



Volpris Discussion Forum

*“Transferable Practice in Valuing
Volunteers in Criminal Justice”*



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Researching the Impact of Volunteers:
an interactive discussion

11th March 2022

Agenda

- Introductory remarks
 - A brief word about the CEP
 - The session today
 - The impact of Volunteers – context and preliminary thoughts
 - Valuing volunteers
 - Range of volunteer roles and tasks
 - Evaluating impact
 - Supporting desistance from reoffending
 - Interactive Discussion
 - Roles and Impact
- Future... strategic considerations and concluding remarks

Introductory remarks...

- Personal Introduction
- A note of acknowledgment
 - of the hospitality offered by VPOs during the World Congress on Probation – Tokyo
 - the insights they offered into the work of VPOs to support desistance from crime..
- **World Congress on Community Volunteers Kyoto and Declaration 2021**
Recognising value, promoting the role in support of reintegration, preventing crime, and constructing peaceful and secure communities
- Variations and similarities around the world, helped sow the seeds of the value of evaluating volunteer impact. A global agenda!





Confederation of European Probation



Founded 1981

60 Member organisations across 40 countries

Probation agencies, Universities, NGOs, individuals, and more

Affiliate organisations around the world

CEP ... promotes pan-European cooperation including by conferences, ... reports ... partnering research, jurisdiction reports, digital newsletter, website; CEP stimulates exchange of ideas on probation in Europe and globally, and contributes enthusiastically to the World Congress on Probation!

The session today



*The Value of
Volunteers in
many different
Roles*



Significance of the work of 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”.



Council of Europe

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”.

Significance of the work of community volunteers ...

“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 can also act as ‘*champions*’ of community sanctions and measures, *helping society to better understand their aims and value*”



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”.

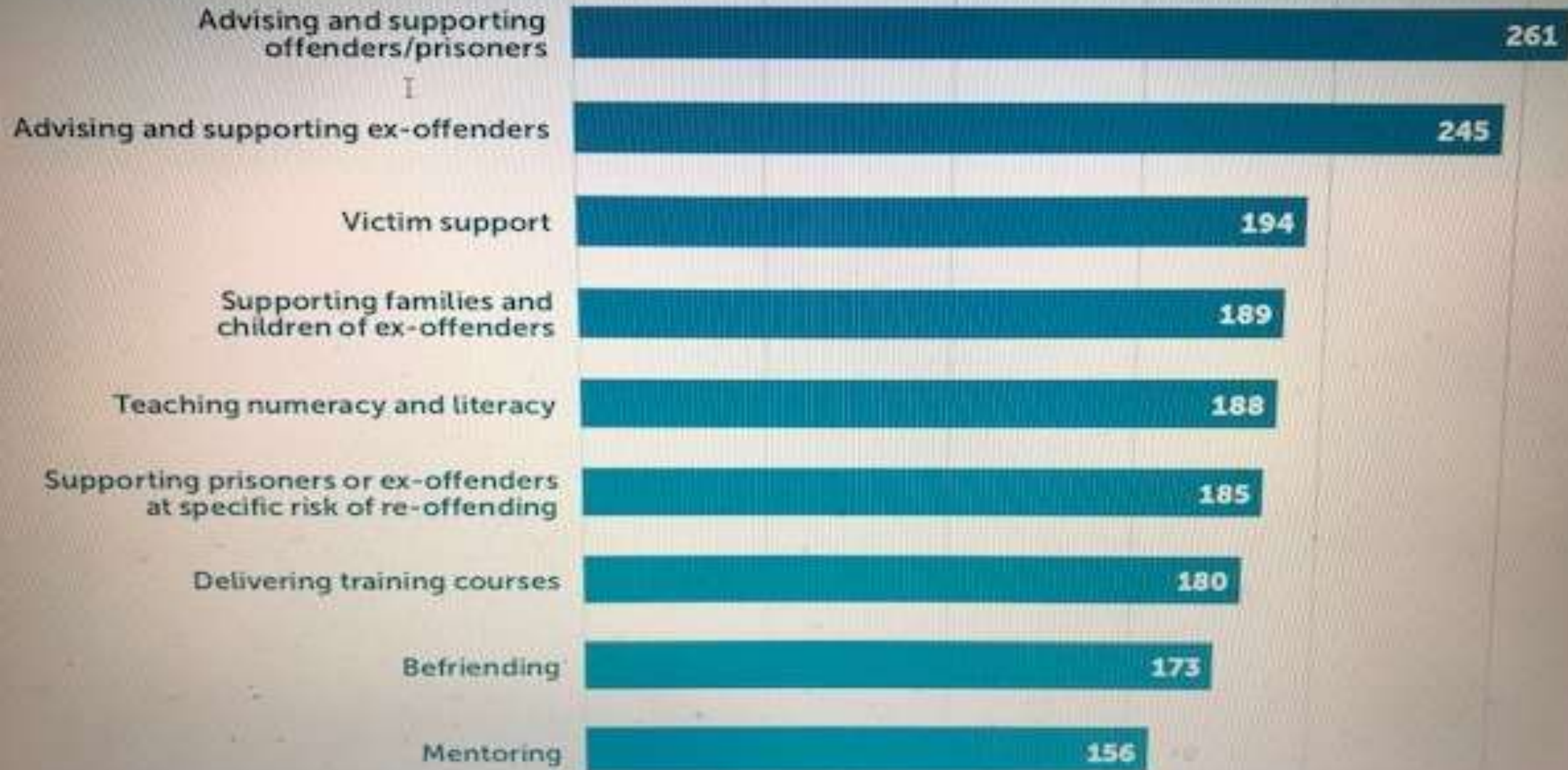
Note: Emphasis added

There is a wide range of Volunteer Roles In Europe... and even more if we look around the world. To name just a few ...

- **Supporting prisoner reintegration**
- **Restorative justice volunteer**
- **Circles of Support & Accountability**
- **Gender specific support - reintegration, diversionary**
- **Projects using real-life lived experience to empower ..**
- **Working with drug misusers**
- **Prison listening, peer advising, literacy support**
- **Youth mentoring**
- **Parent mentoring**
- **Victim Panels**
- **Support for nationals imprisoned overseas, and more**



Graph 4 / Distribution of the different activities undertaken by volunteers



Jive Report 2015; Graph 4 (part) showing first 9 ranked activities undertaken by volunteers (in European survey)

Evaluating Impact





Poll 1

To what extent is feedback available on the impact of your work as a volunteer? (Please indicate ONE answer).

- **Little or no feedback on impact is available**
- **Some feedback on impact is available**
- **A reasonable amount of feedback on impact is available - neither a lot nor a little**
- **A lot/quite a lot of feedback on impact is available**
- **All the feedback on impact that is required is available**

What aspects or results of volunteering do you think should be prioritized when evaluating the contributions made by volunteers?



Responses

- 1) Preparation for being volunteers in prison, personal development
- 2) Motivation
- 3) Mid and Long-term evaluation on outcomes (e.g. recidivism)
- 4) Japanese HOGOSHI system as a good practice to support offenders' reintegration and develop inclusive society
- 5) Good neighbours point of view as community volunteers supporting offender reintegration
- 6) Social and family reintegration
- 7) Human potential growth & reintegration
- 8) Disciplinary Conflict Mediation

Building the Practice Evidence Base in our field...

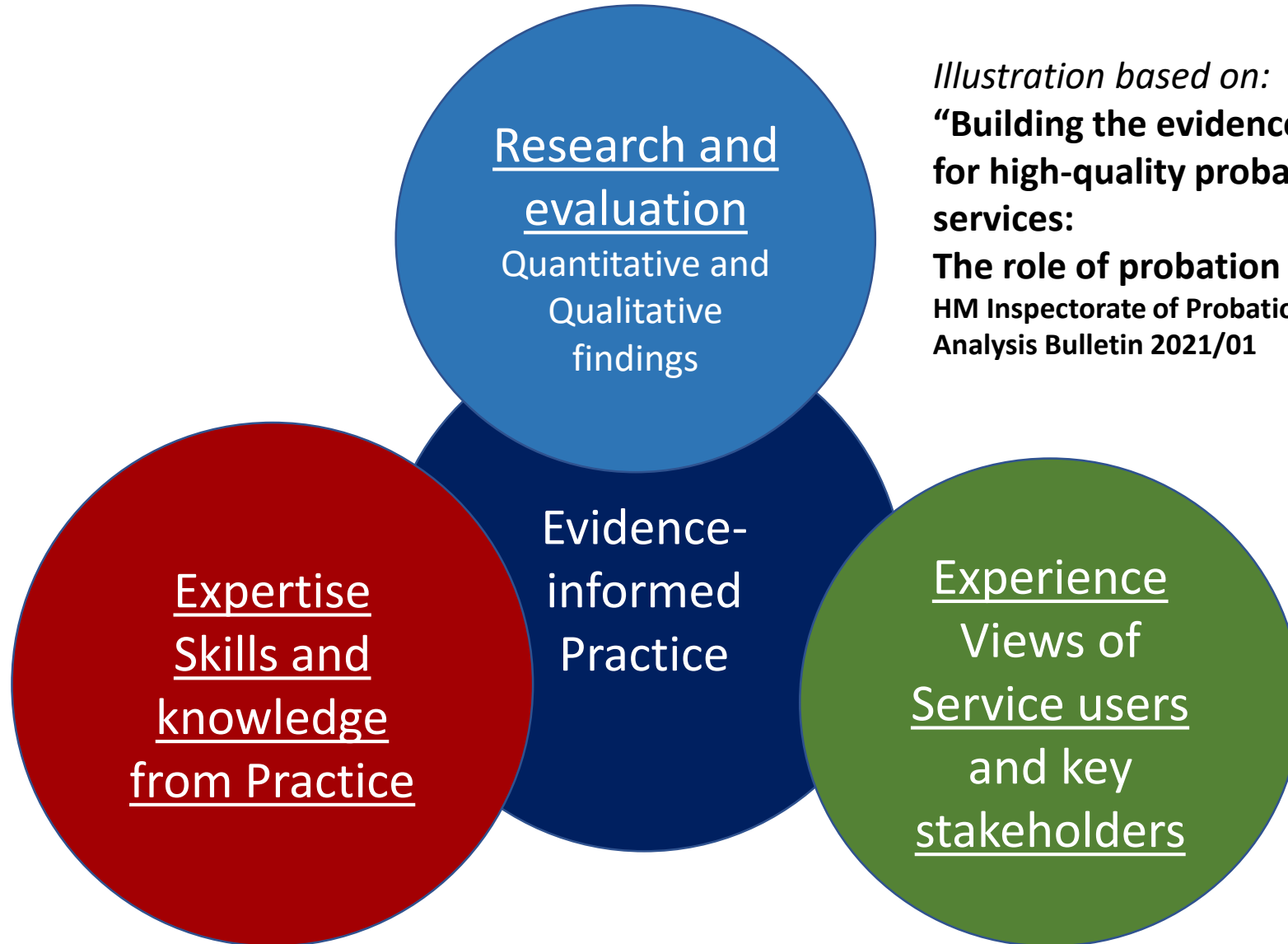


Illustration based on:

**“Building the evidence base
for high-quality probation
services:**

“The role of probation providers”

HM Inspectorate of Probation Research &
Analysis Bulletin 2021/01

Underscoring added



**PLEASE USE JAMBOARD TO SAY
In your experience...
What skills, qualities, knowledge
or practices most contribute to
your impact as a volunteer?**

Thinking about Desistance

- **A focus on strengths**
- **Social opportunity – removal of barriers**
- **Continuity of support from prison to the community, and in the community**
- **A “zig-zag” process**
- **Personal narratives**
- **Others’ acceptance of changing narrative**
- **Community recognition**
- **Restoring Relations - Importance of worker/volunteer relationships or “alliance”**
- **“Responsivity” – responding to difference**

Factors supportive of desistance

Desistance research has developed over recent decades, and the collated evidence suggests that people are more likely to desist when they have:

- **strong ties to family and community**
- **employment that fulfils them**
- **recognition of their worth from others**
- **feelings of hope and self-efficacy**
- **a sense of meaning and purpose in their lives.**

HMIP Research, The Evidence Base, Desistance, December 2020

Desistance – A “strength-based” approach. Future orientated -

It may include -

Supporting Human Capital and Social Capital

Building and sustaining hope

Recognising and developing strengths

Fostering agency / self-determination

Helping to overcome barriers

Continuity of support from prison and in the community

Recognising and celebrating progress

Realism about complexity and difficulties

The importance of relationships, including with workers

Non-offending Identity and Belonging/acceptance by others

Discussion





Poll 2

Which **THREE** of the following best describes your *day-to-day* work as a volunteer?

- Helping a person to achieve their potential
- Supporting (re)integration in the community
- Helping to resolve specific needs (e.g.; housing, work, health, family, drug or alcohol issues)
- Helping someone to reduce or stop reoffending
- Helping to build a sense of hope or optimism
- Helping someone to see themselves in a new light
- Communicating the care and concern of the wider community
- Providing continuity of support from prison to the community
- Building community awareness and support for people who have offended
- Something else (please indicate in chat)

Poll 3

Which of your *practices or qualities* most contribute to impact in your role as a volunteer?

Please indicate up to 5.

- Someone who listens, is non-judgmental, offers time, and support
- Being a helpful member of / link to the community / good neighbour
- Support or guidance on practical matters (work, housing, health etc.)
- Offering emotional support
- Seeing the best/potential in someone
- Helping someone to create/sustain a new/ optimistic view of themselves and their future
- Being someone who has lived through similar issues
- Mentoring or coaching
- Offering guidance in relation to not reoffending
- Providing support continuity from prison and into the community



*Future
Considerations???*





**Concluding
remarks**

Thank you