

UNODC ‘Building Networks Behind Prison Walls’ Webinar Series continues with special focus on Drug Dependence Treatment in Prisons

Over 11M people are currently imprisoned globally, and People in Prisons (PIP) suffer from a disproportionately high rate of Drug Use Disorders (DUD).¹ Working to raise awareness of this important issue, the 7th webinar in the ‘Building Networks’ series was held online, on the 18th of March 2021, by the [UNODC ROSAF](#) team in partnership

with the [African HIV & Health in Prisons Partnership Network \(AHPPN\)](#) and addressed the issue of drug dependence treatment in prisons. This webinar built upon previous episodes in the series, which focused on topics such as mental health in prisons, continuity of HIV treatment after release, sexual violence in prisons, and the re-integration of ex-PIP into their local community.

The main objectives of the Drug Dependence Treatment webinar were to highlight the importance of addressing DUD in prisons, to further support the work of the UNODC and its partner organizations in this endeavour, and to guide policymakers and other regional and national stakeholders in developing programmes, policies and systems that are a truly effective investment in the health and wellbeing of PIP. During the opening remarks, Signe Rotberga of UNODC ROSAF called attention to positive practices being



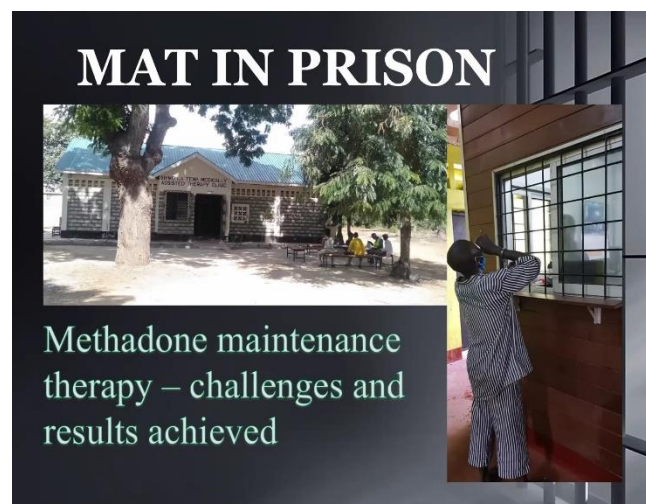
‘Building Networks’ Drug Dependence Treatment in Prisons Webinar, 2021

used to treat DUD in prisons, and welcomed the three expert panelists who joined the webinar: Dr. Fayzal Sulliman - UNODC Regional Office for Eastern Africa, Dr. Astia Murni – Directorate Generat of Prisons, Indonesia and Mr. Kenrodgers Mutemi – Kenyan Prison Service.

Dr. Murni spoke on the practical implementation of drug treatment

¹ Chloé Carpentier, Luis Royuela, Linda Montanari, and Philip Davis, “The global epidemiology of drug use in prison,” *Drug use in prisoners: Epidemiology, implications, and policy responses* (2018): 17-41.

research in Indonesia. Following this, Dr. Sulliman provided the participants with an overview of international standards and key principles for organizing drug dependence treatment in prison settings. Finally, Kenrodgers Mutemi delivered a presentation highlighting the challenges and successes of methadone maintenance therapy in Shimo la Tewa Prison, Kenya.



Shimo la Tewa Prison, Kenya, 2021

Throughout the webinar, the guests in attendance were provided with an opportunity to raise their questions and comments. One of the most interesting topics of discussion for attendees was the success of the methadone therapy project implemented in Shimo la Tewa Prison. This project, which saw UNODC partner with the Kenyan Prison Service, resulted in the construction of a methadone clinic at Shimo la Tewa Prison. The facility is run by prison staff in partnership with NGOs and private medical practitioners and serves both PIP and clients from the local community. With the support of the Kenyan government and law enforcement agencies, this program has managed to reduce illicit opioid use within the prison and surrounding community, reduce mortality and morbidity among drug users, and reduce the spread of blood-borne illnesses such as HIV.

The attentiveness and engagement in these topics by more than 50 webinar participants illustrated the effectiveness of the webinar in facilitating the exchange of current experiences, such as the methadone project, and enhancing knowledge of DUD in prisons and effective treatment programmes.

The [‘Building Networks Behind Prison Walls’ webinar series](#) allows for many NGOs, correctional services, and other facilities to exchange ideas, highlight essential issues, and share best practices in order to improve the lives of PIP, prison staff and local communities. The ‘Building Networks’ series will return in April 2021. Join us then!

Additional Resources:

Alternatives to Conviction:

[https://www.unodc.org/drug-treatment/UNODC Alternatives Poster updated November 19.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/drug-treatment/UNODC_Alternatives_Poster_updated_November_19.pdf)

Nelson Mandela Rules

<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/justice-and-prison-reform/NMRules.html>

HIV Prevention in Prisons and other closed settings

[https://www.unodc.org/documents/hiv-aids/publications/Prisons and other closed settings/20-06330 HIV update eBook.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/hiv-aids/publications/Prisons_and_other_closed_settings/20-06330_HIV_update_eBook.pdf)

Women and HIV in prison settings

<https://www.unodc.org/documents/hiv-aids/Women%20and%20HIV%20in%20prison%20settings.pdf>