



NHSMUN

CCPCJ

UPDATE PAPER

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Hello delegates!

My name is Arturo, and I will be your Assistant Director for Session I of this year's conference! This is my second year attending a conference after three long years and my first year as a NHSMUN staff member so I will be as excited to assist as you are. In 2022 I participated in the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) and now I am thrilled to participate as a Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice AD.

I was born and raised in one of the largest cities of the world, Mexico City, and yes... it is a little bit stereotypical, but I do love tacos and Mexican food. I am currently attending Law School at Universidad Pan Americana as a sophomore student, and I also love reading philosophy and classic novels. I am also a big music fan; I have been playing guitar for 12 years and my favorite genre is classic rock with my favorite artist being Van Halen. Also, I love going to the gym, running and watching sports, especially Hockey as a Boston Bruins fan and Football as a San Francisco 49ers fan. Go Niners! Boxing and MMA are also sports that I watch often. But above all my hobbies, there is one that stands out the most, and that is cinema! I love movies, my favorite one is Casino, directed by Martin Scorsese and released in 1995. Fun fact, it is the movie with the most dialogue in history, with sixty-seven thousand words said in two hours and a half and I highly recommend you watch it.

Aside from my interests, hobbies and degree, there is one thing that I also love... NHSMUN! Assisting NHSMUN in 2022 was one of the best and most relevant decisions that I have ever made. It helped me to be convinced about studying Laws, developing my oratory, public relations and negotiation skills, and to meet people from all around the world, learning about different cultures and ideas through new people.

I know that attending NHSMUN can be intimidating, especially if it is your first time, but for me the most important thing is to learn as much as you can, meeting new people and always having fun! That does not mean that the conference must be taken lightly though, the topics that will be addressed in March are seriously important to the international community and should be addressed as such, so be sure to keep updating yourselves on new information and preparing yourselves to argue and share your country's point of view with confidence and wisdom.

I am truly excited to meet all of you in March and remember that us, your Directors and Assistant Directors, are here for anything you need so if you have any questions, doubts, want to make a new friend, or are seeking advice or words of encouragement, make sure to contact me!

Best regards,

Arturo Gutiérrez

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Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, Assistant Director

Session I



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Hello Delegates!

Welcome to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ)! My name is Giovanna, and I will be your Assistant Director for Session II of NHSMUN 2025. This is my first year being a part of the NHSMUN staff and my third year attending the conference. During high school, I was in various committees including ECOSOC and SOCHUM, so I'm very excited to join the CCPCJ family.

I am from a small mountain town outside of Salt Lake Utah, (Yes, I have met some of the Real Housewives & Secret Lives of Mormon Wives cast members). I'm a huge fan of the outdoors, and spent many years of my life hiking, kayaking, and snowboarding, thanks to the proximity to the mountains. I am currently a freshman at Westminster University in Sugarhouse, and I am a Literature Media and Writing major with an emphasis in Literary Analysis. I am involved in a few clubs on campus, including the craft & snack society, the backcountry squatters, and snowboarders club. I love living in the mountains & am always looking for a new adventure. When I'm not in class or at work, I'm either on a hike, at the movies, or trying to reduce my never-ending 'to be read' list. I am also the biggest *Gilmore Girls* fan on the planet (team Jess).

Joining MUN in high school was quite literally the best decision I've ever made. As someone who's more introverted, learning public speaking and research skills has helped me tremendously with both my college and professional career. MUN helped me make lifelong friends and break out of my shell, and I'm excited to be on the other side of the conference.

The two topics being addressed by our committee are extremely important and all of us at CCPCJ have done so much to help you succeed during the conference. As we get closer to the session, please keep updating yourselves on anything that can help further expand your knowledge on the topics. If any of you have questions about the topics or just want to make a friend before the conference feel free to contact me. I'm always here to help. I know that the conferences can be a bit intimidating, so I understand what it's like and am here to support you. Good luck and I can't wait to meet all of you in March!

Best,

Giovanna Grant

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Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, Assistant Director

Session II





CCPCJ

NHSMUN 2025

TOPIC A:
REDUCING REOFFENDING THROUGH REHABILITATION

Photo Credit: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

Introduction

Rehabilitation is becoming extremely difficult to track. This is mostly because there are few datasets available to observe people’s conduct before, during, and after being in prison. Additionally, bias in judging makes it harder to create improved prison reform. This adjusts for treatment, capacitation, and other forms of support become harder to come up with. Detecting errors in such programs becomes challenging for researchers and the international community in the long run.

The United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) should be able to relate the international community’s policies with the current developments in 2025. Delegates are strongly encouraged to recall the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) framework on ‘recidivism’ (or reoffending) before discussing the real impact of ‘rehabilitation.’¹ Marking the difference between ‘rehabilitation’ and ‘reintegration’ will help the committee to highlight the prisoners’ role in the society.² The main idea is to help people play a positive role in their respective communities after serving their time in prison.³ The committee should address the unseen loopholes of the existing legal frameworks. Ultimately, CCPCJ should identify the social gap to make sure that the policymaking aligns with the current trends. Delegates should understand that the relevant policies and actions should discuss the complex relationship between reoffending and rehabilitation at different levels.

The impact of prison rehabilitation on lowering recidivism rates

In October 2024, Lena Roxell from Stockholm University led a research project focused on understanding how levels of recidivism declined in Sweden.⁴ Roxell’s research between 2012 and 2015, composed of people released from prisons in her country, highlighted that provision treatment, education, and work were key factors in reducing recidivism cases.⁵ Roxell also thought that substance abuse could be related to

continued offending beyond release.

The focus of this project was to determine if provision treatment, education and work are more important for an effective rehabilitation than other factors such as sex, age, ethnic background, criminal history, offenses that caused imprisonment, and the length of the sentence. Sweden counts someone for recidivism if they are convicted of a new crime within three years of their first offence.⁶ In Sweden, the statistics from Roxell’s investigation show that the total recidivism rate is 63 percent after a prison sentence and the risk of relapse is approximately 1.6 times higher for people that identify as men than for people who identify as women. Also, results showed that individuals that have a higher chance of relapsing are identified as men that have lower levels of education, history of reoffending, substance abuse, and mental and physical health issues. The statistics demonstrate those who relapsed into criminal conduct are already marginalized, which makes it harder for them to integrate themselves back into society.⁷

Most of the rehabilitation programs in Sweden focus on behavioral and cognitive therapy. The main goal is to change the behavior of the offenders. The program considers factors that cannot be changed easily, like the economic and social factors. These programs helped reduce re-offenses amongst those convicted of sex crimes and substance abuse. This type of rehabilitation helped reduce the risk of recidivism after prison by lowering the rate in which people commit crimes

1 Lisel Petis, “The Crime and Safety Blind Spot: Has the Criminal Justice System Become a Revolving Door for Repeat Offenders? - R Street Institute,” R Street (R Street Institute, December 6, 2024), <https://www.rstreet.org/commentary/the-crime-and-safety-blind-spot-has-the-criminal-justice-system-become-a-revolving-door-for-repeat-offenders/>.

2 “The Crime and Safety Blind Spot”

3 “The Crime and Safety Blind Spot”

4 Lena Roxell, “What Contributes to Fewer Cases of Recidivism? Treatment, Education, and Work in Prison,” *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation* 63, no. 8 (October 2024): 480–507, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10509674.2024.2406755>.

5 Roxell, “What Contributes to Fewer Cases of Recidivism? Treatment, Education, and Work in Prison,” 480–507.

6 Roxell, “What Contributes to Fewer Cases of Recidivism? Treatment, Education, and Work in Prison,” 480–507.

7 Roxell, “What Contributes to Fewer Cases of Recidivism? Treatment, Education, and Work in Prison,” 480–507.

again.⁸ Many young men in Sweden felt they needed assistance and emotional support. Yet, this successful treatment depends on the individual being willing to participate. This willingness is an important psychological factor that is addressed within the before mentioned rehabilitation.⁹

Research from the same study has shown that people who are engaged in labor market jobs have a lower risk of committing criminal offenses since their jobs provide opportunities for development. However, work related systems were only effective in cases where the individual involved was aged 27 or over. This means that the problem remains for young adults and adolescents who are not interested in developing skills needed for a job and decide to keep participating in criminal conduct.¹⁰ Peggy C. Giordano, research professor at the Bowling Green State University, argues that the process of deciding to commit actions that lead to a positive change are determined by will and motivation. The theory of cognitive transformation puts forward that desistance, stopping or reducing criminal activity over time, is a key component of behavioral change.¹¹

8 Roxell, "What Contributes to Fewer Cases of Recidivism? Treatment, Education, and Work in Prison," 480–507.

9 Roxell, "What Contributes to Fewer Cases of Recidivism? Treatment, Education, and Work in Prison," 480–507.

10 Roxell, "What Contributes to Fewer Cases of Recidivism? Treatment, Education, and Work in Prison," 480–507.

11 Roxell, "What Contributes to Fewer Cases of Recidivism? Treatment, Education, and Work in Prison," 480–507.

12 Roxell, "What Contributes to Fewer Cases of Recidivism? Treatment, Education, and Work in Prison," 480–507.

13 Roxell, "What Contributes to Fewer Cases of Recidivism? Treatment, Education, and Work in Prison," 480–507.

14 Idil Aydinoglu, "Beyond Capacity: Europe's Prison Overcrowding Challenge - Penal Reform International". Penal Reform International. (December 2024). <https://www.penalreform.org/blog/beyond-capacity-europes-prison-overcrowding-challenge/>

Behavioral change starts with wanting to change. Being open to change requires a 'trigger' that motivates the individual that leads to a shift in their identity. It also requires that they detach from their previous behavior and identity.¹² When relating the theory of cognitive transformation to recidivism cases, we can conclude that interventions can be utilized as 'triggers', where the individual has the space and time to reflect about their life decisions and open themselves to positive change.¹³

The term 'restorative justice' is a legal approach that focuses on the harm caused by a crime. The approach does not only punish the offender, but it also addresses the needs of the victim and the community. An issue that has come up when discussing restorative justice and rehabilitation is prison overcrowding. An article published by Penal Reform International in December 2024 reveals how European countries have struggled with overcrowded facilities. At the end of January 2023, the average prison occupancy rate was 93.5 percent. However, the preferred base occupancy of an average prison is 90 percent (recommended by the Council of Europe in 2015).¹⁴ Some countries are dealing with an extreme



SeaTac Federal Detention Center

Credit: SounderBruce

case of overcrowding, such as Cyprus, which averages a 166 percent occupancy rate in its prison, followed by Romania, France and Belgium, who exceed 115 percent occupancy rate. Other countries such as Estonia, Luxembourg, and Spain, have occupancy rates that are between 54 and 75 percent.¹⁵ The same study showed that constructing new facilities can help to reduce overcrowding. Due to this possible solution, Sweden and Croatia plan to build larger prison buildings and consider renting prison space to reduce the projected increases in prison population by around 200 percent rate between 2023 and 2027.¹⁶

That said, there is also an opportunity for CCPCJ to explore sustainable solutions focusing on rehabilitation programs to both reduce overcrowding and help ex-prisoners adapt into society. Community-based treatments, correctional interventions, and house arrest are also effective solutions for recidivism cases. However, CCPCJ should note that drug abusers are more likely to be rehabilitated inside prison, but for other cases the most probable effective solution is to keep implementing cognitive-behavioral based treatment programs.¹⁷

Case Study: The effectiveness of drug treatment-based programs and their current functionality

As previously mentioned, many forms of rehabilitation include cognitive-behavioral treatments, community-based treatments and work treatments. However, these types of rehabilitation programs do not address issues, such as drug abuse. Programs that use modular dosage to rehabilitate drug addiction have been extremely efficient.¹⁸ Modular dosage is the approach to medication delivery where doses can be adjusted to the patient's specific needs. CCPCJ should consider modular

dosage treatment programs when proposing solutions for reducing reoffending cases. This type of rehabilitation cannot be defined as a community-based treatment as it focuses on each individual case.

This happens because drug abuse treatments may look very different for each person. This is why there is no standardized way to measure the whole recovery progress. Factors such as the number of people that finish the program, the percentage of sober individuals after treatment, alumni interviews, and internal studies are considered to evaluate the success rate of the programs. Also, when analyzing drug abuse rehabilitation centers, researchers should see addiction as a condition that includes physical and psychological factors that can end up depending on drugs.¹⁹ Because of this physical and mental condition, it is challenging for someone to quit addictive substances instantly. Patience and adjusting treatment are key factors to decide the success of drug rehabilitation.

According to American Addiction Centers, approximately 108,000 people died in the United States due to drug related overdoses in 2022.²⁰ In other words, 296 people lose their lives to drug abuse each day. Drug abuse is not only a problem before entering a rehabilitation treatment program. The estimated rate of individuals who relapse during treatment is about 40-60 percent.²¹ It was found that from those that attempt quitting alcohol each year, only about 25 percent succeed in reducing alcohol intake for more than a year.²² However, in the United States, 57 percent of people who enter treatment for drug and alcohol abuse can complete it.²³

However, for these rehabilitation centers, success depends on different factors such as the frequency, duration and type of drug used, criminal behavior and offenses, social environments, education, employment status and the impact of the treatment on physical and mental conditions. Success cases are not defined by the completion or the duration of

15 Aydinoglu, "Beyond Capacity: Europe's Prison Overcrowding Challenge - Penal Reform International".

16 Aydinoglu, "Beyond Capacity: Europe's Prison Overcrowding Challenge - Penal Reform International."

17 Johann Koehler, "How Can Offender Rehabilitation Help Address Prison Overcrowding?". *LSE Research for the World*. (September 2024). <https://www.lse.ac.uk/research/research-for-the-world/society/offender-rehabilitation-prison-overcrowding>

18 ADS, "Drug Rehab Success Rates and Statistics". American Addiction Centers. (September 2024). <https://americanaddictioncenters.org/rehab-guide/success-rates-and-statistics>

19 ADS, "Drug Rehab Success Rates and Statistics."

20 ADS, "Drug Rehab Success Rates and Statistics."

21 ADS, "Drug Rehab Success Rates and Statistics."

22 ADS, "Drug Rehab Success Rates and Statistics."

23 ADS, "Drug Rehab Success Rates and Statistics."



Therapeutic group in the Rehabilitation Center for alcohol and drug addicts

Credit: <http://rebcenter-moscow.ru>

the treatment. Since each substance abuse case is individual, it should be measured by the subjective level of reintegration that the person has. After rehabilitation, successful cases are those in which the person can change their surroundings to live substance-free. It might be necessary for the person to change social relationships and continue to assist therapy while surrounding themselves with family, friends and mentors that serve as a support system in which the goal is to achieve a healthy lifestyle both physically and mentally.

In November 2024, an article by the Journal of Criminal Justice named “The efficacy of ‘modular dosage’ in prison-based psychological interventions to reduce recidivism: A state-wide naturalistic study of convicted people in Australian prisons” was published. Modular dosage is a type of treatment where the drug user is given a small dosage with the purpose of reducing his physical dependency to such drug, thus eliminating their drug addiction without risking physical health. This study analyzes the impact and effectiveness of modular dosage in the “Explore. Question. Understand. Investigate. Practice. Succeed.” (EQUIPS) program, which was introduced in Australia in 1996. It employs statistical tools with the finality of analyzing the modular dosage response

of substances in 4,345 individuals. After completing only one EQUIPS program, the result was a 24 percent decrease in reoffending within one year of completing prison time, which shows the potential and effectiveness that the program has.²⁴ Studies showed that, in Australia, even after implementing cognitive-behavioral based programs, such as the Risk-Needs-Responsivity (RNR) model of offender rehabilitation, 42.7 percent of released prisoners commit a criminal offense within two years.²⁵ This led researchers to look for effective alternatives that focused on physical dependency and not only psychological aspects and the result was the consideration of small drug dosage to combat substance addiction.

Since there is little evidence on the clear dosage required to achieve change, treatment recommendations have relied on scientific studies that have focused on adjusting the dosage amount constantly to reach the most efficient change. EQUIPS was designed to allow variation of the dosage received by participants in a modular manner. It is a flexible and short program that allows participants to be assessed by staff depending on their risk level and physiological needs. EQUIPS also includes specialized programs for aggression, addiction and domestic abuse. This has led many critics to

²⁴ Bower, Marlee, et al, “The Efficacy of ‘Modular Dosage’ in Prison-based Psychological Interventions to Reduce Recidivism: A State-wide Naturalistic Study of Convicted People in Australian Prisons,” Journal of Criminal Justice, November 2024, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0047235224001430>.

²⁵ “The Efficacy of ‘Modular Dosage.’”

question the security and safeness of dosage treatments, especially those who include a high dose. Critics have also questioned the treatment due to its high unpredictability and its disruptiveness of the justice system. However, the results have shown that EQUIPS has functioned as an efficient program in Australia and it could be used in other countries as well. Out of the 4,345 individuals that were tested, 2,118 did not participate in the program, 990 completed one EQUIPS program, 239 completed two of these, and 38 completed three programs. Only 24.5 percent of the 990 individuals that completed one program were convicted again within one year, and of the 239 that completed two EQUIPS programs, only 28.5 percent reoffended within one year of being released from prison.²⁶ The data shows that the program is highly effective, with a recidivism rate of 25 percent. It also shows benefits in cases before and after prison. Reducing reoffending cases through rehabilitation does not only refer to programs applied inside prisons. It is also important to consider programs that can be implemented after people leave prison and reinsert themselves to society.

The Rehabilitation for Addicted Prisoners Trust (RAPt) 12-Step Program is another reoffending rehabilitation program that has been generally overlooked by researchers and countries around the world. It has been in operation for over 30 years and has been the most comprehensive prison-based drug treatment in the United Kingdom. A study led by Albert M. Kopak showed that of all the people that completed the program, only 31 percent reoffended within 12 months of being released.²⁷ This statistic alone shows a similar success rate to that of the EQUIPS program utilized in Australia. It is possible to use its 12-step abstinence model both inside and outside of prison settings, which makes it an accessible and continuous program for all prisoners and people that have been released from prison. The 12-step model has also been utilized by other organizations such as Alcoholics Anonymous,

who was the pioneer of these addiction treatment programs.²⁸

Even after completing their sentence and reintegration-rehabilitation programs, many prisoners encounter a lack of health care, employment, education, housing and food assistance when reintegrating into society.²⁹ Policymakers have rejected the idea of easy access to healthcare for those leaving prison. This ignores the restorative justice approaches and causes problems for rehabilitation programs started in prison. By providing continuous support, CCPCJ can improve programs that help people integrate into society after imprisonment.

In 2023, the Biden-Harris administration issued guidance for federal offices interested in using waiver demonstrations. The waiver allows states to provide medical aid and coverage for certain services 90 days prior to the release of imprisoned people.³⁰ This is an ongoing issue in the United States that has affected in the past months, as of October 2024, only 11 out of the 50 federative entities of the United States of America have been approved by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, with an additional 14 states and Washington, D.C. pending approval.³¹ This case helps us dive deeper into healthcare issues and its relation with international rehabilitation programs. It is important to focus on creating and improving community healthcare infrastructure and community-based use programs with the purpose of helping prisoners and people that have been released from prison.

International legal amends with the goal of adapting justice systems to the United Nations standards and norms

Many rehabilitation programs inside prisons have the goal of reducing reoffending. These programs include drug-

²⁶ “The Efficacy of ‘Modular Dosage.’”

²⁷ Ward, Annemarie, “Overlooked Success: The Untapped Potential of RAPt’s 12-Step Programme in Reducing Reoffending,” Favor, September 2024, <https://www.facesandvoicesofrecoveryuk.org/overlooked-success-the-untapped-potential-of-rapt-12-step-programme-in-reducing-reoffending/>

²⁸ Addiction Center, “12 Step Programs,” *Addiction Center*, August 2024, <https://www.addictioncenter.com/treatment/12-step-programs/>.

²⁹ Gore, Anuja, and Akua Amaning, “Expanding Access to Basic Reentry Services Will Improve Health, Well-Being, and Public Safety,” CAP, October 2024, <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/expanding-access-to-basic-reentry-services-will-improve-health-well-being-and-public-safety/>.

³⁰ “Expanding Access to Basic Reentry Services.”

³¹ “Expanding Access to Basic Reentry Services.”

based treatment, psycho-cognitive treatment, modular dosage treatment, and so on. Nevertheless, some countries need legal reforms to enforce humanitarian policies to include social reintegration in criminal law. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the global prison population reached 11.5 million.³² This has led to many issues such as the overuse of being held in jail before trial, prison overcrowding, inadequate conditions and poor prison health, compromised safety and security, discrimination and inequality. UNODC argues that prison and penal reforms would benefit both incarcerated individuals and societies as a whole.³³ The benefits would be increased dignity and protected rights for prisoners, safer citizens, healthier societies, stronger communities and fairer justice systems.

One of the many issues that is being looked at internationally is pretrial detention. Pretrial detention refers to the imprisonment of a person who has not yet been tried and who is only assumed to have committed the crime without enough evidence to support such a claim. In many countries, pretrial detention has negatively affected the justice system. For example, in Mexico, 40 percent of the country's prison population, or approximately 90,000 people remain incarcerated without a sentence.³⁴ On November 2024, Mexico's congress voted in favor of a bill that adds crimes such as extortion, trafficking, and sexual violence offenses to the list of the crimes for pretrial detention. At first, this bill may seem progressive in favor of human rights and the development of the country. However, human rights groups have pointed out that pretrial detention will only bring more unfair trials and injustices for the Mexican people. Since more individuals will be imprisoned without a formal judicial sentence, this will add more innocent people being imprisoned.

In Nigeria, pretrial detainees account for nearly 70 percent of

the prison population, who often spend years in detainment before facing trial.³⁵ An inefficient system, paired with limited access to legal support, makes it difficult for detainees to secure their rights. This puts them at a higher risk of facing human rights abuses during lengthy periods of stay at the prison. A similar situation is observed in India, where pretrial detainees account for 75 percent of the prison population.³⁶ Again, the judicial process is delayed due to systematic inefficiency, leading to more delays.

To improve a justice system through reforms and amendments it is important to take into consideration the principles that will assure a dignity-first approach. In criminal law, these principles are normalization and rehabilitation, which means that life in prison should be like what life outside prisons is, this means giving prisoners access to education, recreation and treatment, as well as time with family and friends and respecting their autonomy. As it has been previously stated, reintegration should be the final goal of incarceration, which is why implementing a new humane philosophy in all countries' prisons seems like the correct medium to achieve such a goal.

This can be accomplished by focusing attention and resources on rehabilitation programs, prison infrastructures and post-prison reintegration programs, and this can be ensured by pushing international amendments that recommend or force countries to implement these measures.³⁷ It is important to note that enforcing international amendments and creating new laws is not an easy process, it follows a series of formal and complex procedures that should be taken into account when proposing laws as a possible solution. "How long will the law take to come into force? How effective will it be practically? Does legislating a law ensure its appliance and execution? Do all international amendments have coercive force?" are questions that should be asked before jumping to

32 United Nations, "Prison and Penal Reform: The Need for Change," United Nations: Office on Drugs and Crime, November 4, 2024, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/justice-and-prison-reform/prison-reform-and-alternatives-to-imprisonment.html>

33 United Nations, "Prison and Penal Reform: The Need for Change."

34 Rocha, Jorge Antonio, "MORENA party passes bill broadening pretrial detention through Mexico's lower house of Congress," Aztec Reports, November 2024, <https://www.aztecreports.com/morena-party-passes-bill-broadening-pretrial-detention-through-mexicos-lower-house-of-congress/4353/>.

35 Jim Ochetenwu, "CSOs decry large number of awaiting trial inmates in Nigerian prisons," *Daily Post Nigeria*, September 20, 2024, <https://dailypost.ng/2024/09/20/csos-decry-large-number-of-awaiting-trial-inmates-in-nigerian-prisons/>.

36 Shreehari Paliath and IndiaSpend, "In India, less than half of undertrial prisoners identified for release are actually released," *NewsLaundry*, December 30, 2024, <https://www.newslaundry.com/2024/12/30/in-india-less-than-half-of-undertrial-prisoners-identified-for-release-are-actually-released>.

37 Eisen, Lauren-Brooke, and Ram Subramania, "Improving Prisons," Brennan Center for Justice, November 12, 2024, <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/improving-prisons>.

a general and ambiguous conclusion by all delegates.

Conclusion

As we learn about rehabilitation programs, it becomes clear that recidivism is a complicated issue. There are many factors that contribute to someone committing a crime after they're released from prison. The issue compromises social, economic, and personal factors. Although rehabilitation may seem like an appropriate solution, it consists of many subtopics and complex issues that must be researched and analyzed before discussing the topic. Different types of rehabilitation treatments should be used depending on the type of crime that wants to be prevented, for example, in Australia, the EQUIPS program is highly beneficial for drug abuse cases, but it does not apply to sexual crimes, homicides or robbery.

Meanwhile, rehabilitation treatments such as the Risk-Needs-Responsivity (RNR) are effective against issues like robbery and assault, which is why it is important to determine the specific problem that wants to be addressed before creating solutions. It is also important to push public policies, legal reforms and international amendments with the purpose of improving countries' justice systems. There are many authors, including the UN, that advocate for penal reforms, the issue at hand is to determine how the reform should be implemented and executed.

Since finding hard data that shows objective results for rehabilitation programs is difficult and the goal of this committee is to find corresponding solutions for mass reoffending cases, it is of extreme importance to research and assimilate real-life cases and success stories of programs.



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TOPIC B:

ADDRESSING HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Photo Credit: Maria Serbakova

Introduction

Human trafficking has become a large topic of conversation within the past decade. Local and international laws were created to stop many of these rings. This illegal act mainly concerns forcing or coercing people into forced labor or sexual exploitation. Over 27.6 million people are trapped in various forms of human trafficking.¹ Countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) have become widely discussed within the topic. Many of these countries still face modern slavery. Modern slavery is a term used within trafficking situations that include both labor and sexual exploitation.²

This is strongly linked to international business practices. Companies around the world still benefit from the work of trafficking victims. The business of human trafficking generates around USD 150 billion every year.³ It is difficult to expose most trafficking rings because of its international setting. The ongoing crisis is closely tied to business operations, especially in those that depend mostly on labor. This exploitation has become a large part of the global industries, as well as its labor and economic development. Within recent years, developments have showcased the evolving methods used by traffickers. Technological advancements have made human trafficking actions easier over time. Companies have shifted many business practices to the digital sphere to keep up with new demands and development. As a result, this made it easier for labor trafficking to spread. However, new technologies have also aided in uncovering trafficking operations across various business sectors.

The United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) should trace the trafficking within business operations worldwide to help form a better understanding of its reasoning and trends.⁴ The committee is responsible for preventing crime and upholding the international standards for criminal justice.⁵ Delegates should therefore first evaluate the realities of the strategies for human trafficking prevention. The committee's success would hugely depend on how the delegates understand the big picture that plays behind the scenes.

Trafficking in the Fashion Industry

The fashion industry's global operations create opportunities for trafficking to occur at different levels. Fashion models are vulnerable to the exploitative nature of the industry. Traffickers will often pose as legitimate agents or representatives, and then lure victims with promises of high paying contracts or international modeling careers.⁶

The modeling industry's systemic flaws contribute to higher trafficking rates. Unlike most career options, modeling lacks the typical legal protection typically seen in any other profession. This leaves the models without any clear protections or resources. Often, it leaves them without help and assistance in cases of abuse. Many agencies will exploit this security flaw, which leads them to operate without accountability and making it easier for human trafficking to happen. Most of the models depend on freelance work. In other words, they work for different companies at different times instead of working for one company. Freelancing means that many models work without contracts or legal safeguards, increasing their vulnerability. There are many cases where international assignments require the models to give up their passports or legal documents, which further increases the risk of exploitation.

The most recent case of model trafficking involved Michael Jefferies, the former CEO of Abercrombie & Fitch.⁷ Court documents show that Jeffries and his partner Matthew Smith

1 UNODC, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2024*, Vienna: United Nations Publications, December 2024, https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2024/GLOTIP2024_BOOK.pdf.

2 UNODC, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2024*.

3 UNODC, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2024*.

4 "Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice," United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, accessed January 25, 2025, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/commissions/CCPCJ/index.html>.

5 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice."

6 "Trafficking in the name of modelling," Stop the Traffik, October 4, 2020, <https://stopthetraffik.org/models/>.

7 Jennifer Peltz, "Ex-Abercrombie & Fitch CEO Mike Jeffries Arrested on Sex Trafficking Charges," *AP News*, October 22, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/abercrombie-fitch-ceo-jeffries-sex-charges-f95f6b480dcb41e5365fa9b49f6206bd>.

used their positions to target and manipulate vulnerable young adults.⁸ These victims, mostly men, were recruited under the guise of professional modeling jobs, which often involved high-profile events. Once they were recruited, these individuals are later forced to participate in sexual acts and other exploitative activities. After these events, they were threatened with career ruin if they hit back with any action against them.

There are many reasons why the exploitation of these men was not detected for years. The modeling industry falls short in regulation about the working conditions and other important standards. In the Abercrombie & Fitch case, Michael Jeffries was able to exploit other men while his executives and employees turned a ‘blind eye’ to his conduct. This is mainly due to the several billion dollars Jeffries generated for the brand.⁹ The freelance nature of the job further complicates the issue, since the models typically work without any legal contracts. Jeffries’ power within the fashion world protected him for years from any consequences. His position allowed him to access these aspiring models, and because of their age and experience, were susceptible to manipulation.

The power imbalance between Jeffries and his victims created an environment that prevented many from reporting the abuse. Both perpetrators-maintained control over the victims, using tactics such as non-disclosure agreements (NDAs), blacklisting, and promises of future career advancements to make sure they stay silent.¹⁰ Because everything was kept secret, many victims were afraid to tell anyone what happened. This made it very difficult to even start investigating. This case showed that there are serious problems within this industry that allow abuse to go on for a long time without being discovered.

This case highlights multiple industry flaws that go beyond just one individual or a single company. Similar tactics have been documented in other areas of the industry, where traffickers exploit ambition, isolation, and a lack of regulation. However, the modeling industry is more susceptible to trafficking due to relying on informal networks and the global nature of recruitment. These factors create more chances of trafficking to take place on a larger scale.

Although the Jeffries case focused primarily on men, young

8 Peltz, “Ex-Abercrombie & Fitch CEO Mike Jeffries Arrested on Sex Trafficking Charges.”

9 Peltz, “Ex-Abercrombie & Fitch CEO Mike Jeffries Arrested on Sex Trafficking Charges.”

10 “Former CEO of Abercrombie & Fitch and Two Other Individuals Charged with Sex Trafficking and Interstate Prostitution,” U.S. Attorney’s Office, Eastern District of New York, October 22, 2024. <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edny/pr/former-ceo-abcrombie-fitch-and-two-other-individuals-charged-sex-trafficking-and>.



Clothing Factory Workers in Bangladesh

Credit: Solidarity Center

women are disproportionately affected by trafficking in the modeling industry.¹¹ These women are often targeted by traffickers who exploit their ambitions, isolation, and lack of resources. Many models are recruited internationally, moving to foreign countries where they may not speak the language or understand local laws, making them more susceptible to abuse. Additionally, traffickers abuse cultural norms and gender inequality to maintain control over the victims. These dynamics often lead to prolonged cycles of exploitation and trauma. This pushes victims experiencing significant psychological, physical, and financial harm. Due to the isolating nature of the career, many of these women are afraid to speak up about their experiences.

Social media also accounts for trafficking in the modeling industry. In recent years, the widespread use of social media platforms has facilitated exploitation.¹² Traffickers can easily pose as real agents and casting directors. Victims find it difficult to distinguish between genuine offers and predatory situations.

Traffickers take advantage of the desire for success by reaching out to individuals who may be looking for work with promises of lucrative contracts and status in the industry. They specifically target those who may not understand the ins and outs of the industry, making them more susceptible to exploitation. Many victims are young, impressionable, and looking to escape difficult circumstances, making them easy targets.¹³ Many of these models are then forced into exploitative work, subjected to abuse, or even coerced into sex trafficking.

High-profile cases like Jeffries' have brought attention to the bigger picture of trafficking in the modeling industry. Further investigations have shown patterns of abuse. These include

the recruitment of underage models and forced participation in illegal activities. These cases highlight the need for systemic change to protect aspiring models from predatory practices. Furthermore, the global nature of the industry has amplified the risks, as traffickers use this independence to target and groom vulnerable individuals.

As more attention has been brought to the issue, models and workers in the fashion industry are demanding greater protection from exploitation. On December 21, 2024, New York governor Kathy Hochul signed the Fashion Workers Act into law.¹⁴ This bill was first introduced in the New York state legislature in 2022 with support from the Model Alliance.¹⁵ The law will go into effect in June 2025.¹⁶

The Fashion Workers Act will require all model agencies in the state of New York to register with the state government. The goal is to protect models from signing with fake agencies like those mentioned above that abuse them. The law also creates a way for models to report any instances of harassment or abuse to the New York State Department of Labor and protects them from retaliation from their employers. The law also includes protections about the use of models' images in artificial intelligence (AI) and requires their written consent to replicate their digital image.¹⁷

Despite these added protections, this new law still falls short in some areas. Critics say that it does not have enough enforcement mechanisms in place to ensure that these protections are implemented. Some critics also say that it incorrectly defines the role model managers play in ensuring their models' safety. These critics argue that while it is important to punish businesses that exploit models, model managers cannot guarantee a model's safety on the job. They claim that the law unfairly punishes responsible model

11 "Trafficking for All Purposes of Exploitation Undermines the Women Peace and Security Agenda: UN Expert," 2024. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/10/trafficking-all-purposes-exploitation-undermines-women-peace-and-security>.

12 Gargi Sarkar and Sandeep K. Shukla, "Bi-Directional Exploitation of Human Trafficking Victims: Both Targets and Perpetrators in Cybercrime," *Journal of Human Trafficking* (May 2024): 1–22, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23322705.2024.2353015>.

13 Stop the Traffik, "Trafficking in the name of modelling."

14 Rosemary Feitelberg, "Models Gain Muscle: Fashion Workers Act Becomes a Law in New York," *WWD*, December 23, 2024, <https://wwd.com/fashion-news/fashion-scoops/models-muscle-fashion-workers-act-new-york-law-1236777035/>.

15 Laurel Deppen, "Fashion Workers Act signed into law in New York," *FashionDive*, January 3, 2025, <https://www.fashiondive.com/news/fashion-workers-act-signed-into-law/736426/>; "Model Alliance," Model Alliance, accessed January 12, 2025, <https://www.modelalliance.org/>.

16 Deppen, "Fashion Workers Act."

17 Deppen, "Fashion Workers Act."

managers for factors outside of their control.¹⁸ Delegates must draw the balance between protecting workers' rights, while reducing trafficking efforts.

Trafficking in the Real Estate Industry

Recent cases show the real estate industry as a key facilitator of trafficking operations. Often, the trafficking operations go unnoticed. Because the commercial and residential properties appear to be rented or leased in a legitimate way. Most recently, several real estate brokers were arrested for sex trafficking and using their connections within the industry to cover up their illegal activities. Tal, Oren, and Alon Alexander, known for their high-profile clientele through their company—the Alexander Team—stand accused of using their wealth and status to lure women.¹⁹ Their tactics include using false pretenses, such as promises of career opportunities or invitations to exclusive events. These victims were allegedly drugged and assaulted. A federal investigation began in mid-2024 and has successfully identified 42 victims across the world. Some of them include minors at the time of being assaulted.

This case has significant implications for the real estate industry. The Alexander brothers leveraged their prominent positions and extensive networks, which included wealthy clients and exclusive social circles, to exploit others. Prosecutors allege that they utilized their professional roles, such as inviting women to real estate events under false pretenses, to facilitate their crimes. This case has raised serious concerns within the industry, creating concern over potential abuse and the need for more safety.

Other relevant cases include the emergence of brothels in many suburban neighborhoods in the United States. Several human

trafficking networks emerged in Chicago, Massachusetts, Virginia, and New York in recent years, threatening the safety of residential areas.²⁰ The rings relied on residential real estate to run their operations and keep trafficked individuals out of public view. In many cases, the apartments or houses utilized belonged to luxury complexes, drawing even less attention to the possibility of such abuses. Traffickers abused the peaceful and normal appearance of such neighborhoods to conceal their activities, emphasizing the need for higher alert.

This case has caused others to look closely at how the real estate industry works. It requires that work and socialization frequently mix. The frequent social settings cater to potential abuse, especially where abuses of power can go without consequences. Altogether, the case is not solely about the Alexanders, but about changing how the industry works. The CCPCJ is responsible for holding those at fault accountable and ensuring that safety is a norm of the industry.

Outside of this, the real estate industry contributes to trafficking through two primary systems. The first is exploitation in real estate development. Many victims of labor trafficking have been identified in large-scale construction projects, specifically within countries with weak labor protections.²¹ The labor traffickers find gaps within the regulatory laws and use them to force workers into harsh and illegal conditions, specifically targeting migrant workers. These migrant workers are coerced through recruitment practices and withheld documentation, leaving them trapped within these exploitative situations. By withholding critical documentation, such as passports or work permits, traffickers effectively trap these individuals, leaving them unable to leave or seek help.²² These cases are often unnoticed due to the nature of hiring migrant workers, and has made it increasingly difficult to uncover due to the nature of the hiring process. These practices can occur in the

18 Deppen, "Fashion Workers Act."

19 Mary Whitfill Roeloffs, "Alexander Brothers—Real Estate Agents for the Ultra-Rich—Arrested on Sex Trafficking Charges," *Forbes*, December 11, 2024, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/maryroeloffs/2024/12/11/alexander-brothers-real-estate-agents-for-ultrarich-arrested-on-sex-trafficking-charges>.

20 NBC Chicago Staff, "Tren de Aragua member with ties to Chicago crimes arrested in Tennessee," *NBC 5 Chicago*, November 25, 2024, <https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/tren-de-aragua-member-with-ties-to-chicago-crimes-arrested-in-tennessee/3609330/>; Steve LeBlanc, "A Massachusetts woman accused of running a high-end brothel network pleads guilty," *AP News*, September 27, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/massachusetts-brothel-network-suspect-guilty-plea-a30e89fc82df3e0047d3071960b69a70>; Lisa Rozner, "As NYPD cracks down on illegal brothels in Queens, advocates say community needs resources not raids," *CBS News*, October 22, 2024, <https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/news/queens-brothel-crackdown-backlash-rally/>.

21 Kelle Barrck et al., *Risk and Protective Factors for Experiencing Labor Trafficking and Other Labor Abuse in the Construction Industry* (Washington: OPRE, 2023), https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/opre/opre-HTPRAP-risk_protective-factors-oct24.pdf

22 Kelle Barrck et al., *Risk and Protective Factors for Experiencing Labor Trafficking and Other Labor Abuse in the Construction Industry*

construction of residential buildings, commercial properties, and infrastructure projects, fueling the exploitation of workers under the guise of legitimate development.

The most widespread and controversial of such incidents remains the 2022 FIFA World Cup hosted in Qatar. Several reports underline thousands of migrant workers abused in the country across different sectors.²³ These investigations originally investigated rebuilding one of the tournament's stadiums. But the results showed a pattern of consistent diminishing of labor rights across the years.²⁴ These reports highlighted the poor living conditions, unfair wages, and lack of freedom to leave jobs, pointing to the need for stricter and more widespread monitoring frameworks in this field.

The second system is using real estate properties as centers for exploitation. Many residential and commercial properties are frequently used as sites for forced prostitution, illicit labor, and places to store and transport trafficked individuals. These properties often go unnoticed, since externally it seems as though nothing illicit is happening. Traffickers manage to hide from laws through exploitation of weaknesses, and the inconsistent enforcement.²⁵ Many real estate groups are not equipped to investigate properties beyond standard legal compliance. This is why many properties often go unnoticed, since everything seems to be legitimate.

Short-term rental properties and hotels have become increasingly involved in such operations.²⁶ Victims often move between such properties to avoid being detected or traced back to a certain location. At the same time, the less stringent tracing or security measures associated with such rentals makes it easier for traffickers to present false identities. Some hotels and motels avoid confronting traffickers because

of the financial benefit. A major case in covering this aspect involved victims that raised more than 50 lawsuits against a variety of hotels for profiting from sex trafficking within their properties.²⁷ The lawsuits suggest that hotel employees were aware of the incidents in their properties, opting to turn a blind eye in favor of financial gain.²⁸

There are many factors that contribute to trafficking in the real estate sector. Most of these trafficking cases happen due to lack of regulation. Many times, where human trafficking is suspected, the property owners, landlords, and real estate agents are not trained or do not recognize the signs.²⁹ This lack of awareness can make it easier for these traffickers to operate without being caught. An example of this would be with buying or renting properties. Many of these locations can be rented or sold with minimal background checks, making it easier for traffickers. Because of these weaknesses in regulation, there is also weakened enforcement. Real estate companies and landlords are often not equipped to investigate properties beyond basic legal compliance, allowing illegal activities to persist undetected within their properties.³⁰

Addressing these issues requires a multilateral approach involving increased regulation, training, and collaboration. Real estate professionals should receive training on recognizing signs of human trafficking and be encouraged to report suspicious activities. Background checks and property inspections must be more rigorous, with stricter oversight and penalties for those who knowingly facilitate trafficking. Collaborative efforts between law enforcement, zoning boards, and industry stakeholders are essential to closing the gaps that traffickers exploited.

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28 Jones, "Hotels in human trafficking lawsuits face second bid for case consolidation."

29 John Malcolm Ludlow and Alexandros Paraskevas, "Breaking the Invisible Chains with Policy: How Insurance Companies Can Help End Human Trafficking in the Hotel Industry," *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (November 2024): 145–155, <https://doi.org/10.1177/19389655231209698>; "Resources and Strategies for Hospitality Leaders to Combat Human Trafficking Risk," HUB International, January 2, 2025, <https://www.hubinternational.com/blog/2025/01/how-hotels-can-combat-human-trafficking-risks/>.

30 Ludlow and Paraskevas, "Breaking the Invisible Chains with Policy: How Insurance Companies Can Help End Human Trafficking in the Hotel Industry."

Conclusion

The increasing attention on businesses' roles in combating human trafficking highlights the importance of corporate responsibility. Multiple industries such as fashion and real estate have come under scrutiny, exposing how trafficking infiltrates and impacts various sectors. The fashion industry has seen a growing push for transparency, as brands are called upon to ensure fair labor practices. Similarly, the real estate sector has faced demands for stronger oversight to prevent properties from being exploited for trafficking activities. By advocating for a culture of vigilance and accountability, these measures offer hope for a future free from human trafficking and demonstrate the potential to create lasting change.

The UN has supported the efforts to mitigate these operations by providing resources, guidance, and platforms for collaboration. But policies such as subsidies or financial rewards are less common. There are many legal frameworks that have been recently put into place to help those affected by trafficking. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 8.7, calls for eradicating forced labor, modern slavery, and human trafficking.³¹ The UN outlines the corporations' responsibilities to respect human rights and mitigate risks of trafficking within their operations. These guidelines have helped mitigate these illicit business operations, and hopefully eventually eradicate them altogether.

³¹ Ludlow and Paraskevas, "Breaking the Invisible Chains with Policy: How Insurance Companies Can Help End Human Trafficking in the Hotel Industry."

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