Investing in women & communities through non-custodial measures

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PROMOTING ALTERNATIVES TO IMPRISONMENT FOR WOMEN IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW
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Making the case: The investment model & non-custodial measures

The investment model:
Funding policies and practices that improve outcomes by investing in all forms of capital

Two key points:
The rationale for non-custodial measures
Non-custodial measures in policy and practices
The rationale for non-custodial measures

Acknowledging the gendered harm and unnecessary suffering for women in prison

Recognizing the ability of justice systems to make rapid change in the face of the pandemic

Grounding in the realities and profiles of women as low risk

These policy actions open the door to a larger discussion of how women can be more safely and more productively supervised within their own communities through non-custodial alternatives to imprisonment.
The rationale for non-custodial measures

Non-custodial measures avoid the problems created by unnecessary and punitive imprisonment, through funding and implementing community policies that include:

- programs and services that target pathways factors that improve outcomes for women in real-world settings
- meeting fundamental needs such as housing, employment as well as treatment
- practices that emphasize relationships with family and children (IPV must be considered)
- opportunities to both develop and maintain community ties
- local investment to strengthen community rather than spending on often far-removed prisons
Empirical evidence for non-custodial measures

A review of evidenced-based practice and corresponding evaluation studies demonstrates both the utility and the efficiency of community-based sanctions.

A review of these findings show clearly that:

- **external services** such as education and training, housing supports, childcare and other resources that target pathway factors

- when combined with therapies and treatment opportunities that **support internal change** through treatment, therapy and other healing services

- **produce the strongest positive outcome** in terms of pro-social behavior, decreased problematic behaviors and overall success on supervision.
NCMs are community-based solutions

To **improve outcomes** for women, their children and the community, successful NCMs share these steps:

- **Engage individuals** as full partners in developing treatment plans
- Develop a **system of comprehensive and holistic services** with case-management
- Address **key pathway needs through external services** that support **internal change** through treatment and external resources **to promote self-sufficiency**
- Directly address **intimate partner violence (IPV) and trauma**
- Provide **staff training and administrative support**
- Community **collaboration**
- Incorporate **safety and dignity at every stage** of involvement in CJ system
More evidence

Convincingly, this research shows that investing in women-centered practices amplifies this effect.

Gender-informed and evidenced-based practice then is more effective in meeting the goals of the justice system than punitive sanctions.
The time is now to reduce over-reliance on prison and its counterproductive outcomes. We have invested in the failure of the prison.

Charge now is to invest in future success of gender-responsive NCM.

NCM with gender-appropriate services has been shown repeatedly to produce much better outcomes than prison sentences of any kind.

We have an opportunity to change the way we spend criminal justice and public safety money.
Implementing human rights reforms through NCM is not a mystery. It is a puzzle. These pieces are supplied in the NCM Toolkit, as well as in the Bangkok Rules and supporting human rights instruments. We have the pieces; now we need to find the will. Thank you for listening to me.