

Maahara digest

ISSUE 03

REBUILD. RECONNECT. REINTEGRATE.



Transparency Maldives, the National Chapter of Transparency International in The Maldives, is a non- partisan organization that promotes collaboration, awareness and undertakes other initiatives to improve governance and eliminate corruption from the daily lives of people. Transparency Maldives views corruption as a systemic issue and advocates for institutional changes that will punish and prevent corruption.



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Transparency Maldives 2023

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INTRODUCTION

The Maldives has been grappling with high crime rates and socioeconomic vulnerabilities for many years. Substance abuse, gang involvement, petty crimes, and theft are all prevalent issues linked to socioeconomic disparities, including wealth and income inequalities and issues of unemployment for youth. These issues result from an amalgamation of various factors such as, the country's highly retributive criminal justice system which has been in place for decades, the lack of restorative justice focus in the system as well as the limited opportunities available for the reintegration and rehabilitation of offenders. Consequently these circumstances have perpetuated a vicious cycle of poverty and crime in the country.

One of the most effective ways to break out of this vicious cycle is the promotion of effective social reintegration. **Social reintegration is the process of supporting individuals who have been involved in the criminal justice system to successfully reintegrate into society** (Griffith, et. al, 2007). The fundamental purpose of a criminal justice system is to ensure public safety and security. Social reintegration programs align with this purpose by providing opportunities for individuals to make meaningful contributions to their communities. These programs address the underlying issues that lead to criminal behavior and offer a chance for rehabilitation and growth. By prioritizing social reintegration, societies can break the cycle of poverty and crime, reduce social inequalities, and promote safer and harmonious communities.

This edition of Maahara Digest is centered around the opportunities and challenges around effective social reintegration in the Maldives. The aim of the issue is to foster a better understanding of this critical issue, bring attention to the current situation in the Maldives and highlight the endeavors of Transparency Maldives (TM) towards promoting effective social reintegration.



One of the key objectives of TM under its PRIME project is to support the promotion of effective social reintegration. The project also seeks to emphasize the importance of social reintegration as an essential component of building safer, resilient communities and fostering greater harmony within society. The contents of this digest therefore is primarily based on findings of the “Situational Analysis of the pathways to social reintegration for offenders and drug-dependent persons in the Maldives” published by TM in 2022 on reducing recidivism rates, improving public safety and becoming cost effective, as well as using other literature on the subject of social reintegration.

MALDIVES BACKGROUND

The Situational Analysis published by TM in 2022 highlighted significant issues relating to the high rate of recidivism and challenges to social reintegration in the Maldives. According to the interviewed stakeholders, Maldives struggles with very high rates of recidivism, with the prison population constituting of only about a 100 first time offenders annually (TM, 2022). This is largely due to the fact that prisoners are less prepared and supported for social reintegration upon their release, due to limited employment opportunities, social stigma, and discrimination (TM, 2022). Social reintegration programs can help address these challenges by providing reentry support for former prisoners with education and training, counseling, etc.

SOCIOECONOMIC VULNERABILITIES

Unemployment is a persistent issue in the Maldives, with former prisoners facing even greater challenges in finding employment due to their criminal record, lack of education and societal stigma (UNDP, 2019).

Social reintegration programs can provide the necessary training and support to improve their employability and increase their chances of finding and keeping a job.

Substance abuse is also a major issue in the Maldives, with high rates of drug use and addiction among both the general population and prisoners, where most are incarcerated on drug related offenses (UNDP, 2019)..

Social reintegration programs can provide counseling and support for substance abuse treatment, in addition to education on the negative consequences of drug use and addiction.

Gang involvement is also a significant problem among vulnerable Maldivian youth with limited upward mobility, with gangs playing a significant role in criminal activity and violence (UNDP, 2019).

Social reintegration programs such as education, job training, and counseling can provide alternative pathways for former gang members, helping them leave the cycles of crime and poverty.



It is clear that the traditional punitive approach to criminal justice has not been effective in addressing the root causes of crime in the Maldives. Instead, there is an urgent need for social reintegration programs that focus on alternative measures that divert away from the criminal justice system and interventions designed to rehabilitate, address underlying root causes, and provide support required to rejoin society as productive citizens. Such programs can help break the cycle of crime and create safer communities.

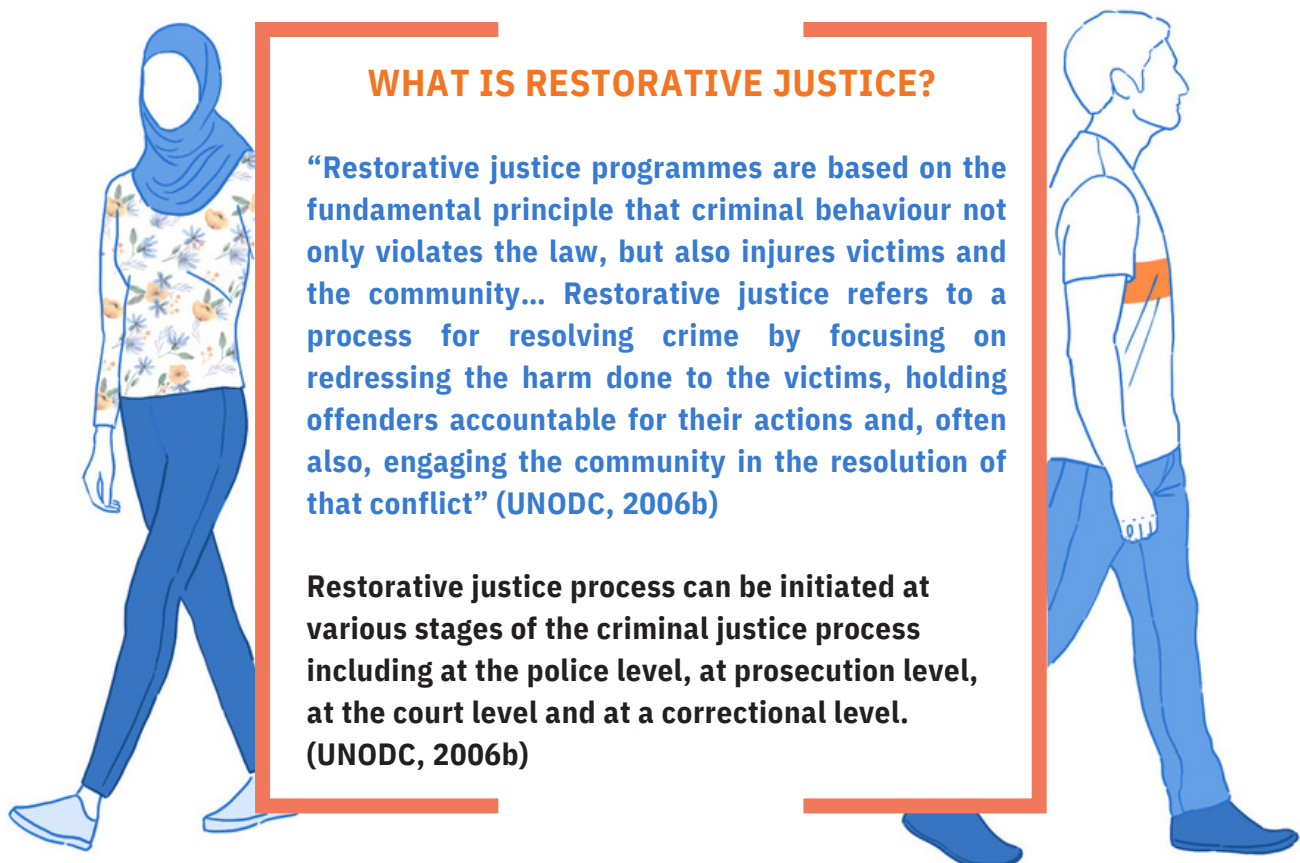
SITUATION IN MALDIVES

Social reintegration is a critical component of any criminal justice system, aimed at promoting the successful re-entry of individuals into society after they have served their time in the system. Promoting social reintegration is also key in reducing the country's high recidivism and social alienation, and therefore, can act as an important measure for overall social cohesion of the community (TM, 2022).

In the Maldives, there are several institutional and cultural barriers that limit successful reintegration, which must be addressed urgently to prevent the high rate of recidivism. There are also several institutional gaps which hinder the effectiveness of existing services. Key issues in Maldives relating to social reintegration include (TM, 2022):

01 Lack of Restorative Justice Focus

The Maldives' criminal justice system can be described as punitive, with a retributive approach that prioritizes punishment rather than restorative justice. Restorative justice involves bringing together the victim, offender, and community to repair the harm caused by the criminal offense. To foster transformative cultural change, a restorative justice approach should begin at all levels, including parenting, schooling, and the legal system. Restorative justice interventions for youth must be promoted in order to avoid labeling them as "criminals" and instead emphasize rehabilitation and reintegration into society.



WHAT IS RESTORATIVE JUSTICE?

“Restorative justice programmes are based on the fundamental principle that criminal behaviour not only violates the law, but also injures victims and the community... Restorative justice refers to a process for resolving crime by focusing on redressing the harm done to the victims, holding offenders accountable for their actions and, often also, engaging the community in the resolution of that conflict” (UNODC, 2006b)

Restorative justice process can be initiated at various stages of the criminal justice process including at the police level, at prosecution level, at the court level and at a correctional level. (UNODC, 2006b)

02 Lack of an overarching national Strategy

The Maldives' current service delivery relating to social reintegration appears to be fragmented and disconnected. Current social reintegration service mechanisms are also incomplete given the lack of a subject-specific legislation, national policy, or strategy which has led to social reintegration not being given the necessary emphasis it requires. While some laws, such as the Drug Act and Juvenile Justice Act, specifically advocate for rehabilitation and social reintegration, there is still a lack of long-term priority placed on it. To strengthen the legislative and regulatory environment surrounding the criminal justice system, a streamlined overarching national level policy to promote social reintegration is required.

04 Ineffectiveness and limited access to existing services:

Resources and budgetary constraints severely limit the availability of rehabilitation and reintegration programs, leaving individuals without the assistance they require to properly reintegrate into society. A lack of qualified staff can also be a significant constraint, resulting in excessive wait times or insufficient support. Clients may find it challenging to navigate complex processes and encounter delays in receiving the assistance they require to reintegrate into society as a result of bureaucracy and red tape. All of these obstacles might be especially difficult for vulnerable clients, and can make reintegration into society more challenging, exacerbate social isolation and reduce opportunities for employment, education, and housing.

03 Issues of stigma and social exclusion:

There is a general lack of understanding of drugs as a public health issue in the Maldives, and it is generally considered a criminal issue, particularly when it comes to drug usage. This approach is concerning because it typically leads to punitive measures such as imprisonment and ignores the underlying reasons for substance abuse, which might include mental health concerns, poverty, and social exclusion. This approach also stigmatizes and marginalizes drug users, making it more difficult for them to seek help and support. A public health approach to drugs would emphasize harm reduction, prevention, and treatment over punishment. Such an approach would involve coordination among health care providers, law enforcement, and community groups to address the underlying causes of substance abuse.

05 Issues relating to high recidivism rate:

The high rate of recidivism in the Maldives is a growing concern, as it reflects the effectiveness of the criminal justice system. While the reasons behind this trend are complex, lack of access to basic needs such as employment, education, housing, and psychosocial care is a significant contributing factor. In contrast, countries with the lowest rates of recidivism prioritize effective social reintegration and rehabilitation, offer comprehensive social safety nets, and prioritize humane treatment of prisoners, providing them with opportunities for education and job training. Supporting successful reintegration is essential in reducing the risk of ex-offenders falling into poverty and homelessness after their release, and ultimately breaking the cycle of recidivism in the Maldives.

06 Lack of individualized and specialized services:

Individualized approaches to reintegration and rehabilitation services are critical to ensuring that each client receives the support they need to successfully transition back into society. By taking into account the unique circumstances and needs of each person, service providers can tailor their interventions to promote long-term success. This includes providing targeted support services and specialized programming for women, children, and persons with disabilities. However, in the Maldives, vulnerable individuals often face significant barriers when accessing rehabilitation and reintegration services. Limited access to individualized case management systems means that many individuals do not receive the support they need to address the underlying factors that led to their involvement with the criminal justice system.

08 Inconsistency of policy:

Policy inconsistency, as well as the politicization of decision making, have hampered effective reintegration in the Maldives. Implementing policies that address budgetary and resource constraints, as well as placing national priority on breaking the cycle of crime and poverty by investing in public healthcare, housing, education, and the development of human and technical resources, is vital. By concentrating efforts in these areas, the Maldives will be able to create a more safe and equitable society in which individuals may reintegrate and lead productive lives. In this regard, the importance of political will in moving beyond short-term remedies and toward long-term change cannot be overstated.

07 Absence of aftercare:

Aftercare and post-release services are crucial in promoting effective reintegration, providing vital support to formerly incarcerated individuals as they navigate the challenges of reentering society. However, in the Maldives, there are no post-release services, and formerly incarcerated individuals have no right to request reintegration services. Without access to aftercare and post-release services, individuals may struggle to find employment or secure stable housing, leading to an increased risk of recidivism. However, providing individuals with access to these services can have significant benefits, including reducing recidivism rates, improving mental health outcomes, and promoting safer and more resilient communities.

09 Major gaps in inter-agency coordination:

Poor inter-agency coordination in relation to social reintegration has resulted in scattered services that do not adequately meet the needs of clients. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that there are currently no systematic means for organizations to share information, resulting in service duplication, wasted resources, and poor outcomes. To address this issue, a centralized system for data management and sharing is required. Maldives urgently needs to improve rehabilitation and reintegration service management, promote agency coordination, and improve program design and service delivery.

KEY PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL REINTEGRATION

The successful rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders is ultimately one of the key objectives of any criminal justice system. (UNODC, 2018)

The success of any social reintegration effort depends on the key idea that individuals who have been involved in the criminal justice system have the right to be treated with dignity, respect, and fairness. They should be provided with opportunities to rebuild their lives and reintegrate into society with the necessary support and guidance. In this regard, some of the key principles that underpin the efforts of TM in promoting social reintegration in Maldives include:

01 Multidisciplinary Collaboration:

Reintegration is a systemic problem that necessitates institutional change. Small civil society organizations often face limitations in addressing it effectively, underscoring the importance of collaboration. It requires a multidisciplinary approach that involves collaboration between various stakeholders, including government bodies, non-governmental organizations, and community leaders, in areas of law enforcement, justice, health, education, and social services.

02 Community Participation:

Effective social reintegration is a participatory process that involves the active involvement of the community. The community must be engaged in the design, implementation, and evaluation of social reintegration programs to ensure that they are relevant, effective, and sustainable.

03 Addressing Root Causes:

To promote effective social reintegration, it is essential to address the root causes of social exclusion, marginalization, disenfranchisement, and conflict. This requires an in-depth analysis of the social, economic, and political factors that contribute to the issue in order to create sustainable solutions that will have long-lasting effects.

04 Emphasis on Restorative Justice:

The promotion of restorative justice is critical in the social reintegration process. Restorative justice approaches aim to heal the harm caused by conflict and promote reconciliation and forgiveness. This approach also recognizes that individuals who have experienced trauma or been impacted by conflict require specific care and support to help them reintegrate into society effectively.

05 Individualized Approach:

Social reintegration programs should be tailored to the specific needs of the individual, taking into account their personal circumstances, strengths, and challenges. This approach ensures that the individual receives comprehensive support that addresses their physical, mental, and social needs.

WHAT CAN CIVIL SOCIETY DO?

While both state and non state organizations play a crucial role, promoting social reintegration does not have to be limited to government institutions or those working directly with clients. CSOs of various scales, including community-led organizations, sports clubs, recreational NGOs, and other social NGOs across the country can also contribute to this cause in a myriad of ways. By ensuring their activities include those who are marginalized and renewing our acceptance of ex-offenders, CSOs can help to create a more inclusive society and a safer future for all Maldivians. Moving forward, it is essential for civil society organizations and governments to invest in social reintegration programs that prioritize the needs of marginalized individuals. For instance, such programs can be:



Research-Driven Advocacy

One of the ways that TM has worked towards the promotion of social reintegration is through conducting research. The situational analysis research has helped to inform TM's work and guide its efforts towards addressing the root causes of social exclusion and other socioeconomic vulnerabilities, and promote social reintegration at various levels of the society among both state and non-state actors. Based on this evidence-based research, TM was able to effectively engage in advocacy efforts to address issues surrounding reintegration.

Advocacy plays a pivotal role in addressing the fundamental lack of awareness surrounding reintegration issues. By amplifying the voices of those affected and championing their cause, CSOs can strengthen advocacy efforts which have the power to challenge, influence, and reshape institutional cultures.

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE PATHWAYS TO SOCIAL REINTEGRATION FOR OFFENDERS AND DRUG-DEPENDENT PERSONS IN THE MALDIVES 2022

Published by TM

RESEARCH ADVOCACY 2023

Sessions with

President's Office

HRCM

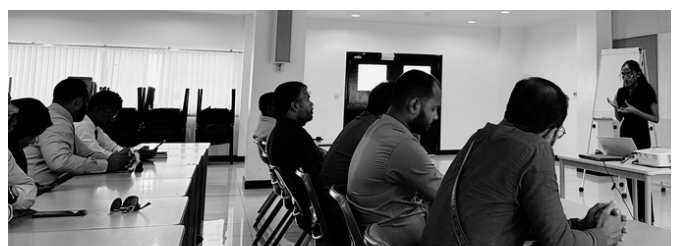
MPS

Children Ombudsperson's Office

DJJ

NDA

FPA



Pictures from the Research Advocacy Sessions 2023



Promoting Restorative Justice

The purpose of promoting restorative justice is to bring about systemic, sustained change, shifting away from punitive measures and embracing approaches that prioritize repairing relationships, rebuilding lives, and reconnecting individuals to society. This transformation requires in-depth understanding by service providers at the community level. In this regard, TM has carried out restorative justice facilitator trainings with the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) to equip stakeholders and community actors with the necessary skills to implement restorative justice processes. TM has also been promoting restorative practices in schools by conducting workshops for teachers.

Restorative practices aim to promote healing and repair relationships that have been damaged by criminal behavior, thereby promoting the social reintegration of individuals into their communities. Under PRIME, TM successfully provided Juvenile Justice Training for relevant stakeholders and awareness sessions for community actors, equipping professionals working with young people in the justice system with valuable insights. This hands-on program, has taught us that prioritizing the rehabilitation and reintegration of young individuals involved in the justice system is crucial. Based on our experience, we have learned that promoting restorative justice practices is a key avenue for CSOs to support the growth and future success of vulnerable young individuals.

JUVENILE JUSTICE TRAININGS, 2022

With MOHA, DJJ

In Fuvahmulah, Kulhudhuffushi

JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMUNITY AWARENESS SESSIONS, 2022

With MOHA, DJJ

In Fuvahmulah, Kulhudhuffushi

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE FACILITATOR TRAINING 2022

With DJJ

In Male'

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE AWARENESS SESSION, 2022

With CSOs

In Male'

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES IN SCHOOLS, 2022

With MOE

In Gahdhoo



Pictures from the Juvenile Justice Training 2022

“It changed some of my personal and professional perspective regarding how human interactions affect other people.”

“Unlocking ways on how to deal with my own issues and making that self-discovery about myself. The theories/ concepts were explained in such a way that we were able to apply it to ourselves and relate it to several of our clients as well.”

-Participants of the Restorative Justice TOT 2022



Pictures from the Juvenile Justice Training 2022



Providing Access to Resources and Services

This can include access to housing, healthcare, education, employment opportunities, and other support services. It is also important to offer practical support, such as providing transportation, offering childcare, or connecting individuals with community-based programs, referral mechanisms, or resources. These resources can be provided through government programs, non-profit organizations, or community-based initiatives.

TM was able to contribute to such endeavors by supporting other local NGOs, such as Journey, that aim to provide referral, counselling, outreach, rehabilitation, and support services for those struggling with substance abuse through their RISE program.

RISE: PREVENTION AND ELEVATING TOLERANCE - 2021 to 2023 PROJECT BY JOURNEY* (SUBGRANTEE)

RISE in 4 islands

- 3500+ Door-to-door engagements
- 40 Psychosocial Support facilitators
- 700+ beneficiaries of various Outreach interventions and trainings

Services in Male'

- 900+ referrals to treatment
- 200+ crisis interventions
- 1900+ outreach interventions
- 3000+ beneficiaries of peer support, counselling, group therapy sessions
- 44 Peer educators trained
- 1700+ beneficiaries in NA Groups
- 450+ family visits

**These figures are from some of the interventions. For more information on the RISE program and drug prevention efforts, please refer to Maahara Digest 1.*



Building Supportive Relationships

Supportive relationships provide a sense of belonging and help individuals develop a positive self-identity. These include providing emotional support, being non-judgmental, showing empathy, and building trust at individual, family and community level. These relationships can be established through community-based programs, peer support groups, pro-social activities such as sports and recreation, or mentoring relationships.

Individuals who have experienced social exclusion or isolation may have underlying mental health issues or substance abuse problems that require professional support. Access to mental health services, counseling, substance abuse treatment, rehabilitation and even peer support programs are all critical avenues for CSOs to help individuals overcome these challenges.

TM has undertaken valuable parenting skills sessions, understanding the significant role that families play in the process of reintegration. These sessions equip parents with essential tools for conflict prevention and resolution within the family. Through this initiative, TM has gained insights into the importance of strengthening family bonds and promoting healthier relationships as essential components in the successful reintegration process.



Pictures from the Parenting Skills Session, 2022,2023

PARENTING SKILLS AWARENESS, 2022

With MOHA, DJJ

In Kulhudhuffushi

**PARENTING SKILLS HANDBOOK
AND TRAINING FOR PTA
RESOURCE POOL, 2023**

With SHE

In Male'



Capacity Building Initiatives

Focusing on capacity building within the realm of service delivery is of paramount importance, particularly so when addressing the issue of substance abuse and addiction. TM gained valuable insights through conducting capacity building trainings for counselors from the National Drug Agency (NDA), providing a useful opportunity to promote and enhance rehabilitation services and counseling support to those in need.

Rather importantly, these activities also revealed that community awareness, combatting stigma and promoting understanding around substance abuse and rehabilitation are critical in addressing this issue effectively. Based on this experience, it is evident the crucial need to prioritize ongoing stakeholder capacity building, community education efforts, de-stigmatization initiatives, and fostering empathy to support individuals affected by drug addiction on their path to recovery.



ASSIST-BI TRAINING, 2022
With NDA
In Addu



PSYCHOSOCIAL UPSKILLING 2022
With NDA
In Male'



Developing Skills and Competencies

TM has been working to provide career guidance and vocational training programs for prison inmates and drug rehabilitation clients in collaboration with various stakeholders. This program helps individuals who have been impacted by substance abuse and criminal behavior to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to pursue meaningful employment and income for better livelihood.

It is vital to acknowledge the existing gaps in the system when it comes to reaching out to incarcerated youth, those in prison, and rehabilitation facilities. Through TM's career guidance programs we have identified significant areas where these young individuals lack access to helpful information, guidance, and understanding of the opportunities and pathways in education, vocational training, and employment. By drawing attention to these gaps, it is clear the need for broader efforts to address and fill these voids in the system and enhance service delivery.



Individuals may require training or education to develop skills that will enable them to find and maintain employment, manage finances, and live independently. This is a vital gap that CSOs can mobilize in through activities such as skill-building programs, vocational training programs, community online forums, or apprenticeship programs in order to facilitate social reintegration.

CAREER GUIDANCE SESSIONS FOR PRISONERS, 2022

With MCS, Maldives Polytechnic, MNU, MoYSCE

In Maafushi Prison and Asseyri Prison



VOCATIONAL TRAININGS, 2022

With IITE, MAPS College, Villa College

In Maafushi Prison and Asseyri Prison

CAREER GUIDANCE SESSIONS FOR DTRC Clients, 2022

With NDA, Maldives Polytechnic, MNU, IITE

In DTRC, K. Himmafushi

Pictures from the Career guidance session in DTRC, 2022



Fostering Positive Self-Identity

Individuals who have experienced social exclusion or isolation may struggle with self-doubt and low self-esteem. Programs and initiatives that promote positive self-identity can help individuals develop a sense of purpose and self-worth. This can be achieved through programs that promote personal growth, cultural awareness, or mental wellbeing.

PROJECT “ERA” - ENHANCING RESILIENCE IN ADOLESCENTS

**BY FEMHEALTH - NGO
(SUBGRANTEE OF TM)**

In Male' and Addu

**Resilience Trainings
2022 and 2023**

16 Trainers

301 young individuals trained
(200+ students)

In support of its commitment to nurturing positive identity within local communities, TM allocated its resources to empower grassroots organizations. As part of the PRIME project, FemHealth, a TM subgrantee NGO, implemented their project "ERA-Enhancing Resilience in Adolescents," which aims to address young children's sense of purpose and identity through education and help youth build their resilience. FemHealth ran a Training of Trainers (ToT) program as part of this project, preparing 16 individuals to deliver resilience trainings that covered life skills, problem solving skills, mental health awareness, how to cope with peer pressure, and so on. Following that, FemHealth held 11 resilience training sessions in Addu and Male', involving over 300 participants.

VULNERABLE YOUTH SUPPORT PROJECT

**BY HUVADHOO AID - NGO
(SUBGRANTEE OF TM)**

In GDh. Hoadehdhoo

**ToT on Lifeskills and Peer
Education**

2022

22 individuals trained

**Psychosocial Training Program
2023**

19 individuals trained

In addition, another TM subgrantee, Huvadhoo Aid, an NGO focused on community development, launched their project, "Vulnerable Youth Support Project," which included a ToT program focused on life skills and peer education. The program provided skills to help adolescents deal with daily challenges/demands, such as regulating emotions and making informed decisions, and contained components of Personal Behavior Change, Effective Communication, Social Resistance Skills, and Cognitive-Behavioral Skills. HuvadhooAid additionally carried out psychosocial support training programs in order to promote resilience and build capacity of relevant stakeholders.

Looking forward, CSOs can draw inspiration from these experiences. They can employ activities such as mentorship programs, skill-building workshops, and community engagement initiatives to assist vulnerable individuals in their reintegration to promote a positive sense of identity and prevent the perpetuation of cycles of poverty and crime rooted in socioeconomic and psychosocial vulnerabilities. Collaboration, shared insights, and on-the-ground mobilizations especially are essential elements in achieving these critical objectives.

PATHWAYS TO SOCIAL REINTEGRATION

Although CSOs play a crucial role in promoting social reintegration, successful reintegration ultimately requires institutional involvement. Activities aimed at rehabilitating individuals, preventing substance abuse, curbing gang involvement, and fostering positive social change are undeniably beneficial. However, true progress in promoting social reintegration also hinges on strengthening the various opportunities within the criminal justice system that can empower individuals to regain their autonomy and rebuild their lives with a sense of agency.

In essence, a multifaceted approach that combines the efforts of CSOs and institutional support is critical, more so given that the concept of social reintegration is inherently broad, encompassing a spectrum of challenges faced by individuals seeking to rebuild their lives after involvement in criminal activities. **Social reintegration comprises of both non-custodial measures, such as diversion programs, and custodial measures, including activities carried out during imprisonment and post-release** (TM, 2022). Effective social reintegration is also essential for ensuring that individuals who have served their sentences are given the opportunity to make positive and productive contributions to society. In addition to that, research has also shown that promoting social reintegration can have a strong preventative effect on youth criminal behavior by providing positive alternatives and support systems and can ultimately steer vulnerable young people away from criminality.

However, the **benefits of social reintegration are not confined solely to the individual either; they extend to the family unit and, ultimately, society as a whole**. Social reintegration programs that prioritize the involvement of families can help to improve familial relationships, promote positive communication, and foster a sense of social cohesion. By providing resources and services that address the needs of both the individual and their family members, social reintegration programs can strengthen the sense of belonging, and counter the negative impacts of social exclusion and stigma. This, in turn, can lead to more stable and harmonious communities. Thus, social reintegration serves as a valuable mechanism for preventing early criminality, promoting individual growth and development, improving familial relationships, and strengthening the overall social cohesion. Accordingly, the concept of social reintegration entails a range of activities and programs aimed at supporting individuals who have been involved in the criminal justice system to return to their communities.



Social Reintegration is a broad umbrella, which brings into action various institutions, and can be promoted at various stages of the criminal justice system, and consists of a diverse range of pathways. Some of these pathways for social reintegration include (but are not limited to):

DIVERSION

Diversion offers an alternative for individuals who get into conflict with the law. Instead of going through the usual legal processes, the aim is to steer them away from the formal criminal justice system. Diversion mechanisms are especially useful for preventing early delinquency for youth. It helps avoid labeling them as “troublemakers” too early. The idea is also to lessen the need for them to be taken away from their homes as a punishment. It’s all about giving young people better support. Some programmes that can be provided under diversion include:

**RESTORATIVE CAUTIONING/
WARNING PROGRAMMES**

**REFERRAL TO TREATMENT
AND/OR FACILITY**

**EDUCATIONAL OR
MENTORING PROGRAMMES**

**PREVENTION OR
INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES**

COMMUNITY BASED SANCTIONS

Community-based sanctions are a different approach to punishment within the legal process. Instead of going to jail, people stay in their own community. This helps them take responsibility for their actions, while also getting the support they need to reintegrate into society. It’s a way to avoid prison and give individuals a chance to make things right while rebuilding their lives in their own community. Some community based sanctions include:

PROBATIONS

COMMUNITY SERVICE

HOME CONFINEMENT

ELECTRONIC MONITORING

CUSTODIAL MEASURES

Custodial measures, occurring within the criminal justice process, involve placing certain individuals under supervision within specific facilities, such as prisons, rather than allowing them unrestricted freedom in society. Imprisonment aims to prevent dangerous individuals and crime from adversely impacting the community. However, it remains crucial to implement measures and programs that actively promote reintegration even during periods of custody. Failing to do so increases the risk of individuals reoffending once they are no longer under supervision. Such programmes can be:

**REHABILITATION
PROGRAMMES**

**PSYCHOSOCIAL CARE
AND COUNSELLING**

**EDUCATIONAL AND
VOCATIONAL PROGRAMMES**

PRE-RELEASE AND RE-ENTRY PROGRAMMES

Pre-release and re-entry programs play a significant role in the phase of preparing for and supporting social re-entry. These programs are designed to assist individuals as they transition from being in prison to becoming active members of the community once again. The primary goal is to lower the chances of these individuals committing more crimes by addressing the underlying reasons for their criminal behavior. By providing essential support and guidance during this critical period, pre-release and re-entry programs contribute to a safer society while also giving individuals a better chance at a positive future. Such programmes may include:

**EMPLOYMENT AND JOB
SEEKING SERVICES**

**HEALTHCARE AND/OR
HOUSING PROVISION**

**RE-ENTRY PROGRAMMES ESPECIALLY FOR WOMEN
AND CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW**

EARLY OR CONDITIONAL RELEASE

Early or conditional release comes into play during the process of letting someone leave a place where they were held, such as a prison. This option is typically available to individuals who have shown good behavior. The main idea is to give them an opportunity to rejoin society before their full confinement period is completed, all while ensuring they remain answerable for their actions. This approach aims to support their reintegration into the community while maintaining accountability for their behavior. It can include:

PAROLE

CLEMENCY

POST RELEASE

Post-release refers to the period when individuals are released from places of confinement, like prisons. The main goal of this stage is to help and support individuals who have been released from prison in order to lower the chances of them committing more crimes. It involves giving them the necessary resources and help to successfully reintegrate into society, helping them start anew and not go back to their old ways. Post release services include:

**AFTERCARE AND
MONITORING**

**HALFWAY HOMES/
TRANSITIONAL HOUSING**

**EMPLOYMENT AND
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES**

**FOOD, CLOTHING AND OTHER
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

SNAPSHOT OF SOCIAL REINTEGRATION PROGRAMMES IN MALDIVES

The following tables show a snapshot of the currently available social reintegration programmes in the Maldives. Despite pathways to reintegration have been incorporated into law, there are still limited provisions and operational limitations of these programmes.

STAGE	PROGRAMME	LAW
INSTEAD OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM - Prosecutor General's Office	Diversion from prosecution	CPC Article 97 (a)
ALTERNATIVE SANCTIONS & REMAND	Non-custodial Measures such as fines, house arrest, community services, probation	Penal Code: Part 3 (1005 e) Sentencing Guideline
	Probation involves periodic meetings with a supervisory officer, regular drug or alcohol test, regular psychological counselling	
AS PART OF CUSTODIAL MEASURES Maldives Correctional Services	Prison based Reintegration Program "Phases program" 2016	Maldives Jail and Parole Act (14/2013)
	Early Release Scheme: Parole Program	Regulation on Parole (R-86/2020)
	Conditional Release	Not mandatory
	After care and Re-entry Assistance	No written policies
PRE- SENTENCING	The Clemency Early Release Scheme:	Clemency Act (Law no. 2/2010)

SOCIAL REINTEGRATION PROGRAMMES FOR CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW

STAGE	PROGRAMME	LAW
PRE-TRIAL DIVERSION Maldives Police Service	1. No Action/ Intervention 2. Verbal warning 3. Informal cautioning 4. Formal cautioning 5. Community conferencing	Juvenile Justice Act (18/2019) Article 33
DURING PROSECUTION Prosecutor General Office	Diversion given based on the Risk Assessment, Social Inquiry Report and Case Conference	Juvenile Justice Act (Article 31 and 38)
DURING SENTENCING IN TRIAL Juvenile Court	Alternative to Detention includes: 1. Postponement of verdict with conditions 2. confiscate money or property 3. Parental custody with condition 4. Probation 5. Institutional Treatment	Juvenile Justice Act Article 73: Measures Enforced by the Court
DURING DETENTION Maldives Correctional Service	1. Parole 2. Reporting 3. Rehabilitation/ Educational Programs	Juvenile Justice Act (18-2019)
DURING ALL CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS Department of Juvenile Justice	Rehabilitation programs for children include early intervention, disciplinary issues, drug rehabilitation, reintegration, special rehabilitation, and parenting training for various criminal offenses and societal marginalization.	JJA (Chapter 14, Article 75)

SOCIAL REINTEGRATION PROGRAMMES FOR DRUG-DEPENDENT PERSONS

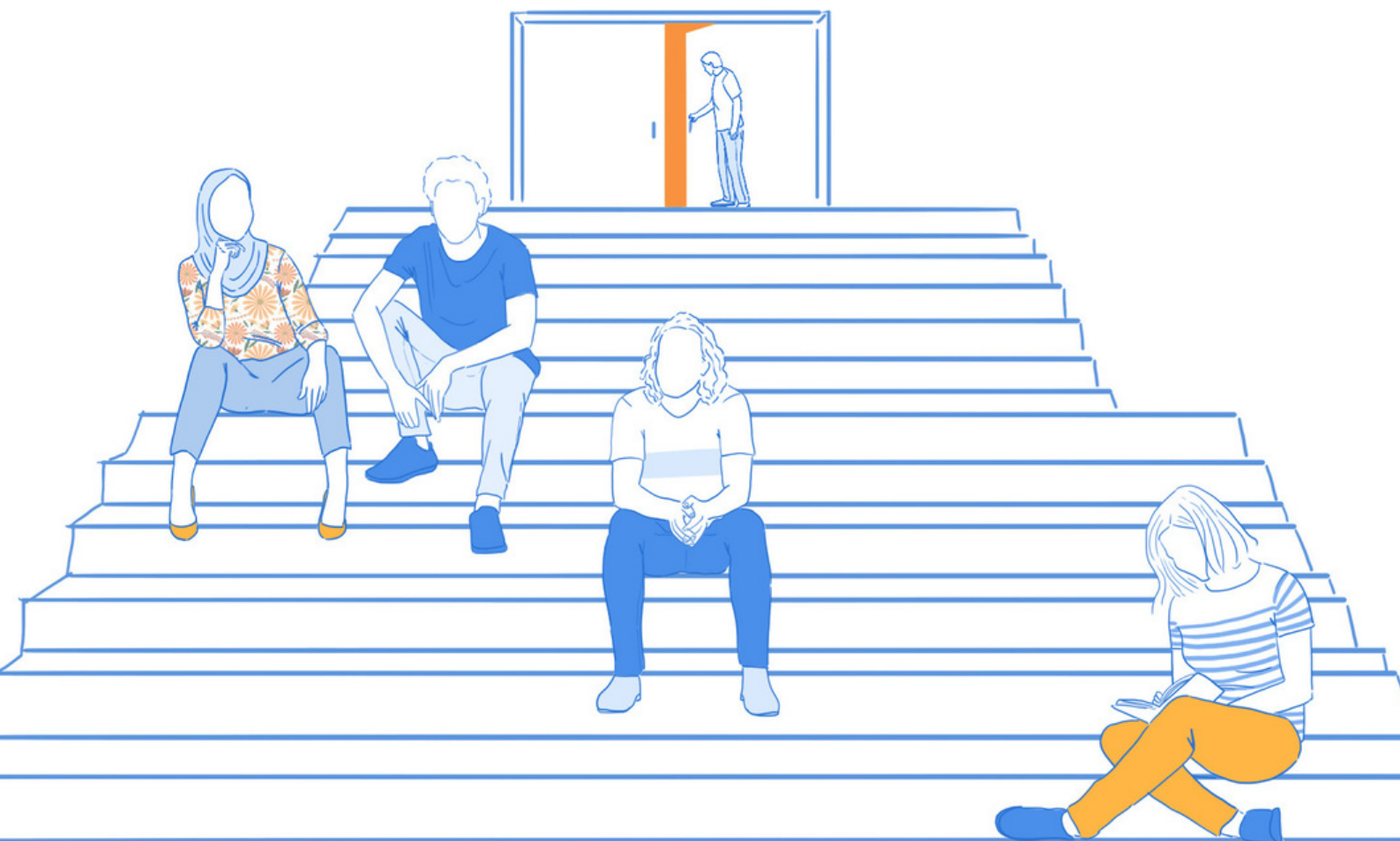
STAGE	PROGRAMME	LAW
ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION Drug Court / National Drug Agency	Drug Detoxification comprising of Medical and psychosocial components	Drug Act (2011)
	Community-based Reintegration: Basic and Extensive. Available in the Drug Detoxification and Community-Rehabilitation Centres and in the Half-way House in Hulhumale.	
	Residential Treatment Program in the Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre (DTRC) in Himmafushi.	

CONCLUSION

The traditional punitive approach to criminal justice has not been effective in addressing the root causes of crime in the Maldives, and there is an urgent need for social reintegration programs that focus on restoring and rehabilitating offenders. Through research and advocacy, TM has been working towards addressing the root causes of social exclusion and other socioeconomic vulnerabilities as well as promoting social reintegration at various levels of society among both state and non-state actors.

TM's efforts to promote social reintegration for ex-offenders could serve as a model for other civil society organizations by leveraging partnerships with government agencies, businesses, and community organizations. However, it is important to acknowledge that this is just the beginning, and there is still much work to be done to scale up and expand reintegration related initiatives to reach a larger population of ex-offenders.

The experience of TM shows that social reintegration programmes can be effective in reducing recidivism rates and promoting a more inclusive society. However, the success of these programmes depends on a national commitment to the issue, as well as political will to prioritize social reintegration as a key part of the criminal justice system. This means investing in reintegration programmes and in addressing the root causes of socioeconomic vulnerabilities. At the same time, civil society must continue to play an active role in promoting these efforts and advocating for the human rights of ex-offenders. Ultimately, a successful approach to social reintegration requires a holistic, collaborative effort that involves not only government agencies and civil society organisations, but also the broader community. By working together, we can build a more inclusive and just society, one in which every individual has the opportunity for meaningful participation in the community.



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