prison work, safeguards must be in place to ensure a free labor relationship.⁸⁶

As recommended by the International Labour Organization, the conditions of work offered to prisoners should be similar to work outside the prison, with comparable wages to those of free workers in the relevant industry. There should also be the possibility of prisoners continuing the same type of work upon release.⁸⁷ In practice, prison work programs are often designed to benefit the prison authorities or to keep prisoners occupied. Women in prison are often employed to carry out tasks that support the running of the prison, such as cooking, cleaning, and repairing prison uniforms. Such tasks are not usually part of an organized rehabilitation program and are often unwaged.

Employers can be reluctant to give jobs to former prisoners due to fear and stigma, or the assumption that they do not have the necessary skills. There are, however, many promising examples of programs that connect prisoners and employers and provide prisoners with skills for specific jobs, as well as enterprises that are set up with the specific aim of employing former female prisoners. Some employers have started actively recruiting in prisons, with job fairs in prisons becoming increasingly common. There are also a growing number of innovative projects designed and led by prisoners, community organizations, and local businesses, which support the training of prisoners and the employment of prisoners after release.

Prison work programs that create links with potential employers and community organizations can also be particularly valuable for female prisoners and can provide a route to potential employment after release. There are many good examples of rehabilitation programmes that benefit the broader community as well as the prisoners themselves, helping to break down the stigma of imprisonment and improve community awareness of life in prison.



It's a double restoration — not just of the house but of the person. What does Indianapolis need? A solution to this housing crisis. What do women in prison need, more than anything? Ownership. Of our minds, of our bodies, and of our physical homes. ”⁸⁸

Vanessa Thompson, *Constructing Our Future*, Indiana Women's Prison



PROMISING PRACTICE - Investing in Prisoners' Futures

US: Constructing our Future program

Constructing our Future is a community revitalization program dedicated to providing education, housing, and employment to formerly incarcerated women in Indianapolis, US, whilst also mitigating the problem of abandoned homes in Indianapolis – thereby restoring communities and at the same time promoting successful integration of women.

The program combines extensive training in life skills with education and practice in building trades and residential maintenance. Participating women learn multiple trades and can obtain certified construction skills and carry out work to restore formerly abandoned homes. The aim is for women released from prison to be independent, law-abiding citizens who give back to the community and in the process reduce recidivism, rebuild communities, and provide affordable housing.

The program was conceived by a group of incarcerated women who had participated in a public policy class in prison, where they discussed life after prison and what they would need to be successful. In 2017 these were endorsed by the Indiana General Assembly as a re-entry program for women leaving prison.

Criteria for participating include a willingness to complete training programs, the ability to be a productive member of a team, and a commitment to the mission to rehabilitate abandoned houses.

UK: Bike repair training

In 2017, Halfords – a UK retailer of car parts, bicycles, and other equipment – launched a cycle mechanic training facility at Drake Hall prison for women prisoners who want to train as bike mechanics. The project aims to increase the number of female bike mechanics in a profession that is traditionally male dominated.

The women are supported by Halfords workers and, during their training, they work on reconditioned bikes that are then donated to primary schools in disadvantaged areas of the country. The company has since hired former female prisoners who signed up to the training scheme while serving their sentences.

Algeria: Microcredit schemes

Since a prison reform strategy was adopted in Algeria in 2006 for the reintegration of prisoners and the prevention of recidivism, over 7,850 former prisoners have benefited from employment assistance schemes.⁸⁹ Algerian prison authorities have agreements with several microcredit agencies to help former prisoners set up their own businesses after release.



We believe that projects like Drake Hall are a real win-win for businesses and local communities alike – the more productive people are whilst in prison, the more they can learn and the better their chances of succeeding once they leave. We're not just talking about prisoners, we're talking about people who have a huge amount of potential and skills, and above all, it's about changing people's lives and giving them a second chance. ”

Halfords spokesperson (see Promising Practice on page 47)



PROMISING PRACTICE - Therapeutic and Community-Oriented Programs

There are an increasing number of innovative prison programs in which prisoners participate in work schemes designed to benefit their local community or which are driven by environmental and sustainability principles. There has also been a recent growth in projects that combine work and vocational training with therapeutic approaches that are of direct benefit to prisoners.

In Auckland Regional Women's Corrections facility, New Zealand, prisoners learn practical beekeeping (apiculture) whilst also studying for a certificate in the subject. The course provides participants with highly sought-after skills for employment in a commercial beekeeping enterprise or for starting their own business – or simply for pursuing beekeeping as a hobby after release. The honey produced is either used in the prison, gifted to prison visitors, or donated to local charities.

Since the program was established in 2016, a total of 17 women have completed the one-year program, with some graduating with a certificate in apiculture. Some of the women who graduate from the programme go on to mentor others.

In Adelaide Women's Prison in Australia, the Greyhound Adoption Programme (GAP) allows prisoners to train retired greyhounds to be pets and make the transition from racing careers to domesticated life. The program gives women in custody an opportunity to learn new skills and turn their lives around so that they can contribute to society in a meaningful way upon their release.

Prison staff work in partnership with the South Australia Greyhound Association to coordinate and deliver the program. Trainers attend the prison four days a week and teach the women skills in areas of dog care such as first aid, grooming, diet, interacting with people, walking on a lead, and daily exercise. One hundred and thirty former racing greyhounds have been retrained since the program was established in 2015.

The grey hounds are a valuable addition to the prison environment and have proved to be a positive point of connection between prisoners and staff. Prisoners who have fostered a dog have noted how the animals have improved their mental health and taught them about responsibility. The programme has been such a success that it was expanded to Mobilong men's prison in 2018.



It's a positive interaction, and the pride and dignity that comes with it is worth its weight in gold.”

Australian Correctional Services Minister speaking about the Greyhound Adoption Programme (see Promising Practice above)

Preparation for release and post-release support

Re-entry into society can be distressing for prisoners and many suffer from depression or anxiety after their release. For rehabilitation and social reintegration to be successful, prison systems should focus from an early stage on preparing prisoners for release, by building confidence, self-esteem and independence.

The Nelson Mandela Rules stipulate that before the completion of a sentence, necessary steps should be taken to ensure a gradual return to life in society for the prisoner. The Rules also point out that the duty of society does not end with a prisoner's release, noting that there should be governmental or private agencies 'capable of lending the released prisoner efficient aftercare directed towards the lessening of prejudice against him or her and towards his or her social rehabilitation'.⁹⁰

The Bangkok Rules state that '[a]dditional support following release shall be provided to released women prisoners who need psychological, medical, legal and practical help to ensure their successful social reintegration, in cooperation with services in the community'.⁹¹

The problems women face after release from prison tend to be very different from those men face, particularly in relation to their health, employment opportunities, housing, and primary care responsibilities. Many women return to the same abusive situations that led them to prison.



Good rehabilitation and pre-release schemes take these factors into account, providing prisoners with the practical skills and tools they need to adapt to life after prison. There are many examples of such programs, with the most successful incorporating both emotional and practical support and advice.

In-prison programs should help female prisoners prepare to adapt to life in the community by teaching them life and relationship skills and how to deal with situations that may arise. This could include problem-solving, communication, self-assertiveness, anger management, and conflict resolution. Programs that educate women on their rights are also particularly important. Programs that are linked to community initiatives can be particularly beneficial as they can provide continuity of support post-release.

As women prisoners are less likely to have been in mainstream employment and more likely to have been financially dependent on male relatives, they are also likely to benefit particularly from job skills training, financial management, and support with securing housing.

Whilst rehabilitation programs should be integrated throughout the term of imprisonment, the weeks immediately before and after release from prison can be particularly important in determining whether rehabilitation will be successful. Prisoners should be provided with practical information to help them prepare for release, including information about local public transportation and support services available in the community. Women prisoners should have the opportunity to discuss life after prison, including their fears, expectations, and any specific support services they may need.

As they are usually the main caregivers in families, women will benefit from extra contact with their families as their release date approaches, including pre-release home leave schemes. Such schemes help boost self-confidence and allow women to reconnect with their families, including their children. Temporary release schemes also allow prisoners to put some practical measures in place in preparation for leaving prison, including the possibility of contacting prospective employers, getting on-the-job training, and finding accommodation.

If the temporary home release is not possible, authorities can also increase a prisoner's contact with family by allowing them extra visits and phone and/or Skype calls. Some prisons offer family visiting spaces where a prisoner's family members can stay with them overnight.



PROMISING PRACTICE - Community Engagement in Singapore

The Yellow Ribbon Project in Singapore⁹² is based on the premise that prisoner rehabilitation requires broader community engagement. The project seeks to engage the community to help former prisoners find employment and housing, learn new skills, and feel welcomed. The project aims to generate greater awareness of the need for second chances and inspire more people to accept former prisoners into their lives.

The project is spearheaded by the Community Action for the Rehabilitation of Ex-Offenders (CARE) Network, which involves public, private and non-governmental bodies working together to ensure

seamless care between prisons and communities and to develop innovative rehabilitative initiatives.

The project features regular job fairs, during which prisoners can meet with potential employers and undertake job interviews. Ahead of the fair, prisoners are provided with training on basic interview techniques and resume writing skills and are given an update on the availability of career opportunities. Prisoners who secure employment during the job fair are also provided with post-release support, including financial assistance, accommodation and counselling.



PROMISING PRACTICE - Uganda's Post-Release Programs

UPS and other NGOs conduct reintegration skills training to economically help the prisoners upon release. The discharge boards are in place and help in identification and monitoring of inmates towards release. Pre-release visits are done by The Rehabilitation and Reintegration Officers in the communities before a prisoner is released there to

prepare them for the prisoner's homecoming. The UPS and other NGOs provide start-up packages to prisoners for livelihoods and income generating activities upon release.

For rehabilitation to be successful, it is equally important that families and communities are well

prepared for the release of prisoners. This applies to all prisoners but can be particularly helpful for women due to the stigma they face, the additional barriers they encounter upon release, and their roles as mothers.

Local NGOs, community leaders, local authorities and former prisoners are well placed to work with

families and communities to prepare them, both practically and emotionally, for a prisoner's return. Public perceptions and media representations of prisoners and prison life can also influence how communities react to released prisoners. Prison authorities themselves can play a key role in improving the way prisoners are represented in society.



PROMISING PRACTICE - Working with communities in Malawi

The Centre for Human Rights Education, Advice and Assistance (CHREAA)⁹³ in Malawi is an NGO that was set up in 2002 to promote and protect human rights by assisting vulnerable and marginalized people in Malawi to access justice through advocacy, legal advice, and assistance.

The Centre has several ongoing projects, including the decriminalization of vagrancy laws, the promotion, and protection of the rights of sex workers, a bail project that aims to equip people to apply for bail even if they don't have a lawyer, and paralegal services for victims of sexual abuse. CHREAA also provides psychosocial counseling

and support services for prisoners, including assessments to ensure that prisoners with mental health problems are moved to appropriate institutions for care and treatment, and psychosocial services to help prepare prisoners for release.

In parallel to this, CHREAA works with families and community leaders in the months before the release of the prisoner to help prepare them for the prisoner's return. CHREAA representatives then carry out follow-up visits to check how the former prisoners, families, and communities are coping.



PROMISING PRACTICE - UPS Practice on Community Engagement and Reintegration

UPS engages the community through one-on-one meetings, community dialogues, and partnerships. Efforts are made to strengthen confidence and trust within and between agencies and organizations to reinforce cooperation and collaboration regarding the assistance that can be extended to a prisoner on release. These take a multi-sector approach involving family members, Probation Officers, Community Development Officers, community leaders, religious leaders, and local NGOs.

The NGOs support prisoners in their rehabilitation and meet their needs for example Fill the Gap which supports prisoners by providing basic needs for children and elderly prisoners.

Franciscan Prison Ministry provides support in terms of reintegration packages for prisoners due for release, facilitating the Prison education programs and providing food supplements for vulnerable groups.

The NGOs also provide attachments to mentors who counsel, support and motivate ex-inmates to pursue a positive life as law-abiding citizens, handling situations, problems, and conflicts with foresight and maturity. They also provide linkages to employment opportunities, accommodation, training, and support for identifying alternative social networks.

Monitoring during reintegration focuses on public protection or safety, risk reduction, and Resistance to re-offending. The Rehabilitation and Reintegration Officers work with other stakeholders and the ex-inmate to plan how to use other resources and support networks which are available to them.

The Rehabilitation and Reintegration Officers' Role in Monitoring and Review of the Reintegration Process includes:

- Development of support resettlement plans
- Monitoring compliance
- Participating Directly in the Reintegration activities
- Acquiring and realigning resources to help meet the identified needs
- Empowering young people to cooperate with the laid down reintegration plan

UPS has developed networks with other partners in the criminal justice system to support the reintegration process. Before engaging with communities, The Rehabilitation and Reintegration Officers liaise and coordinate with Police, Local Council leaders, and other community actors.

Family and Community support is done through:

- Training, Education/Information, and guidance that help support the understanding of individuals ie individual needs, family members and the community on reintegration and resilience against crime.
- Providing a single point of contact for families or community members
- Involvement in the individual's rehabilitation from an early stage while in prison.
- Identifying and providing assistance in terms of financial, emotional, and guidance into making social adjustments when one is released back into the family.
- Making connections to social services and other support providers and resources
- Assisting family members or the community to manage their emotions and anxieties towards the ex-prisoner.
- Coaching families or communities to actively engage in behavior change and resist crime.

Community engagements also include exhibiting and sale of products made by prisoners (for example bags, household rugs, furniture, etc.) which proceeds to help them to economically engage with the communities around them and those who visit prisons.

For some prisoners who have finished serving and do not have where to go, halfway homes are provided on a minimal basis by Wells of Hope which provides temporary shelter for women prisoners in the central region.

Post-release support is one of the most crucial aspects of successful reintegration, linking former prisoners with potential work opportunities and providing them with appropriate services in the community, such as mental healthcare, counseling, and substance abuse programs. Any gaps or deficiencies in the care and support available to prisoners after release can contribute to reoffending.

There are many models of post-release support. These include 'halfway houses', which are places of residence aimed at providing prisoners with the necessary skills to reintegrate into society and to support and care for themselves. Parole is a form of conditional, supervised, and supported release from prison which allows prisoners to return to the community before their sentence has expired. Such schemes act as an intermediate stage between prison and independent living in the community.

There are also a number of schemes, often run by NGOs, that provide practical support and small loans to released prisoners and their families. This may include help with reuniting families, housing, or employment opportunities.

Peer mentoring programs can provide support so that former prisoners can continue education, training, and employment on release. This can also be provided by former prisoners who have successfully reintegrated after leaving prison.



When a parent is imprisoned, the dynamics of families change. The remaining parent faces additional pressure to both earn an income and care for their children emotionally. Children with a caregiver in prison are likely to drop out of school. The effect of this increased family stress ranges from the emotional distance between children and their parents to actual family separation in more serious cases. ”

Billy Gorter, Director of This Life Cambodia (see Promising Practice on page 54)



PROMISING PRACTICE - Peer Health Mentoring in Canada

The Unlocking the Gates Peer Health Mentoring Programme in British Columbia, Canada, helps female prisoners in the first few days after their release, with peer mentors helping the women navigate life after prison – such as meeting them at the prison gate and helping them to get to appointments, find housing or enter treatment programs. The program works with community agencies inside the prison in order to connect with women during pre-release planning and offers

systematic peer support and engagement during the immediate days following release.

The project was designed after women told researchers that the first few days of transition were particularly hard because they have immediate unmet health and social needs that can be overwhelming. The mentors are themselves former prisoners, some of whom went through the mentoring program after their release.



PROMISING PRACTICE - Providing Pre-and Post-Release support in Cambodia

The organization This Life Cambodia provides holistic case management to families in conflict with the law in Cambodia, with the goal of supporting vulnerable families at risk of separation. Women with children are a priority group.

Under the project named This Life in Family, the organization provides income-generation support for families with a primary caregiver in conflict with the law. It also helps prisoners maintain regular contact with their families through family tracing services, prison visits, and supporting children to remain in appropriate family care. In addition, the organisation supports access to legal assistance and provides post-release planning and support.

This Life in Family aims to bolster the resilience and capacity of families, especially during the vital stages of reintegrating a primary caregiver back into their community upon release from prison, and to enable the family to become self-supporting through income-generating activities. The project is community driven and was identified as a priority by local communities.

Between 2016 and 2018 the project supported 86 families with children, and 28 primary caregivers were supported with income-generation activities in preparation for their rehabilitation and reintegration on release from prison.



PROMISING PRACTICE - Erasing criminal records in Costa Rica

Legislative reform in 2017 in Costa Rica permitted courts to erase criminal records. The law outlines criteria for the court to take into account, which include the length of the sentence, the offence committed and, when relevant, the 'situation of vulnerability' of the offender. The law is applicable to people imprisoned for minor offences (carrying a penalty of five years imprisonment or less) who have served their sentence. The offender must have been in a situation of vulnerability (such as poverty, social exclusion, and discrimination) at the time that the offence was committed.

While the reform does not specifically target women, they are likely to benefit as the majority of non-violent female offenders are imprisoned for property crimes or small-scale drug-related offences, often committed in a context of vulnerability and poverty. In the past, these women struggled to gain employment because of their criminal record, despite having relevant work experience and skills; this in turn perpetuated cycles of poverty and recidivism.



PROMISING PRACTICE - Employment for released prisoners in Thailand

The Lila Thai Massage Ex-Inmate Employment and Skill Development Centre set up in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in 2014, offers employment upon release for graduates from the Chiang Mai women prison's massage training program.

The women earn the equivalent of USD\$ 950 per month, which is more than twice the average monthly income in Thailand (about USD\$ 450). The Centre, in response to the increasing demand, has now expanded its service to cover six locations in the city of Chiang Mai.

Rehabilitation Programs for Specific Groups

Whilst women have different rehabilitation needs from men and face gender-specific challenges, they also have personal characteristics and situational circumstances that impact their rehabilitation requirements. These can often overlap, causing multiple needs and challenges.

It is also important for prisons to offer rehabilitation programs that reflect the diversity of the prison population in a country, taking into account particular groups of prisoners. The availability of specific programs should therefore be periodically reviewed to ensure it reflects any significant changes in the prison population profile, such as an increase in the numbers of foreign prisoners or older prisoners. The section below identifies some groups of female prisoners with specific needs and provides suggestions as to how authorities can provide them with appropriate support.

Pregnancy and Women with Children in Prison



Pregnant women and women with children living with them in prison can face particular challenges when it comes to rehabilitation. Pregnant women, mothers, and their children have specific healthcare and dietary requirements that are often not adequately met in prisons, and mental well-being is of particular concern. Contact with friends, families, and communities can be especially important for these women, not only to reduce their isolation but also to enable them to prepare for release, including in relation to practical childcare and support needs.

In prison, pregnant women and women with children living with them tend to be excluded from rehabilitation programs. Sometimes authorities assume they would not want to participate in education and vocational training, and often there are no alternative childcare arrangements available that would allow them to do so.

Rule 42 (2) of the Bangkok Rules specifies that the regime of prisons should be 'flexible enough to respond to the needs of pregnant women, nursing mothers and women with children. Childcare facilities or arrangements shall be provided in prisons in order to enable women prisoners to participate in prison activities.' Rule 42 (3) further notes that '[p]articular efforts shall be made to provide appropriate programs for pregnant women, nursing mothers and women with children in prison'.

Holistic rehabilitation programs are particularly important for pregnant women and women with children in prison. Many will leave prison with little, or no family support and their childcare responsibilities may make it difficult for them to undertake additional training or find employment and suitable housing. Women leaving prison with their children are also likely to need help dealing with the physical and psychological impact of prison on their children and supporting them in adapting to life in the community.



PROMISING PRACTICE - Prenatal yoga in prison in the US

The Washington Corrections Center for Women (WCCW), in collaboration with the organizations Yoga Behind Bars⁹⁵ and Birth Beyond Bars,⁹⁶ co-organized a three-day programme in the US on trauma-informed pre-natal yoga for pregnant and post-partum prisoners. This programme provided a safe space for them to share their feelings of isolation, distress and depression and to create a 'community of caring'.⁹⁷

The trained facilitators used this platform to validate and honor people's experiences. Those involved in the programme shared information about pregnancy, birth and post-partum needs and learned from each other. It helped them realize that even though they were in prison, they still had choices.



I am not alone. What I am experiencing is a normal part of being a new parent. ”

Billy Gorter, Director of This Life Cambodia (see Promising Practice on page 54)



PROMISING PRACTICE - Day Care Centres in Women Prisons in Uganda

At Luzira, Mbarara, Arua and Gulu Women's Prisons, there are daycare centers for children of prisoners. Children in prison with their mothers who may no longer be breast-feeding are taken to a daycare center that is annexed to the prison for their protection and safety. They are fed, housed and given pre-school learning all week and returned to their parents in the prison over the weekend to bond. This is aimed at child protection and care giving for these children.

In addition to this, the Rehabilitation and Reintegration Officers regularly engage the mothers with children in prison who are 2 years or more to plan their placement back into the communities where they or their mothers come from. The relatives of the inmates who may include the grandparents of the child, their fathers, aunts, mother's friends etc., and the Local Leaders are engaged to assist

with the placement of these children back into the communities and are urged to offer child protection and care.

There is a school managed by a local NGO Wells of Hope Ministries in the Central Region to provide education for children of prisoners who are placed back into the communities or left behind by an imprisoned parent and the relatives are not able to meet their education needs.

Through partnerships with NGOs, 4-day care centers have been constructed out of the 19 female prisons. Also, in some prisons where day care centers are not available, elderly prisoners are tasked to take care of the children. This gives their mothers an opportunity to participate in rehabilitation programs. There is need for more daycare centres in other units.

Foreign National Prisoners

The term foreign national prisoners refer to prisoners who do not carry the passport of the country in which they are imprisoned. They may have lived in the country for a long time or may have been arrested soon after arrival.⁹⁸

As a minority group, foreign national prisoners face particular challenges when it comes to rehabilitation. Language is one of the most obvious barriers, not only in terms of the provision of education and training but also because without a common language, staff will not be able to recognize individual needs and problems. It can also be very difficult for prison administrations to establish the personal and educational background of foreign prisoners and to understand their likely situation on release, with many facing deportation from the country of detention.

As a result, foreign national prisoners are often excluded from regular rehabilitation programs and prisons are unable to provide for their needs, including practical assistance to prepare for release. Depending on their country of detention, some may receive support from their embassies or consular officials, but many will not have access to this type of support.

The rehabilitation needs of foreign female prisoners' merit particular attention. Many are in prison for drug trafficking and are serving very long sentences. A large proportion of them are mothers and are particularly affected by the separation from, and lack of contact with, their children. Many come from socially and economically marginalized communities. Female migrant workers and trafficked women are particularly vulnerable in prison settings.

Any rehabilitation programs for foreign national prisoners need to take into account their individual situations, including the reason they were in the country of detention. For example, those who were arrested for drug smuggling upon entry to the country will have very different needs from women who were long-term residents or women who were living in the country legally as migrant workers.

Other ways to support foreign national prisoners can include consultations with community representatives of foreign nationals, basic language courses and the availability of foreign-language books, and the use of e-learning courses for distance education. Authorities should also consider offering foreign national prisoners' activities such as art, sport, and music, which require less use of verbal communication.



PROMISING PRACTICE - Distance learning for foreign national prisoners

FORINER⁹⁹ was a two-year pilot project funded by the European Commission. It provided foreign national prisoners from EU countries with access to education offered by their home country, while they were imprisoned in a foreign European country. The research found that there were only limited or no educational materials available for foreign EU national prisoners and that the financial resources to offer foreign prisoners' education were too limited.

During the project 36 students, including five women, enrolled in an educational course offered by their home country. An evaluation of the project found that the majority of students thought that participation in the courses would reduce the likelihood of recidivism and make it easier for them to find a job after prison. More than half of the students indicated that they hoped participation in the course would improve their relationships with their family and friends.



I want to do something here. I don't want to waste my time. When I go back out, at least I have something that can help me in the future to start a new life. You have the chance to do something positive with your life. All people make mistakes, and from these mistakes, you can learn. I now have the chance to start something that is positive. When I go out it can help me to get a job. ”

Students who participated in the FORINER project (see Promising Practice above)

Ethnic and Racial Minorities and Indigenous prisoners

The Bangkok Rules state that prison authorities must recognize that women prisoners from different religious and cultural backgrounds have distinctive needs and may face multiple forms of discrimination. Accordingly, prison authorities should provide comprehensive programs and services that address these needs, in consultation with women prisoners themselves. Pre- and post-release services should also be appropriate and available to these groups of prisoners.¹⁰⁰

Ethnic, racial minority and Indigenous prisoners are often over represented in prison systems and are particularly likely to have multiple needs due to their social and economic marginalization.

Many are drug and alcohol dependent. Indigenous female prisoners are statistically more likely to have been victims of domestic violence and are at particular risk of stigma and ostracization from their communities.

When they are released from prison, these groups may face particular barriers to rehabilitation and existing support services may not take into account their specific cultural needs. They are also likely to face discrimination when seeking housing, employment and social support.



CONTEXT: Minority Groups

A 2017 report found that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women comprise 34 percent of women behind bars in Australia but only two percent of the adult female Australian population.

The report also found that 'the overwhelming majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in prison are survivors of physical and sexual violence. Many also struggle with housing insecurity, poverty, mental illness, disability, and the effects of trauma. These factors intersect with and compound the impact of, oppressive and discriminatory laws, policies, and practices, both past and present. Too often, the impact of the justice system is to punish

and entrench disadvantage, rather than promoting healing, support, and rehabilitation.'¹⁰¹

There are many steps that prison authorities can take to meet the particular rehabilitation needs of ethnic and racial minorities and Indigenous prisoners. These can include employing a representative number of staff from different backgrounds and training all staff in cultural sensitivity. Authorities can also consult with community representatives to understand how best to address the problems and barriers faced by their members within the criminal justice system and society as a whole.



PROMISING PRACTICE: Indigenous prisons for women in Canada

The Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge (OOHL) is a multi-level security facility for women in Canada located on Nekaneet First Nation land. It was opened in 1985 as Canada's first healing lodge for women offenders. It provides a unique environment where minimum- and medium-security offenders can work towards changing their lives through the educational, vocational, correctional, and social programs available to them in a culturally responsive setting. The practices, traditions, culture, and values of the Nekaneet are taught to the residents. The OOHL represents a culturally and gender-informed option for federally incarcerated Indigenous women, or those who wish to follow a traditional healing path.

Buffalo Sage Wellness House (BSWH) is another Indigenous healing lodge for women in Canada. It is a minimum- to medium-security facility with 28 beds, where Indigenous and non-Indigenous prisoners who present a low risk of flight or recidivism can apply to transfer. Women living at the lodge can have supervised day trips, day parole, and full parole. The centre is run by an Indigenous community that is responsible for implementing federal prison rules. The facility also provides programs that focus on the root causes of offending and on managing past trauma. The effective operation of BSWH relies on the belief that Indigenous and non-Indigenous offenders who follow the Aboriginal culture require specific programs that address their social, educational, emotional, physical, and spiritual needs in a culturally sensitive way. BSWH develops appropriate programs to assist women offenders in recognizing their full potential for reintegration back into the community and provides high-quality support and supervision for offenders by ensuring the protection of society, offenders, and their communities.

Prisoners with mental healthcare needs

A disproportionately large number of prisoners, and particularly female prisoners, have mental health conditions. They are a particularly vulnerable group and have complex rehabilitation needs, including in relation to the healthcare they receive. Prisoners with mental health conditions are vulnerable to abuse in prisons and the discrimination and stigmatization they encounter in the community can be magnified in prison settings.

As with all prisoners, the rehabilitation of prisoners with mental healthcare needs depends on individualized assessments and adequate health screening and monitoring. However, there are many prisons around the world that are not equipped to carry out such assessments or provide appropriate mental healthcare. If prisons do not have qualified mental health professionals, then prison staff as well as other healthcare professionals should be trained to identify signs of emotional or psychological distress and know how to respond.¹⁰²

Good social reintegration planning is crucial for prisoners with mental health conditions as they are likely to face particular difficulties finding employment and housing after their release, and their conditions are likely to deteriorate if they do not receive continuity of care. It is best if prison and community mental health services cooperate closely to ensure appropriate measures are in place post-release.

Prisoners with physical disabilities

The difficulties that people with physical disabilities face in their communities are magnified in a prison environment. They need to be allocated to suitable accommodation, including in relation to their physical environment and the availability of appropriate healthcare services. The Nelson Mandela Rules are clear that prison administrations must make all reasonable accommodations and adjustments to ensure that prisoners with physical disabilities have full and effective access to prison life on an equitable basis.¹⁰³

Prisoners with disabilities should be able to participate in rehabilitation activities and services. Where existing services are not accessible to them, authorities should ensure that there are alternative measures available. For example, information and materials should be available in alternative formats such as Braille or audio. Good reintegration planning is particularly important, and prison authorities should coordinate with community organizations to help prepare prisoners with disabilities for release and to ensure continuity of care.

Older prisoners

In many countries around the world, the number of older people in prison is growing fast.¹⁰⁴ Despite this, most prison systems are not set up to cater to their needs. Most prisoner programs and services are designed with younger prisoners in mind and many lack the resources to care for the needs of older prisoners.

Elderly prisoners might have specific mental healthcare needs, including those related to dementia, and older women prisoners may suffer from low mood, anxiety, and feelings of depression as a result of menopause. Elderly women also have an increased risk of depression, which can be linked to bereavement or problems associated with growing old, including physical illnesses. Some research indicates that older female prisoners are more likely than older male prisoners to report serious health problems such as cardiac, degenerative, and respiratory illnesses.¹⁰⁵

Vocational training and work programs in prison may not be relevant to older prisoners, because many will not be looking for employment after release. Additionally, they may struggle to participate in recreational activities due to ill-health and mobility problems and they also have different needs in terms of therapy and counseling. Some prison staff view older prisoners as beyond rehabilitation and consider that it is not worth spending time helping them prepare for life after prison. Older prisoners also have specific needs in terms of preparation for release, particularly in countries where there is a lack of community support available to them. Prison programs should be customized to the individual needs and circumstances of older prisoners, including age- and health-related needs and length of sentence. Prison authorities can modify existing programs to increase the older prisoner's ability to participate. Special programs for older prisoners can also be arranged without significant additional resources.



PROMISING PRACTICE: Promoting the welfare of Elderly Prisoners and their Rehabilitation in Uganda

The welfare of elderly prisoners in Uganda and their inclusion in rehabilitation programs have been embraced by UPS. In 2019, UPS concluded research on elderly prisoners. The recommended actions have been implemented across all prison units and these include:

- Creating awareness among staff on the needs of elderly prisoners
- Inclusion in rehabilitation programs e.g., basket weaving.
- Engage in recreational activities for their entertainment,

- Light physical exercises for their health
- Separate accommodation where possible
- Taking care of medical conditions and ailments
- Providing adequate clothing & bedding
- Training inmate caregivers to support the elderly
- Practice vegetable growing to boost immunity and improve their nutrition
- Psychosocial support, counseling, and outreaches to maintain relationships with families.



10 key principles

for gender-sensitive rehabilitation programs

The principles below provide a framework for the successful design and implementation of rehabilitation programs for female prisoners.¹⁰⁶ They address the points raised in this guide and reflect the foundations of the promising practice examples cited. These key principles can be used as a basis for developing new programmes and improving existing ones: -

01 Part of a Broader Strategy

Rehabilitative principles are embedded in relevant laws, policies and procedures. Programmes are based on a national strategy for rehabilitation and are fully supported by politicians and policymakers.

Community-based alternatives to imprisonment are implemented wherever appropriate and possible, particularly for pregnant women and mothers.

Adequate resources, including financial resources, equipment and staff, are allocated for rehabilitation programmes to ensure long-term sustainability.

02 Community and Prisoner Driven

Programmes are based on consultations with prisoners, former prisoners and communities about rehabilitation needs, taking into account their ideas for improving existing programmes or developing new ones.

Training, work and education programmes delivered by the prison system are supplemented by peer education programmes where possible, e.g. the Prison Education opportunities reflect the education provided in the community.

Where possible, prisoners are able to participate in educational and training opportunities in the community or in collaboration with community agencies.

Where applicable and appropriate, as an inmate prepares for release, reintegration programmes should include family and peers, to ensure a smooth transition from prison to the community.

03 Supported by Staff and Managers

Prison staff are carefully selected and provided with appropriate and ongoing training, which enables them to address the special rehabilitation needs of women. In Uganda we still need to conduct refresher trainings for both the Rehabilitation & Reintegration Staff and the Uniformed Staff on how to rehabilitate female inmates.

Prison staff actively encourage and support women and girls to participate in prison programmes.

Staff are well supported by their managers and have the time to engage with prisoners. There are sufficient women staff to supervise female prisoners.

04

Gender Responsive

Education, work and training opportunities are available to all without discrimination and reflect the needs of women and girls, including those with special needs.

Programmes are specifically designed for women but are comparable to those offered to men.

The range of opportunities available to female prisoners are as broad and flexible as possible and counter gender stereotyping.

05

Individualized

Rehabilitation programmes are based on individual needs assessments and tailored to the backgrounds and specific needs of female prisoners.

Programmes take into account previous learning and current skills levels and reflect prisoners' history, including their family situation, any physical or mental health problems, drug or alcohol dependencies, and previous instances of abuse.

The design of individual sentence plans takes into account prisoners' situation on release, in terms of their family situation, housing, employment prospects, ongoing health needs and the availability of community-based support programmes. Prisoners are provided with appropriate pre-release and post-release support.

06

Holistic

Rehabilitation programmes take a holistic approach aimed at tackling the root causes of offending and developing female prisoners' different sets of skills and knowledge.

Given the broad range of social and personal issues that female prisoners face, programmes also combine support in different areas such as mental health, housing, relationships and addiction.

Such integrated programmes provide prisoners with practical life skills in preparation for their release, aim to improve their confidence and self-esteem, and help them address other problems they may face such as poverty, homelessness or substance abuse.

07

Based on Market Needs

Work and training opportunities for women prisoners are based on research into the real needs of the community and of the market needs for employment. In Uganda we still need to conduct this research.

There are clear pathways to potential employment for women in prison. In Uganda we need to establish these pathways

Prisons periodically assess the programmes offered to see if they fit the profile of the female prisoner population and are relevant to the job market.

08

Sustainable and Consistent

Good linkages exist between prison-based programmes and community-based interventions to ensure relevance and continuity of support for female prisoners.

It is possible for prisoners to continue or complete programmes of learning after their release, to ensure that the time and efforts they put into learning in prison are not wasted and to ensure a smooth transition from prison to the community.

Unless absolutely necessary, education, training, work, health and wellbeing programmes are protected from frequent interruptions due to transfers and security measures.

09

Good Quality

Prison educators are properly qualified and trained to the same standard as educators in the community.

Prison educators receive specialized training on working with women in prison and understanding their backgrounds.

Prisoners participating in education and training programmes are safe and free from abuse. Health and safety standards are consistent with international standards and programmes are free from corruption and exploitation.

10

Evidence-Based

Rehabilitation programmes are based on a detailed analysis of the profile of the prisoner population, gaps, resources and market needs.

Structures are in place to oversee implementation of rehabilitation strategies and programmes are regularly monitored and evaluated against gender-responsive indicators, with the direct involvement of prisoners.

Independent monitors have access to information about rehabilitation programmes in order to check they are being applied fairly, consistently, and in accordance with international human rights standards.

Endnotes

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- 96.
97. For more information, see yogabehindbars.org/prenatal-yoga-prison.
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