

Strengthening the Critical Role of Community Volunteers in building Safer Societies

Public Lecture on Criminal Justice Policy
Friday 30th January 2024
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Ambassador – Confederation of European
Probation (CEP)

Lecture Overview

Strengthening the Critical
Role of Community
Volunteers in Building
Safer Societies, by...



1. England and Wales

“Setting the Scene”

Professional Journey: Aim, to illustrate
the *Richness of Volunteer work* from
which we can draw



2. European Experience

International Rules/Guidance;
Deeper dive: Roles, *Challenges*
(e.g. community awareness, recruitment,
training, support, retention, evaluation),
Developments to address them



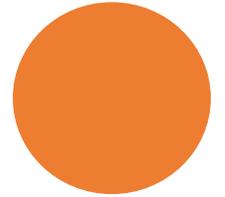
3. Global Collaboration for Safer Societies

Strengthening the Volunteer Role Globally
Guidance, Evidence, Collaboration,
Inspiration!

Introductory remarks...

A kind acknowledgement of -

- my family - who introduced me to the work of probation volunteers
- the hospitality offered by VPOs – Hogoshi - during the 3rd World Congress on Probation – Tokyo - and subsequently
 - and the insights into the work of Hogoshi to support desistance from crime
- of the strong global leadership of Japan in addressing community safety, and especially
 - Kyoto Model Strategies on Reducing Reoffending
 - Strengthening the role of community volunteers esp. 3 World Congresses on Community Volunteers



An illustration of a London street scene. In the background, the Big Ben clock tower stands tall on the left, and the London Eye Ferris wheel is on the right. A river flows between them. In the foreground, a red double-decker bus is on the left, a black taxi is in the center, and another red double-decker bus is on the right. Pedestrians are walking on the sidewalks. The sky is blue with white clouds.

1. Community Volunteering in England and Wales

An historical and
professional note...



The origins of modern Probation work are found in volunteering in the 19th Century





An historical note...

Historically in Europe - 19th century - including the United Kingdom and Netherlands - Volunteers, often attached to churches or charities, worked with courts to offer community-based support to offenders – especially those with drink problems. In England, Frederic Rainer’s voluntary work led to the “Police Court Missionaries”

USA – 1841 - Boston – John Augustus “Father of Probation” – a bootmaker, for 18 years a court volunteer driven by belief in rehabilitation and helping those who abused alcohol - through kindness and moral persuasion...

Ireland work with discharged prisoners developed, an early form of parole from 1850s.

Objective – reform...

Followed over time by moves towards a formalised probation service -

For example, UK 1887, Probation of First Offenders Act allowed a person charged on a first offence to be released without punishment.

In 1907 the Probation Service was created.

Volunteering in England and Wales today

Two distinct areas of voluntary activity in our field –

- More formal – in courts, prisons...

For example, court magistrates, legal guardians, prison visitors and advisory board members

- Widespread engagement of community volunteers in civil society through NGOs - and on occasion by probation departments directly

A scenic landscape featuring a large, mature tree with dense foliage in the foreground. The tree stands on a grassy slope. In the background, there are rolling hills under a sky with scattered clouds. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

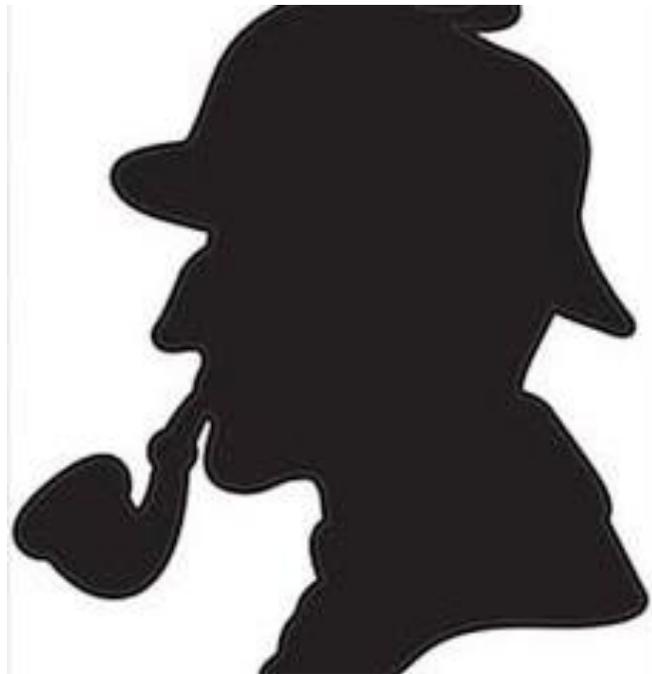
England and Wales

The Volunteer Landscape and Personal Perspectives

Informed by personal and (mainly) professional experiences working with and managing volunteers, witnessing their invaluable contribution to probation (and prison) work and to safer societies...



Raised in the rural South-West of England, I was aware 60 years ago of Dartmoor prison. Opened 1809. As local people, we were conscious of its forbidding reputation, but we had little real information about the prisoners it housed or the work of the prison and probation services.

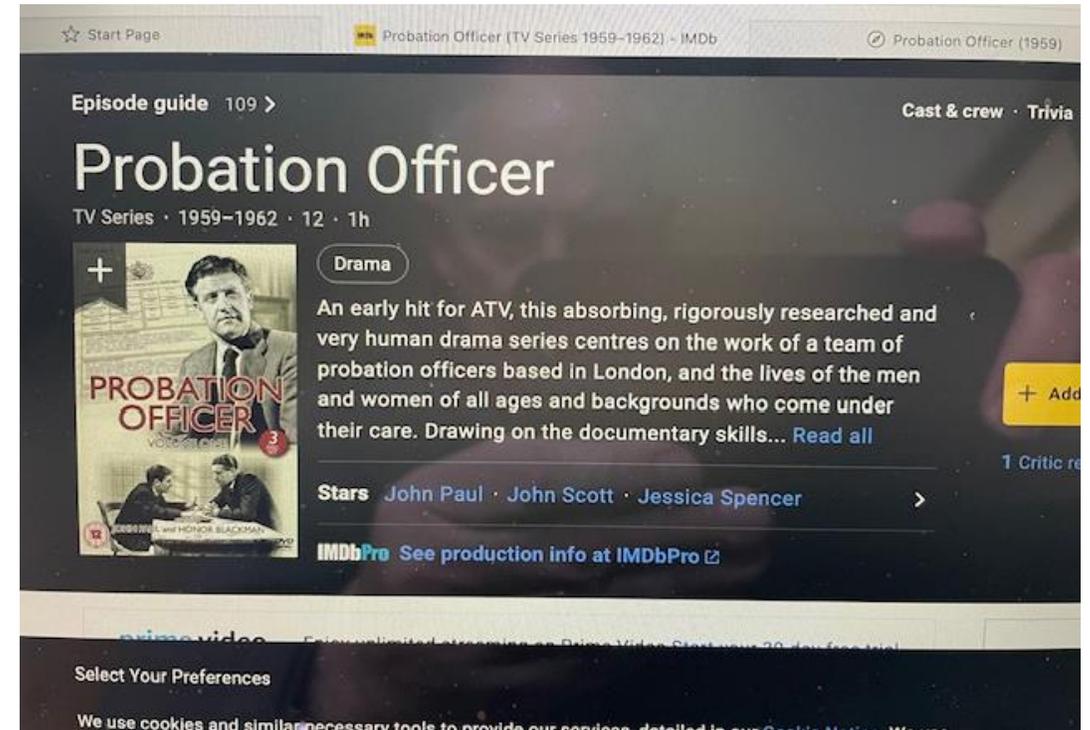


The prison featured regularly in literature and in the public imagination!

(Several iconic British fictional characters made it their job to track down previous prison residents!)

In fact, unclear Public Perception & Understanding of our work – A Challenge?

- A new (1959!) series – “The Probation Officer”
- Need to “demystify” – increase public understanding of - probation
- Someone I knew became a probation volunteer!
- Opportunity to challenge stereotypes – “person behind the statistic” - more balanced understanding of risks and needs
- Applied to become a PO



Is unclear public perception a challenge in recruiting volunteers?
Can volunteers also be an important part of the solution i.e.; demystifying probation work?



1970's The "Cyrenians" (Bristol)
Charitable house for Homeless
People including probationers
and ex-prisoners

Managed by a mainly Voluntary
Committee - and run by
volunteers (I was one!)

Experienced: the Vital roles
played by volunteers giving time,
skills, energy – often with little
direct reward or recognition and
often "below the radar".

London 1981...

London 1981 – serious civil disturbances – ...led to national enquiry – deprivation, race tensions



PA MEDIA



- Probation response – a “hub” (1:1, group work, community engagement)
- 4 POs, c20+ volunteers - wide variety of roles (1:1, groups, activities; community liaison and development)
- **Learnt:** Volunteers a key “bridge”, building community awareness and understanding.. Volunteers, including celebrities, inspire - role models
- Benefits to probation staff (time, insight, support...)

In short – volunteers were central to our work!

England and Wales today

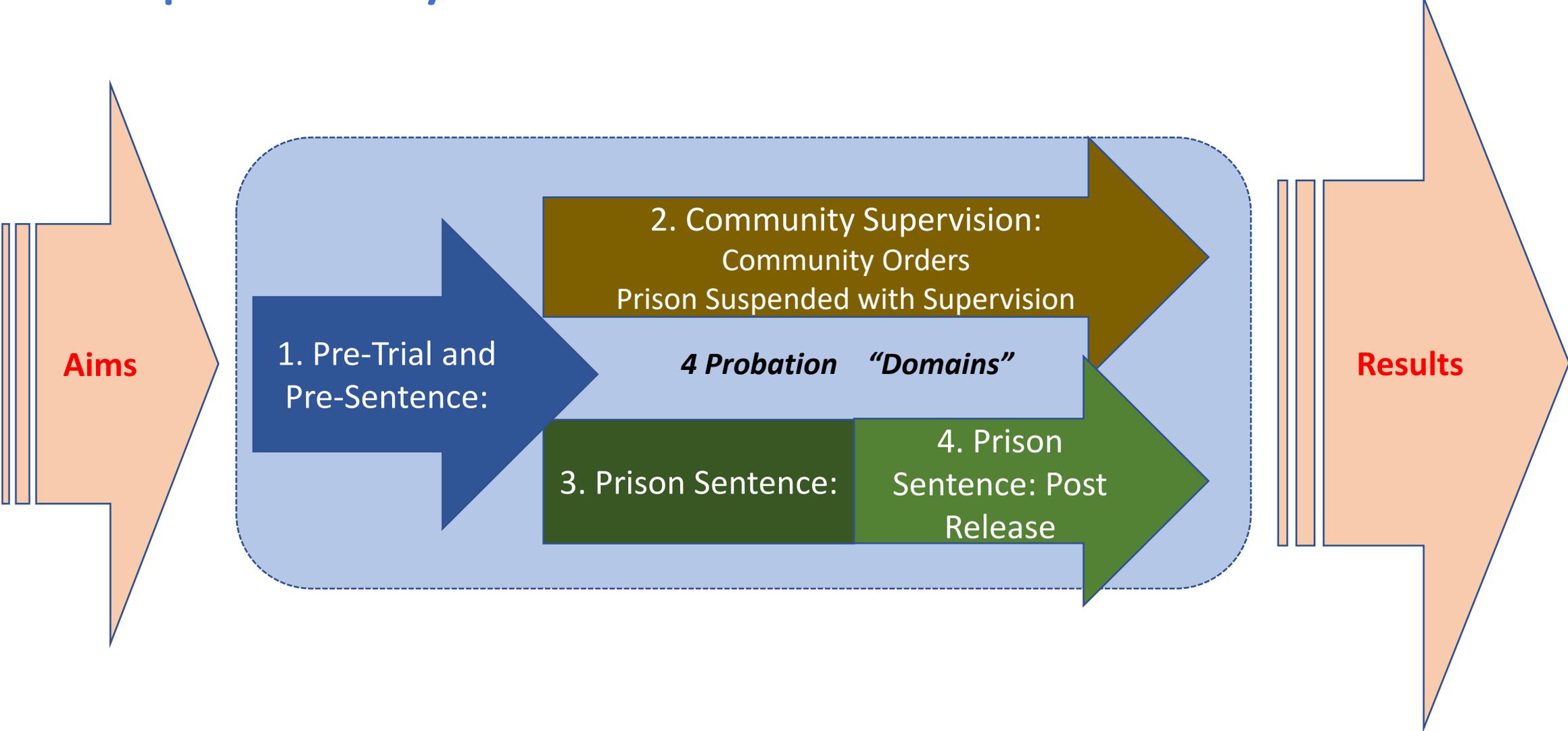
A very Wide Variety of Volunteer Activity -

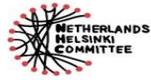
- Some volunteers specialise in meeting the needs of a particular **group of people**, for example women, older people, or people from particular ethnic groups, prisoners and their families.
- Other volunteers focus on a particular critical **issue**, for example substance misuse, debt advice, or housing.
- Some volunteer groups focus on a **form of intervention** - the arts, restorative justice, sports, and so on.
- Information on hundreds of voluntary and community organisations working in the criminal justice system is provided in the Clinks' Directory of Services - an online database

(Slide based on presentation by Dr Andrew Watson – 2nd WCCV 2024)



Volunteers contribute to all Four “Domains” or Areas of Responsibility of Probation - and Prisons - Work!

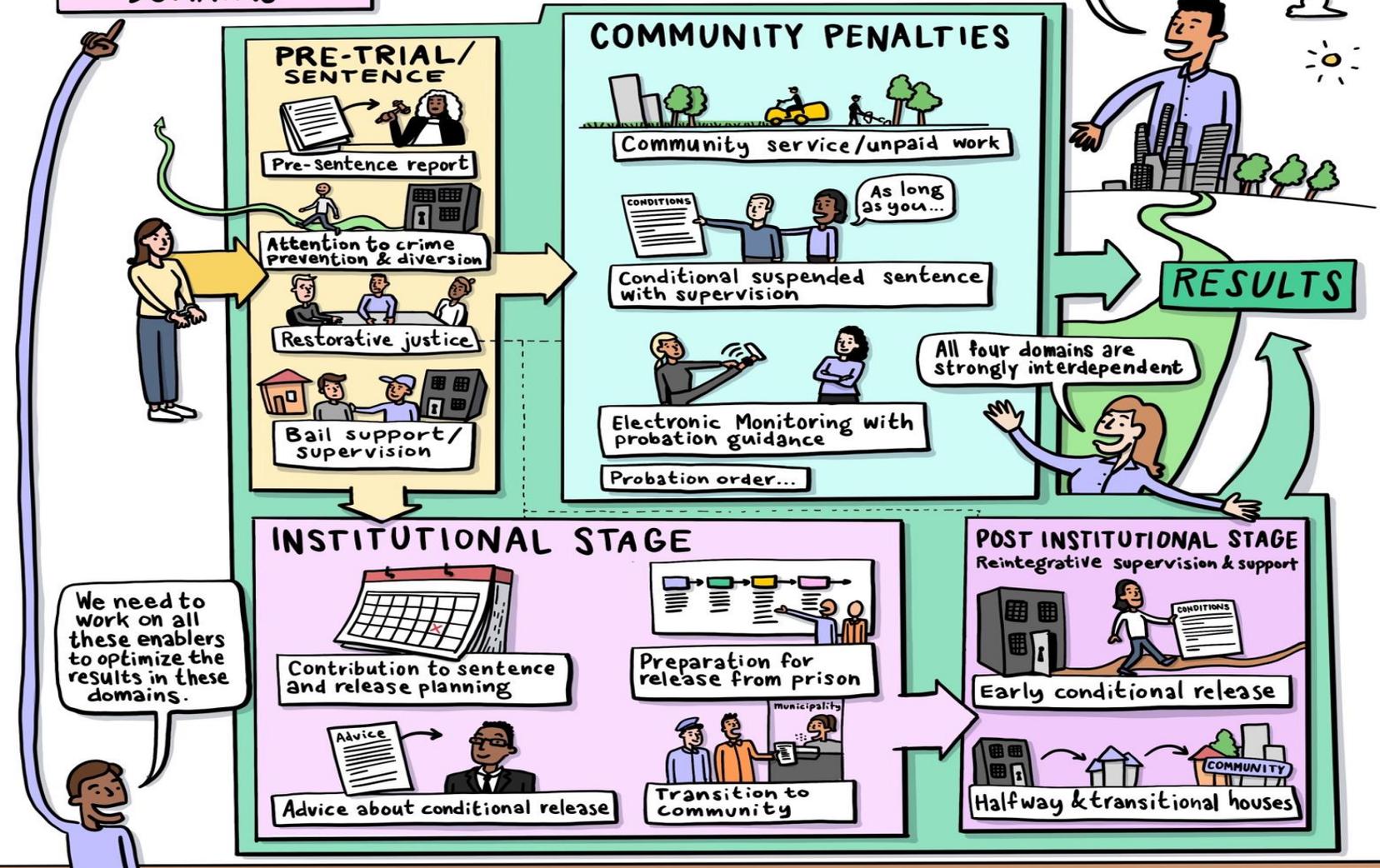




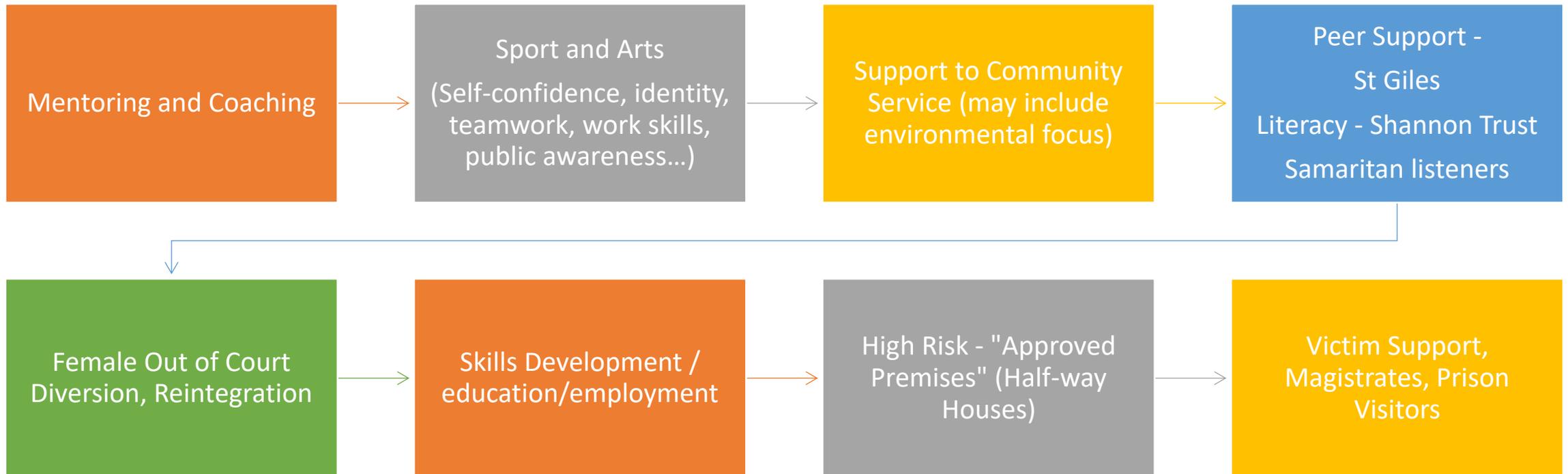
PROBATION CAPACITY BUILDING

AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY/
DOMAINS

Objectives: reducing reoffending, supporting reintegration, preventing further victims, reduce the use of prison...



England and Wales today – A Diversity of Volunteer Roles, needs and client groups - some examples include -



LandWorks

- LandWorks provides trainees with
- Vocational and work experience
- Across a range of enterprises on
- our site, shop, and a pottery studio
- and more...



Image and content from LandWorks website

LandWorks - Volunteers and
Desistance – Food
Horticulture, Preparation, Serving,
Building confidence, Social skills

Join a Lunch



- The daily lunch at LandWorks where volunteers (from the community) cook lunch (using food grown on site by people on day release and probation) with people on day release and on probation, where the trainees, volunteers, staff and visitors eat together; show appreciation for whoever has cooked the food and at the end of meal celebrate successes, completing training, getting a volunteering position elsewhere, getting a job (Parsons 2025)



The CLINK Charity





What is The Twinning Project?

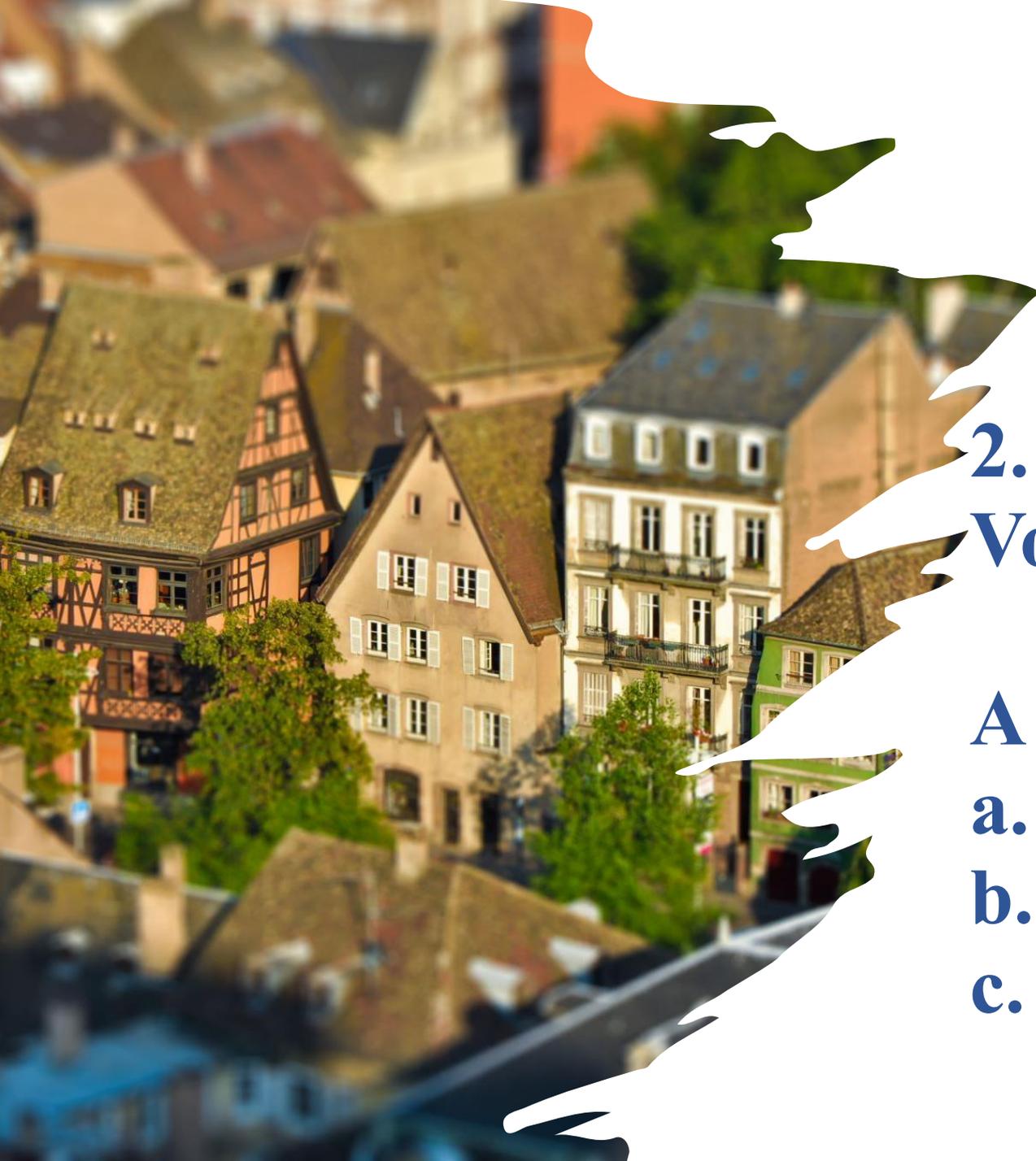
The Twinning Project is a partnership between HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) and professional football clubs with the objective of twinning every prison in England and Wales with a local professional football club.

The aim is to engage approximately 48 prisoners per year in each of the 122 prisons and Young Offender Institutions prisons in England and Wales in football-based programmes to improve their mental and physical health, wellbeing and obtain a qualification which will help improve their life chances and gain employment on release.

Don't look down on someone, unless you are helping them up.

Jesse Jackson





2. Community Volunteering in Europe

A deeper dive -

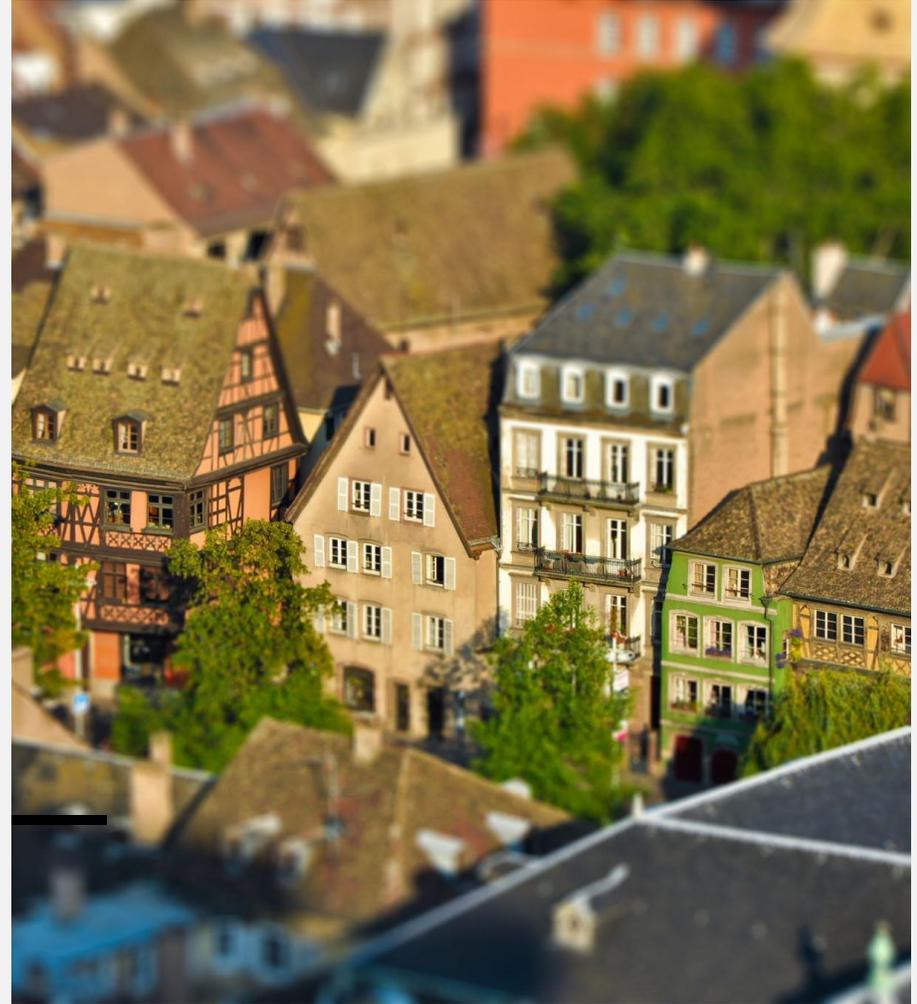
- a. Rules and Guidance**
- b. The Volunteer Landscape**
- c. Challenges, Developments**

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Community Volunteering in Europe

a) European Rules and Guidance



Europe...Guidance Importance of the work of community volunteers ...

Recommendation CM/Rec (2017) 3 on the European Rules on community sanctions and measures

“The involvement of volunteers can be part of the contribution made by wider civil society in responding to crime, rather than handing over such work solely to professionals”.



“Justice cannot be effectively administered in isolation from the community it seeks to serve; it requires both the acceptance and the respect of the public. This level of confidence and commitment is most likely to be achieved if members of the public are encouraged and enabled to participate in the administration of justice”.

Europe...Guidance Importance of the work of community volunteers ...

Recommendation CM/Rec (2017) 3 on the European Rules on community sanctions and measures



“Although they are formally associated with the authority in this way, just because they are not professionals and are unpaid, their ***contribution is different and can serve to make and strengthen bonds with the community.***

Like professionals, volunteers can help suspects and offenders change their lives, can serve as a positive role model, and help offenders understand the harm done by offending”.

“They can also work as ***mentors*** and can ***befriend*** suspects and offenders, offering a relationship that is ***valued all the more because it is less formal*** than the relationship with a supervising officer. Suspects and offenders often especially ***appreciate the time and commitment of people who are giving their support and advice without payment.*** Volunteers may assist professional staff in a range of practical tasks by agreement with the authority. Volunteers can also act as ‘***champions***’ of community sanctions and measures, ***helping society to better understand their aims and value”***

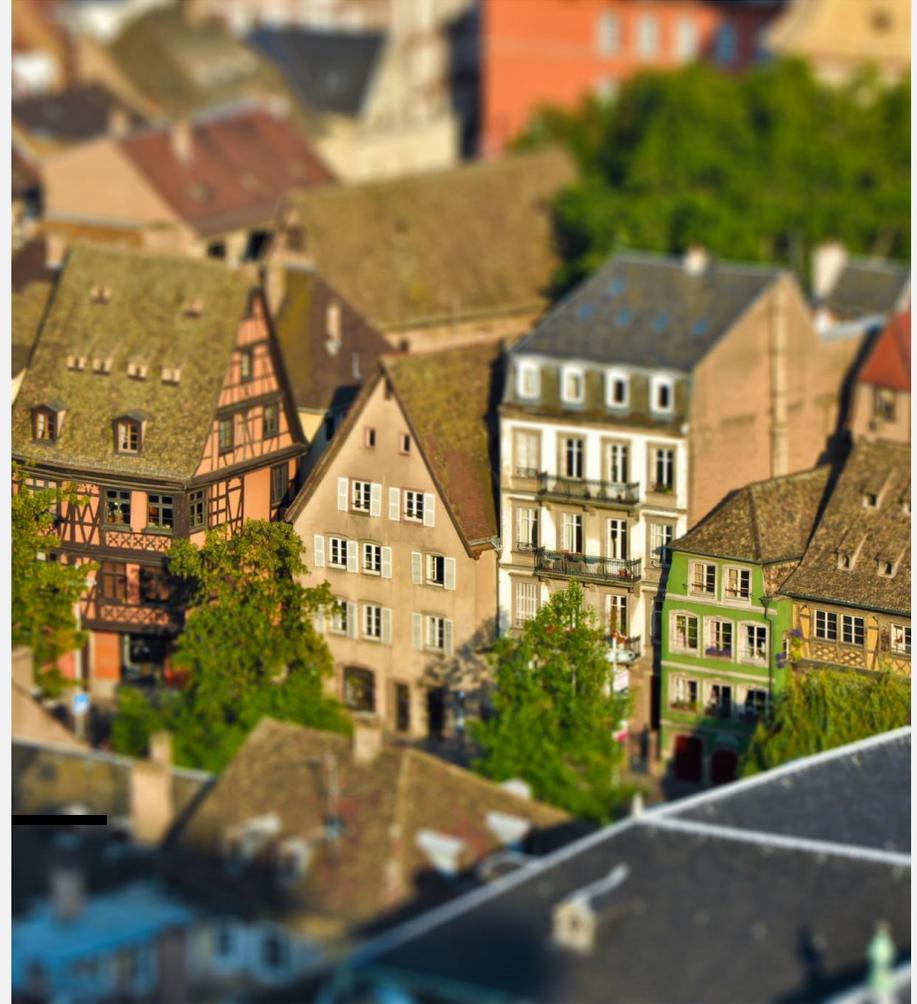
Note: Emphasis added

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Community Volunteering in Europe

b) Volunteer Landscape (Structures and Roles)



Volunteer Landscape - Structures and Roles in Europe

**A wide variety of
structures/organizational
arrangements, and volunteer
roles/activities**

**Allows flexibility to meet
need and volunteer interest?**

***The following represents a
small “snapshot” within
Europe***



Approaches to volunteer organization

- Recruited by main probation service provider – volunteers have a mainly befriending or specialized role
- Recruited by main probation service provider – volunteer role closely integrated with professionals
- Recruited by NGOs / CBOs / Civil Society....
- Hybrid Approach



Volunteer RolesNGO/CBOs often recruit and deploy volunteers ...they are involved in a wide variety of activities –

- **Volunteers have a single or multiple focus, for example support to probationers, resettlement from prison, perhaps also mediation**
- **Multiple focus - justice system AND other (non-offender) client groups (e.g. youth, mental health, women)**
- **May in part or whole involve peer / desistor mentors**
- **Other roles, e.g. overseas prisoners, higher risk probationers**



Example - Austria

INTEGRATED Volunteers and Professionals

NEUSTART – Probation Service - Private not-for-profit organization

Volunteers and Professionals working closely together

Number of volunteers – 992 (f 59.85% m 39.72%)

Number of professional employees – 432 (f 57.4%, m 42.36%)

Role - personal tutor, social work



Requirements include

Compulsory education curriculum

Team working led by professional, regular team meetings

Full case responsibility (supervisory control by team leader)

Selected cases, maximum 5 clients

Quality manual for volunteers

Expenses

Significance includes

Additional

- *know-how and work experience*
- *personal potential in supervision*
- *external resources*

Experience – 8.5 years average

Ambassadors of values

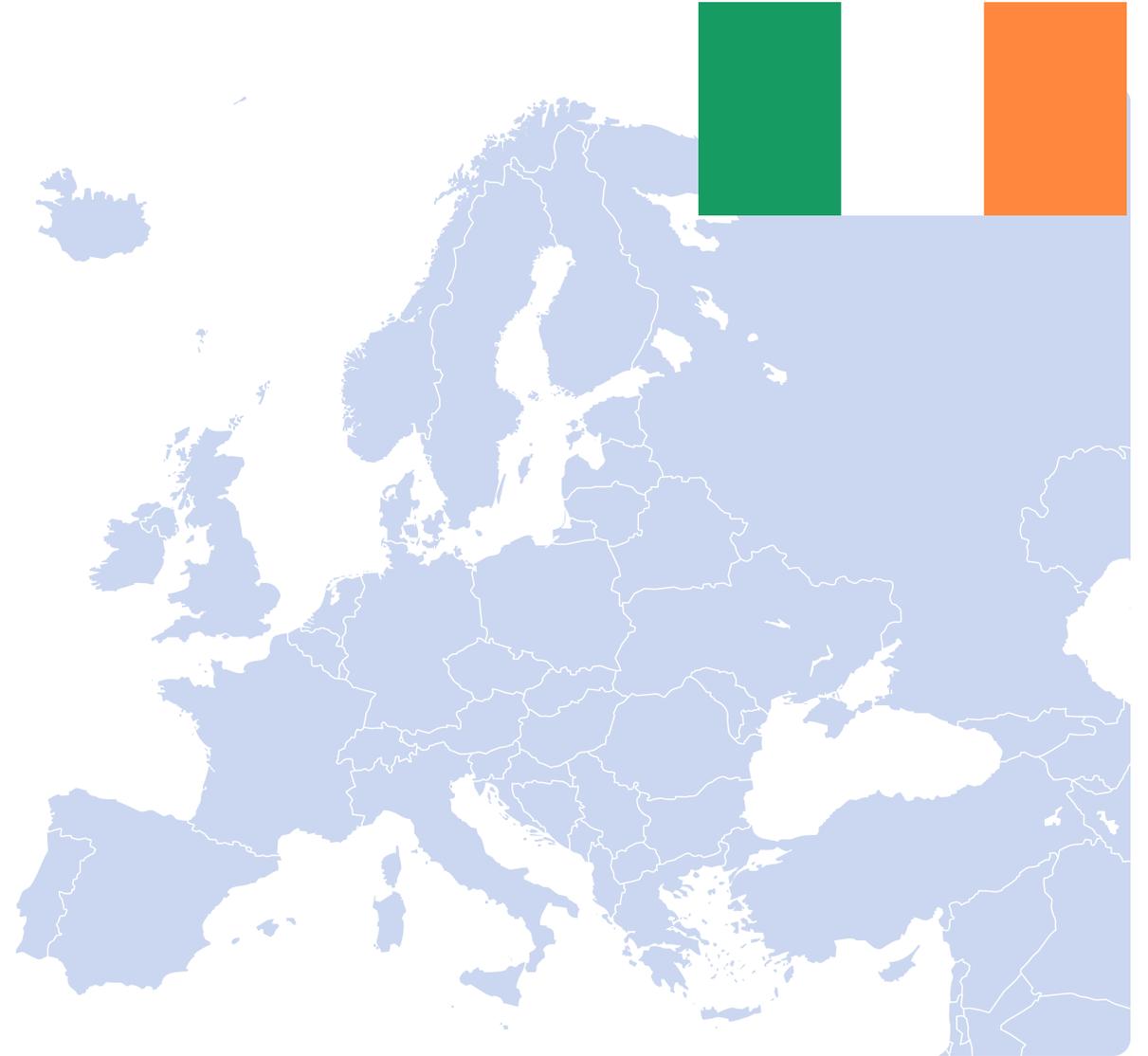
Cost reduction (but high-quality supervision)

Connection to society

Example – Ireland

Probation Service *actively supports and promotes the work of volunteers through funded NGOs.*

- The Probation Service funds over **60 Community Based Organisations (CBOs/NGOs)** providing services and interventions.
- All CBOs/NGOs are **charitable bodies with volunteer boards of management** overseeing service delivery, management and strategic policy in concert with the Probation Service.



Le Chéile Mentoring – Ireland

(Multiple volunteer roles)

- Youth Mentor
- Parent Mentor
- Restorative Justice Volunteer
- Victim Panel Volunteer

Le Cheile's mentoring service is a *partnership with the statutory Probation Service; statutory - voluntary partnership working well* with young people with high levels of need, with *effective training, support and supervision provided by Le Cheile for the volunteers.*

Independent research with young people who have offended and their parents., reported they *really appreciated the fact that the mentors are volunteers.* They often have many professionals involved already – they *value the relationship, the chats, the encouragement and hope.*

(Italics added)



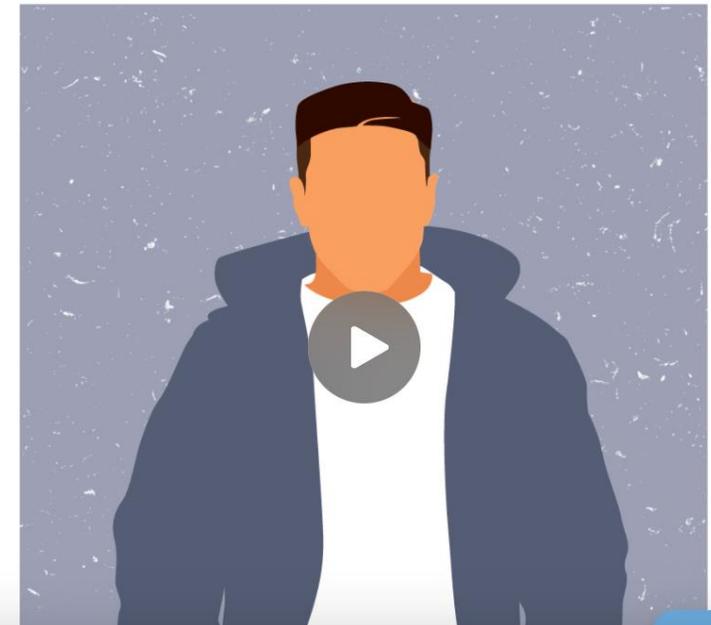


Inspiring hope, believing in change

<https://lecheile.ie>

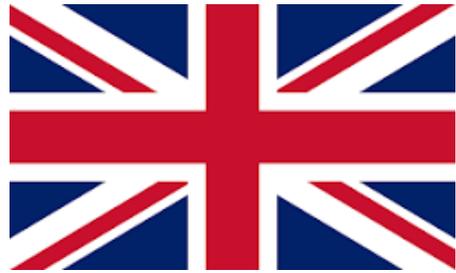
About Us

Every day across Ireland, many young people at risk, need a mentor who can help them navigate life's challenges. Through Le Chéile, you can be that "one good adult" who can help someone turn their life around. With just one to three hours a week, your life experience and support can make a profound difference, providing the stability, encouragement, and understanding that so many young people desperately need. This opportunity not only impacts the lives of mentees but also gives mentors a deep sense of purpose and fulfilment.



Examples – England and Wales, Sweden

Peer Mentoring



ST GILES UK - charity using expertise and real-life past experiences to empower people...

“Turning a past into a future”

- **Multiple focus** including people caught up in crime or a combination of issues
- **Prevention, resettlement, reducing reoffending - Peer Advisor Programme – 35 male and female prisons -** majority of peer advisors embark on qualification whilst in prison

KRIS (Criminals Return Into Society) – Sweden

- Formed 1997 by individuals with long history of involvement in crime and drug misuse
- Association of *people with similar experiences - supportive network for individuals wishing to leave a life of crime and drug abuse behind them.*

Example – Netherlands
Overseas Prisoner Reintegration and Support

- **Support for prisoners detained overseas**
-
- Dutch **volunteers living in the country of detention visit prisoners and provide a range of assistance** guided by Dutch Probation Service resources and a team of international probation officers in the Netherlands
 - Detention abroad causes additional social exclusion resulting in decreasing chances of reintegration and increasing risk of reoffending
 - Assistance includes help in dealing with stress, addressing practical problems, emotional support, and preparation for return



Photo: Pixabay

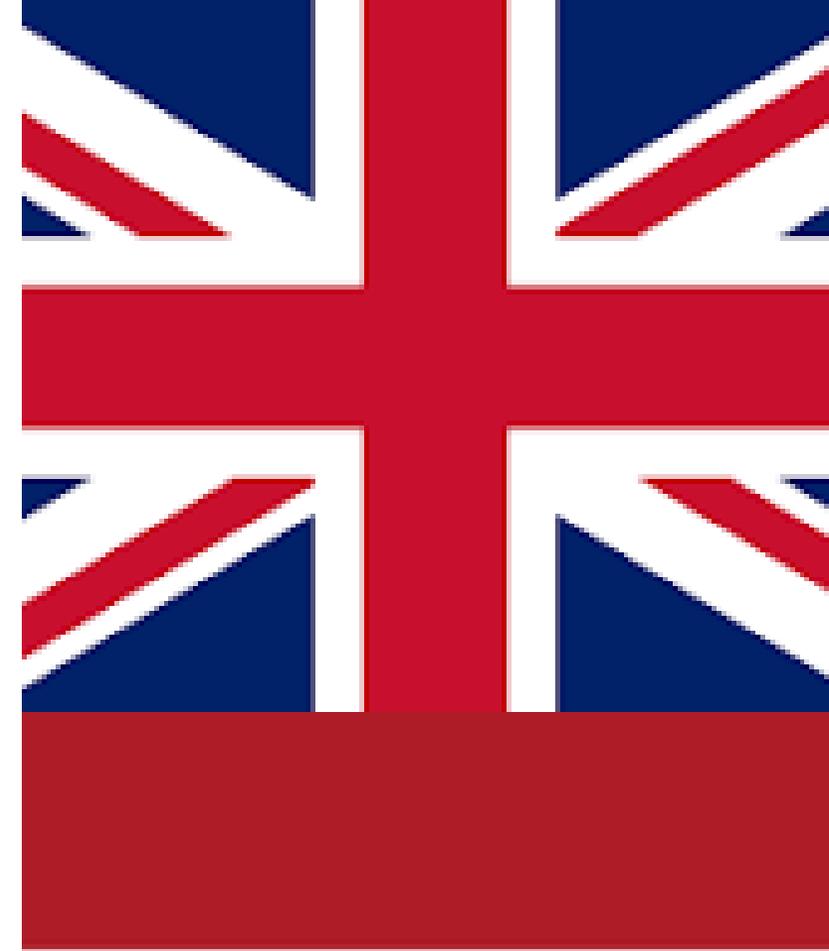
Example – United Kingdom, Netherlands

Circles of Support and Accountability



- ***Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA)** is considered an inspiring practice because it combines*
- *structured volunteer engagement with professional oversight to support the safe reintegration of*
- *justice-involved individuals while protecting the public.*

- *Using an “inner circle” of 4-6 trained community volunteers and an “outer circle” of probation, police, and other professionals, CoSA maintains clear role boundaries, delivers intensive training, and ensures ongoing supervision.*
- *This balanced approach of empathy and accountability has been shown in Canada, the UK, and the Netherlands to reduce reoffending rates and improve community safety, while fostering public ownership of rehabilitation and reducing stigma against people returning from prison.*



How it works

Core Member: The person under supervision (often someone assessed as high risk for reoffending) becomes the “core” of the circle.

Volunteers: 4–6 trained community volunteers form the immediate circle around the core member. They meet regularly, offering social support, practical help (e.g., finding housing, employment), and accountability for behaviour.

Professional Support: The inner circle is supported by an “outer circle” of professionals (probation officers, police, psychologists) who advise volunteers and monitor risk.

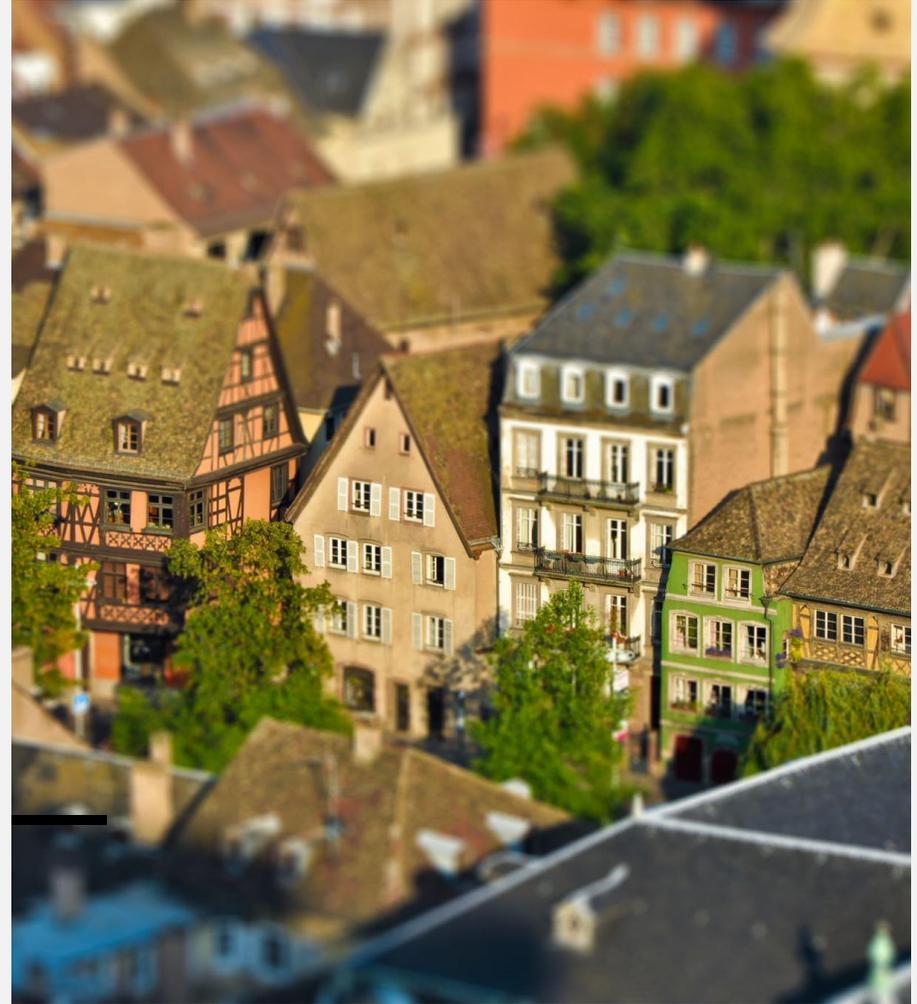
Principle: “**No more victims,**” balancing compassion and accountability.

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Community Volunteering in Europe

c) Challenges and Developments The CoPPer Project



A brief introduction to the CEP – the **Confederation of European Probation**



Founded 1981

60 Member organisations across 40 countries

Probation agencies, Universities, NGOs, individuals, and more...

Affiliate organisations around the world

<https://www.cep-probation.org>

*Vision for Europe
“To contribute to safer
communities by
rehabilitating and
reintegrating offenders
and providing the best
possible interventions to
reduce offending and
the impact of crime.”*



**CEP ... promotes pan-European cooperation
including by**

- **Conferences**
- **Webinars**
- **Expert groups**
 - **Including - Technology, EM, Education & Training, Communication & Awareness Raising, Mental Health, Research ...**
- **Host Jurisdiction reports**
- **Digital newsletter**
- **Website**
- **Partnering research...**
- **CEP stimulates exchange of ideas and collaboration on probation in Europe – and beyond!**
- **CEP contributes enthusiastically to the World Congresses on Probation, Parole, and on Community Volunteers!**



Challenges and Solutions – A Response

**CoPPer Project -
Inspiration from the Hogoshi
system of Japan!
5 countries, 7 organisations**

ABOUT

The CoPPer project aims to promote the active engagement of citizens, civil society and social partners in the social inclusion of people that commit crimes, ensuring that we all play our role as key guarantors of a common European culture of rule of law, common values, democracy, freedom, security and prosperity.



ABOUT

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Community Probation Volunteers Challenges and Developments

JIVE REPORT 2015 – RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDE -*

-European mandate to promote **improved integration of justice and voluntary sector** services

-European standard of **accredited training** to improve response to complex target groups

-Improve **recruitment, training and support** to reflect a demanding voluntary role

-Adequate **resources and volunteer's value** recognized

-Invest in a **culture of volunteering**

-Recognise **diversity**

-**Reward, recognize and motivate**

-Improve **evaluation**

-**Support volunteering to build healthy, resilient communities**

RESULTS

The project aims to develop the following results:



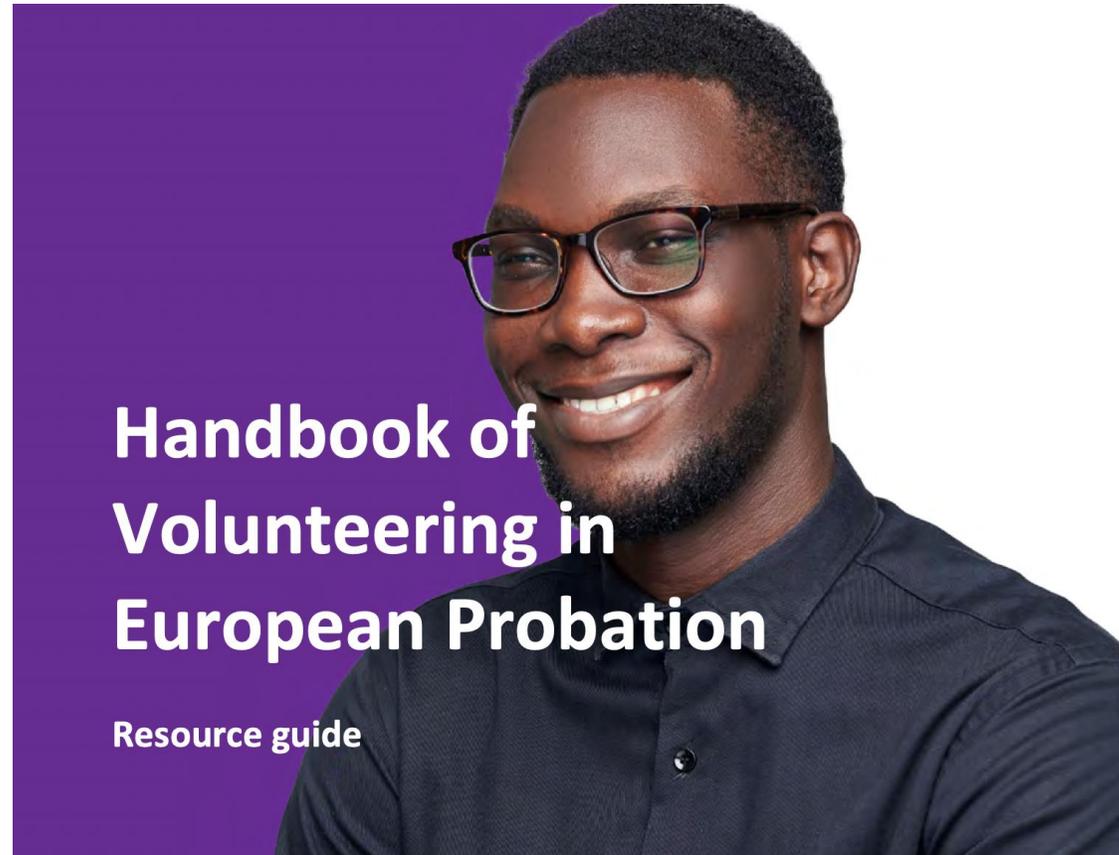
Mapping the European
practice of Volunteering in
probation



European Training programme
for Volunteers in the
Probation Services



Community Based
Organisations Capacity-
Building



Publication date
2025

With acknowledgment of the Handbook for the following slides



Challenges and Developments Addressed include ...

- Acknowledging the **Value of Volunteers**, for
 - Probation Services
 - Justice-involved individuals
 - Communities
- Recognising need for a **variety of approaches**
- **Roles, responsibilities, boundaries**
- **Recruitment**
- **Competencies**
- **Selection**, including **lived experience** volunteers
- **Training** – and Continuous Development (including “soft skills”)
- **Recognition and Reward**
- **Reducing Risks**
- **Organisational Capacity**
- **Monitoring and Evaluation**



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FOR PROBATION SERVICES

THE VALUE OF VOLUNTEERS IN PROBATION



- Extends capacity, especially in under-resourced contexts
- Brings specialised skills or lived experience
- Increases flexibility of service delivery

FOR JUSTICE-INVOLVED INDIVIDUALS

- Builds trust through community-based relationships
- Improves self-confidence and wellbeing
- Encourages new skills and pro-social identity
- Supports the desistance process



THE VALUE OF VOLUNTEERS IN PROBATION

FOR

FOR COMMUNITIES

THE VALUE OF VOLUNTEERS IN PROBATION

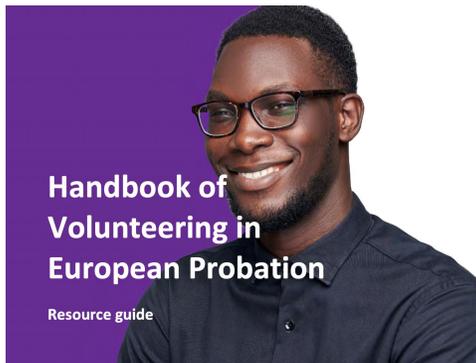
- Enhances confidence in justice systems
- Strengthens community cohesion
- Encourages active citizenship

The Value of Volunteers – A Flexible Approach – Respecting Jurisdiction Differences

“While the value of volunteers in probation is widely recognized, it is equally important to acknowledge that no single model fits all contexts. Each country, and sometimes each region within a country, operates within its own unique blend of legal traditions, institutional capacities, cultural attitudes toward punishment and rehabilitation, and levels of civil society engagement.”

“...what is needed is a flexible framework that offers shared principles, ethical standards, and a menu of adaptable strategies that can be tailored to local needs.

This Handbook supports that aim providing common reference points while respecting national diversity, encouraging innovation, and promoting cross-border learning without imposing rigid templates.”





Volunteer Roles include...

Volunteer roles can be informed by a needs/gaps analysis – national - local

- **Mentoring and Befriending**
 - **Supervision Assistance**
 - **Resettlement and Aftercare Support**
 - **Specialised Support (counselling, education, restorative approaches, literacy...)**
 - **Family and Victim Support**
 - **Community Engagement and Advocacy**
-

Volunteer Recruitment - Communication

Effective recruitment requires clear communication about what volunteering in probation entails. Recruitment messages should explain:

- the purpose of volunteering (supporting reintegration and community building),
- the boundaries of the role (not risk management, not enforcement),
- the expected commitment (time, availability, participation in training), and
- the support offered (training, supervision, recognition).

Volunteer Recruitment Channels

Recruitment channels can include:

- *Digital platforms: websites, social media, volunteer portals.*
 - *Educational institutions: universities, vocational schools, criminology and social work faculties.*
 - *Local community networks: NGOs, cultural associations, faith communities, sports clubs.*
 - *Word of mouth and alumni networks: existing or former volunteers bringing in new candidates.*
-

To widen participation, probation services should actively encourage diverse recruitment: young people, older adults, migrants, people with lived experience of the justice system (where appropriate), and community leaders.

Volunteer Recruitment- The value of active communication

European Example: United Kingdom and Ireland

Probation services in the UK and Ireland run community outreach campaigns, often partnering with universities and local radio stations to attract students and mid-career professionals. Messaging focuses on mentoring, personal growth, and making a tangible difference in the lives of people under supervision.

Volunteer Competencies

The Competence Framework offers a practical tool for structuring recruitment and selection:

- **Cluster 1 (attitudes and qualities)** should be assessed during recruitment and selection, since these are not trainable. For example, interviews and reference checks can reveal reliability and collaboration skills.
- **Cluster 2 (knowledge)** is covered in Module 1 of the European training programme (probation field, justice system, volunteer role). Volunteers do not need this knowledge at entry but must be willing to learn.
- **Cluster 3 (skills)** are the focus of Modules 2–5 of the training (relational, communication, observation, problem-solving). Selection can screen for potential but development is achieved through training and supervision.

Volunteer Selection

Key components of selection include:

1. **Application screening** – checking motivations and availability.
2. **Structured interviews** – assessing empathy, reflective capacity, collaboration, and reliability.
3. **Scenario-based assessments** – roleplays or case questions to test reactions to challenging situations.
4. **Reference checks and safeguarding** – ensuring candidates are suitable to work with vulnerable individuals.
5. **Role compatibility evaluation** – matching volunteer strengths with available roles (e.g. mentoring, practical support, community projects).

The engagement of individuals who have lived experience of the probation services and possibly have also been beneficiaries of volunteering in probation, can be a useful element in a European approach to volunteering. Not only can they offer an example of 'living desistance' to beneficiaries but also build a unique bridge between volunteers and beneficiaries in general. Mindful of not exploiting so called 'wounded healers', the authentic involvement of lived experience voices can be beneficial for all involved.

Volunteer Selection – inclusion of lived experience volunteers

Volunteer Training



The European Volunteer Training Model

The CoPPer project has developed a five-module European training curriculum designed to prepare volunteers for probation work:

- **Knowledge of the professional field** (e-learning): probation principles, justice system, role of the volunteer.
- **Relational skills**: building trust, empathy, managing boundaries and friction.
- **Communication skills**: active listening, asking questions, summarising, giving feedback.
- **Observation and interpretation**: distinguishing facts from bias, recognising subjectivity.
- **Problem-solving**: identifying client needs, solution-focused approaches, activating resources.

The structure combines digital self-study, webinars, and in-person sessions, ensuring flexibility and accessibility. Trainers are encouraged to adapt modules with local examples and legal frameworks.

Continuous Development

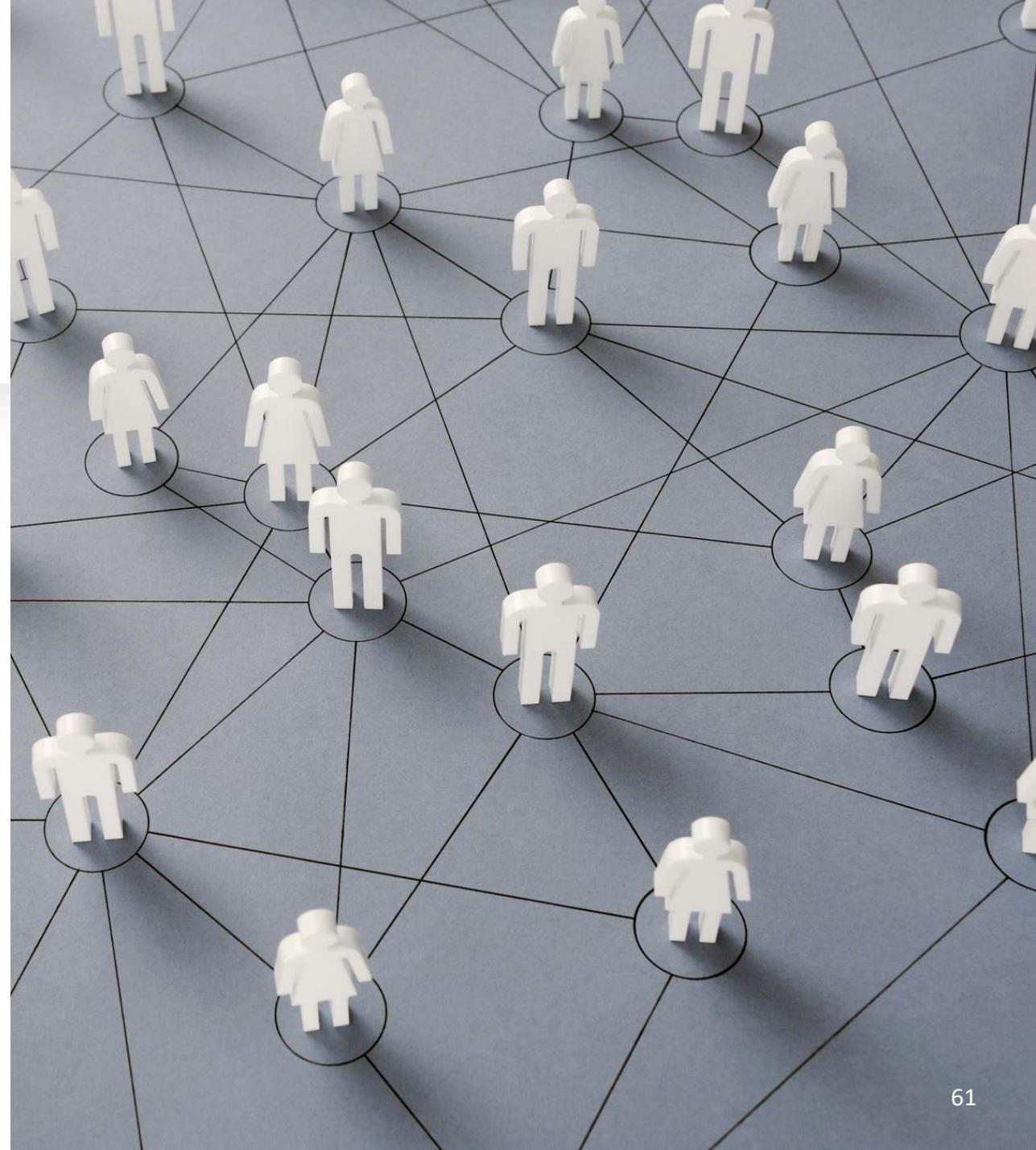
Initial training is essential, but probation volunteering is demanding, and learning must be continuous. Continuous Professional Development helps volunteers stay motivated, avoid burnout, and adapt to new challenges.

Key practices include:

- Refresher workshops: revisiting communication, boundary-setting, or ethics.
- Peer reflection groups: volunteers share experiences and learn from one another.
- Advanced modules: focused on themes such as addictions, domestic violence, or intercultural communication.
- Mentoring systems: experienced volunteers coach newcomers, reinforcing learning and retention.
- Blended learning: combining online resources, supervision, and practice-based activities.

On-going Support

- Volunteer Networks (Support & Learning)
- Risk mitigation (burn-outs, vicarious traumatization..)
- Monitoring / support / check-ins
 - Group supervisions
 - Annual conference
 - Regular supervisor meetings
 - Questions may include...



Volunteer Support and Risk Mitigation

- What's gone well?
- What hasn't gone so well?
- Do they feel there is any support or training that they need?
- Is the volunteering role meeting their needs or fulfilling their motivations for volunteering?
- Are there any other tasks within the organisation they would like to do?

Volunteer Recognition

Recognition is essential for volunteer retention and satisfaction. Evidence shows that symbolic and social recognition is often more powerful than financial incentives.

Good practices include:

- *Formal recognition: certificates of service, volunteer passports, and competence documentation.*
 - *Public recognition: annual ceremonies, volunteer days, or media coverage.*
 - *Social recognition: opportunities to feel part of a community, such as volunteer gatherings and peer networks.*
 - *Career-related recognition: training certificates or skill validation that enhance employability.*
-

Monitoring and Evaluation



- Does not be complex!
- *Start with clear objectives. Monitoring begins with the question: What do we want to know?*
 - *If the goal is to improve volunteer retention, data collection may focus on volunteer numbers, retention, training, satisfaction and supervision quality.*
 - *If the aim is to demonstrate reintegration outcomes, indicators should capture changes in beneficiaries' social or behavioural progress.*
 - *Other significant factors - organisational value (staff, workload, community partnership strength), Public value, contribution to trust in public institutions*
- *Consider storytelling*
 - *How a person regained confidence, gained work, reconnected with family –*
 - *A glimpse into transformation that statistics cannot fully express*

Organisational Capacity and CBO Training

Continuous development is not only about the individual volunteer but also about the organisations that support them. The **CBO training curriculum** strengthens the capacity of community-based organisations to design, deliver, and sustain volunteer programmes. It covers:

- how to design volunteer services;
- how to recruit, train, and retain volunteers;
- how to build partnerships with probation services;
- how to measure and recognise impact.

By supporting organisations, the CBO curriculum ensures that volunteer training does not end with the individual but becomes embedded in organisational practice.

Digital and Hybrid Volunteering?

Technology offers opportunities

- Online engagement
- Flexibility during training and ongoing engagement

Risks?

- Need to maintain face-to-face community building
- Volunteers-volunteers, Volunteers-beneficiaries, Volunteers-professional staff

Hybrid Approach?

- Best of both worlds – flexibility and strengths of face-to-face engagement



3. Global
Collaboration and
Inspiration!
For Safer Societies

Global Rules, Guidance
Evidence
Collaboration, Inspiration!

Volunteering in Probation & Parole – First: some International Highlights – Important to acknowledge the leadership of Japan in each of these events, and between them.

**3rd World Congress on Probation,
Tokyo 2017**

C. 46,000 Volunteers - “Hogoshi”
Also “Big brothers and sisters”, 22,000
employers

***UN Crime and Justice Congress, Kyoto
2021***

**1st World Congress on Community
Volunteers**



6th WCPP, Hague 2024

**2nd World Congress on Community
Volunteers – Japan, Kenya, USA,
Thailand, UK, Singapore, CoPPer
Project**

**Declaration – *International Day for
Community Volunteers* - 17th April**

**7th WCPP, Indonesia,
April 2026**

**3rd World Congress on Community
Volunteers**



A: Global Guidance and Recommendations

01

United Nations
Standard Minimum
Rules for Non-custodial
Measures (The Tokyo
Rules, 1990)

02

14th United Nations
Congress on Crime
Prevention and
Criminal Justice - Kyoto
Declaration, 2021

03

Kyoto Model Strategies
on Reducing
Reoffending (2025)

United Nations
Standard
Minimum Rules
for Non-custodial
Measures (The
Tokyo Rules)
(1990)

VII. Volunteers and other
community resources

17. Public participation

17.1 Public participation should be encouraged as it is a major resource and one of the most important factors in improving ties between offenders undergoing non-custodial measures and the family and community. It should complement the efforts of the criminal justice administration.

17.2 Public participation should be regarded as an opportunity for members of the community to contribute to the protection of their society.

KYOTO DECLARATION

ON ADVANCING CRIME PREVENTION, CRIMINAL JUSTICE
AND THE RULE OF LAW: TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE
2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



**Fourteenth United Nations Congress on
Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice**

Kyoto, Japan, 7–12 March 2021



18 . Public understanding and cooperation

18.2 Conferences, seminars, symposia and other activities should be regularly organized to stimulate awareness of the need for public participation in the application of non-custodial measures.

18.3 All forms of the mass media should be utilized to help to create a constructive public attitude, leading to activities conducive to a broader application of non-custodial treatment and the social integration of offenders.

18.4 Every effort should be made to inform the public of the importance of its role in the implementation of non-custodial measures.

II. Model strategies on reducing reoffending

F. Partnerships, community engagement, capacity-building and sustainability

Core principle V

Reducing reoffending requires the active participation of not only the justice sector but all sectors of society, and significant amounts of time and resources must be invested in partnerships, outreach, training and sustainability measures.

II. Model strategies on reducing reoffending

Model strategy No. 14

The potential for volunteers and civil society organizations to contribute to the rehabilitation and social reintegration of offenders should be recognized, promoted and supported.

62. Volunteers' activities may include involvement in peer support programmes, the fostering of connections between offenders and the community and the provision of practical assistance in the reintegration process. The role of community volunteers is crucial in this process. They are members of the public to which the offenders will eventually return, and can therefore serve as catalysts for reintegration, such as in the case of community probation volunteers (Kenya), *hogoshi* (Japan), probation members (Republic of Korea), volunteer probation assistants (Philippines) and volunteer probation officers (Singapore). Volunteers can also play a significant role in providing a platform for community engagement and raising public awareness of the importance of offender reintegration.

63. Youth volunteers and youth-oriented civil society organizations should be regarded as essential agents of the rehabilitation and social reintegration of juvenile and young adult offenders. Youth volunteers play a significant role as catalysts for change for those offenders in empowering themselves and building life skills that allow them to better cope with daily challenges and to move away from involvement in crime.

64. Legal and administrative mechanisms should be developed to ensure the accountability of civil society organizations and community volunteers and the sustainability of their activities. Such mechanisms should encompass careful recruitment, screening, training, guidance and support (practical, financial and psychological), evaluation, monitoring and supervision by competent judicial authorities. It is also important to cultivate public recognition of the work of those organizations and volunteers, including by disseminating information on and celebrating their contributions through relevant events, awareness-raising, giving awards to dedicated volunteers, supporting national associations of volunteers and developing international volunteer networks.

II. Model strategies on reducing reoffending

Overview of the strategies

The 18 Model Strategies are made up of practice-oriented guidance that builds upon **six core principles**:

- Applying individualized offender management
- Promoting the use of non-custodial measures in appropriate cases
- Establishing safe, secure, humane, rehabilitative custodial environments and carefully managed reintegration
- Addressing root causes of offending
- Mobilization of holistic partnerships and community support
- Advancing research and evaluation

2025 - Reducing reoffending: the Kyoto Model Strategies
... recommended for adoption by the General Assembly
during the 34th session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

Volunteering – The Evidence- base

Three Stages – Another way of looking at Desistance

(After Professor Fergus McNeill)

Three stages of Desistance -

Primary – Behaviour –

cessation of offending

Secondary – Identity –

adoption of a non-offending identity

Tertiary - Belonging –

Opportunity; Recognition by others that one has

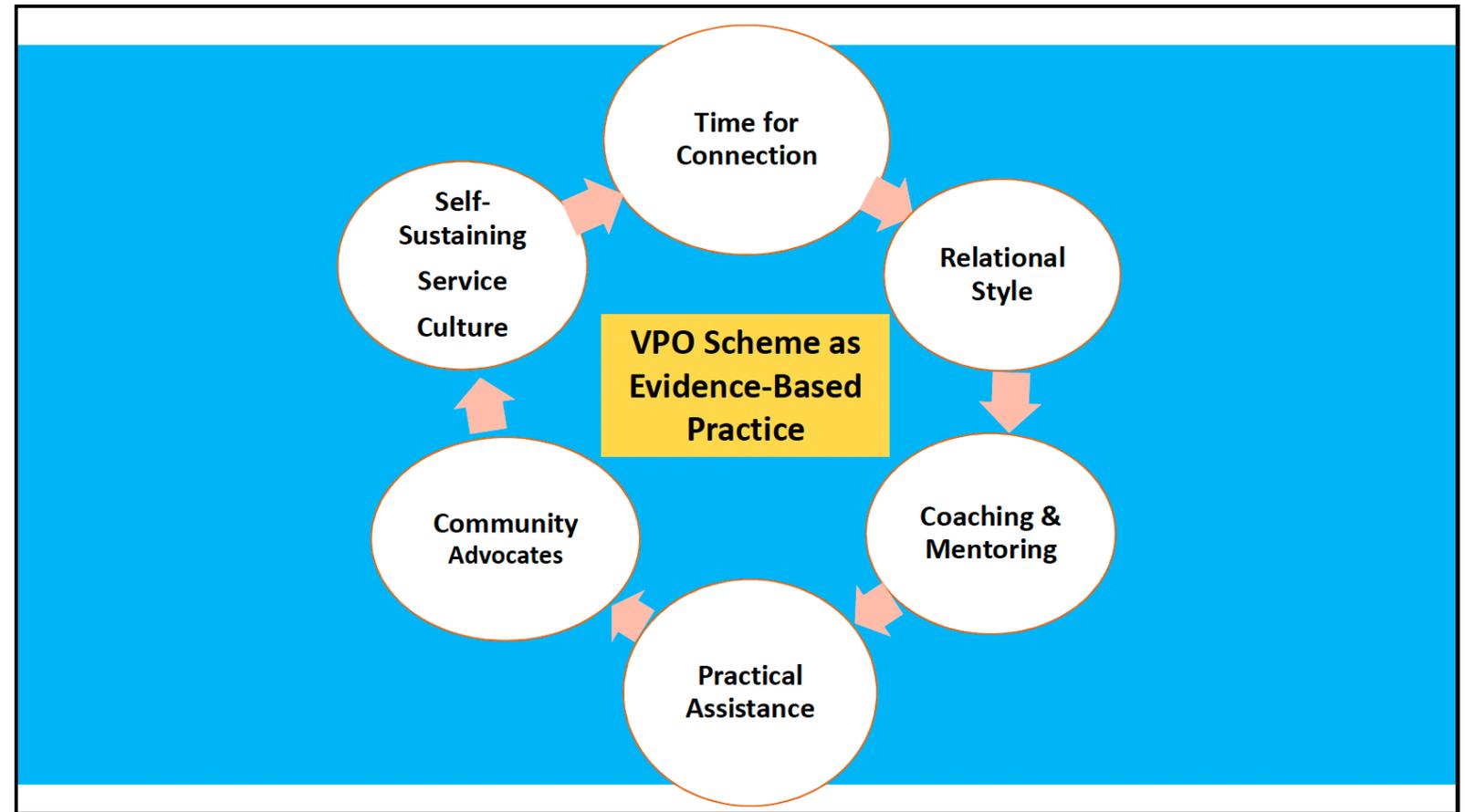
Changed, and development of a

sense of belonging

Volunteering - The Evidence-base

Frank Porporino – 1st
World Congress on
Community Volunteers,
Kyoto 2021

Volunteering as Evidence- Based Practice



Inset slide: Dr. Frank Porporino
– 1st World Congress on
Community Volunteers, Kyoto
2021

Volunteering as Evidence-based Practice

Quote: Dr. Frank Porporino – 1st World Congress on Community Volunteers, Kyoto 2021

But the VPO model in Japan has been embedded as an innovative and evidence-based component of community corrections that should be **applauded and emulated as much as possible ... EVERYWHERE!**

Why and *How* volunteering matters Learning from Japanese volunteers

- “A non-judgemental approach
- Respect for the person
- Focus on future, on potential, not the crime
- Being a good neighbour, and demonstrating community support
- Supporting Connections
- The importance of connecting, giving time”



C: Global Collaboration and Inspiration!

Global Examples

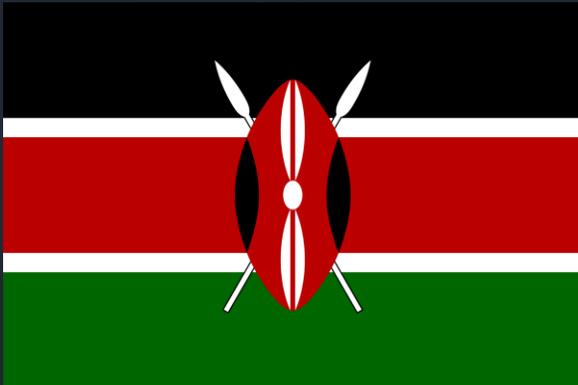


Volunteering – Global Examples (1st WVCV Kyoto – 2021)

Volunteer Probation Officers, Kenya...*

establishment of VPOs in Kenya in 2005. Community Probation Volunteers (CPVs) provide assistance and support to offenders, and they assist the work of professional probation officers. CPVs play a greater role in monitoring offenders based on their proximity to the offender in the community. The use of CPVs has enhanced community participation in offender management and built trust between the community and professional probation officers.

CPVs have also reduced cost and increased the efficiency of probation services



Implementation of the Community Probation Volunteers programmes, under pilot in four counties with the support of the Japan International Corporation Agency (JICA)

*Based on 1st. WCCV report

The Singapore Approach – Role Range

The programmes and services facilitated by volunteers **complement** the [rehabilitative initiatives](#) provided by SPS to better prepare offenders for eventual return to the society.

You can volunteer to:

- Be an SPS Befriender
- Be an Academic Tutor
- Be a Facilitator of Religious, Family, or other Personal Development Programmes
- Be a Volunteer Case Officer (VCO)
- Be a Yellow Ribbon Community Project (YRCP) volunteer



The Singapore Approach – Desistor Network

*The Desistor Network (DN)

... a collaborative initiative between the Singapore Prison Service and its community partners to support ex-offenders in their journey towards desistance and successful reintegration into the community after their release.

This focus on longer-term desistance is particularly crucial, as statistics show that four in ten offenders return to prison within five years of release, which is double the number within two years of release.

To achieve this, SPS recognises that it is important to create an ecosystem of support for ex-offenders.

Hence, the DN was launched on **15 April 2023**, and it reflects a distinctive hallmark of co-partnership between the government and the community.



*Extract –SPS website

Singapore Volunteer appreciation?

Awards are given out to recognise volunteers who have reached the benchmark years of service (e.g.; 3, 5, 10 and in multiples of 5 onwards) during the annual volunteers' awards ceremony events held for SPS volunteers and YRCP volunteers.

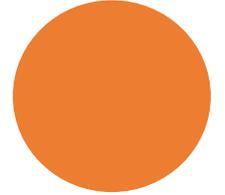
In addition, **dialogues and appreciation events** are organised to provide volunteers opportunities to provide feedback and to feel appreciated.

Information with thanks to SPS



20th Singapore Yellow Ribbon Run 2024

- ...11,000 participants on community run
- 35,000 Km run by prisoners
- Supported by Yellow Ribbon Community volunteers



Global Learning - Emulated - Yellow Ribbon Project – Czech Republic!

The annual Yellow Ribbon Run

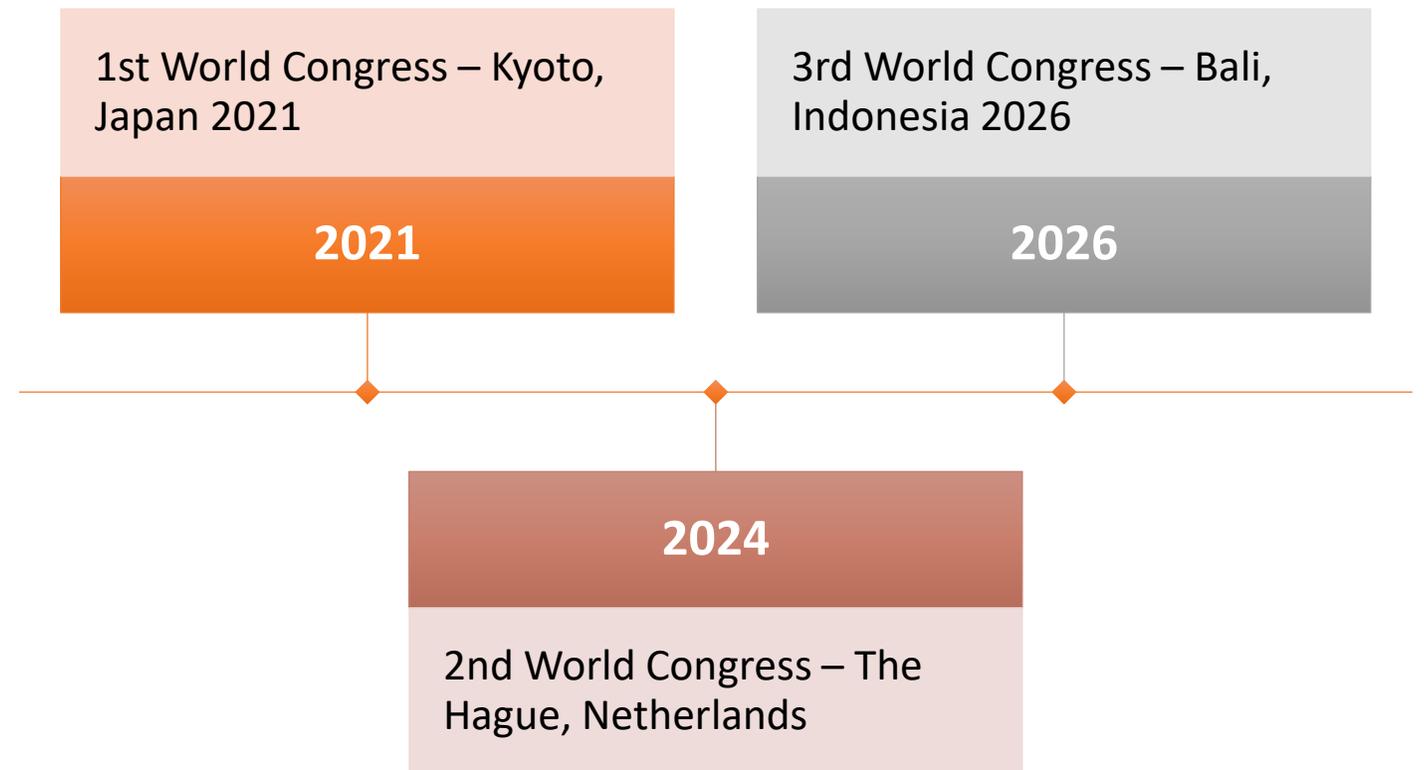
Czech Yellow Ribbon Run – aimed at fighting prejudice against ex-offenders and raising public awareness about the importance of inmates' reintegration back into society.

- “The 7th year - dedicated to the often-forgotten victims of crimes – offenders' children.
- Organisers honoured 20 colleagues from Singapore Prison Service.
- **European YR Hub - Runs now also in Croatia and Lithuania!**

Adapted from, and more information at <https://yellowribbon.cz/>.



We approach the
Third World
Congress on
Community
Volunteers!



2nd World Congress for Community Volunteers 17th April 2024

Japanese Inspiration - Declaration on the International Day for Community Volunteers Supporting Offender Reintegration

*5 Declarations
including –*

“We propose April 17th as the International Day for Community Volunteers Supporting Offender Reintegration to enhance global awareness of the efforts of community volunteers who support offender rehabilitation and reintegration, and to promote international networks among volunteers”.

“... highly significant step towards enhancing the role of community probation volunteers – and their critical contribution to community safety”

Strengthening the Role of Community Volunteers in Building Safer Societies

How do we as a global community build on these important steps and continue to enhance volunteering and the contribution of volunteers to community safety?



- At jurisdiction level – nurture the *wealth* and *range* of volunteer activities, working with *all sectors* to harness the power of communities
- Embrace challenges and volunteer good practices: stakeholder and community communication and awareness-raising, volunteer recruitment, selection, training, support, valuing/rewarding volunteers ... and evaluation ...
Consider sharing learning with partner organisations who work with volunteers
- Internationally - continue to strengthen the means to learn from each other, to inspire, and to improve at a global level...

Strengthening Probation And Community Safety Globally



**“Getting Smart on Justice:
Healing Hearts & Safer Societies”**

In conclusion -

The Third World Congress on Community Volunteers (WCCV) will take place alongside the 7th World Congress on Probation and Parole in April 2026.

The 3rd WCCV will build on the 1st and 2nd Volunteer Congresses, and on other highly significant steps such as the Kyoto Model Strategies for Reducing Reoffending. In so doing it will undoubtedly add further momentum to the drive to support global learning and collaboration in the pursuit of building safer societies worldwide.



Thank you very much for your attention.

I would be pleased to respond to any questions.

