

GROUP 2

MEASURES FOR ENHANCING AND PROMOTING VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION IN COOPERATION WITH GOVERNMENTS (AND JUDICIARIES) INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY-BASED TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS

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I. INTRODUCTION

On 26 January 2015, Group Two commenced its workshop. The Group elected, by consensus, Mr. Marcus Rito as the Chairperson, Ms. Miyuki Shiina as its co-chairperson, Mr. Paul Wagun as its Rapporteur, and Ms. Mariko Oguni, Mr. Kennedy Achungo and Mr. Rodrigo Manuel, Jr. as co-Rapporteurs.

The group was assigned to discuss the theme of: "Measures for Enhancing and Promoting Volunteer Participation in Cooperation with Governments (and Judiciaries) Involved in Community-Based Treatment of Offenders".

The term "Volunteer" as a general concept needed to be redefined as to how it applied specifically within the context of "Community-based Treatment of Offenders" before discussions could be commenced; hence, the definition of a volunteer in that context was defined by the group as: "*A person or organization with particular life skills and experiences who is willing to contribute his/her/its skills, experiences, time and resources for community-based treatment of offenders without remuneration*".

The key concepts of volunteerism are: 1. Willingness 2. Altruism 3. Without remuneration.

A. Why Do We Need Volunteers?

Volunteer participation has distinct advantages, as follows:

1. Local Character

Since volunteers and offenders live in the same community, offenders can contact volunteers immediately. Also, since volunteers are rooted in the community, and know the community well, they can provide the offender with social resources and useful information. Moreover, since the participating countries have various languages, cultures, religions, etc., volunteers play a key role in bridging the gap between offenders and the community.

2. Non-Governmental Officials

Despite the fact that volunteers are not paid, they work with offenders because they seek offender rehabilitation and safe communities. Such sincere concern and personal interaction are effective for offender rehabilitation.

Ex-offenders also can be volunteers. For example, in Cote d'Ivoire, ex-offenders work with inmates on prison farms. In Japan, ex-drug offenders assist with drug-offender treatment. Peer support has great influence for offenders because they understand deeply offenders' situations, feelings and challenges.

3. Continuity of Activities

Since volunteers live in the same community with offenders, even after the expiration of the supervision period, private relationships between offenders and VPOs may continue among them as citizens living in the same community. Japanese VPOs said some offenders came to see VPOs to tell them about offenders' marriages or their children.

4. Volunteer-State Partnerships

Lack of correctional treatment and intervention for offenders released on non-custodial sentences often means that such offenders are neither fully rehabilitated nor re-integrated into mainstream society. Volunteer-State partnerships are therefore crucial to address the following:

- Constraints in terms of inadequate funding and human resources.
- To involve the community in the rehabilitation of offenders, notably the family, clan, churches and villages.
- To provide a forum of public awareness on community-based treatment of offenders.
- To initiate entry points into network relationships with opinion leaders and other service providers in the community.

B. Objectives

To establish, organize and enhance public participation in crime prevention and community based-treatment of offenders.

II. SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSIONS

A. Recruitment and Appointment of Volunteers

1. Recruitment

It is important to recruit mature, credible and dependable volunteers with key life skills and experiences who will impart value to the rehabilitation process of the ex-offender. In this context, it is important to have a proper appointment procedure and specified criteria of recruitment of volunteers readily on hand for lay persons to utilize even if it is specified in any subsidiary legislation or regulation.

The best source of quality volunteer identification information is from the experienced volunteers and the key stakeholders (judiciary, police, corrections officers, and probation officers) in the criminal justice system.

In most cases volunteers who have been involved with ex-offenders within their communities will know from their own interactive experience within the community who would be a potential candidate for recruitment from within the community.

2. Appointment

Once recruitment candidates are identified and screened, *appointment* of such persons as volunteers will have to be done in accordance with the Act or empowering legislation; hence the concerned volunteer is a legitimately recognized volunteer practitioner within the community in the field of offender rehabilitation.

B. Capacity Building/Training and Morale Development of Volunteers

The following proposals are necessary to achieve the above concerns.

1. Basic orientation training is required to be given to volunteers.

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2. The Government needs to fund periodic professional training for volunteers throughout the course of their involvement.
3. Volunteers with other stakeholders (judiciary, police, corrections, and probation officers) of the criminal justice system need to hold case conferences to identify capacity and training needs, and also incentives to boost morale of volunteers.
4. Pre-existing orientation training established by volunteers and probation services exists in some countries so it should be the first to be utilized in training of volunteers.
5. In terms of incentives, ways to boost the morale of volunteers are: awards, thank you parties and theme-based seminars to coincide with awareness and identity cards, field visits and participation in national events, certificates of authority to act lawfully in communities. These are some methods that can be applied as incentive programmes.
6. Medicare insurance, public insurance, food vouchers and cost reimbursements are some ways to boost the morale of volunteers.
7. Respecting the confidentiality of the relevant parties relating to the personal affairs which the volunteers have come to know in the course of their duties.

C. Resources/Funding/Organization of Volunteers

The funding and resourcing of volunteers must first and foremost be a government subsidy to begin with and all other efforts and endeavors to secure resources and funding must also be pursued. Some examples are as follows:

1. Private sector corporations, community awareness events by volunteers and other stakeholders, membership with established volunteer organizations, government tax credit schemes with corporate firms to support such activities, involve active youth and women groups such as in Japan the *Big Brothers and Sisters Association*, *Women's Association for Rehabilitation Aid* and the *Japanese University Students' Awareness on Peer Dynamics* with juveniles.
2. Volunteers must also have ready access to professional assistance at any time from Probation Officers and government judicial officers to confide their problems and needs.
3. The community is a sleeping giant in terms of resourcing for volunteers. It is important to properly organize in order to tap into the resources of the community and its participation.
4. Other government resource organizations also exist such as ministries or departments of education, labour, welfare, health and tourism, and also building relationships and making connections with the community and service corporations should be a key drive to secure support in terms of resourcing and funding.
5. In terms of organization of volunteers, there should be affiliations with existing volunteer organizations. Close dialogue with colleague volunteers and government justice institutions such as the police and corrections is important as these organizations are always open to providing meeting places and other relevant facilities and also to assign some members to participate in assisting volunteers.
6. Volunteers from the local community should be organized at the regional and national levels to enable wider participation, such as in Japan where they have national, prefectural, regional and district levels of volunteer organizations.

D. Welfare and Safety of Volunteers

Volunteers perform an important role in the delivery of offender rehabilitation services to the community as an extended service arm of the government under the criminal justice system.

While the volunteer services are appreciated, they cannot be taken for granted. This means the respec-

tive arm of government, particularly the Ministry of Justice, must give recognition to the safety and welfare aspects of volunteers.

Volunteer welfare and safety should be covered by the government's compensation insurance scheme; therefore, the volunteers should be provided with medical care insurance.

The department or government ministry responsible for the recruitment, training and placement of volunteers must take responsible steps to ensure that volunteers' safety and welfare needs are properly provided for during the course of their voluntary services to the state.

The welfare and safety of volunteers should also be ensured to allow them to carry out their duties effectively, and measures should be considered including financial and psychological burdens on volunteers.

E. Community Resources/Public Understanding and Cooperation

The community has the potential to contribute to volunteer services but this has not been adequately tapped. It is important to properly organize to tap into the resources of the community and its participation.

Volunteers should also take advantage of other unexploited resources such as those in the education, labour, health, welfare and tourism sectors; also building relationships and making connections with the community and service corporations should be a key drive to secure support in terms of resourcing and funding.

Before going out to seek community resource support, the volunteers must themselves be organized legally into associations and must be properly recognized to seek such assistance. Not only does it help the volunteer cause but it gives structure and publically perceived confidence to the work of volunteers in terms of accountability and reporting.

Public awareness must be funded by government funds to bring the awareness to the communities and the public prior to seeking assistance so the community and public corporations will be aware and supportive.

Note: The Act and subsidiary legislation on the volunteer programme should provide detailed guidelines on operations and good practices for the volunteer programme in any country or state.

III. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusion

Crime is born in the community, and as a good citizen, it is a social obligation and responsibility to safeguard the peace and order of the respective societies. It is therefore critical to ensure that the full criminal justice systems of respective societies are geared toward community-based approaches to offender rehabilitation and re-integration back into the communities.

The community, being part and parcel of the criminal justice system, is a potential human resource for maintaining peaceful societies. Moreover, the community is the only vehicle for the re-integration and community-based treatment of our penitent offenders into the main stream of society.

The increase in criminal acts continues to be a concern of many countries. Correctional institutions are overcrowded and too often provide inhumane living conditions; they consume human resources, funding and result in poor investments on the part of many governments.

Volunteer participation is indispensable for offender rehabilitation, not only because of financial burden and the shortage of human resources, but because of its advantages such as local character, non-governmental officials and continuity of activities.

B. Recommendations

1. Each country or state should develop an Act or empowering legislation for the volunteer programme.
2. Recruitment of mature, credible and dependable persons with life skills and experience as volunteers. Therefore ex-offenders who have successfully completed their rehabilitation therapy fulfill the criteria of being recruited as volunteers as it is practiced in Cote d'Ivoire where an NGO has recruited ex-offenders in a team to implement the prison farm project of Saliakro.
3. Training for volunteers should be provided by the government periodically, and the volunteers together with the stakeholders should hold case conferences from time to time whenever necessary.
4. Governments should support volunteers so that they can work with motivation (welfare and safety, financial support, psychological support and commendation).
5. Promotion of government tax credit schemes with corporate firms to support volunteer programmes.
6. Develop and implement an international programme for monitoring and evaluation of volunteer programmes to raise standards to best practice expectations.
7. Creation of an international platform for volunteer exchange, benchmarking and exposure.
8. Enhance networking, collaboration and partnership among stakeholders (judiciary, police, correctional services and probation services) in the criminal justice system.
9. Develop a standardized international volunteer programme document and disseminate internationally.

