

MANAGING RISK BY BRINGING MINDSETS TOGETHER

'Thinking is difficult, that`s why most people judge'

Good morning everyone. Welcome. As President of ICPA it is a great honour for me to welcome you all to this conference. A special welcome to the Prime Minister, welcome to colleagues from all over the world and in particular the hosts of this conference. Ladies and Gentlemen, distinguished guests, welcome to all of you.

Also a special welcome to Ole Ingstrup and Reggie Wilkinson since they were our first President and Vice President. And of course a special welcome to our major sponsors The GEO Group, Serco, Our Top Supporters Freephone, Telio Management, Sodexo Justice Services, and last but not least our global event sponsor G4S Australia & New Zealand. And to our 'Public Sector Members' with whom we seek to collaborate with for the advancement of professional corrections'.

I want to give you my thoughts on the theme of this conference. Many may remember that I like to compare these themes with my own fundamental principle, which is: *'Bring prison into the community and the community into the prison'*.

For a moment let us reflect on recent ICPA conferences. In 2011 in Singapore I became more and more convinced that a good relationship between the correctional service and the community is of paramount importance. I became even more enthused by the fundamental idea that a symbiotic relationship between the correctional services and the community is critical in achieving a safe society. During that powerful Conference there were many examples, but the most inspiring was the Yellow Ribbon project. It was remarkable that so many improvements were achieved with apparently little outlay. They really did believe that Everybody deserves a second chance

The logic is inescapable. Isn't it? The interconnectedness of the community and the correctional institutions is the critical relationship that will lead to a reduction in recidivism that will create a safer community. Or put another way, effective collaboration is a prerequisite for effective reintegration and therefore an effective way to protect the community. Later on I will return to this topic.

Ladies and Gentleman, I consider this conference as the last part of a trilogy which started two years ago.

In Colorado in 2013 you were invited to *Think Outside the Cell* in order to find other solutions for the incarceration of millions of people. This theme resonates with a founding ICPA value that *'the use of imprisonment only as a last resort'*. The use of imprisonment as an ultimatum remedium. It is the founding testimony of ICPA, our most basic value carved in stone. During

that conference I explained my firm belief that we have to tackle social exclusion by imprisonment and strive to a more socially inclusive approach. Moreover imprisonment is a very expensive solution, while other cheaper solutions are available. Last summer, on July 14, during the Second World Congress on Community Corrections in Los Angeles, I had moved on in my thinking and believe that *'the future of prison is outside prison'*.

This thinking to reduce the use of incarceration is being echoed around the world. In Europe, in the USA, where there are a couple of examples. On July 14, US President Barack Obama gave a major speech outlining the moral and economic case for shrinking the prison population, rehabilitating inmates instead of merely locking them up and addressing the disproportionate impact of policing and criminal prosecution on poor black communities. Obama wants to end the mass incarceration. A brilliant example of a movement towards another solution. Even in Texas which is not known for its liberal views it recognizes that mass incarceration does not work. I see that the Minister of Justice in UK went there to see first hand what they are doing to improve rehabilitation.

Last year, at our conference in Windhoek Namibia, we talked about changing the mindset. There the theme was *'From incarceration to reintegration'*. Discussions took place in the context of the vision, the objectives and the values of ICPA. In my speech there I presented a thought based on *'The system is broken, the system is insane'*. I emphasized that ICPA has the intention of promoting ethical and rights-based imprisonment and that good detention conditions are a very important prerequisite for the rehabilitation of offenders. Research has shown that a climate with positive, supportive treatment contributes to a positive behavior and reduces the risk of recidivism, as opposed to a repressive treatment. Respect the detainee as an appreciated and full citizen and as a normal human being. The best *'antidote'* to prevent recidivism is an approach, which balances on the one hand a combination of safety, care, fairness and dignified human treatment, and on the other hand the need by society for the return of a reformed inmate into a free society. So, last year we pleaded from the moment that someone is incarcerated, we have to plan for their successful release and rehabilitation. And in Windhoek we heard of many outstanding new initiatives from all over the world.

And now, 2015, we have the next chapter in the trilogy, namely *'Managing Risk in Contemporary Correctional Systems'*. The organizing committee is offering you a balanced program with very interesting lectures and workshops. There will be a focus on Risk Management within the institutions. In terms of managing risks by practicing dynamic security, assessments, and screenings, by offering special programs for identified groups of high risk offenders, and offering programs aimed at behavioral changes and the reduction of the recidivism, in many cases using technology solutions.

I would now like to focus on the more external levels of risk management. Besides the need for well-developed systems for managing risk in prison and programs for the period after detention, it is necessary to prepare detainees properly and adequately for their return to the community. Not only to rehabilitate but also to manage the risks of reoffending.

Getting out of the prison is one thing, staying out is another...

It's a challenge for the former detainee, but also a challenge for the community and the probation officers. It is my conviction that the preparatory work for successful rehabilitation begins in the prison as a collaborative exercise between the prison staff, the probation staff, the prisoner and the community where appropriate. In my opinion a social inclusion-oriented model is a prerequisite of a successful reintegration. I am persuaded that a stronger and a more fundamental involvement of the community and the politicians is at the core a complementary and most effective way of managing the risks in the contemporary practice of the corrections. I hope that I can convince you that the social exclusion in most of our current correctional systems is a road that comes to a dead end and that we have to exchange this outmoded model for the model of a more social inclusion-oriented approach.

In fact, this thinking in terms of social inclusion is not a new way of reasoning, but frequently this way of thinking is subordinated to a more classical variant, which is focused on a managerial approach. In my opinion it's wrong to embark upon this line of thinking and we need to break away from this model. In this perspective we need to exchange it for a detainee-centered approach. This alternative is fully in line with a basic principle of ICPA that a detained person is a citizen and remains a citizen and cannot be 'downgraded' from a legal entity with all its dignity, from a respected subject to a logistical entity

Generally speaking it can be said that only banning people into incarceration is hardly a solution to a safer society. The question therefore is, why are we locking up people? In the international literature you can find four goals for incarceration: retribution, rehabilitation, prevention and protection.

In our global penal and penitentiary reality all these goals are used. Often with integrity, but frequently they are misused. The protection of society is very frequently abused by governments as an excuse and allows some regimes to incapacitate people who have deviant thoughts, other religions or other sexual preferences and which have no basis in the laws of the country.

The world famous Swiss Psychiatrist Carl Jung once said: *'Thinking is difficult, that's why most people judge'*. Many decision makers on the political and administrative levels have severe problems with thinking in a nuanced manner how to respond to deviant or abnormal behavior and how to react to the behavior of non-law abiding citizens. We have to help them with this.

I strongly believe that in general the penal and the penitentiary system are focused too much on retribution. From the perspective of victims I can fully respect that their way of thinking, their feelings of revulsion and disgust are directed against the offender, because of the injustice and pain that has been caused to them. However we should not base correctional policy just on either retribution on the one hand or a spirit of detainee-centric thinking on the other. We would be wrong to go for one or the other. We need to find a balance between the two.

In my opinion there is a third very important and relevant stakeholder, namely the community as civil society. In the traditional outmoded way of thinking, imprisonment is used as a political and managerial instrument to ensure greater security in society. But is it actually achieving that? In effect we often treat the symptoms and not the causes. Nobody doubts that the community benefits when the detainee does not reoffend. These benefits are mutual, and essential to both parties. But this needs to be better recognized so that it becomes the norm. But it is not the norm.

It seems that some politicians and citizens may think on one level but act on another.

I'm not pleading for an abolition of the incarceration. But I have many arguments to plead for a fundamental reconsideration of how it is used. In this context I think that it is of paramount importance that we start thinking instead of judging.

Ladies and gentleman, therefore, it's necessary that we have to build bridges with the politicians and the community. Why? Because, some members of the community, and some politicians, have a misunderstanding about detainees, their problems, their needs and their aspirations. They also have a misunderstanding about what happens in a correctional facility. We need to connect the prison more with the community. I think that it is our duty, a commitment for all the professionals in corrections, to set up, to create a redesigned and reframed mindset with the politicians and the community.

Let me refer again to the quote of Carl Jung. In fact, the meaning of his words is that we have to invest in thinking or at least to invest in learning to think, instead of investing in creating myths. This way of thinking, of renewing and reframing the mindset is not a magic remedy to solve all the problems in a short term, but it is a prerequisite to be able to change.

Perhaps, we have communicated too little or ineffectively and this means that ignorance, or gut feeling combines to degenerate into a political game with short-term gain.

However, we simply cannot remain silent. We have to set out our arguments so that politicians, policymakers and the community learn from us, the professional practitioners. In the end we have to hope that they will listen to our evidence based considerations.

It is a big challenge and a long walk. Still I am persuaded of the fact that at its essence an existential and sustainable involvement of the community and politicians is the most effective way of '*Managing Risk in Contemporary Correctional Systems*', it's a sort of 'managing risk by bringing mindsets together'.

Thank you for your attention.

The Hague, October 2015