



Confederation of European
Probation



Stephen Pitts
Ambassador
Confederation of European Probation

2nd World Congress on Community Volunteers

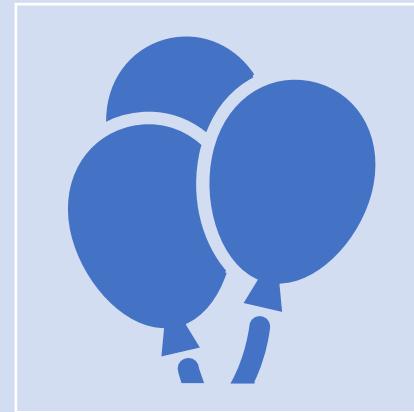
*Celebrating and Developing Volunteering in
Probation and Parole*

Welcome Address
The Hague
17th April 2024



2nd World Congress on Community Volunteers

Introductory Remarks



Welcome



Acknowledgements

International Inspiration!

3rd World Congresses on Probation and
Parole Tokyo 2017

Hogoshi – thank you for your
hospitality, inspiration and insights!

1st World Congress on Community
Volunteers Kyoto 2021

Inspiration - the CoPPer Project – a
*journey to promote a step-change in
volunteering in probation in Europe*



2nd World Congress on Community Volunteers



Celebrating and developing the
Global diversity of probation
volunteering

Aims

- Celebrate the *richness and value* of volunteer work
- Note challenges regarding volunteers in probation - and *current initiatives* to address them
- Highlight *benefits of global connectivity and learning*, especially regarding *how* volunteering makes a difference

By

...A (sometimes personal) journey through time
and geography – stopping in

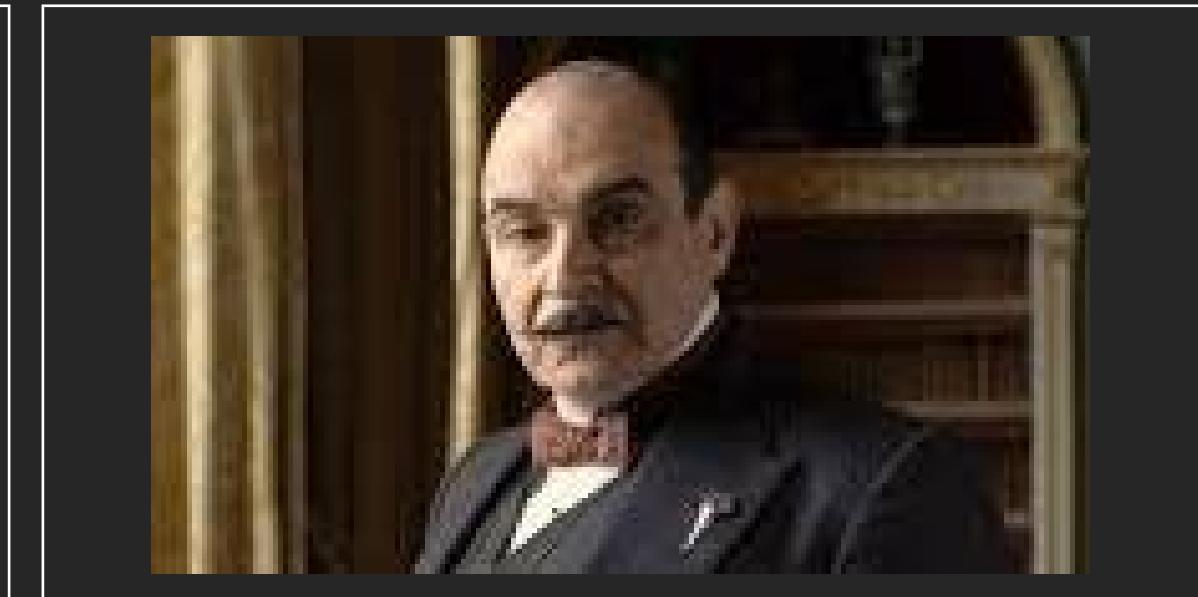
- *England and Wales*
- *Europe*
- *Global collaboration and inspiration!*

1. United Kingdom (England and Wales)

A personal journey –
4 pauses at points which gave
insight into the work of volunteers,
(and perhaps illustrate why I am
committed to their work)

The journey starts 50 years ago!
Are insights relevant today?



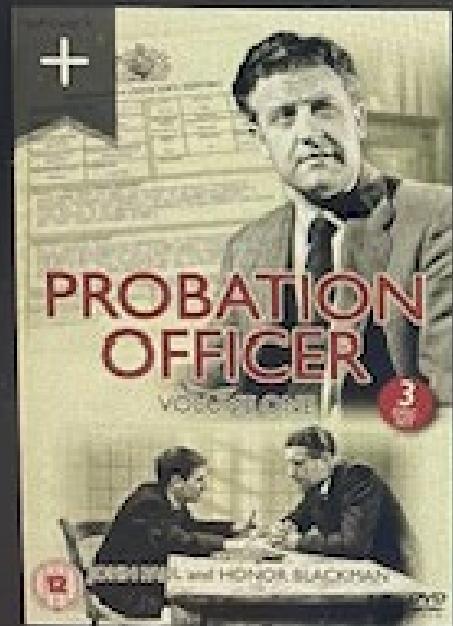


[Episode guide](#) 109 >

1960s...

Probation Officer

TV Series · 1959–1962 · 12 · 1h



Drama

An early hit for ATV, this absorbing, rigorously researched and very human drama series centres on the work of probation officers based in London, and the lives of the men and women of all ages and backgrounds who come under their care. Drawing on the documentary skills...

Stars [John Paul](#) · [John Scott](#) · [Jessica Spencer](#)

[IMDbPro](#) See production info at [IMDbPro](#)

Public Perception & Understanding – A Challenge?

- A new (1959!) series – “The Probation Officer”
- Demystify – increase public understanding of probation
- Become a probation volunteer!
- Challenge stereotypes – more balanced understanding of risks and needs
- Applied to become a PO

[Select Your Preferences](#)

2) 1970's The "Cyrenians" (Bristol)
Charitable house for Homeless People
including probationers and ex-prisoners

Run by volunteers (I was one!)

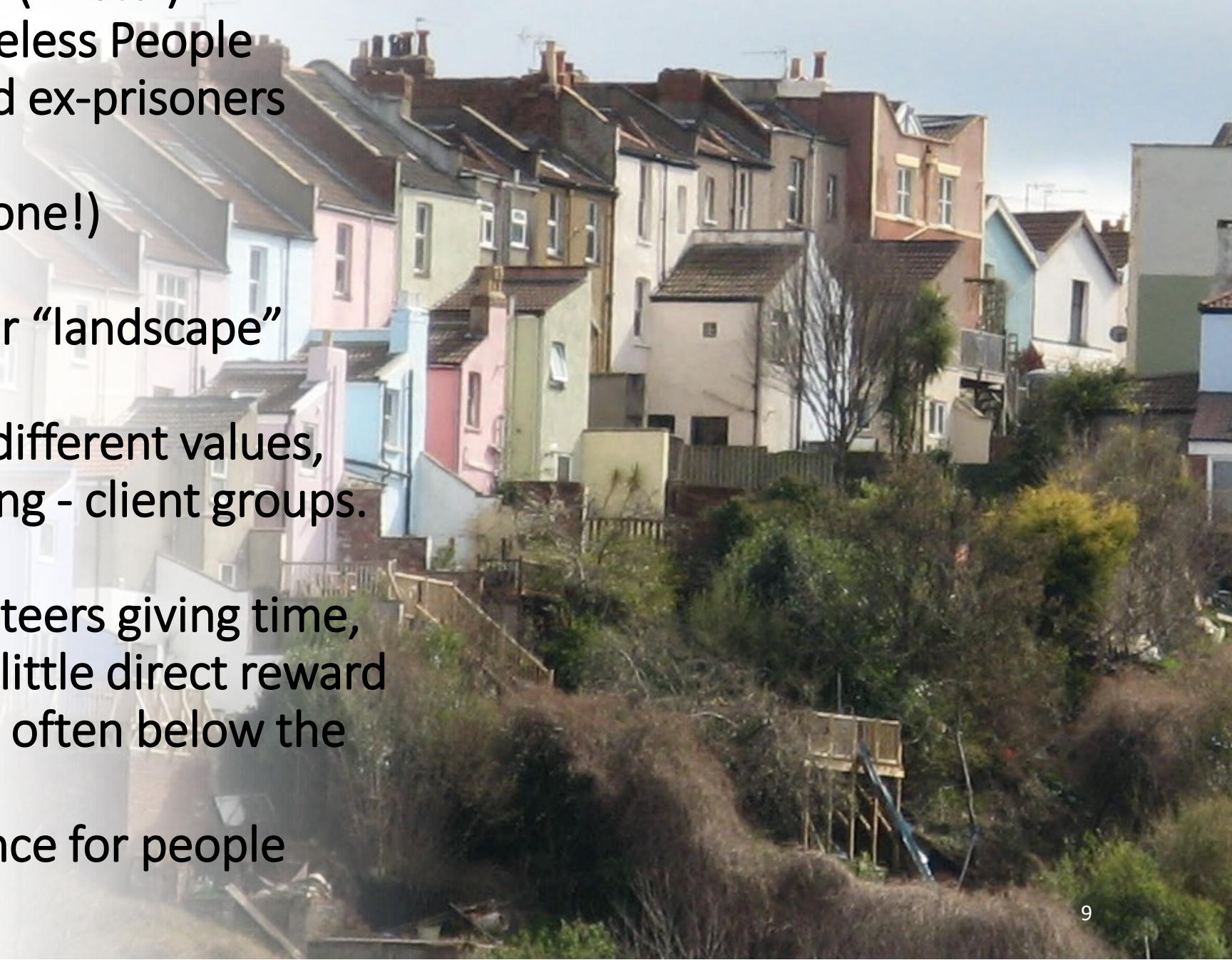
Hugely generous volunteer "landscape"

Complexity of need

Complexity of provision - different values,
different needs, overlapping - client groups.

Vital roles played by volunteers giving time,
skills, energy – often with little direct reward
or recognition by society - often below the
radar.

Making a world of difference for people
who didn't have much





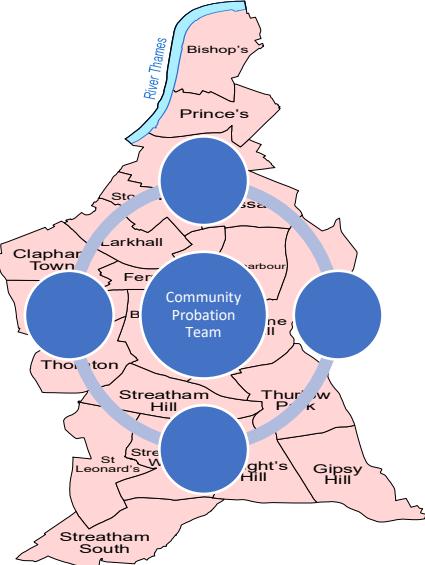
London 1981

Photograph: Manchester Daily Express/SSPL/Getty Images

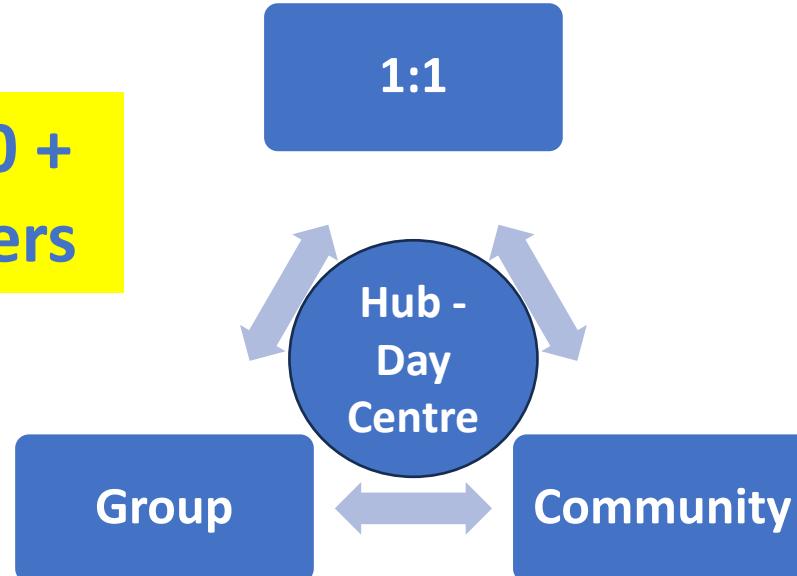
3) Brixton Civil Disturbances – Inner city, Deprivation, Race tensions: The Probation Response? “...inspired probation to innovate new methods of working with communities”

(Broad, 1991) Broad, B. (1991), *Punishment Under Pressure: The Probation Service in the Inner City*, London: Jessica Kingsley.

London Borough of Lambeth
Ward Map, 2002-2022



4 P0s, 30 +
Volunteers



1:1 “Accompanying”, support, coaching, Groupwork, Day Centre, Employment, Housing, Leisure (Sport, Music, Wild camping...). Breakfast club, Cookery; Community- interpreting / building probation service--community relationship!

Volunteers central and critical in ALL roles. And a “bridge” between all players

POs supported volunteers; Volunteers supported *Probationers, Communities... + POs!*

Distinct/different/complementary roles?

Role of Prominent/celebrity volunteers – inspiring role models, building community awareness and understanding..

The story of
“Joe”
The
importance of
time and space



4) 1999 – 2003: Established 7 Pilot “Pathfinder” Programmes to improve Resettlement (reintegrate) “Short-term” Prisoners:

Professor Mike Maguire (Independent Evaluation Team) ... describes ... encouraging recent innovations: ... **mentoring** to support custody to community transition (Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, 2004).
6 Male, 1 Female pilot, Mentor involvement in some pilots

“...early evidence from the Pathfinders suggests that ... combining the advantages of 'advising, assisting and befriending' by mentors ...and... more structured and offence-focused inputs by probation staff, may be the **optimum strategy**.”

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

Arts
(Koestler Trust)

Sport
(Football Twinning)

Peer Support -
St Giles
Literacy - Shannon Trust
Samaritan listeners

Female Out of Court
Diversion, Reintegration
(Footprints)

Victim Support,
Magistrates, Prison
Visitors

High Risk - Approved
Premises (Footprints)



2. Europe: Challenges and Current Initiatives

Volunteers *Past present* *... and future*

A reminder... Volunteers more than a long-standing tradition – they are the *origins* of probation and parole in Europe

- Europe - 19th century - including Netherlands and United Kingdom...
- Volunteers, often attached to churches or charities, worked with courts to support offenders – especially those with drink problems.
- In Ireland work with discharged prisoners developed, an early form of parole being practiced from the 1850s.



Europe today – similarly a diversity of Volunteer structures, roles, needs, client groups - some examples...

COSA*
Circles of Support & Accountability

Support for Detainees overseas (NL)

NEUSTART - Integrated volunteers (992) and professionals (432)
(Austria)**



*In 2002, COSA was first introduced in Europe (UK). Since then, further implemented in the Netherlands, Belgium, Catalonia, Latvia, Bulgaria, Ireland, Italy...

** 2022



Volunteers... *recommendations*

JIVE REPORT 2015 (Clinks) – RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDE - (Emphasis added)*

- Improve *recruitment, training and support* to reflect a demanding voluntary role
- Invest in a *culture of volunteering*
- Recognise *diversity*
- Reward, recognize and motivate*
- Improve *evaluation*
- Support volunteering to build healthy, resilient communities*

Recommendation relevance to other world regions and countries?

**“Volunteering is freely given, but not cost free –
- it needs and deserves targeted support from all stakeholders”**



European Developments

Taking Volunteering Forward

Council of Europe Recommendations (2017)

Managing Volunteers (CLINKS.. Et a) (2020...)

VOLPRIS

The CoPPer Project - Inspiration by Japan!

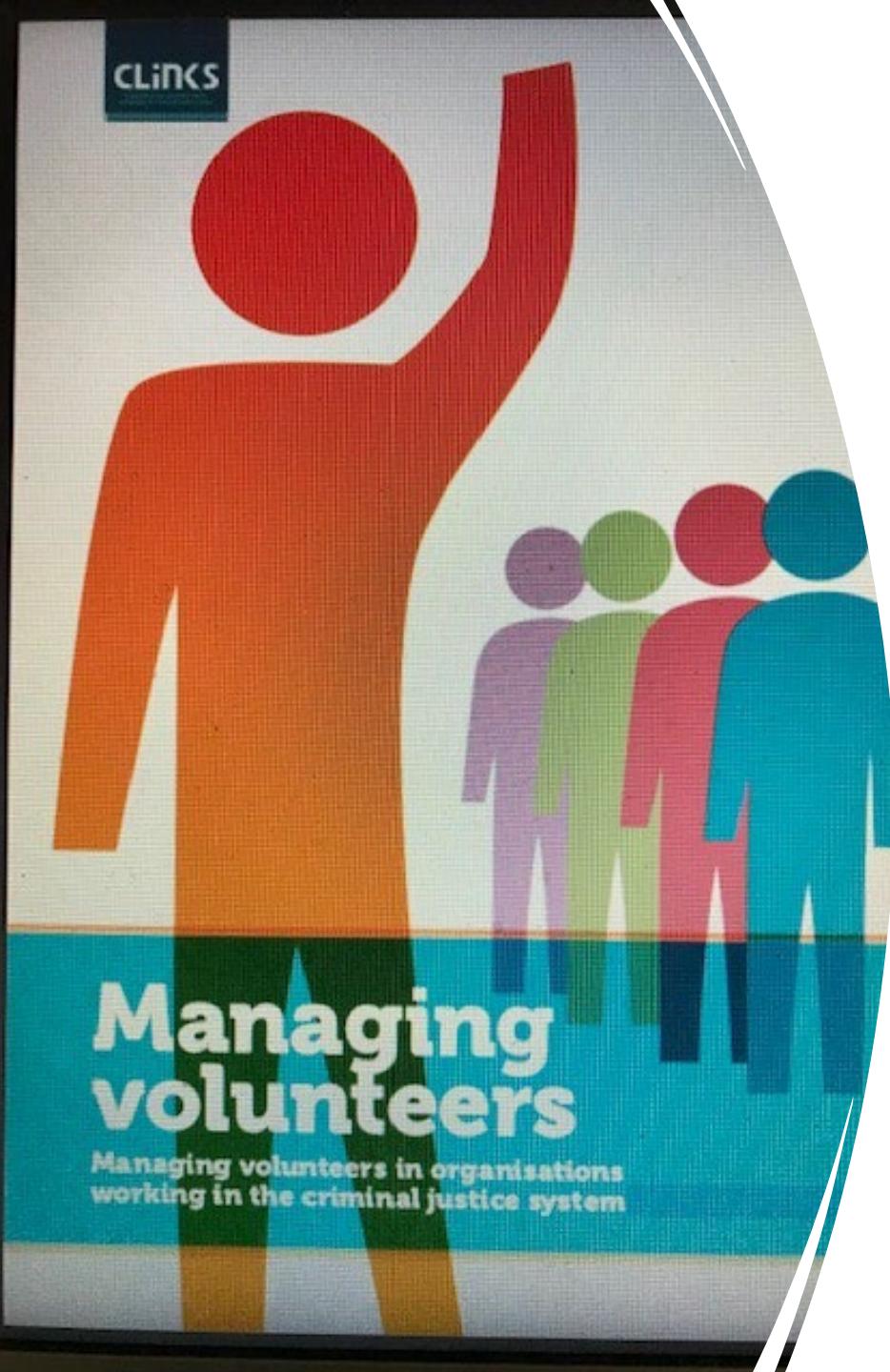
The importance of work with community volunteers ...

“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”.



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”.



Managing Volunteers – Clinks

- A new resource about volunteers
- Clinks (2020)
- “Managing Volunteers in organisations working in the criminal justice system”

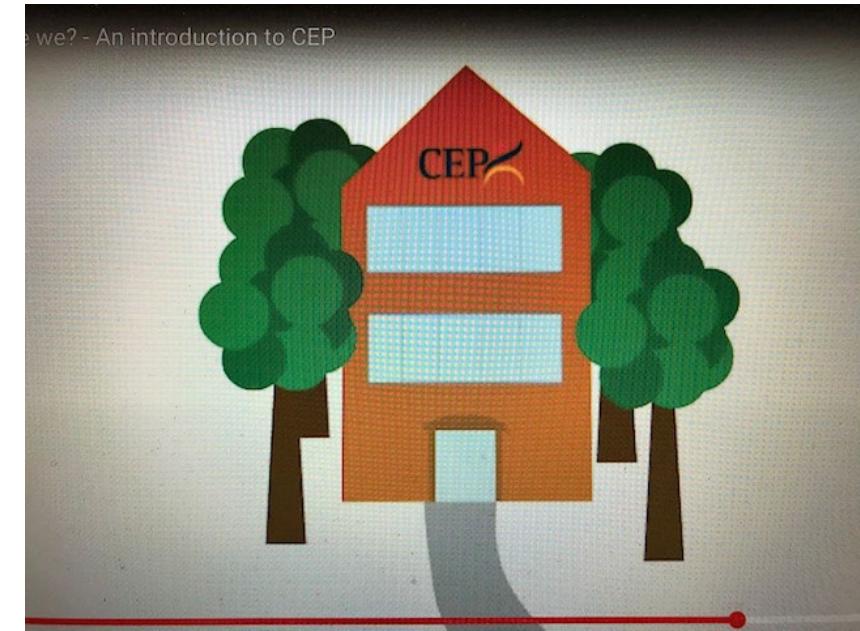
A Partnership of **8 countries**, statutory and not for profit, and **5 aims** -

VOLPRIS

Project

- 2019 - 2022 ... identified ... pathways between voluntary organisations and prisons and how to train managers in prison to support these.

1. ... Prisons and VSO *exchange frameworks*;
2. Identify *key performance indicators* between National Prison Administrations and volunteer organisations within secure settings;
3. Develop a *training curriculum and programme* ... and develop a *European Volunteer Managers training guide*;
4. Establish common *European minimum standards to train volunteers*
5. Promote *collaborative training*.



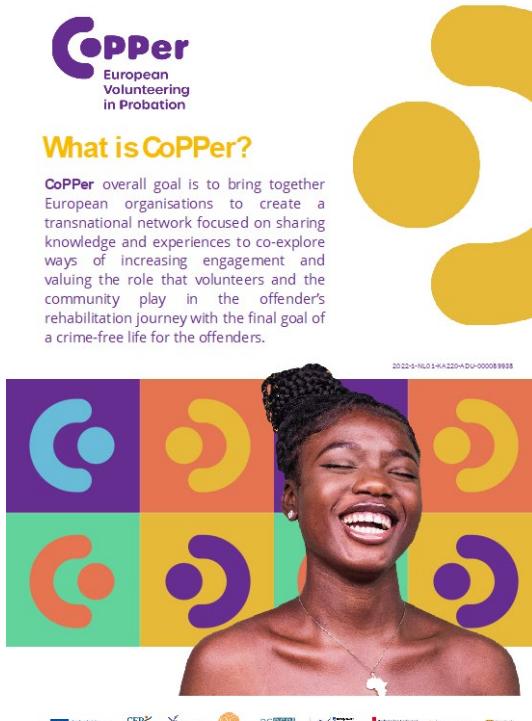
Founded 1981

60+ Member organisations across 40 countries
Probation agencies, Universities*, NGOs, individuals, and more...
Valued affiliate organisations around the world

CEP ... promotes pan-European cooperation including by conferences, workshops, expert groups, jurisdiction reports, knowledgebase, "Day in the Life of", "Probation Works", digital newsletter, website, regional events for newer services, CEP Matchmaking Project, webinars... and research projects!

CoPPer Project

Cooperation to Promote a European Volunteering Program in Probation Services



Who do we want to involve?

- Prison and Probation Services
- Community-Based Organizations
- People in Conflict with the Law
- Academia
- Volunteers

Project Results

- Mapping the European practice of Volunteering in probation
- European Training programme for Volunteers in the Probation Services
- Community Based Organisations Capacity-Building
- European Probation Volunteering Handbook

Know more:



COPPer
European
Volunteering
in Probation



CoPPer - Evidence Review on Volunteering in Probation 2023

- Key Aspects include -
 - Recruitment and Engagement
 - Training programs and support mechanisms
 - Reward systems and recognition
 - Insights into societal perceptions and the interplay between the voluntary sector and criminal justice

CoPPer Project Evidence Review (2023)

Reintegration: A “community-active” two-way street

“The emphasis of volunteering ... is also placed on reintegration as a process which involves communities rather than only individuals and the probation service.

“...Reintegration as a two-way street where the community supports and welcomes the formerly justice involved person back into their fold (Carlen, 2013; McNeill, 2023)

Volunteering as having both an individualised and a community dimension.



CoPPer Project Evidence Review

Considers characteristics ... beneficial for potential volunteers:

- A non-judgmental approach
- Good listening and communication skills
- Empathy and compassion
- Good Understanding of confidentiality
- Socially responsible
- Strong mindset

Example - Team Oxford (2023)

3. Global Collaboration and Inspiration!

Volunteering Globally

Why and How volunteering matters



Global Collaboration and Inspiration



Huge and valuable Global
Diversity of Volunteer Role
and Practice



wccv an important forum
for discovery and sharing



Transferability? Inspiration
and adaptation!

The 7th Yellow Ribbon Run (2022)

- 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 of the Czech YRR – dedicated to the often forgotten victims of crimes – offenders' children.
- 700 hundred people including 160 prison service staff, and 290 prisoners (virtual run within the prison walls).
- Organisers honoured 20 colleagues from Singapore Prison Service – Singapore being a cradle for the YRR – participated in the virtual run!”
- Adapted from, and more information at <https://yellowribbon.cz/>.



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 listening ...and giving time”



Why and How volunteering matters

Your presence is the most precious gift you can give to another human being.

Marshall B. Rosenburg

Closing remarks -

1st WCCP (Kyoto) and 2nd WCCV (Hague), ...

As I hope these stories and examples illustrate, volunteers have a critical role to play at the individual and community level in supporting stronger reintegration and desistance, and building peaceful and secure societies

Volunteers support probationers, parolees, communities ...and probation officers as well!

They deserve our support too!



Closing remarks -

1st WCCP (Kyoto) and 2nd WCCV (Hague), ...



*Let's sustain the momentum of these Congresses - in fact lets help this momentum become a movement...
... and of course let's*

Support the Declaration on an International Day for Volunteers!

*Thank you!
I look forward to our presenters and discussion*

World Congress for Community Volunteers



www.cep-probation.org

info@cep-probation.org



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International Inspiration!

- Hokusai --- Vincent van Gogh
- The Great Wave off Kanagawa (1831)
- Starry Night (1889)