



**ASIAN AND PACIFIC
CONFERENCE OF CORRECTIONAL
ADMINISTRATORS**

2013

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CONFERENCE DISCUSSION GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

Topics for the annual APCCA conference are decided at the previous year's conference on the basis of delegates' suggestions. The 2012 conference in Brunei Darussalam selected the following topics for 2013.¹

AGENDA ITEM	TOPICS FOR 2013
Agenda Item 1	Challenges and Initiatives in Corrections ²
Agenda Item 2	Organisational Culture: Promoting Shared Positive Values and Integrity
Agenda Item 3	Meeting the Challenges Posed by High Risk Offenders
Agenda Item 4	Alternatives to Imprisonment: Opportunities and Challenges in Developing Community-based Supervision and Management
Agenda Item 5	Measuring and Reducing Recidivism Rates: Assessing What Works, Setting Targets, and Implementing Evidence-Based Programs

This *Discussion Guide* identifies some of the key issues that may be discussed in relation to each Agenda Item and provides a list of suggested questions. Members have found this approach helpful when preparing their papers and it also helps delegates to better consider similarities and differences in practice. We therefore request that you follow the suggested format as closely as possible, especially with respect to Agenda Item One.

IMPORTANT NOTES

- All delegations should provide a written paper and presentation on *Agenda Item 1*.
- It is not necessary to provide papers on all the other Agenda Items. Delegations may decide to provide papers only on those topics that are most relevant to them.
- Please ensure that the papers are as succinct as possible. Generally, papers should not exceed 15 pages in length per Agenda Item.
- Please ensure that the name of your country, the number of the Agenda Item and page numbers are included in the header or footer of the paper.

¹ The process is that delegates suggest topics for consideration by an *Agenda Committee*. That committee makes recommendations for consideration by the conference as a whole. The aim is to ensure a balance of topics each year, including at least one topic from each of the following categories: (i) Administration; (ii) Prison operations and custody; (iii) Rehabilitation, treatment and reintegration.

² Some members may wish to focus on community corrections as part of this Agenda Item.

AGENDA ITEM 1: CHALLENGES AND INITIATIVES IN CORRECTIONS

PREPARING YOUR CONFERENCE PRESENTATION

The conference presentation is limited to 8 minutes per delegation. You should therefore be selective in what you choose to present.

It is recommended that in your presentation, you discuss either:

- (a) one or two key challenges or major policy initiatives; or
- (b) a specific 'success story'.

PREPARING YOUR WRITTEN PAPER

Your written paper should consider the following questions so far as they are relevant to your jurisdiction.

1. External Factors

Correctional systems are invariably affected by the general socio-economic and political climate. Political discord and terrorist threats have presented serious problems in some countries. And many countries, including Japan, New Zealand, Thailand, Indonesia, China, and some Pacific Island nations have suffered devastating natural disasters over recent years.

Do you face any particular issues as a result of economic conditions, political crises, natural disasters or other external factors? How have you responded to these problems?

2. Legislative and Policy Framework

Papers presented to recent conferences have emphasised the need for good modern corrections legislation, and have commented on the fact that legislation often seems rather outdated. This can present some difficulties in improving both prisons and community corrections. Papers have also noted the importance of transparency and accountability and the growing regional influence of human rights standards on correctional policy and practice.

Please outline any major reviews, initiatives and legislative changes with respect to prisons and community corrections over recent years.

3. Prison Populations

This Agenda Item gives delegates an opportunity to discuss and reflect on trends in this critical area.

(a) General trends

Has your total prison population increased or decreased over recent years?

(b) Sentenced and unsentenced prisoners

There is considerable regional variation with respect to the position of unsentenced prisoners (in other words, people who are remanded in custody prior to trial or during trial, or who are detained for some other reason such as national security). In part, these differences reflect different investigative procedures, legal requirements and criminal justice traditions.

What is the proportion of unsentenced prisoners compared with sentenced prisoners (and what are the trends)?

(c) Offender demographics

What is the proportion of female compared with male prisoners in the total prison population (and what are the trends)?

Are there any identifiable trends with respect to the age of prisoners (for example, are you seeing more young prisoners or more older-aged prisoners)?

How many foreign nationals do you have in your prisons? Are there any developments with respect to agreements for the international transfer of prisoners?

(d) Overcrowding and associated problems

Do you face problems with respect to overcrowding in your prisons? If so, what are the particular 'pressure points' (for example, are there particular pressures with respect to female prisoners or remand prisoners)?

Has any increase in the prison population affected security and control in prisons?

(e) Accounting for the trends

Do changes in the prison population reflect changes in crime rates?

Are there any significant changes in terms of the offences committed by prisoners? (For example, are there more prisoners serving sentences for serious crimes, such as sexual, violent, drug or terrorism offences?)

Have there been significant legislative or policy changes that have affected the prison population? (For example, laws relating to bail, sentencing, remission, parole and home detention)

4. Prison Building and Renovation

Delegates should outline concerns they have with respect to prison building conditions, and update the conference on construction and renovation programs.

How adequate are your current prison facilities in terms of accommodating the number and type of prisoners?

Do you have a major prison building or refurbishment program? If so, what are your priority areas?

5. Community Based Corrections

All APCCA members are actively pursuing prisoner reintegration and are keen to examine alternatives to imprisonment. It is therefore important for APCCA members to learn more about developments with respect to 'community based corrections'.

The term 'community based corrections' is used to refer to:

- (i) sanctions which involve the offender remaining in the community rather than going to prison (such as probation, community work and 'diversionary' measures); and
- (ii) systems which allow a prisoner to be released early from prison under supervision (such as parole or home detention).

In some jurisdictions, the departments which administer prisons are not responsible for community based corrections. However, in other cases, the same government department is responsible for both prisons and community corrections.

To the extent it is relevant to your department, please outline any important recent developments with respect to community corrections.

6. Other Issues

Please identify any other initiatives or issues that are of particular current concern.

AGENDA ITEM 2:
ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE: PROMOTING POSITIVE SHARED
VALUES AND INTEGRITY

1. Introduction

Having a positive culture is critical to the success of any organisation, whether public or private. It is generally easy to identify a poor culture but not as easy to define or implement a positive culture across large organisations which carry out diverse functions. Over recent years, APCCA members have also often commented on the need to improve staff professionalism and to change from the old 'lock them up' prison culture to a rehabilitative focus. This topic is therefore very timely.

One of the critical elements of a positive culture is integrity. Integrity means many different things in a corrections context. In a narrow sense, it means eliminating corruption. As delegates to previous conferences have pointed out, prison officers are increasingly vulnerable to corruption because of the wealth and power of some groups of prisoners, such as drug dealers and terrorists. More broadly, integrity refers to the way employees conduct themselves in undertaking tasks, in decision making, in dealing with colleagues and in contact with offenders, their families and other agencies.

In preparing papers, delegates may choose to focus broadly on the question of developing a positive organisational culture or to focus more specifically on the question of integrity. This guide provides some suggestions as to how papers may be written. Alternatively, delegates may prefer to present a report on a specific initiative.

2. Promoting Positive Shared Values

All corrections organisations aim to have positive values and to ensure that these values are shared by all staff and applied in their daily work. However, different countries face different challenges in meeting this goal. Although there are many shared values, religious and social differences may play some role in defining the precise organisational culture and values. Delegates may wish to reflect on the extent to which they have faced the following challenges and how successful they have been in addressing them:-

(a) Organisational vision

Strong organisational cultures invariably reflect the fact that the organisation has a clear vision of what it is seeking to achieve. This has presented some challenges as correctional services have moved towards a more rehabilitative approach.

What is your organisational vision? How has it changed over recent years?

(b) Organisational values

In addition, to having a clear vision, it is vital for correctional organisations to reflect on the values which underpin their operations. These values are likely to include integrity, trust, respect for colleagues, accountability, ethical decision making, delivering on promises, and a commitment to the safe and decent treatment of offenders. In addition, correctional services also now have an increasing responsibility to the community.

What are your main organisational values?

(c) Engagement and communication

There is no point having a 'corporate' vision and values if these are not known to staff and applied during their daily work. All large organisations struggle to manage the potential 'gap' between the corporate view and the view of staff 'in the field'. It is particularly important that all the different staff groups (including administrative and support staff as well as custodial officers) are parties to the same vision and values. Experience also shows that staff are far more likely to be responsive if they are consulted and engaged.

What strategies have you adopted to engage all groups of staff in the process of developing, improving and fine tuning organisational visions and values?

How do you ensure effective communication of these values to all staff? Do you conduct training sessions or workshops which help to link these values directly to their own work and workplaces?

How successful have you been in ensuring that staff understand the vision and values, and apply them in their work? What are the main challenges you still face?

3. Promoting Integrity

As noted earlier, integrity is a critical element to a successful and professional correctional services department. The very nature of the job is that staff must deal with people with criminal records, usually in an environment which is closed from public view. It is essential that strong measures are in place not only to reduce the risks of corruption and malpractice, but also to promote positive ethical and professional standards.

In recognition of this, many corrections departments now have dedicated divisions which focus on integrity and professional standards. Generally speaking, these divisions must perform two functions. The first, and most important role is proactive: is prevention. It is important that the standards expected of staff are clearly articulated and that they are then educated and engaged in terms of what is expected of them. Some of the required standards will apply across the whole of government and others will be specific to corrections departments. Prevention also

requires systems to be set up so that people can raise concerns about issues of integrity. The second role is reactive: the investigation of alleged breaches and taking appropriate actions in response.

What have been your main challenges in terms of staff integrity?

How have you gone about promoting integrity on the part of staff?

How far do you work in collaboration with other agencies in promoting integrity (for example, many countries have independent 'integrity watchdogs')?

4. Conclusion

Please summarise:-

- The main challenges you have faced to date;
- How you have addressed those challenges; and
- Your priorities over the next five years.

AGENDA ITEM 3:

MEETING THE CHALLENGES POSED BY HIGH RISK OFFENDERS

1. Introduction

Recent APCCA conferences have highlighted the fact that the profile of prisoners has been changing. Generally, it appears that prisons across most of the region now house a more complex mix of prisoners and that a larger number of them may be termed 'high risk' for one reason or another.

There are several very different groups of 'high risk' prisoners (see below) and different policy and practice responses are required for the different groups. It is therefore recommended that the papers discuss the following:-

- (a) The general profile of the prisoner population and trends with respect to different groups of 'high risk' prisoners; and
- (b) One or two specific case studies of measures taken to deal with high risk offenders, and the success (or otherwise) of these measures.

Although the main focus is likely to be on prison-based management, it would also be instructive for delegates to learn about measures and initiatives to better manage high risk offenders on release back to the community.

2. Nature and Extent of the Problem

The term 'high risk offenders' is open to many interpretations. Some people would say that most prisoners are a risk, and that is why they are in prison. However, there are many different forms of risk. Some prisoners, for example, are at risk of self-harm or suicide but pose little direct risk to other people.

The focus of this topic is on prisoners who pose a higher than normal risk to other people. The main groups are probably as follows:-

- (a) Prisoners who are dangerous to the State such as people involved in terrorist plots or attempted coups.
- (b) Gangs or affiliations of prisoners who pose a risk to both prison management and the community because of their criminal affiliations (including violence and drug-related crimes).
- (c) Prisoners who, as individuals, pose a particular risk to corrections staff.
- (d) Prisoners who, as individuals, pose a risk to the safety of other prisoners (for example, in terms of violence, bullying or predatory sexual behaviour).
- (e) Prisoners who do not pose a particular risk in terms of their behaviour in prison but are a potential risk to people in the community if they escape or upon release (for example, 'high risk' sex offenders may well be compliant prisoners).
- (f) Offenders (both in prison and under community based supervision) who pose a risk to others because of their volatile mental state.

Please provide broad overview of the profile of 'high risk' offenders in your jurisdiction by reference to the above categories.

How, if at all, has the profile changed over recent years?

How do you identify 'high risk' offenders (for example, do you use specific tests)? What are the main challenges you are currently facing?

3. Responding to the Problem in a Balanced Way

No corrections system can completely eliminate risk. The aim should be to minimise risks as far as possible and to maximise the safety of staff, prisoners and the public as far as possible. It must also be recognised that while the imposition of a highly restrictive regime may reduce the immediate risks to staff or prisoners, the longer term goal of reducing risk to the community requires a focus on rehabilitation. In summary, the approach to managing high risk offenders will therefore be one of risk management, not complete risk avoidance.

In this part of the paper, you should provide case studies of how you have met the challenges posed by one or more of the high risk prisoner groups. You may wish to consider some or all of the following questions:-

How has the design of prisons altered to take account of high risk prisoners? For example, do you have special 'SuperMax' units or prisons? Or have you constructed special mental health-focused facilities?

What strategies do you adopt in terms of housing different groups of high risk prisoners? For example, in the case of terrorists and prisoners with gang affiliations, do you house them together (which may assist in some aspects of security) or separately (to reduce the chances of further plotting)? In the case of prisoners who bully other prisoners, do you segregate the victims or the bullies?

What other management techniques are useful in dealing with high risk offenders? What sort of programs and regime are offered to such offenders?

What staff training programs have been developed to ensure that they feel competent and safe when managing high risk offenders?

Sometimes staff and/or their families may be threatened. How do you tackle such problems?

Most prisoners will be released at some point. What strategies and practices do you have in place to safely manage the reform of high risk prisoners to society (for example, are they subject to monitoring, supervision and support on release?). And what systems are in place to ensure the competence and safety of community based corrections staff who are involved in the management of such offenders?

4. Conclusion

By way of conclusion, please provide a brief summary of the main areas of concern and likely future challenges.

It would also be interesting, in the conclusion, to reflect on the role of the media. High risk prisoners tend to capture media attention and there are many risks with this. Sometimes the media may lack sufficient understanding for the offender but at other times they are unduly sympathetic.

AGENDA ITEM 4:
**ALTERNATIVES TO IMPRISONMENT: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES
IN DEVELOPING COMMUNITY-BASED SUPERVISION AND
MANAGEMENT**

1. Introduction

APCCA traditionally focused on prisons rather than community based corrections but this has been changing over the past five to ten years. This Agenda Item aims to explore two aspects of community based supervision and management across the region. The first is to consider how different countries have developed alternative sentences so that judges will only use imprisonment as a 'last resort'. The second is to consider conditional release schemes (such as parole) under which prisoners are released before the end of their sentence, but are then supervised and monitored in the community.

There are many factors behind the growing interest in community based corrections:

- Overcrowding: good alternatives to imprisonment and successful parole systems can reduce the number of prisoners.
- Relative costs: prisons are expensive; community corrections will generally be much cheaper.
- 'Corrections' philosophy: over the past decade, APCCA members have increasingly expressed a commitment to a philosophy of 'corrections' rather than 'custody'. This is shown by the number of jurisdictions that now talk of 'correctional services' rather than 'prison departments' and of 'community corrections' rather than probation.
- Reintegration: reflecting the philosophy of corrections, recent APCCA conferences have examined ways to improve a person's chances of reintegration. Community based sentences (which avoid incarceration in the first place) and supervision on release can assist reintegration.
- Community engagement: APCCA delegates frequently discuss the challenge of engaging communities in corrections. Good community based sentences and supervised release schemes provide an excellent opportunity for community organisations to work alongside government departments in providing structure and support to offenders.

The topic is very broad and it will not be possible to cover every aspect. The following questions are designed to give delegates an understanding of two main areas: the current situation across the region, and a better understanding of what can make community based corrections successful.

2. 'Front End' Alternatives to Imprisonment

Please provide a brief description of the main forms of community based orders that are available to sentencing judges in your country (examples are likely to include probation and community work).

3. Parole and Other Conditional Release Schemes

Please provide a brief description of the 'conditional release schemes' that allow prisoners to live in the community, subject to supervision and monitoring (examples are likely to include parole and home detention.)

4. Organisational Structure

There are two main options in terms of the organisational structure for community based corrections. The first is that they are funded and managed separately from prisons. Historically, this was typically the case with probation, which was often placed in a government 'welfare' department rather than in corrections / justice departments. The theory behind this model was that probation services had a different philosophy from prisons. However, many jurisdictions now place probation / community corrections services in the same department as prisons. The theory behind this approach is that modern corrections involves community supervision as well as imprisonment, and that both aspects are best managed by a single department.

Are systems such as probation, parole and community corrections administered by the same department as prisons or by a different department? Which approach is better?

5. Staffing Community Corrections

In most countries, probation and parole officers tended traditionally to come from a social work / welfare background and prison officers from a military or police background. However, it is likely that there have been changes in both areas of correctional service over the past 20 years.

What are the main qualifications, skills and attributes that you look for in officers who undertake probation / community corrections work?

Are some community corrections officers based in prisons (for example, to assist prisoners in planning for release)? Is there any capacity in your system for prison officers to be seconded to work in community corrections?

6. Case Studies: What Works and What Doesn't Work?

It is important, through this Agenda Item, to get a better understanding of 'what works' in community based corrections in different countries. Clearly, geographical, political and cultural differences will make some difference but there are also likely to be common themes.

We all learn by our mistakes as well as by our successes. And many countries are in the process of developing community corrections. It would therefore be very useful if papers from countries with well-developed systems can discuss pitfalls and problems as well as success stories. One obvious problem is public and media reactions to cases where offenders serving community orders commit serious offences. Even though there may have been no fault on the part of community corrections staff, there may well be a backlash.

What are the main features of successful community based corrections in your country? Please provide examples of successful initiatives and also of initiatives that were less successful.

What strategies do you use to gain public support for community corrections and to deal with negative publicity?

7. Conclusion

Please reflect on current and future challenges.

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AGENDA ITEM 5:

MEASURING AND REDUCING RECIDIVISM RATES: ASSESSING WHAT WORKS, SETTING TARGETS AND IMPLEMENTING EVIDENCE BASED PROGRAMS

1. Introduction

Every correctional service in the world is under pressure to reduce recidivism. Some APCCA members have even been set specific targets by their governments. This is a change from ten years ago when performance tended to be measured solely by reference to matters such as number of escapes and the number of assaults on staff.

This change reflects the fact that correctional services now espouse the goals of rehabilitation and reintegration. In countries where the private sector is engaged to operate prisons, including the United Kingdom, New Zealand and parts of Australia, there is now sometimes even a 'payment for results' component to the contracts. This usually involves proving a reduction in recidivism or proving that the offender's risks have been reduced (for example, by moving directly into employment on release).

However, some complex issues underpin the proposition that the performance of correctional services departments should be measured by reduced recidivism. The issues include the following:-

- (a) How is 'recidivism' defined and measured (see below)?
- (b) Many different factors influence the reasons why people commit crime or desist from crime on release. Some may be influenced by correctional services (such as the completion of a particular psychological program) but others may be unrelated (such as maturity or forming a positive new personal relationship). It can therefore be difficult to determine exactly what it was that 'worked'.
- (c) There is a good deal of evidence internationally that programs based on a cognitive behavioural therapy model can have a positive effect on recidivism. However, the fact that a program may work with one group does not necessarily mean it will work with another. For example, a sex offender treatment program which 'works' in the United Kingdom may not be suitable for a country such as Malaysia or for Aboriginal prisoners in Canada or Australia. *The challenge is to work out what works for whom and why.*

In order to give structure to this topic, it is suggested that delegates discuss the following:-

- (a) How do you define and measure recidivism?

- (b) Provide a case study of an initiative which has worked (or has not worked) to reduce recidivism, identifying the factors which contributed to success or failure.

2. Defining Recidivism

There are two main variables to 'recidivism rates'. The first is to decide what constitutes 'recidivism' in terms of the nature of the further offending. The second is to decide on the timeframe within which success is to be measured.

Criminologists have long argued about the most appropriate measures and are unlikely ever to agree. However, it is important to understand how APCCA members currently measure recidivism rates and to consider whether there is scope for members to agree on a benchmark which can be used for APCCA purposes.

(a) What type of offending constitutes recidivism?

It is usually accepted that minor infractions of the law, such as minor road traffic infringements, should not constitute recidivism. However, the issue of what constitutes a minor offence is not straightforward.

The benchmarks which have been adopted include the following:-

- Conviction for a further offence which results in *the imposition of another sentence of imprisonment*;
- Convictions for a further offence which results in *the imposition of a prison sentence or a community-based sentence* (such as probation or community work); or
- Conviction for *any offence*, even if that results only in a fine being imposed.

(b) Timeframes

Different jurisdictions appear to use different timeframes to measure recidivism. The most common period appears to be two years from release, but three and five years are also used.

Different jurisdictions may also adopt different approaches to how the time period is counted. For example, an offender may commit an offence within a two-year follow-up period but not be caught and convicted until three years after release. This should constitute recidivism as he actually offended during the two-year period.

Please provide the primary measure of recidivism that is used in your jurisdiction.

3. MEASURING RECIDIVISM RATES

Please provide details of general recidivism rates (if available) in your country.

If figures are available, please provide further details regarding recidivism amongst particular offender groups (for example, recidivism rates for women compared with men, and juveniles compared with adults).

4. WHAT WORKS FOR WHOM AND WHY?

In this part of the paper, delegates should provide a case study of an initiative (or a range of initiatives) which has worked (or has not worked) to reduce recidivism.

The case studies and reviews can focus on any aspect of corrections. There has been a tendency for academic commentators to focus mainly on the impact of psychologically based 'treatment programs' such as 'sex offender treatment programs'. However, APCCA members will be just as interested in the impact of other initiatives designed to improve the chances of successful reintegration. These may include family support, employment, 'skilling offenders up' for release, and the provision of supported accommodation.

It will also be very helpful if you can discuss why certain initiatives may have 'worked' when others have not. This will allow members to consider the appropriateness of similar initiatives in their own countries. For example, a program to equip Aboriginal Australians from remote regions to work in the mining industry may well work for them; and although such programs are clearly not directly relevant in, say, India, Singapore or Hong Kong (China), there may well be lessons to be learned by all delegates.

5. CONCLUSION

Please summarise your main achievements in recent years in tackling recidivism and the main challenges which lie ahead.

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