

Justice  
Involving  
Volunteers  
in Europe

JIVE

# Building successful partnerships involving volunteers in the criminal justice system

A good practice guide



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JIVE – Justice Involving Volunteers in Europe

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# Executive summary

**Volunteering in the Criminal Justice System plays an integral role in a wide variety of settings across Europe's courts, prisons, probation systems and non-governmental organisations. Feedback from (ex) offenders that have had or are receiving volunteer support tells us that it is a vital and very effective way of helping them to reintegrate into their community, reduce their risk of reoffending and to change their lives. Compared to other relationships within the prison environment, (ex) offenders find they have a safe relationship with volunteers who have a better understanding of who they are. From a governmental point of view, volunteers contribute to the humane execution of penal law.**

More and more, the use of volunteers within the criminal justice system is organised by means of partnerships between public, private and non-profit organisations. Within these cross sector partnerships, individuals from partner organisations commit resources and agree to work cooperatively toward common goals relating to the reintegration of (ex) offenders. These collaborations have the ability to combine the unique capabilities and resources of each organisation to surpass any of them working in isolation.

However, in order to establish and sustain effective cross sector partnerships, partner organisations often face challenges. For example, a lack of clarity in the division of tasks between professionals and volunteers may result in tensions between them. There is also the risk of an imbalance of power, particularly reflected in financial arrangements, which can seriously impede a positive and co-operative partnership. Another challenge is finding a balance between the amount of monitoring and reporting requested by funders and time spent carrying out activities that the partnership was established for.





“More and more, the use of volunteers within the criminal justice system is organised by means of partnerships between public, private and non-profit organisations”

**Interviews were conducted in order to identify examples of good practice in dealing with the challenges that cross sector partnerships involving volunteers in the criminal justice system face. These interviews with staff members of volunteer involving organisations, prisons and their representatives have helped identify examples of good practice, which have been divided into four categories:**

## Step one / Establishing a partnership

### Good practice 1 /

#### **Make the needs of service users a priority**

In order to enable organisations to reach out across their respective responsibilities and interests and to co-operate, partners need to have a shared vision. Making what is needed 'on the ground' by (ex) offenders the basis for starting a project and funding discussions is a good way to explore avenues of funding, align priorities of stakeholders and make success criteria for reporting purposes realistic and motivating.

### Good practice 2 /

#### **Invest time in finding the right partners**

In order to find the right partners, networking and staying on top of developments in statutory and non-governmental organisations prove to be crucial activities. In countries that have umbrella organisations, these are thought to be a route into identifying potential partners. When an initiative is taken to set up a partnership, it is important to make sure there is a match between parties. If possible, carry out a pilot collaboration in which partners can explore the co-operation.

### Good practice 3 /

#### **Set up a partnership agreement**

The signing of a partnership agreement between organisations can be an important step forward in reaching out across their respective responsibilities and interests, and to co-operate on how best to involve volunteers in their work within the Criminal Justice System. Having a formal agreement will contribute to preventing and resolving problems in the future.

## Step two / Organising funding

### Good practice 4 / **Just get started**

Projects or partnerships do not always start immediately after receiving funds. In some cases there are no funds available for the project. In other cases the funds are not sufficient to finance a whole programme. However, sometimes just getting

started on a project with no or a small amount of money enables partnerships to flourish and establish themselves, show their value and build trust. This can result in getting longer term funding and embed the work that has started.

#### **Good practice 5 / Create transparency**

In order to make needs of service users a priority, encourage the right conditions for funding, and have effective discussions between funders and contractors, there needs to be transparency between all parties involved. It is important to establish this as a norm across the partnership early on, starting with yourself. Be as open as you can, especially on values and interests you are representing and funding you are receiving from other avenues, and take time to have an open dialogue with the funder on tasks, terms and conditions. One way of being transparent from the start and establishing it throughout the programme is by initiating a feedback loop.

#### **Good practice 6 / Arrange long-term funding**

In almost every partnership interviewed for this research, funding that had been agreed for the period of one year is seen as too short a period. The short amount of time makes it difficult to set up an effective project. Many interviewees specifically identified the need for a three-year funding term.

#### **Good practice 7 /**

##### **Agree on the right conditions for funding**

Once funding has been agreed funders usually assign certain preconditions that need to be fulfilled before making any payments to organisations. In choosing conditions of funding and payment, it is important that they are clear in advance and that they fit the cause.

#### **Good practice 8 / Payment by results**

In certain situations, and indeed countries, it can be fitting and effective to define desired results in advance and make payment dependent on achieving those results. Those desired results have to be aligned with the goals the partnership is aiming for; all parties should work together on agreeing these details and neither party should be left at a disadvantage. Discussing and forging desired results from different viewpoints are more likely to contribute to appropriate, realistic and motivating goals.

## **Step three / Organising co-operation**

#### **Good practice 9 /**

##### **Employ a volunteer co-ordinator**

Volunteer co-ordinators are a conduit between partner organisations and vice versa, and will significantly improve the activities of all parties involved. The volunteer co-ordinator can also play a crucial role in the co-ordination of other volunteer involving organisations that work in the same area or within the same custodial institution.

#### **Good practice 10 /**

##### **Communicate clearly and openly**

An essential factor of a successful partnership is clear and open communication based on trust, mutual respect and understanding. Good communication starts with engaging service users in the design and commissioning stages of a programme. It is also important to build strong links with key stakeholders - such as Ministry of Justice staff, prison governors, police commissioners and other community leaders by having a single point of contact.

#### **Good practice 11 / Meet often**

Meetings are an important means of clearing up problems and finding new ways of working together. Therefore, meet with partners, and meet often. This will deepen relationships and increase trust among partners.

#### **Good practice 12 /**

##### **Create integrated approaches**

Integrated or multidisciplinary approaches, in which all stakeholders and viewpoints are represented and where relationships are based on cooperation, seem to have the best results for adapting to changing environments. For example, organising meetings between the (ex) offender, the volunteer involving organisation, the local community and the probation service will help in finding an integrated response for a client with multiple and complex needs.

**Good practice 13 /****Invest in an umbrella organisation**

Umbrella organisations act as the official representative and lobby on a political level for its member organisations. Through this network the umbrella organisation can build a more substantial case for policy shaped by evidence.

## Step four / Monitoring

**Good practice 14 / Avoid bureaucracy**

Interviewees highlighted that there is an imbalance between the volume of monitoring and reporting requirements from funders against the activities that the project or partnership was established to do. Volunteer involving organisations expect a degree of reporting is necessary however would encourage funders to minimise this to allow them to concentrate on delivering outcomes. Organisations have developed their approach to dealing with this which includes, integrating data collection into their daily work patterns and consulting their umbrella organisation for advice on tackling monitoring and reporting activities.

**Good practice 15 / Report face-to-face**

Since face-to-face contact is so vital for discussing progress and outcomes that cannot be captured in documents, it is important to make face-to-face interpersonal contact an integral and substantial part of the monitoring process. Therefore, have frequent progress meetings with all stakeholders, use coaches to monitor the work of volunteers and organise evaluation sessions and focus groups to discuss experiences, problems and good practice.

**Good practice 16 / Organise research**

Research into the added value of a service, can enhance the service and prove it's worth to potential funders and commissioners. Research can also be used before a programme starts or in its early stages to identify the real needs of service users and how to best meet them. For reasons of accuracy, reliability, impartiality and independence, this research is best commissioned from universities or independent research organisations.

**Good practice 17 / Use standards**

Whereas research is carried out intermittently, standardised monitoring and reporting techniques are used with high frequency. They can make the monitoring process structured and efficient and can help identify trends.

**Good practice 18 /****Establish effective data systems**

When information about the progress and results of a partnership are gathered on a structural basis and in a standardised way, data systems will help with monitoring. These make it possible to report more easily to funders and other stakeholders, as well as identifying trends in progress and results.

**Good practice 19 / Make it known**

The fruits of monitoring should not go to waste. This means that organisations should try to make sure that reports sent to stakeholders, commissioners and funders are read and in such a way that all parties can benefit from them. It is also recommended that funders and commissioners provide suitable and easy to use reporting templates. Secondly, organisations should ensure that the outputs and outcomes of the monitoring processes are shared publicly.

Implementing these examples of good practices will contribute to establishing effective and sustainable cross sector partnerships that will provide (ex) offenders, their families and victims with better care and support.



# Introduction

“Volunteer support is a very effective way of helping (ex) offenders to reintegrate into their community”

Despite the wide support and promotion of volunteering as part of active citizenship in Europe over many years, and the recommendations of the 2011 EYV Alliance, there are some sectors where (the image of) volunteering can still use a positive boost. This is partly because, historically, in some countries the services have been provided by national governments, and partly because of public perception in other countries. One sector for which this is particularly true is the Criminal Justice System (CJS), working with (ex) offenders, their families, and victims of crime.

In an earlier study, respondents across Europe promoted an increase in the evidence

base around volunteering in the CJS, and a mandate to keep the voluntary sector high on the justice agenda. Systematically integrating voluntary and criminal justice systems in this way would deliver a more effective, local response to an increasingly diverse target group. The feedback from offenders that have had or are receiving volunteer support, also tells us that it is a vital and very effective way of helping them to reintegrate into their community, reduce their risk of reoffending and change their lives. One reason for this is because the volunteer will usually come from the offender's local community which will reduce the risk of social alienation .

The vast majority of volunteers that do work in the CJS are recruited, trained and supported by specialist non-government organisations (NGOs), or non-profit organisations. Many of them are commissioned by private or statutory organisations to deliver frontline services to (ex) offenders with the aim of contributing to their reintegration.



For an extensive overview of how and why European organisations working with (ex) offenders, their families and victims of crime involve volunteers in civic engagement, see *The role and value of volunteers in the Criminal Justice System: a European study* (2015). This report was written using data collected through a survey conducted by the JIVE project.

A critical aspect of involving volunteers in the criminal justice process is the nature of the relationship between statutory, private and non-profit organisations. There is often an imbalance

of power, particularly reflected in financial arrangements, which can seriously impede a positive and co-operative cross sector partnership. New and emerging methods of working, such as payment-by-results and sub-contracting, also raise some interesting questions about how to implement them while keeping the focus on the 'core business': helping vulnerable stakeholders in the CJS.

This guide highlights good practices in effective cross sector partnerships working in several European countries. For countries with limited experience of working with volunteers in the CJS, but who are establishing a partnership opportunity, this guide intends to provide useful guidance for setting up effective partnerships. For those organisations that already have an established partnership, this guide hopes to stimulate mutual respect and understanding and help address any power imbalance evident within partnerships.

This guide is an outcome of the JIVE project, a two-year project that aims to exchange ideas and share good practice on volunteering within the CJS between European member states. The information in this guide has been collected by means of interviews with organisations already working within volunteer involving partnerships across the CJS. It is aimed at practitioners and is based on practical experience and knowledge.

The guide begins with a description of the ideal partnership, a combination of the 'dreams' interviewees shared with us on how they would like to see volunteers involved in the CJS. The advice given in the other chapters forms the step-by-step process for achieving this ideal partnership.

Although the number of interviewees is large and the types of organisations they represent vary in size and scale, they cannot represent the views and experiences of the sector in Europe in its entirety. The JIVE partnership believes the advice presented here is of great value to organisations starting to work or currently working with volunteers in the CJS. It can be adapted to suit the reality of other contexts, taking account of differences in the policy frameworks of member states, the needs of the partners and the local issues to be tackled.



# Background

## About the JIVE project



**Justice Involving Volunteers in Europe (JIVE) is a two year project, led by Clinks, that aims to exchange ideas and share good practice on the role and value of volunteers working with (ex) offenders, their families and victims of crime and NGOs working effectively in partnership with statutory and private organisations.**

The eight NGO partners working together in JIVE are:

1. Aproximar from Portugal.
2. BAGazs from Hungary.
3. BRIK Institute, University of Bremen from Germany.
4. Clinks from England and Wales.
5. Cooperativa Sociale Cellarius from Italy.
6. Foundation 180 from The Netherlands.
7. GRADO from Romania.
8. Penal Justice Reform Foundation from Romania.

JIVE builds on the recommendations of the Policy Agenda for Volunteering in Europe (PAVE) produced at the 2011 European Year of Volunteering, and the Opinion of the European Economic & Social Committee.

The project runs between April 2014 and March 2016, and consists of:

1. A survey and report on the current contribution and value of volunteers in the Criminal Justice Systems of Europe; for dissemination to relevant statutory and non-statutory organisations and European bodies (led by BRIK Institute).
2. A volunteer training programme, process map and best practice guide on volunteer recruitment, training and support (led by Aproximar).
3. An evaluation of current practices in cross sector partnerships, to include a report and recommendations for effective cooperation (led by Foundation 180).
4. Cross sector seminars to explore ideas and promote the use of volunteers within Criminal Justice Systems and regular e-bulletins outlining project developments (led by Penal Justice Reform Foundation).
5. A final conference in Bucharest, Romania to promote and demonstrate the value of volunteers within the Criminal Justice System (CJS) and celebrate the successes of the project (led by GRADO).



# Definitions

Volunteering plays an integral role in a wide variety of settings across Europe's courts, prisons, probation systems and NGOs. Volunteering supports work with (ex) offenders, families and victims of crime, and the form and scale of this contribution varies significantly.

The JIVE project gives a broad definition to the term '**voluntary work**' and defines it as: "**civic engagement without pay**". Work carried out by volunteers includes:

1. Honorary, voluntary, legally regulated or mandatory work within institutions - such as jury members, lay judges, prison board trustees, prison visitors, voluntary parole and probation officers.
2. Mentoring, befriending and social support in prisons or in the community.
3. Practical help, in varied fields as housing, housekeeping, work and finances, identity documents, restore relationships, public relations, research, and so on.
4. Training, education, sports and creative arts initiatives.
5. Roles within pressure or campaign groups, think tanks and lobbyists for legislative change.

We have defined the term '**partnership**' as "**two or more organisations that make a commitment to work together, to develop a shared sense of purpose and generate joint action towards agreed targets**". The commitment could include a formal agreement, for example, a memorandum of understanding or partnership agreement. It implies that there are expectations of interdependence between the organisations involved and of a time-limited or long-term relationship. It also implies the sharing of decision-making, risks, power, benefits and burdens. A partnership should add value to one another's services, products or situations. In this way, a partnership leads to synergy and lower overhead costs.



# Sources

This guide was produced using the data collected from 25 group and individual interviews that were held with a total of 50 people across 7 EU member states during the first half of 2015.

## Interviewees have been selected by means of three non-probability sampling techniques:

- 1) 'convenience sampling' (persons or organisations to which the JIVE project partners have had easy access, for example because they are a member of the same partnership);
- 2) 'judgmental sampling' (persons or organisations of whom the JIVE project partners know they are a reliable professional or authority), and;
- 3) 'snowball sampling' (persons or organisations that have been recommended by other interviewees).

## Interviewees represented:

### 1 / Volunteer organisations

Abandofbrothers, BLAST Foundation, Inspirit Training, Pecan, Prison Dialogue Limited, the Shannon Trust and Thames Valley Partnership from England and Wales; Alba, Associazione Provincia Arci Quartu Sant'Elena, Associazione Volontariato Giustizia and Caritas from Italy; Alternative Sociale Association, Foundation for Promotion of Community Sanctions and Prison Fellowship Romania from Romania; Ontmoeting, Humanitas, ToRechtIt and When The Eagle Learns To Fly from the Netherlands; Freie Hilfe Berlin e.V. and Hoppenbank from Germany; O Companheiro from Portugal.

### 2 / Prisons and their representatives

BVOP (Prison Headquarters) from Hungary; HMP Dorchester from the UK; Lasi Prison and Gherla Prison from Romania.

### 3 / Victim support organisations

Associação Portuguesa de Apoio à Vítima and Cruz Vermelha Portuguesa from Portugal; Victim Support from England and Wales.

### 4 / Statutory organisations

National Health Service (NHS) from England; Custodial Institutions Agency from the Netherlands; the Ministry of Interior from Hungary.

### 5 / Private sector organisations

MTCnovo Thames Valley Community Rehabilitation Company from England and Wales; SZTÁV from Hungary.

### 6 / Probation services

Probation Service Bucharest from Romania.

### 7 / Umbrella organisations for volunteering

Der Paritätische Wohlfahrtsverband Berlin, Landesverband Berlin e.V. (abbreviated: DPW) from Germany.

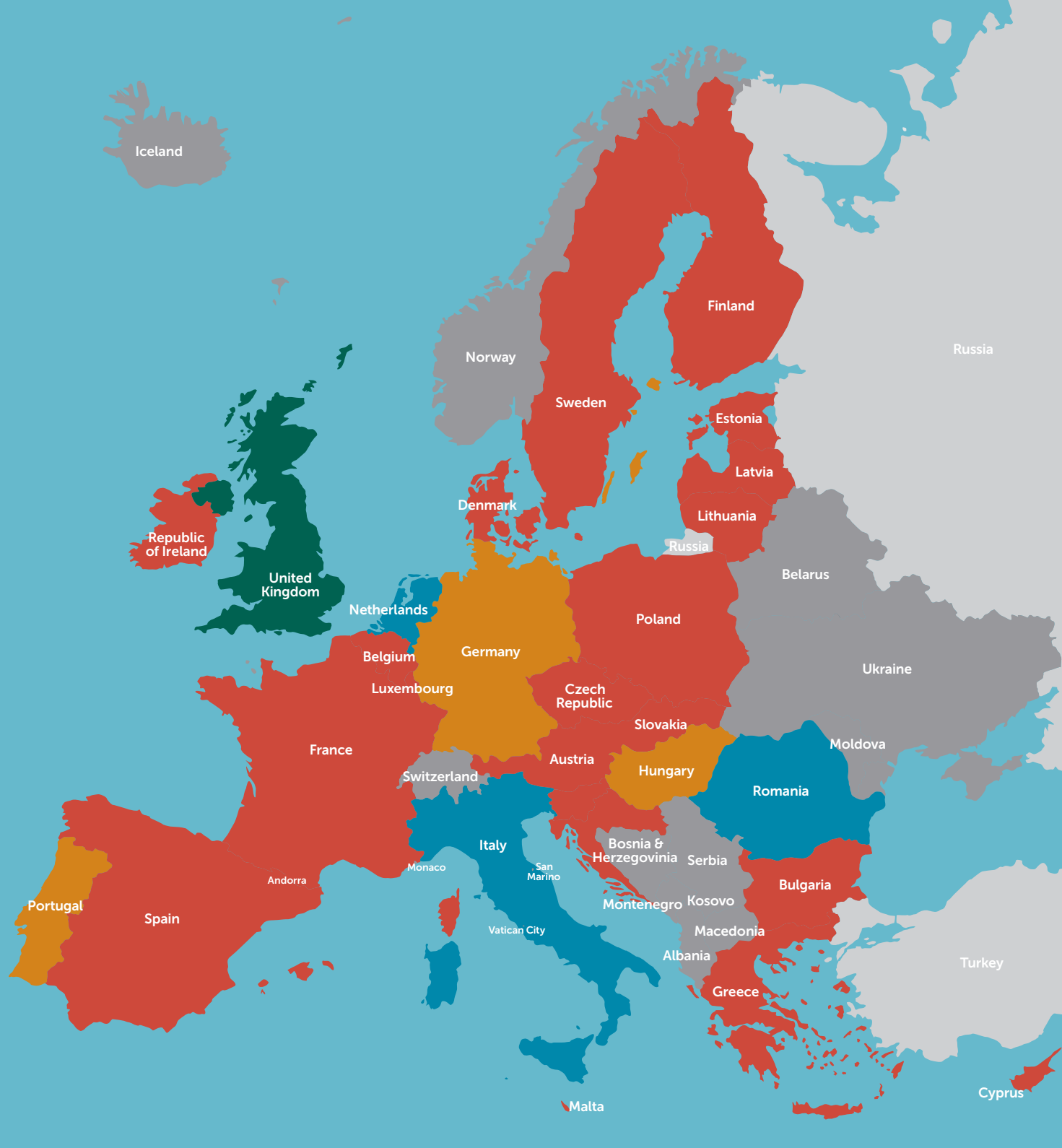
### 8 / Universities

University of Bucharest from Romania.

### 9 / Other types of organisations and partnerships

Tévelygőkért Alapítvány from Hungary; Ufficio per l'Esecuzione Penale Esterna (UEPE – Ministry of Justice) from Italy.

Interviewees were asked questions on the partnerships themselves (i.e. what organisations make up the partnership, what are its goals), the way funding is organised, how monitoring takes place, how cooperation is organised and what the ideal partnership looks like. Answers to these questions resulted in 975 different data points that have been carefully processed to create this guide.



**Diagram 1 / Distribution of interviewees**

- 11+ Interviewees
- 5-10 Interviewees
- 1-4 Interviewees
- 0 Interviewees
- Not EU members

# The dream

**Sharing dreams is an energising exploration of 'what good looks like'. Whether we call it dreaming, envisioning, or imagining, the focus is to think about possibilities beyond the realm of present day thinking. For staff members of organisations working with volunteers in the CJS, asking them what they believed to be the ideal partnership was a time to explore their hopes and dreams, to think about the contribution and value of volunteers working in the CJS. The following reflects on how the world of volunteering in the CJS would look if we were to unite the dreams of the interview participants. The image presented here is not complete and the dream itself is in constant evolution. However, it does paint a picture of the hopes and wishes that are in the field right now.**

## Imagine it is 2020

The contribution of volunteers to the criminal justice systems across Europe has been recognised to be of major value. The expanded involvement of volunteers in the CJS has had a big impact on reforming prison and probation services, rehabilitating (ex) offenders and providing relevant care and support to the families of (ex) offenders and the victims of crime.

All parties and people involved are working toward the same goals: effective reintegration, reducing reoffending and improving quality of life. The objective of working within partnerships is to provide the client with better care and everyone working in those partnerships strives towards their common goals.

The foundation for reaching these goals is a joint and cooperative mind-set present in all stakeholders from service users ((ex) offenders, their families and victims) to funders. The collective mind-set is influenced by the voices of service users, volunteers and professionals by helping them and other stakeholders understand one another. All parties contribute openly, they are appreciated and listened to, free to share their perspectives, and their differences are valued.

This is done by organising regular forums, and other systematic dialogues between stakeholders such as Ministries of Justice (MoJs), prisons, probation services, municipalities and NGOs amongst each other on a national, regional and local level. In these dialogues stakeholders providing a wide variety of (statutory, voluntary and private) services to offenders and (ex) offenders are brought together. During dialogues dreams are shared on the approaches to service user needs. There are discussions about seeking funding together, working together to train volunteers and to otherwise share and enhance resources and projects.





Other dreams of the interview participants have also become reality, such as the following:

**Robust funding:** There is a joint approach to funding wherein partnerships are given time and resources to have the project up and running before going live and to the time to bed in before funding period ends. This is taken into account in bid proposals.

**Through-the-gate care:** There is a policy on through-the-gate care and funding continues even after the day the prisoner leaves prison.

**Policy in cooperation:** There are general agreements and policies about cooperation between NGOs and the prisons about their work. In this way there is less dependency on individuals, which makes partnerships robust and durable.

**Trained professionals:** Professionals are all well trained in working with volunteers as well as in understanding and recognising the needs of service users.

**Diverse volunteers:** Volunteers come from different walks of life and from completely different backgrounds. Service users carry out volunteer work as part of their reintegration and volunteers from different ethnic backgrounds are well represented. There are more students volunteering and the educational institutions they study at focus on practical, professional training of their students.

Turning practice into policy: Good practice is the base on which policy is built. For instance, where

once umbrella organisations for volunteering agencies were NGOs, now every country has organised that some public sector organisation gives administrative support to volunteer organisations. In this way, volunteer organisations can focus more on the core of their work, namely recruiting and coordinating volunteers, and finding new ways to better help service users.

**Removal of bureaucracy:** Only information vital for the funding of and cooperation in the partnership is gathered and used for monitoring purposes. Data processes are 'lean and mean'.

The question is: how does this dream come true? Every dream coming true starts with it being translated into an initiative. For an initiative to become a movement there should be partners willing to cooperate, and first proof of it being viable. In the world of justice involving volunteers, realistically, no initiative can go on and no dream can come true without proper funding. So, for an initiative to become more than that, funding is the next thing one needs. Then, a partnership needs to be set up: which organisations are working together, who is doing what and how should they coordinate the work? When the work is being done, it also needs to be monitored in order to keep it effective and in line with the dream, to improve the work and the partnership, and to inform the funders that their money is well spent.

In the following chapters, we will explore these steps in greater detail.



# Step one: Establishing a partnership

**There are a variety of reasons for setting up a partnership which aims to involve volunteers within the CJS, and therefore also a number of different ways to approach it. The initial focus can be:**

1. Locally driven or bottom-up, meaning from the locality or region itself where the need for better co-operation and co-ordination of activities involving volunteers in the CJS is recognised;
2. Policy driven or top-down, when someone at the central level considers the partnership approach to be the right one for involving volunteers (for example because higher effectiveness and a lower overhead ratio are expected);
3. Incentive driven, in that funding is made available by institutions for a certain type of activity.

Whatever the reason to set up a partnership, there are certain key factors to bear in mind, which will be described in the next paragraphs.

# Good practice 1 /

## Make the needs of service users a priority

**“Making the needs of service users a priority is a good way to align the interests of all stakeholders and start worthwhile projects.”**

In order to enable organisations to reach out across their respective responsibilities and interests, and to co-operate on certain issues, partners have to have a **shared vision**. Making the needs of service users and their communities a priority is a good way to align the interests of all stakeholders and start worthwhile programmes. Making what is needed ‘on the ground’ by (ex) offenders, the basis for starting a project and funding discussions is a good way to explore avenues of funding, align priorities of stakeholders and make success criteria for reporting purposes realistic and motivating. Ultimately, the needs of (ex) offenders, their families and/or victims of crime is what drives everybody involved.

### Some facts: what are the goals of partnerships as identified in the interviews?

1. Reintegration is a goal in almost 50% of the partnerships.
2. In more than 50% of the partnerships generic goals (deliver quality services, change behaviour, provide help etc.) were set.
3. About 10% of partnerships have goals that have to do with community service, families of offenders, humanity, networking between stakeholders, reducing recidivism and providing a social network.
4. Other goals are about reducing prison terms, providing learning opportunities for students and helping victims of crime and children of offenders.



Volunteer involving organisations should offer innovative solutions that are real answers to local problems. For that reason, the key to making the needs of service users the basis for project and funding discussions involving volunteers is that volunteer organisations and their partners offer solutions to problems in the way that authorities, such as prison governors and directors, perceive those problems. If NGOs want to offer such solutions to perceived problems, they should be present in local communities and have strong personal connections at a local level. They should find creative and novel ways to solve those perceived problems, so as to not get caught in the system that caused the problem in the first place.

It is also important to make the needs of service users a priority by communicating intentions clearly so they are easily understood by all partners. Also, for this needs based way of working, commitment is needed from all parties to really understand the issues from a service user's perspective. It is important to **hear the voices of (ex) offenders**, families, victims of crime, volunteers and professionals in a way that makes them feel free to explain their perspectives and their differences. To enable funders to hear these voices one can organise events where funders can hear the stories of the parties involved.





An illustration of letting the voice of (ex) offenders be heard comes from Hungarian Tévelygőkért Alapítvány.

Every year, the Feldmár Institute (that professionally supports the programmes of the Tévelygőkért Foundation) organises an auction. The aim of the auction is to raise funds for a selected social project.

In 2013, the auction was organised for Sándor, an ex-inmate who was released from prison after seven years, just a few hours before the charity event. Tévelygőkért Alapítvány decided to have Sándor present at the auction. When they said that they needed the money from the auction to help him to get started, people were willing to bid fair amounts of money. About one hundred people participated in the auction and they received enough money for Sándor's first few months.

The mere presence of an (ex) offender communicated the need of the (ex) offenders and the way the NGO could help them in a clear and direct way.



Another illustration of letting the voice of (ex) offenders be heard comes from the Dutch foundation ToReachIt.

This small foundation aims to guide people who just come out of prison or a forensic clinic to a full and valued place in society. During the different stages of the reintegration process, volunteers of ToReachIt assist with daily activities and provide guidance in arranging practical matters.

The foundation has been established by a young couple, Stefan and Sharinda, as a result of their own experiences with addiction and detention. They started with a dream, and with the help of many others, have now become a solid foundation.

Being the main ambassadors of their foundation they have been very fortunate that, besides some poor choices they have made in their pasts, they have always worked hard. Therefore, they can regularly function as a successful example when possible future employers falter or are suspicious about former detainees. Having Stefan and Sharinda on board as a positive role model helps convince employers and give (ex) offenders a chance.

Another way to demonstrate the importance of addressing the needs of service users to all parties is by using the range and influence of an **umbrella**

**organisation.** Der Paritätische Berlin (DPW) is a German example of such an organisation.





Der Paritätische Wohlfahrtsverband Berlin, Landesverband Berlin e.V. (DPW) is an umbrella association linking together some 700 charitable organisations and self-help groups. These are active in the care of children, young people, the elderly and families, in social and psychosocial care, in social work for migrants and in many other areas.

The division taking care of criminal justice and related issues is the Department for Offenders and Victim Support. DPW holds in trust the grants of the Berlin Senate Department of Justice (the regional Ministry of Justice) for organisations providing services in the areas of offenders and victim support. The annual volume of funding amounts around € 3.200.000. Some of these grant-funded organisations work with volunteers, others provide either education, training or counselling services in prison. There are also several organisations supporting victims of crime. Altogether, there are 20 organisations that get grants from the Senate Department of Justice for their projects. 14 of them are member organisations of DPW. The role of DPW in the context of trust-holding is to provide support and assistance for the grant funded organisations but also to administrate and monitor their projects.

Organisations who are members of DPW are encouraged to conceptualise projects based on the emerging needs and priorities they see in the field, and to approach a responsible agent within the social services or the regional Ministry of Justice with a project idea. Because there is a very open and responsive relationship between DPW and the people responsible for areas of interest, these people are easily reached.

For example, a DPW member organisation sees a growing number of young men returning from Syria coming to a particular region. It recognises this as a growing issue. DPW can then call the person responsible for extremism, find out where their funding priorities lie, see what influence they can have on these and test a project idea on them. If the concept and the funding are in alignment, there are clear calls organised in good time for a proposal to be developed, and the funder is there every step of the way. This has resulted in good use of funds, effective use of partnership and (not in the least) excellent outcomes for the beneficiaries of the project.

#### **Example: Through the Gate working group, London**

Another example of a platform functioning as a go-between for needs on the ground and funds is the Through the Gate (TTG) working group in London. This working group had the remit of bringing together partners involved in TTG services (e.g. prisons, Community Rehabilitation Companies, delivery partners, National Offender Management Service (NOMS)), in order to implement the service. The remit has now changed to ensure that any local problems or issues can be resolved swiftly. Platforms such as these facilitate and speed up the process of identifying needs, finding initiatives to address them and arranging funds to pay for those initiatives.

## Good practice 2 / Invest in identifying the right partners

Once the need for starting a partnership is clear, it is important to get all the relevant people to join in the partnership. **Generally speaking, any organisation or institution that is either part of the problem to be addressed or part of the solution for that problem, is a relevant party.** Failure to invite or attract some of these key people and organisations might turn out to be an on-going weakness, limiting success and endangering results.

In some cases, volunteer involving organisations will be approached by other organisations to join in

an NGO will start the search itself, based on the need to strengthen the value of the proposal or to find unmet needs, and the acknowledgement that a partnership would be a valuable asset in the application for funds.

Less often, public organisations look for partners that can provide them with support. For example, universities search to partner with probation services or prisons to find placements for the practice of students. Probation services and prisons



a partnership. For example, quite regularly, policy-making agencies - like the Ministry of Justice - issue a **'request for proposal'** (RFP). This is a request for projects that aim to achieve certain policy goals. The activities of the partnership will be financed by the policy-making agency. The request for proposal can either be submitted directly to potential partners, but sometimes it is also directed through umbrella organisations setting guidelines and a general framework, and local agencies seek partners according to their specific needs.

Requests for partnering can also come directly from organisations that have already started to carry out (or make a proposal for) a programme or project. These organisations seek partners that have competencies, resources or access to target groups that they themselves do not. In most cases,

### Some facts: who are the organisations in partnerships identified in the interviews?

1. Almost 50% of the partnerships include prisons and volunteer organisations.
2. The justice department is involved in 40% of the partnerships.
3. Courts, municipalities and private organisations are part of a quarter of all partnerships.
4. One in five partnerships involve universities.
5. Three partnerships actively involve police organisations and probation services.
6. Local health services are involved in three partnerships.
7. Schools are partner in a mere two cases, and they are both from the UK.
8. Social securities are represented in just two cases, both Portuguese.
9. Victim support organisations participate in two partnerships.
10. Housing trusts are a partner of one partnership in the UK and one in Portugal.
11. Social solidarity institutions are involved in one partnership in Portugal.
12. Unemployment agencies play an active role in a Dutch and a Portuguese partnership.

accept this partnership as they feel they can contribute in this way to better training of future professionals in their field. This type of partnership usually does not involve any specific funding from the public organisation initiating the partnership. The common goal, in this case well-educated probation and prison professionals, is enough to justify the investment of time and money of the involved parties.

However, being invited to join in a partnership happens rarely. Therefore, volunteer involving organisations should not only wait for potential partners to come with requests for proposal, cooperation or support; it is wisely to also take the initiative.

In order to find the right partners, **networking** proves to be the number one activity. In countries that have umbrella organisations, these are thought to be the best way to identify potential partners. One of the functions of umbrella organisations like Der Paritätische Berlin or Clinks is to bring members together regularly for workshops and thematic conferences and discussion events. These events 'double' as networking events where (potential) partners exchange their contact details. Out of these (new) relationships spring ideas and proposals that form the basis for projects and partnerships. Attendance at networking events offers the potential to move away from the working in silos and move into the multi-agency partnerships which produce user-focused service systems.

In case of policy changes, proposals, programmes or a need for support, it is essential for volunteer involving organisations to stay on top of developments in statutory, umbrella and non-governmental organisations. This can be done by staying in close contact with their representatives. Networking, again, is the key to finding and maintaining those necessary connections.

When an initiative is taken to set up a partnership, it is important to make sure there is a match between parties. The first thing to look at is whether the core of the partners' activities, their missions are compatible. Are interests aligned? A second match needs to be ascertained when it comes to

competencies: does every party really have 'what it takes' to carry out the programme or project? And, do the combined competencies give the ability to achieve the objectives?

Some partnerships might be easy to develop. For example, there will be groups that can easily agree on activities and the ways they want to achieve their outcomes. In other situations it might be more difficult. For instance, when organisations have no history of co-operation and don't necessarily share the same values. However, those organisations might have identified the same issue and need to work together in order to tackle it. In those cases, it might be good to start with a first provisional step.

Once it is established that the potential partners are complementary and are working for the same goal, it is recommended that a pilot collaboration be carried out. In this trial phase, partners get to know each other and clarify if the match is real and a long-term option for all involved parties. The funder does not always give room for this type of test, but if possible, this is a very good way to make sure the partnership is up to the task and learn from first experiences.

#### **Some facts: on what organisational level and in what geographical area do the interviewed partnerships operate?**

1. In most partnerships operational and managerial levels are both actively involved.
2. The working area of most partnership is local or regional -- 80 per cent works locally, regionally or both.
3. There seems to be a preference for countries when it comes to the working area of their partnerships. In Portugal and Romania it is local. Germany and the United Kingdom tend to adopt a regional approach. In the Netherlands working nationally is preferred. In Hungary partnerships never work regionally and in Italy some partnerships prefer regional approach, while the working area of some others is national.

## Good practice 3 / Set up a partnership agreement

“Partnership agreements are not used across the board, although they seem to be a good solution to avoid conflicts.”

When two or more partners decide to work together in a partnership, they are able to produce a **partnership agreement**. The partnership agreement describes their understanding and commitment to the collaborative effort and details the terms and conditions of the partnership.





Looking at those countries involved in the research, there is no consistency in **the formality of partnership agreements**. For instance, Caritas, an Italian pastoral organisation committed to support the most vulnerable people, pointed out the importance of formal partnership agreements when it comes to the distribution of competencies and the allocation of responsibilities. In Germany, the Netherlands, Romania and the UK, only half of the partnerships have formal agreements. Some organisations have agreements set out between partners, but not between volunteers and professionals; others have organised it vice versa.

There does appear to be a connection between having no formal agreements and experiencing problems. For example:

1. When the Eagle Learns to Fly (The Netherlands) experienced problems between professionals and volunteers and stated that a more strict division of tasks would have helped solve those problems.
2. Charity abandonofbrothers (UK) said that there is a lack of clarity between probation and the charity. This lack of clarity leads to misunderstandings between the two organisations about the ownership to the service abandonofbrothers provides. More formal agreements on exclusivity regarding services could have solved this.
3. A former prison governor recounted a story where partners blamed each other for what went wrong. He recognised things could not be left to luck and issues concerning accountability should have been written down on paper.
4. Hoppenbank e.V. (Germany) stated that data sharing is more of a problem in less formal partnerships, because confidentiality has not been put down in writing.

Therefore, it is good practice to have partnership agreements in place setting clear expectations; the roles each partner is to play and how often partners are to meet. This means partners can plan for specific activities and results and have something to fall back on when things become unclear or divergent.

### Essential parts of a partnership agreement

The signing of a partnership agreement between organisations of different backgrounds can be an important step forward to reach out across their respective responsibilities and interests and to co-operate on the use of volunteers within the CJS. Essential parts of such an agreement are:

1. Common goals of the partnership.
2. Description of tasks, rights, duties and responsibilities of all partners.
3. Scope: what are the boundaries of the partnership (also: what is it not about).
4. Duration of the partnership.
5. Funders and funding.
6. People involved (staff and management).
7. Reporting dates and content (what the funder expects to receive data on and what the delivery partners can realistically deliver).
8. Payment structure, including dates for any performance targets that must be achieved, and clarification of consequences in case of under- or overachievement.
9. Communication (key points of contact, regular meetings, but also some 'soft' text acknowledging a cultural shift within each organisation in this partnership approach).
10. Rules on withdrawal by one partner, on change, suspension or termination of the agreement and associated penalties, and on how to solve litigation that may occur between partners.

It is important to keep in mind that **a contract never replaces a relationship**. The strength of the relationship between partners is a major determining factor in the success of the partnership. The key to building that strength is having a continuous, open dialogue. Maintaining good relationships involves establishing trust by acting with openness and integrity and addressing conflicts and issues proactively so they do not intensify.



## Step two: Organising funding

**Although volunteers are willing to invest their time for free, without funding volunteers cannot be organised to do their work. For instance, paid staff are needed to recruit, select, train and monitor volunteers; the staff require office space; and the travel expenses of volunteers ought to be covered. Not all activities carried out in this field are funded. There are cases where some of it is only supported by in-kind contributions of NGOs or statutory organisations.**

It is hard to make a direct comparison between countries when it comes to funding. In some countries most of the funding comes from statutory organisations, whereas other countries rely almost solely on gifts from the public or religious organisations. However, organising funding is a big challenge for all partnerships, especially during times of economic downturn. One of the biggest challenges is that often political interests (and changes therein) do not coincide with the interests of (ex) offenders, their families, and society in a broader sense. Although all parties discovered that it is not easy to get funding, a lot of them found ways to make it happen.

**“A lot of partnerships work without a budget - most funded partnerships get their money from the Ministry of Justice.”**

Based on the interviews we cannot say that a specific funding model represents good practice. Whether or not a specific model works depends on the nature of the relationship between the funder and the service provider. A large part of this guide introduces ways of making that relationship an effective one.

#### **Some facts: where does the funding for the interviewed partnerships come from?**

1. A lot of partnerships work without a budget. One third of them depend on pro bono contributions of its partners.
2. When the partnership is funded, one in every four of the funding received comes from the Ministry of Justice.
3. In one in five of all cases funds come from charities; a little less often they come from grants.
4. In a few other cases funders are the police, ESF, municipalities, the Ministry of Health, lotteries, (local) companies and fundraisers.
5. Budgets vary between € 2,000 and € 1,000,000, and average at approximately € 400,000 per year.

#### **Some facts: differences in funding of the interviewed partnerships between countries**

1. The government of Hungary does not support volunteer work in prisons. There is no public funding for volunteer work in the CJS, so in Hungary volunteer organisations get their money from the EU and private parties.
2. The government of Italy does not directly fund volunteer work in prisons. There are specific grants for projects or general activities. The volunteer involving organisations are also funded by Christian organisations, private contributors and indirectly by the government, through a part of the general taxation (contributors get a tax reduction when donating to a charity).
3. In the Netherlands most funding comes from the Ministry of Justice.
4. In Portugal there are some sub-sectors (e.g. victims associations) that have agreements with the state, but generally the organisations seek for donors and funding programmes themselves.

## Good practice 4 / Just get started

**“Getting funds for volunteer projects is also about investing one’s own time and money.”**

Initiatives or partnership do not always start immediately after receiving funds. In some cases there are no funds available for the initiative once it has started. In others cases the funds are not sufficient to finance a whole programme. These situations however do not have to spell the end. Sometimes organisations start their projects with a small grant for one year. This enables them to establish themselves, show their value and build trust, which then can allow some organisations to get beyond one year of funding and embed the work that was started.

In other cases the best way to get up and running and secure funding is to just begin. If one believes in one’s initiative and the value it can bring to (ex)



offenders, their families, victims or society as a whole, that belief itself can give enough energy to start without financial support. Investing one’s own time and showing commitment often proves the best way to get funds for the long term. In doing so, the initiative can show its worth, which is sometimes easier than showing it on paper, before it is actually been carried out.



For example, in the first six to nine months of its existence people from the Hungarian foundation Tévelygőkért Alapítvány worked without funds in the Balassagyarmat prison. Tévelygőkért Alapítvány (TA) works for the establishment of a healthy parent-child relationship between incarcerated fathers and their children. It does so by helping inmates perform plays for their children adapted from their own stories and experiences in order to bridge the gap that is tearing the family apart during the years in prison. After the first period without funding, TA applied for a grant from Norway Grants. Helped by the proof of their first successes, TA won the grant.

### Associazione Volontariato e Giustizia

Volontariato e Giustizia is an Italian association that works with offenders and their families. They offer support in organising visits in jail. In 2002, the volunteers started working in the Prison of Cagliari (Buoncammino), with just their own funds and a lot of motivation. After some years of working without many facilities, the local institutions funded them in 2008 with a camper van that is very important for the support that they are offering.



## Good practice 5 / Create transparency

**“Transparency can be organised, and it starts directly at the beginning of a partnership.”**

In order to make needs of service users a priority, set the right conditions for funding, and have effective discussions between funder and contractor, there needs to be transparency between all parties involved. Therefore, establish this as a norm across the partnership early on, starting with yourself. In the early stages of the partnership be as open as you can, especially on values and interests you are representing. Also, take time to have an open dialogue between funder and contractor to agree on tasks, terms and conditions. If you are seeking funds, present information and anticipated results in a way the funder can understand and manage expectations in doing so. Help funders to be clear on what they want delivered and measured. It can negatively affect a relationship when one or both parties discovers the other had different

expectations than the other had anticipated. It can cause disappointment and frustration with both the funder and the contractor.

One way of being transparent from the start and establishing it throughout the programme is by installing a feedback loop at the beginning of the programme. A feedback loop is a constant and direct check whether messages are being understood by and meeting expectations of the recipient. In other words, it is about being honest and direct to each other on a regular basis. If, for instance, the funder were to respond to the volunteer organisation's evidence on earlier programmes, that would help both parties to discover what they could be aiming for together in a new programme. Or, if a volunteer organisation knows which figures the funder is responding to, both parties can better set collaborative goals. By making direct and constant feedback a habit from the start, parties can keep each other on the right track during the programme.

Partners should be open about receipt of funding from other avenues to avoid over or double funding. It is only fair that community money is spent wisely and efficiently. This type of information can usually be requested at the tender stage or it can be gathered by liaising with commissioners to ensure that other funding streams are not paying for similar services.

At the same time, the level of openness is restricted because of competition rules and issues of confidentiality that refrain partners from sharing certain information. This should not stand in the way of building a transparent and trusting relationship. By being transparent about what one can and cannot be transparent about at the beginning of a partnership, maybe paradoxically, one creates an atmosphere of openness and trust.



## Good practice 6 / Arrange long-term funding

**“One year funding is not sufficient to meet the goals one is striving for.”**

In almost every partnership interviewed in the research, funding is commonly agreed for the period of one year. In almost every case that is seen as too short a period. The short amount of time makes it difficult to set up an effective project. In the first few months one is busy building the partnership (getting to know one another, agreeing on roles and responsibilities, setting up monitoring processes). The last few months are needed to evaluate and wrap things up, and then seek new funding. So, effectively, organisations have only about half a year to do the actual work. The one-year period also makes future planning very challenging and sometimes even impossible. In turn, this makes reaching long-term goals a hard thing to do; in the field of reintegration and preventing reoffending there are few goals that can be reached in the short term.

Many interviewees specified the need for a three-year funding term, instead of the common one-year for the reasons given above. Of course this creates bigger risks for funders but if there is a proof of concept when the activities of the partnership are clearly aligned with the needs of service users, and when conditions for funding are clear and transparent, those risks can be largely mitigated.

It must be highlighted that only two of the interviewees has had the experience of three-year funding term. Longer-term funding should have a regular feedback loop: contractually reviewing and reassessing the balance of risk for all partners, alongside the benefits for the service users.



The Foundation for Promotion of Community Sanctions (FPSC) from Romania is under a partnership of over five years with the Romanian Ministry of Justice- The National Directorate for Probation and is financed by the Swiss-Romanian Cooperation Programme. The Community Service Workshops Project was designed as such by the Swiss partners (VEBO- a Swiss organisation) to enable the establishment of a sustainable intervention that, initially, was going to be supported financially by the Ministry of Justice of Romania, and also have other sources of funding. In other words, besides the main goal of the project, which is organising and supervising the execution of Community Service sanctions, while providing a viable model for other local authorities and/or NGOs, the reason for choosing a longer period of funding than the traditional one year is sustainability and the possibility of the intervention to be funded by another than the original funder. One of the results of this (relatively long) period of sustained funding has been that more students have had the opportunity to learn about working with offenders, and more offenders on community service have had the opportunity to come in contact with students that are pro-social models.

## Good practice 7 / Agree on the right conditions for funding

**“Most funders say in advance how they want their funds used but the way each contractor reports on it is different.”**

Once funding has been agreed funders usually assign certain conditions that need to be fulfilled before making any payments to organisations. In most cases, participants in the research said that payment is not one lump sum at the beginning of the project, but rather in instalments. A number of NGOs need to justify their funding by forecasting activities to be carried out (e.g. number of clients visited). Dutch volunteer organisations typically need to publish annual reports, justifying the expenditure of resources and two in particular said they need a declaration from an independent accountant to accompany it. Dutch social welfare foundation the Oranje Fonds even has a web page on which organisations can fill out documents to declare expenditure. Volunteer organisation When the Eagle Learns to Fly, uses these.

The main point in choosing conditions of funding and payment is that they should fit the cause. If for instance the main goal of a partnership is for offenders to feel less isolated then it should suffice to agree upon a minimum number of offenders visited. However if the goal is to have them reintegrated into the community then carrying out activities, such as paying visits, will not be the correct condition. A substantiated promise to get certain results can in those cases be a better condition for funding.



Dienst Justitiële Inrichtingen  
*Ministerie van Veiligheid en Justitie*

In the Netherlands, the Ministry of Security and Justice is an important source of funding for organisations that stimulate volunteer work in the application of sanctions. The Ministry applies several grant conditions for volunteer organisations, on multiple domains :

- 1) Selection, screening and matching of volunteer
  - The volunteer organisations will capture the requirements for volunteers in a competency profile.
  - The selection of volunteers will take place according to that competency profile.
  - Candidate-volunteers will have to present a certificate of good conduct to the volunteer organization.
- 2) Formalisation
  - Volunteer organisations close a contract with each volunteer that carries out activities in the framework of the application of the sanction. In any case, this contract contains provisions concerning:
    - the obligations of the volunteer in carrying out its activities in the institutions and establishments;
    - secrecy;
    - liability insurance;
    - expenses;
    - participation in skill-enhancing activities.
- 3) Expertise enhancement and quality
  - The volunteer organization is responsible for some form of periodic and structured expertise enhancement among their volunteers.
- 4) Supervision, monitoring and tuning
  - Every volunteer organisation that operates in an custodial institution or establishment appoints a coordinator, who:
    - provides adequate supervision and support of the volunteers;
    - acts as a first contact person for the management of the institution or establishment.
- 5) Information and communication
  - Volunteer organisations report periodically on the number of active volunteers and the extent and nature of the activities that have been carried out.



## Good practice 8 / Payment by results

**"A substantiated promise to get certain results can be a good condition for funding."**

A special type of condition for funding is achieving results in order to get paid, or 'payment by results'. This is not an unusual condition, but it is neither very common for agreements between funders and partnerships in the CJS. It is hard to say how many do use payment by results but it seems that it is used in less than half the cases interviewed. As stated above, **in certain situations it can be very fitting and effective** to define desired results in advance and make payment dependent on achieving those results.

Those desired results have to be **aligned with the goals** the partnership is aiming for. If reintegration is the goal, getting a home might be a suitable result. If reducing reoffending is the aim, then a decline in reoffending rates over a certain amount of time can be an appropriate result. Also, clear results should be jointly formulated and actively used by the partners to guide their practice. They should **never be one-sided**, because if that would be the case, they will be less appropriate, less realistic and less motivating. Discussing and forging desired results from different viewpoints will make them better.

Additionally, one has to be aware of a fact that seems obvious: working with prisoners, their families,

victims and volunteers is **working with people, and working with people cannot ever be considered to be predictable**. Desired results can be used as a good guide for the actions of partners, but as the work develops and formulated results are not feasible anymore, are simply not reached or have proven to not be formulated ambitiously enough, there should be open discussions with funders. The outcome of these discussions could be that the contractor gets paid less (or more) than what was originally agreed upon in the contract. The outcome could also be to change the original targets and choose other results that fit ambition and reality better.

There is worth in working this way. It makes **discussion between funder and partnership** necessary, which is good for creating and maintaining a common understanding. It also makes for realistic goals and results, which make activities more fitting and effective to the situation at hand. However, this way of working can be troublesome and time-consuming. If funder and partnership do not have common interests and do not have an open line of communication, it could make cooperation more difficult instead of better. Therefore, this way of payment should be chosen carefully, with one major criteria: does it fit the purpose?





## Step three: Organising cooperation

**Once you have identified partners willing to cooperate and secured appropriate funds to make it happen, the next step is to organise the work: what is everyone's task and role and how is the work coordinated between partners? In most cases this is the easiest question to be answered.**

The most difficult questions to answer are those that ask how you keep a partnership going. A lot of those questions have to do with the ease with which coordination and cooperation is going. Trust is a key aspect to manage. Trust requires open and honest communication and commitments. All parties need to be clear about their intentions, goals and strategy.

### **Some facts: what are activities within interviewed partnerships?**

1. Training is the most popular activity in partnerships and is mostly done by professionals. Volunteers are mostly the target group for trainings (60% of the cases). Prisoners and staff of partner organisations are other participants in training activities. Not coincidentally, training - particularly where it is linked to nationally recognised qualifications - was most frequently mentioned by volunteers as a key motivation for volunteering in an earlier study.
2. Social support to (ex) offenders (e.g. buddy system), given by volunteers, ranks second; five partnerships have it as an explicit activity. Activities vary from keeping company and meaningful conversation to mentoring and counselling.
3. In three partnerships events are organised for stakeholders by staff of NGOs.
4. Families of inmates are part of activities of volunteers in three cases.
5. Other activities include providing specialists for commissions and trials, housing for ex-detainees, a re-integration centre in every prison, and restorative justice. Staff of NGOs carries out the first three activities. Volunteers mostly do the latter.
6. The rest of activities can be categorised under 'practical jobs for volunteers': they get involved in donation campaigns, do housekeeping, provide CVs and business plans, do research, translate, are public relation officers, office clerk, designers, nurses and physicians and, in generic terms, do the actual or practical work mentioned in the programme.

### **Some facts: how is the organisational work managed by the interviewed partnerships?**

Tasks concerning resource management can be divided into providing and/or managing:

1. volunteers: done by NGOs in 75% of the cases, 15% by universities (when students are volunteering) and in one partnership by a department of the Ministry of Justice;
2. professionals: done by professional organisations (e.g. prisons);
3. service users: done by probation services and prisons;
4. division of activities: two thirds of the time done by NGOs, in other cases by universities or statutory organisations, such as health or probation services;
5. access to service users: always being done by prisons and probation services, or their representatives (like prisons);
6. security: always a responsibility of the prisons;
7. operations (the actual work of the volunteers): in all cases done by NGOs.

## Good practice 9 / Use volunteer coordinators

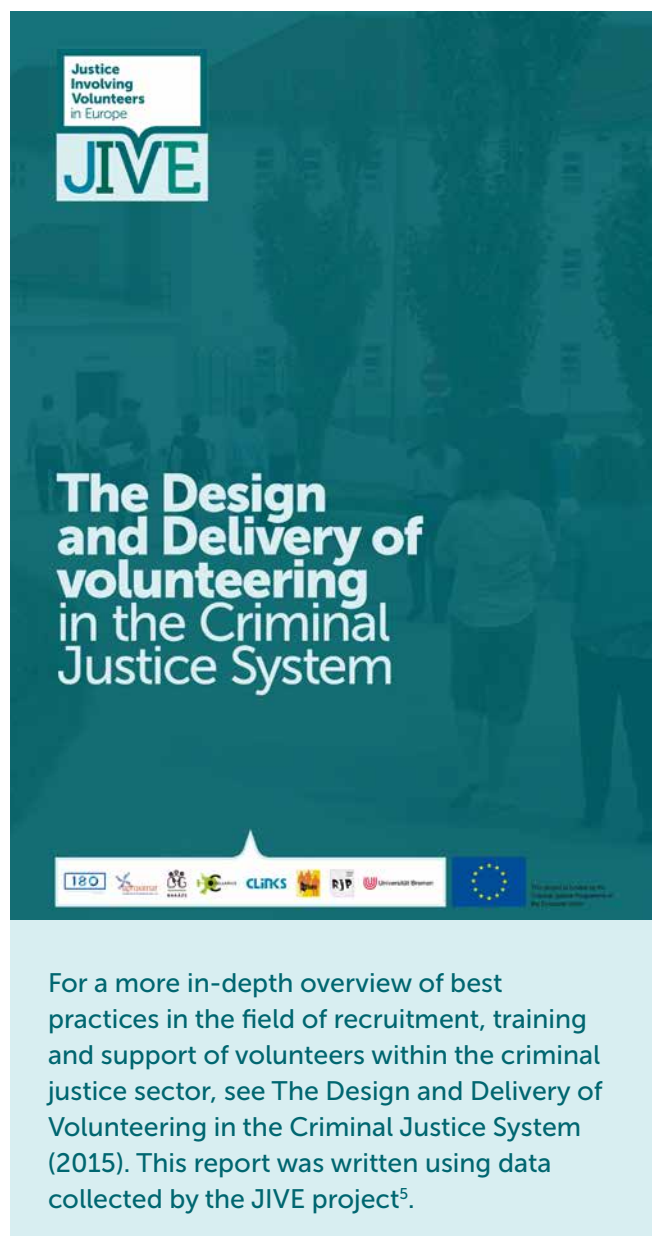


One of the most important tasks to be carried out is that of managing volunteers and operational activity. In other words, it is essential to get the right volunteer to do the right job and do it well. Some volunteer organisations have a volunteer coordinator to do just that. They find volunteers, deploy them and monitor their work. Volunteer coordinators also function as a 'lifeline' for the volunteer. They are available for questions and difficult issues. Furthermore, **the volunteer coordinator communicates signals from volunteers to partner organisations and the other way around**, to either improve the work of all parties involved or initiate new programmes and find funds for them.

A volunteer coordinator has a crucial role, for he or she is the central point where professional staff and volunteer staff meet. Typically, a volunteer coordinator would perform the following duties:

1. recruiting and selecting volunteers;
2. inducting, training and developing volunteers;
3. scheduling, monitoring and supervising the activities in which volunteers are involved;
4. ensuring good communication and information about activities for volunteers to volunteers;
5. providing support and appreciation to volunteers;
6. planning activities to reward, recognise and motivate volunteers;
7. facilitating interaction between professionals and volunteers;
8. preparing and submitting regular reports of volunteer activity;
9. managing the database of volunteers;
10. networking and collaborating with other organisations involved in volunteering.





The volunteer coordinator plays a crucial role in the coordination of the different volunteer involving organisations that work in the same area or even for the same organisation. When, for instance, two volunteer involving organisations work for a prison, it is important to make clear arrangements about which volunteer involving organisation, and even which volunteer, is doing what. The volunteer coordinators of both volunteer organisations can make these arrangements.

Because of the weight of the responsibilities of the VC, certain skills and other requirements are needed or desired:

1. experience in coordinating and managing people, projects and activities;
2. team competencies;
3. assertiveness, resilience, resistance to stress;
4. experience in NGOs, volunteering and/or the CJS;
5. knowledge of reintegration;
6. respect for professional conduct and code of ethics;
7. advanced oral and written communication skills;
8. knowledge of monitoring and evaluation;
9. higher education.

In some countries there are two different levels of volunteer coordination: one inside the volunteer organisation and one at a statutory level. These both levels together represent the field of tasks outlined above. The first type of volunteer coordinator is responsible for the volunteer activities; he or she is the 'operations manager'. The other verifies the achievement of the objectives and plays the role of the tactical manager. Whether one chooses an integrated approach, where both roles are played by one coordinator, or the levelled approach depends mostly on the size of the volunteer involving organisation: the bigger the organisation the more levels of coordination.

# Good practice 10 /

## Communicate clearly and openly

**“Communication is often a best practice, and there are some practical examples to make it work.”**

Everywhere people work together, information is shared and processed to make cooperation possible and transparent. An essential factor of a successful partnership is **clear and open communication based on trust, mutual respect and understanding**. Looking into the good practice shared by the people interviewed, communication has actually proven to be the most crucial component.

### **Some facts: who is responsible for communications in the interviewed partnerships?**

Communication tasks are sometimes explicitly outlined:

1. NGOs have a hub function in keeping stakeholders informed.
2. Umbrella organisations lobby on a political level.
3. Statutory organisations and NGOs valorise and disseminate knowledge on relevant topics: for instance, the Dutch Custodial Institutions Agency (DJI) is developing methods for efficient mutual exchange of knowledge between volunteers, and Tévelygőkért Alapítvány wrote a paper on children rights.
4. Professional organisations, like prisons and probation services, inform NGOs on local situations, and function as a go-between between NGOs and (ex) offenders.

Good communication starts with engaging service users in the design and commissioning stages. Keep in mind the one who will benefit from the products of a partnership is the most eligible to judge them. Therefore, it is critical to involve service users, such as (ex) inmates, in the starting phase of the partnership. By beginning a dialogue with them, one will get information about needs and values. A well-developed understanding about the relevance and importance of the work that will be done by the partnership will help in forming the common goal. Making the needs of service users a priority is a good way to align interests of all stakeholders and start worthwhile projects.

To get a project up and running it is important to build strong links with key people - like MoJ staff, prison governors, police commissioners and other community leaders. Often, access to institutions to provide new services depends on the attitude and openness of their management team. Having a continuous, open dialogue with key people ensures everyone has the same understanding. Start this dialogue in the early stages of a programme and do not limit it to the early stages. Remember the feedback loop, mentioned in section 5.2. Engage key people constantly and have them present at project meetings as well, even when they do not have formal responsibilities in those meetings. It reduces the risks of assumptions and encourages staying focused on the common goal. This way open communication builds strong links and it also builds the trust needed to maintain (financially) durable partnerships.

One should be aware that key people are not just in strategic or management positions. They operate throughout the organisation, so building strong relationships at an operational level is just as important. This importance has a lot to do with the significance of a good work atmosphere between volunteers and professionals (see the text box below). For instance, as a volunteer organisation, make sure that there is a relationship with prison staff in which also the difficult issues, like insecurity and fear, can be discussed.

**Try to reach stakeholders on more than a professional level.** Sometimes, professionals can be reached better when they are not in their professional context. As one of the interviewees noted: "It is much easier to make an impression on the prison workers when they are not within the prison. When the prisoners travel somewhere to give a performance, the accompanying prison guards have human reactions -- we see them crying, laughing and smiling during the performance."

It is important to **have a single point of contact**, which will allow a relationship to develop, built on trust and mutual understanding. Having a single point of contact, a person one can count on, one can turn to with questions and who understands the project, is also a way to guarantee that results are in line with expectations. To manage expectations, project and contract communication needs to be constant (frequent contact), personal (visits) and regular (reports and meetings). When crucial people have a single person to turn to, who is in constant, personal and regular contact with them, the likelihood of miscommunication is reduced.

Building strong links with key persons (from funder to user, from top to bottom) is really important for durable partnerships. The strength of the relationship you have with your partner(s) is a major determining factor in the success of the partnership. Still, make sure you develop a number of contacts, for key players do change jobs and when they do, you lose a strong link.

### **Tensions between volunteers and professionals**

During several interviews, it was reported that professionals sometimes feel threatened by volunteers. In most of these cases, professionals were afraid that volunteers would take over their jobs. Incidents and feelings like these affected the climate in which volunteers work in a negative way.

These examples highlight the importance of investing in mutual understanding between volunteers and professionals. This starts with clarifying expectations from the start in face-to-face meetings as well as on paper, for instance by making clear agreements about the division of tasks (also see good practice 3 - Set up a partnership agreement). Clarity and a positive working atmosphere can be continuously stimulated by means of communication and meetings (see good practice 11 - Meet often).

# Good practice 11 / Meet often

**“Meetings are an important means to help clear up problems and find new ways of working together.”**

**Face-to-face communication** was seen as vital by interviewees. Therefore, meet with partners, and meet often. Meetings can be used to deepen relationships and a good meeting can increase trust among partners. Meetings should be about listening and about respect for all viewpoints, priorities and intentions.

In order to make meetings successful, listen with respect and be clear and open about your own viewpoints, priorities and intentions. Also, do not just organise regular meetings on programme progress alone. Meet with stakeholders to talk about subjects that have a broader reach than just the work at hand. Some interviewees have suggested having frequent progress meetings with all stakeholders, sometimes even on a national level, to make that possible, and to make the impact of such meetings wider and improve the possibility of them evolving in new ways to help service users.

## Some facts: how many times do stakeholders of the interviewed partnerships meet?

Communication tasks are sometimes explicitly outlined:

1. Operational meetings between staff of volunteer and professional organisations are mostly held weekly.
2. The frequency of meetings between managements of partner organisations varies from bi-weekly to every six months and when needed.

Some partnerships have interesting practices with meetings.



For instance, Inspirit Training & Development Ltd from the UK, an organisation that primarily works to support alcohol and drug users and their families through educational opportunities, personal development and consultation for service user involvement, take the ‘appreciative inquiry’ (AI) approach in meetings. The AI model is based on the assumption that the questions we ask will tend to focus our attention in a particular direction. AI does not look for problems to be solved, but for possibilities to be strengthened. It advocates collective inquiry into the best of what is, in order to imagine what could be, followed by collective design of a desired future state that is compelling and thus, does not require the use of incentives, coercion or persuasion for planned change to occur. In doing so, meetings become inspirational learning opportunities instead of troubleshooting sessions.





## humanitas

Dutch volunteer organisation Humanitas has made it a good practice to evaluate frequently in meetings. For example, they hold regular meetings between volunteer coordinators and prison staff to evaluate the division of tasks and identify potential problems. In doing so, Humanitas avoids the problem of misunderstanding between volunteers and professionals and the subsequent insecurity and antagonism. Additionally, four times a year the Dutch volunteer organisation organises a national meeting for all volunteer coordinators of Humanitas. In these meetings they discuss and evaluate all the projects and activities of volunteers in the CJS. This makes for a deeper understanding and improvement of work of those volunteers.



The Paritätische Berlin (DPW)'s 700 organisations are divided into thematic divisions, each of which holds large meetings and smaller workshops regularly, and at least twice a year. These meetings give direct learning opportunities for stakeholders on specific topics and skills, and create possibilities for dialogue between parties that otherwise would not meet. Thus, DPW facilitates new openings for multi-stakeholder initiatives and partnerships.



Italian volunteer organisation Caritas frequently organises meetings. For example, they hold regular meetings between volunteers, coordinators and prison staff in order to check the division of the tasks, evaluate the objectives' achievement, redefine the objectives (when needed) and identify potential problems. Caritas organises national meetings for both volunteers and coordinators. In these meetings they discuss and evaluate all the projects and activities of volunteers in the CJS. This allows the volunteers to increase their consciousness of their role in paths to social inclusion and inside the organisation.

## Good practice 12 / Create integrated approaches

**“Integrated approaches, coming from cooperative relationships, seem to have the best results for adapting to new issues.”**

All of the good communications practices are needed to ‘keep the lines open’. One should organise structured ways that have parties come together, so that partners are also ready to gather and work together on finding ways to deal with issues when they arise unexpectedly. In other words: work together in a structured manner continuously, to be able to be creative together instantaneously. This becomes more valuable the bigger, more diverse and more complex the partnership is. Large

partnerships and highly political contexts have the tendency to be less flexible, which hinders adapting to changing needs of service users.

Integrated or multidisciplinary approaches, in which all stakeholders and viewpoints are represented, where relationships are based on cooperation, seem to have the best results for adapting to new issues. An earlier JIVE study already showed that systematic top-level integration of justice systems with the voluntary organisation improves effectiveness and diversity of service delivery. Two examples from the interviews can illustrate the concept of an integrated way of working.





The Dutch Christian foundation Ontmoeting offers professional help to the homeless, using their needs and possibilities as a starting point. Regarding ex-detainees, their main goal is to create a social network for the ex-detainee in order to make him or her part of society again. Ontmoeting is convinced that volunteers have an added value to succeed in their mission of creating a social network. For their work with (ex) offenders, they receive funding from the Ministry of Justice.

For each client, the first weeks include weekly meetings with Ontmoeting and the probation service to discuss conditions of the re-integration trajectory and to add necessary actions to the working plan. Additionally, Ontmoeting stimulates regional dialogues between municipalities, police, social care, etcetera. In doing so, these stakeholders try to find an integrated response for a client with multiple problems (for example, addiction combined with behavioural problems). Ontmoeting experiences that an approach that is multidisciplinary instead of one-sided results in more successful outcomes.



Another example comes from the Paritätische Berlin. They have guided the process of formulating clear goals and developing a concept and integrating meaningful reporting functions in cooperation with specialised workers from the funder. Over the years, this has helped partner organisations and funders align their roles and responsibilities, providing a path for working together rather than against each other.

Goals are a result of sustained communication in which both the funder and the funded input into a clear, jointly-understood picture of the project aims, and what success would look like. External reporting consultants hold regular workshops with all 83 members in this sector of DPW. Regular capacity building within these smaller organisations allows them to put forward achievable goals to the funder which also serve to review, refine and continuously improve the quality of their service delivery. In the best case scenario, these joint goals are woven into practice at the project design stage, delivering organic high quality service.



“Umbrella organisations can help balance between different types of organisations and their interests”



# Good practice 13 /

## Invest in an umbrella organisation

**“Umbrella organisations can help balance between different types of organisations and their interests.”**

In a study done by JIVE, voluntary sector respondents universally called for more support (i.e. funding) for their umbrella organisation, saying it would have a direct positive impact on the training they could offer their volunteers, the quality of their service and their contribution as an organisation. The notion of an associational organisation in the field of volunteering in the criminal justice system has been already highlighted (see for instance good practice 1 - Make the needs of service users a priority). Nevertheless, we think it is such an important notion, that it should be underlined again.

The reason for this is that a balance is wanted between public, private and volunteer organisations. Without that balance, interests of the one outweigh the interests of the other, which leads to programmes and interventions that do not necessarily benefit the offenders, (ex) offenders, their families, victims of crime, and society as a whole. Interviewees feel the need for equal status and mutual respect between partners, but that equality is not always there. Especially volunteer organisations, which in a lot of cases are not big, often feel like they have less influence. This is particularly the case in countries where volunteering in the CJS is not a common and/or politically popular concept.

Umbrella organisations such as Clinks in the UK and Paritätische Berlin in Germany are good examples of a general trend to help balance between different types of organisations and their interests, which can be seen in other European countries as well. They act as the official representative and lobby on a political level for member organisations. This ‘vertical lobby’ is strengthened by the fact that an umbrella organisation has a broad horizontal network with member and peer associational organisations. Through this network the umbrella organisation can build a more substantial case for policy shaped by evidence.



German volunteer organisation Freie Hilfe has a good, collaborative relationship with their umbrella organisation Der Paritätische Berlin. DPW are there when they need support, on finance, training and mediation, for instance. DPW connects them with other voluntary groups working with offenders and, in general, has had a positive influence on Freie Hilfe’s development. DPW acts as official representative to the Ministry of Justice, communicating their funding priorities and providing external evaluation so that monitoring is right first time and integrated into the volunteers’ work. DPW checks the annual reports and evaluations, helps train Freie Hilfe staff and provides bridging finance in urgent need. DPW also lobbies on the political level to the MoJ and within the Berlin administration.



Clinks supports, represents and campaigns for the voluntary sector working with offenders and families. Clinks aims to ensure the sector and all those with whom they work are informed and engaged in order to transform the lives of offenders and their communities. Their mission, vision and strategic aims can be found on their website.

Most of Clinks' work is national, though it draws on evidence gathered at regional and local levels. It includes campaigning, influencing policy and practice, and promoting opportunities for the voluntary and community sector (VCS) to develop or expand their work with offenders. Clinks has developed many valuable resources in the field of volunteering.

Clinks' local development work aims to improve opportunities available to the VCS working in that area. This helps ensure Clinks is informed about what is happening on the ground, which in turn allows them to better represent their members at a national level. Clinks works with Local Infrastructure Organisations, including Volunteer Centres and Councils for Voluntary Services.

To help Clinks meet their strategic objectives, they often work in partnership with other organisations whose expertise supports and enhances Clinks' own work.



Caritas Italiana is a pastoral organisation of the Italian Bishop's Conference. It connects 220 diocesan Caritas, committed in their daily activities to support the most vulnerable people, including offenders, (ex) offenders and their families. Caritas Italiana is engaged in many areas including: peace, old and new forms of poverty, volunteering, civil service, immigration, mental health and homelessness. Caritas Italiana contributes to the development in its area of interest by awakening public opinion, offering services and financial help as well as coordinating the initiatives of the various groups and movements inspired by Christian values. It coordinates various initiatives and charitable actions and provides training for staff.



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Another 'form to the umbrella' is given by the big four – nationally operating - volunteer organisations within the criminal justice system in the Netherlands (BONJO, Exodus Nederland, Humanitas and Gevangenzorg Nederland). In a joint effort, they are creating awareness of volunteering in the CJS, for instance by united lobbying and marketing work. They are supported by the Custodial Institutions Agency of the Ministry of Security and Justice, with which they have a close cooperation. For example, the directors of the 'big four' have regular meetings with the project coordinator of the Ministry of Security and Justice, in which they discuss topics like grant conditions and working arrangements between volunteer organisations and custodial institutions.

This intensive cooperation builds on the policy principles of the Ministry regarding volunteers, which have been explicitly described in a public document called "Policy vision on volunteer work in the application of sanctions". The purpose of the policy vision is to support the volunteer work for (ex) judicial detainees in a justifiable, objective and transparent manner. For volunteer organisations, the policy vision provides more security to properly perform their volunteer work in the judicial establishments and institutions. Volunteer organisations benefit from clearly defined agreements, which hold true for all volunteer organisations. In addition, the policy vision will generate a positive impulse on the image of volunteering within the CJS and the custodial institutions.

Some of the main policy principles of the Ministry regarding volunteers are:

- Volunteering has its own position and value, and strengthens the objectives of Justice, namely: a humane execution of punishments and measures that, from a person-centered approach, should lead to effective reintegration into society.
- The use of volunteers within the framework of the sanction application provides a useful and necessary contribution to the rehabilitation and return of (ex-)detainees into society. Having social contacts is of great importance for (ex-)detainees to feel accepted and not to fall back in old behaviour.
- The goal of the volunteer work must fit within the goals of Justice; the volunteer activities should connect with the work of the professionals in the institutions; and volunteer activities must be carried out under conditions that are acceptable and workable for both Justice and volunteer organizations
- Since the voluntary aftercare work contributes greatly to a seamless transition of the ex-convict to follow-up facilities, also volunteer activities within half a year after the termination of the criminal title will be eligible for financing by the Ministry of Security and Justice.

The policy vision is expected to contribute to a resistant and rightful place of volunteer work within the application of sanctions.



# Step four: Monitoring

**The monitoring process keeps track of the progress and results of a certain endeavour. Part of the monitoring process is reporting, the sharing of information with relevant stakeholders. For most professionals working with volunteers in the CJS, it is obvious that reporting helps keeping stakeholders, especially the ones that put their funding in a partnership, connected, updated and - if the work is done properly - satisfied. If used correctly, the monitoring and reporting process can be of great value to operational staff and volunteers too.**



### **Some facts: how often do partnerships need to report?**

1. Reports are customary for most of the partnerships (over 60% specifically indicate having to report regularly).
2. The frequency varies from weekly to yearly, with other frequencies in between.
3. Weekly reports happen only in Romania and (bi-) monthly only in the UK, in Germany every six months is customary and yearly reports are a typically Dutch thing.
4. Interviewees from Germany, Italy and the UK indicated they also use end-of-year reports.
5. Reporting is also said to be a good basis for qualitative talks between funder and contractor (also see Reporting face-to-face).

### **Some facts: on what topics do partnerships report on?**

1. Most reports on results are on recidivism and progress of service users, such as behavioural change in prisoners, improvement of family bonds and reintegration into society.
2. Reporting on activities -- e.g. programme completion, events, help provided -- is also fairly common (a quarter of all partnerships do it), especially in Holland.
3. Presence -- of volunteers, and service users and their children -- is something that is reported on in one fifth of the cases.
4. Reporting on numbers -- of volunteers and clients registered -- is something that is common only in the Netherlands.

### **Some facts: who is doing the paperwork and monitoring in the interviewed partnerships?**

1. The paperwork is often, but not always done by NGOs, e.g.:
  1. Contracts for volunteers are drawn up by volunteer organisations.
  2. NGOs produce evaluation reports for judges.
  3. Certificates for students are produced by an NGO and probation.
  4. An office of the MoJ handles papers needed to start the social reinsertion program.
2. Monitoring is always done by the NGO.
3. Support is given in different forms and for two different stakeholders:
  1. reassurance, coaching, mentoring, advice and supervision for volunteers, given by volunteer managers and coordinators of NGOs, and professionals of private and public organisations;
  2. financial support, mediation and advice for NGOs (the German Paritätische Berlin and the Hungarian Feldmár Institute are good examples of this; Italian foundations Alba and Caritas take care of the insurance cost).

## Good practice 14 / Avoid bureaucracy

**“A balance is needed between bureaucracy and creativity.”**

For several of the organisations in the research, the bureaucracy and number of documents that has to be filled in are burdensome. Interviewees from numerous countries complained about the large amount of work that is caused by reporting duties. They say the monitoring duties get in the way of the real work that needs to be done. In one case, a big volunteer organisation said it took about 50% of their time. On the other hand, some partnerships indicated that the absence of formal evaluation mechanisms is problematic. Some argue that work is not monitored sufficiently, which is seen as undervaluing and maybe even endangering the work, because ‘no-one seems to care’.

In both situations, there is an imbalance between the amount of monitoring and reporting that has to be done on the one hand, and the actual activities the partnership was established for in the first place and its value on the other.

An interesting consideration is given by some of the more experienced field workers. They are not sure whether certain interventions are measurable in the way that traditional evaluation procedures demand. Like one of the interviewees from Hungary said: “The most important achievements are likely to be non-quantifiable.” When one thinks of the situations people involved in the criminal justice system are dealing with, this may come as no surprise. How can one solidify whether an (ex) offenders has improved his or her chances in the labour market, or a victim feels less of a victim, or an offender’s child has warmer relations with his or her father? Most of the times that is a matter of experiencing the way the ex-offender talks about job interviews, or how the victim is talking about his life, or the look in the eyes of the child when she sees her father. In other words, being present, to witness these achievements, sometimes is the best way to have a good assessment of the results of volunteer activities in the CJS.

The fact that some of the most important achievements are non-quantifiable and intangible also implies that they are not easily planned.

Therefore, most interviewees agree on the notion that there must be a balance between room for responding to a particular need of the target group, thinking and acting creatively on the one hand, and proving the success of interventions by reporting on the other hand.

Paritätische Berlin (DPW) developed a good practice for this. For most of DPW’s partners, reporting on performance targets was expensive and a growing burden. As an umbrella organisation DPW was able to mediate between partners and funders, and advise on how to best use limited reporting and evaluation resources.

### **Advice of Paritätische Berlin on reporting**

First of all, data collection should be integrated into the daily process in a straightforward way. It should not detract from the work itself or place an adverse financial burden on the service provider. Each DPW member project has different, cooperatively agreed monitoring and reporting activities tied to funder targets. DPW employs an external monitoring consultant (which they have contractually obliged to do at their expense in their agreement with the Ministry of Justice) who goes to each organisation and helps them make goals concrete and results of the work clear, get their monitoring activities right first time, and make sure documentation is well kept. The consultant holds regular workshops with the 83 members and DPW helps with ground level engagement to help the outcomes of the monitoring integrate into the everyday practice of each organisation. Alongside appointed agreed outputs, this monitoring aims to show what works with the client group. For example, in their mentoring project run entirely by volunteers in prisons, Freie Hilfe collects basic statistics about the prisoner, and cross-reference with other client interventions, merit, performance and events attended, and any facts about the prisoner or their relationship which the volunteers report.

## Good practice 15 / Report face-to-face

**“Face-to-face contact is important to discuss the richness of progress and outcomes that cannot be captured in documents.”**

As described in the previous section, a lot of what makes up the success of an intervention in the field of volunteers involved in the criminal justice system cannot be measured with hard facts and figures. Therefore, many of the interviewees stressed the **importance of ‘warm monitoring’**, meaning that face-to-face interpersonal contact should be an integral and substantial part of the monitoring process.

Meetings, as mentioned in the section on establishing a partnership, are important, and they are also an important means to make reporting a human activity. Therefore, have **frequent progress meetings with all stakeholders**, including one-on-one meetings with key stakeholders, like MoJ staff, prison governors, police commissioners and other community leaders. Meeting one-on-one has the advantage that it creates an atmosphere of confidentiality and intimacy, making difficult things easier to talk about. Besides meetings, there are other ways that volunteer organisations use to make monitoring and reporting a process in which there is room for the intangibles that are a big part of the work in the CJS.

The first is the **use of coaches to monitor the work of volunteers**. As the first point of contact for volunteers, coaches can not only oversee the work volunteers are doing, they can also be available for questions and difficult issues, such as certain situations with detainees. Dutch organisations Humanitas and When the Eagle Learns to Fly have good experiences with volunteer coordinators that coordinate the work volunteers are doing, and serve as supervisors and coaches (also see Using volunteer coordinators).

Another form of coaching in this line of work is giving advice on efficient and effective monitoring. As stated above, the German umbrella organisation Paritätische Berlin have an expert consultant to help members with their monitoring activities. This type of coach does not have direct contact with volunteers, but with staff of partner organisations.

By helping with monitoring and reporting duties directly on an operational level, and not, for instance, by sending instruction manuals, the Paritätische give a personal touch to this part of their monitoring job.

One can also **organise evaluation sessions and focus groups with stakeholders** to discuss experiences, problems and best practices. When done regularly, these sessions become an integral part of the monitoring process, complementing and enriching information gathered through other, more factual reports. The Dutch volunteer organisation Humanitas organises such evaluation sessions. They call them “intervision” - as in: looking (vision) at issues between (inter) peers. These sessions follow a fixed structure around a case that one or more of the participants find relevant at that given moment. Sessions like these help focus thoughts and ideas, exchange experiences, and, as a bonus, develop new behaviour. By postponing the offer of solutions and tips and by asking questions in the right way, the case can be studied from different viewpoints, which can lead to new insights about the case and cases like that.

Dutch foundation Ontmoeting mentioned the importance of the signal function of volunteers. Volunteers are the eyes and ears ‘on the ground’. They can discover complex problems and report them to the organisation they are working for in order to make adaptations if necessary. For example, volunteers are there when something happens with service users, they can sense their needs change, or notice that interventions do not work, or work extremely well. In other words, they are the ones with valuable information and should be used for that. Hungarian foundation Tévelygőkért Alapítvány (TA) gives the most original way of making monitoring and reporting fit-for-purpose. They give evidence of the worth of their programme in a creative way. They are making a video, showing the workings of their activities and what they meant for the inmates and their families. By using moving pictures, TA can convey the personal and human value of the work they are doing in the prison.

# Good practice 16 / Organise research

**“Research, into the added value of a service, can be a good measure to improve the service and prove its worth to potential funders and users.”**

Since results of the work of volunteers in the CJS can be hard to grasp in factsheets and numbers, in-depth studies can be a necessity to prove the value of volunteers, to prospective funders, partner organisations and service users. Research can also be used before a programme starts or in

the early stages of a programme to find the real needs of service users and how to best meet them. For reasons of accuracy, reliability, verifiability, impartiality and independence, this research is best executed by universities or independent research bureaus. Various organisations involved in this line of work have already done extensive research to improve the work they are doing and to show its worth to stakeholders.

## **The Netherlands: Research to the added value of conversations with volunteers**

In the Netherlands there are four big volunteer organisations, the Dutch refer to as the Big Four. Initiated by the Big Four, an independent research institute carried out a scientific research to the added value of custodial conversations between volunteers and detainees. The researchers concluded that these conversations with volunteers are of great value to the detainees. In those conversations, characterised by equality, openness and of ‘having a match’, the situation of the detainee is discussed with the volunteer. The volunteer often appears to act as a positive example worthy of imitation, as proof that a crime-free life is possible and pleasant. The conversations also contribute to the implementation of humane detention.

An interesting note, made by the researchers, concerns the difference between the role of professionals in contrast with that of the volunteers. They say it is understandable that the bond of trust between detainees and prison personnel has its limitations vis-à-vis the (trust) bond volunteers can build with detainees. After all, contacts of prison personnel and detainees stem primarily from a professional involvement. This requires a different type of contact with the detainee than between detainee and volunteer. This notion shows the worth of volunteers involved in the CJS. The fact that the Dutch Ministry of Justice has cited this notion and others made by the researchers in official documents shows the power of research in justifying the work done by volunteers in the CJS.

## **Like the Big Four in the Netherlands, British organisations also do research. For instance:**

1. Pecan, a Christian-based charity from Peckham, south London, helping to build a stronger community, has been working with the University of Greenwich to evaluate their work.
2. Abandofbrothers, a VIO committed to positive social change through personal development and community building, will do longitudinal studies to measure success with cohorts being evaluated every six months. It will be looking at re-offending behaviour, substance misuse and homelessness
3. Thames Valley Partnership, working in partnership with the statutory, private and voluntary sectors to provide long-term sustainable solutions to the problems of crime and social exclusion, has developed a PhD together with Oxford University, looking at how victims of crime feel during the restorative justice process.
4. The programme of the BLAST Foundation, a Christian inspired organisation, aiming to support students and their families on their personal transformation, is evaluated by IPSOS Mori, for which a number of factors form the basis of the analysis, for example, reoffending rates.



## Good practice 17 / Use standards

**“Standards can help to assess performance in a structured way, which helps identify long term developments.”**

Whereas research is done irregularly and with big time intervals in between, standardised monitoring and reporting techniques are used with high frequency. They can make the monitoring process structured and efficient. Also, they can help identify trends. Numerous interviewees gave examples of standards they use for their reporting duties (see below). Especially in the United Kingdom and Romania, partnerships are said to use structured concepts and questionnaires to gather information on performance.



An interesting variety thereof is the Outcomes Star™, which is being used by Victim Support and the Thames Valley Partnership in the UK. The Outcomes Star™ both measures and supports progress for service users towards self-reliance or other goals. They are sector wide tools -- different versions of the Star include homelessness, mental health and young people. All versions consist of a number of scales based on an explicit model of change, which creates coherence across the whole tool and a Star Chart onto which the service user and worker plot where the service user is on his or her journey. The attitudes and behaviour expected at each of the points on each scale are clearly defined, usually in detailed scale descriptions, summary ladders or a quiz format.

An Outcomes Star™ reading is taken by the worker and service user at or near the beginning of their time with the project. Using the ladders or other scale descriptions, they identify together where on their ladder of change the service user is for each outcome area. Each step on the ladder is associated with a numerical score so at the end of the process the scores can be plotted onto the service user's Star. The process is then repeated at regular intervals (every three, six or twelve months depending on the project) to track progress. The data can be used to track the progress of an individual service user, to measure the outcomes achieved by a whole project and to benchmark with a national average for similar projects and client groups.

The people behind the Outcomes Star™ are developing the Justice Star (working title). It is being piloted by the collaborators until November 2015 and is expected to be published in May 2016. They are also gathering feedback from the Fortune Society who work with formerly incarcerated people in New York, USA and Youth Justice Services within the Department of Justice and Attorney-General in Brisbane, Australia and a Salvation Army project with young offenders in the UK. (See [www.outcomesstar.org.uk/](http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk/) for more information.)



### Some facts: what other forms of standardised monitoring are used within partnerships?

1. Service user surveys are used by Victim Support (UK) to check the level of success of the intervention. Thames Valley Partnership (UK) also uses service user surveys to monitor progress on targets. Associação Portuguesa de Apoio à Vítima (APAV), a Portuguese association for victim support, asks victims to fill out a service satisfaction survey.
2. Romanian organisations Probation Services and Foundation for the Promotion of Community Sanctions (FPSC) use a standard list of questions to be answered in their reporting. The questions are on educational needs (education and employment history, skills and interests, criminal history and attitude towards the act committed), social needs (housing and social support networks), and psychological aspects (events in personal development, risk of suicide, aggression management, drug abuse, mental health, sexual impulses, and victimization and experienced exclusion).
3. National Offender Management Service (NOMS) use a weighted scorecard to evaluate the prison's work.
4. APAV (Portugal) delivers annual statistical reports on victims of crime and the help and services they have been offered.
5. Other regular assessments are done by UEPE Ufficio Esecuzione Penale Esterna (Italy), FPSC (Romania), Pecan (UK), the Shannon Trust (UK) and SP (Romania) to assess the (work of) volunteers and service users.



The Shannon Trust, a volunteer involving organisation dedicated to transform lives by inspiring prisoners who can read to teach prisoners who cannot, did a so-called People Survey in 2014 to assess the way volunteers experienced working with the Shannon Trust (ST). The Clinks Volunteering Impact toolkit was used as basis for survey. Shannon Trust and prison staff reviewed the content and added Shannon Trust specific questions, in particular around Shannon Trust training. The draft survey was shared with NOMS (National Offender Management Service) and as a result the Shannon Trust included two specific questions about in-prison induction and support.

**In the survey, feedback was requested on:**

1. motivation and impact of volunteering on the volunteer;
2. recruitment and induction;
3. support given to volunteers;
4. time given to volunteers;
5. mentor training;
6. impact on Learners (prisoners who have yet to become confident readers) and Mentors (prisoners who are confident readers);
7. changing or developing the service.

The survey was limited to volunteers because at the time the Shannon Trust were already regularly surveying prison teams. These surveys included questions on the support being received from Shannon Trust and future support requirements.

SurveyMonkey was used to avoid data entry and allowed the Shannon Trust to move to the analysis stage as soon as the survey closed. Use of question logic meant that volunteers only saw the questions relevant to their role and based on answers to previous questions. The survey was anonymous. Volunteers were asked to indicate which Shannon Trust regional they belong to but not which prison they supported.

The results were reviewed by the full staff team and actions agreed. The Shannon Trust shared these with volunteers in a 'you said, we will' approach.

# Good practice 18 /

## Establish effective data systems

**“Data systems can help monitor in an efficient and effective way.”**

When information about the progress and results of a partnership is gathered on a structural basis and in a standardised way, data systems can help

to monitor properly. They make it possible to easily report to funders and other stakeholders, as well as see trends in progress and results, and identify interventions and ways of working that are more or less successful.



Abandofbrothers builds a management information system that will be used for the longitudinal studies to measure success with cohorts being evaluated every six months. Obviously, this IT-system will help them with in-depth research to prove the worth of their activities. Abandofbrothers believe that a reduction in offending happens most frequently through a journey of desistance rather than in one moment, i.e. that offending behaviour in the life of an individual is like a dimmer switch that is gradually reduced rather than a simple light switch that is either on or off. Therefore their data capture needs to be more sophisticated than solely focussing on offending behaviour. To go about this, they first built a theory of change, which lays out the big picture. Then looked at the theory of change and identified all of the interim outcomes which support desistance (both given their experience of what works and also drawing on externally verified evidence basis such as this 2013 report).

**The data system needs to do three things:**

- Record all information;
- Enable information to be captured and inputted in a secure and user friendly manner;
- Analyse the data effectively to produce the information required by funders/commissioners and other stakeholders.

Abandofbrothers have supported in this process by both their evaluation partners and also the agency working with them to customise a salesforce installation to meet their needs.

In some cases, setting up new data systems is not necessary; information can be integrated into already existing systems. For example, instead of having an elaborate in-house data warehouse, the Shannon Trust records and enters data in the management information system of the prison it works for on a monthly basis. The prison service reports on those and their own data and enter those

directly in the Ministry of Justice database. Besides data from the Shannon Trust, data on prison flows and population, Probation Service supervision, court reports and previous criminal history are gathered and combined. In the end, different data from various sources are processed together to give detailed information on individual and groups of inmates and their progress.



## Good practice 19 / Make it known

**“Evidence of effective practice is a good tool to influence the general public.”**

The fruits of monitoring should not go to waste. That means two things. The first is that organisations should try to **make sure that reports sent to stakeholders and most importantly funders, are read and in such a way that all parties can benefit from them**. Interviewees indicated that a lot of times they did not know how their reports were used by their stakeholders, and sometimes did not even know whether they were read at all. So, one could ask recipients about the reports: how do they read the reports, what information is most important to them, and what would they like to see improved in the form of reporting? When one knows the answers to these questions, one can change the reports to cater to the needs and wants of the recipients, making them, and the conversations about them more valuable.

Secondly, organisations should try and **ensure that the output and outcome of the monitoring process are shared publicly**, whether it be from research, (big) data mining, interview sessions or video reporting. When it is either relevant information for a broader audience or beneficial for (the promotion of the work of) the partnership itself, one should not shy away from ‘stepping into the spotlight’.

For example, the Freie Hilfe make their evaluation public, so that other interested stakeholders can see the impact of the project. This is a powerful tool to increase the reach for dissemination. The Paritätische Berlin helps them work out which measurements will be most meaningful and powerful.

Another example are the ‘Big Four’ volunteer organisations in the Netherlands, who all **share the experiences of (ex-)detainees, their family members and volunteers via several media**. Some volunteers of Humanitas and Gevangenenzorg Nederland have a blog on the websites of these volunteer organisations, in which they regularly share their thoughts and feelings. Exodus Nederland



also shares experiences of volunteers and (ex-) detainees by means of short videos, which appears to be a powerful tool to communicate the impact of volunteer work. All of these examples illustrate the way in which the stories of ambassadors of the volunteer organisation can be made known.

This type of public sharing should become more common, for in the vast majority of cases, the story of the work of volunteers in the CJS is worth telling.

# Literature

- 1 / Eduard Matt (2015). The role and value of volunteers in the Criminal Justice System: a European study. London: Clinks.
- 2 / Esther Kuis, Carmen Schuhmann & Anne Goossensen (2015). Onderzoek naar één-op-één bezoekgesprekken van vrijwilligers aan gedetineerden. Utrecht: Universiteit voor Humanistiek.
- 3 / Ministerie van Justitie (2010). Vrijwilligerswerk bij de sanctietoepassing: Beleidsvisie 2010. Den Haag: Ministerie van Justitie.
- 4 / See 1.
- 5 / Gustavo Pereira, Joaquim Ramos, Rita Lourenço & Tiago Leitão (2015). The Design and Delivery of Volunteering in the Criminal Justice System. Lisbon: Aproximar.
- 6 / See 1.
- 7 / See 1.
- 8 / See 3.
- 9 / See 2.
- 10 / Letter from the Directorate-General Punish and Protect, Managing Board Application of Sanctions and Youth, to the Lower House of the Dutch Parliament on volunteer work in the application of sanctions ('Vrijwilligerswerk bij de sanctietoepassing'), September 28 2015.

# Organisations

## 1 / England and Wales

Organisation	Website
Abandofbrothers	<a href="http://www.abandofbrothers.org.uk">www.abandofbrothers.org.uk</a>
BLAST Foundation	<a href="http://www.blastfoundation.org.uk">www.blastfoundation.org.uk</a>
Clinks	<a href="http://www.clinks.org">www.clinks.org</a>
HMP Dorchester	<a href="http://www.justice.gov.uk">www.justice.gov.uk</a>
Inspirit Training	<a href="http://www.inspirit-training.org.uk">www.inspirit-training.org.uk</a>
MTCnovo Thames Valley Community Rehabilitation Company	<a href="http://www.thamesvalleycrc.co.uk">www.thamesvalleycrc.co.uk</a>
NHS England	<a href="http://www.england.nhs.uk">www.england.nhs.uk</a>
Pecan	<a href="http://www.pecan.org.uk">www.pecan.org.uk</a>
Prison Dialogue Limited	<a href="http://www.prisondialogue.org">www.prisondialogue.org</a>
The Shannon Trust	<a href="http://www.shannontrust.org.uk">www.shannontrust.org.uk</a>
Thames Valley Partnership	<a href="http://www.thamesvalleypartnership.org.uk">www.thamesvalleypartnership.org.uk</a>
Victim Support	<a href="http://www.victimsupport.org.uk">www.victimsupport.org.uk</a>

## 2 / Germany

Organisation	Website
Bremer Institut für Kriminalpolitik (BRIK)	<a href="http://www.jura.uni-bremen.de/institute/bremer-institut-fuer-kriminalpolitik">www.jura.uni-bremen.de/institute/bremer-institut-fuer-kriminalpolitik</a>
Der Paritätische Wohlfahrtsverband Berlin, Landesverband Berlin e.V.	<a href="http://www.paritaet-berlin.de">www.paritaet-berlin.de</a>
Freie Hilfe Berlin e.V.	<a href="http://www.freiehilfe.de">www.freiehilfe.de</a>
Hoppenbank	<a href="http://www.hoppenbank.info">www.hoppenbank.info</a>

## 3 / Hungary

Organisation	Website
BAGázs	<a href="http://www.bagazs.org">www.bagazs.org</a>
BVOP (Prison Headquarters)	<a href="http://www.old.bvop.hu">www.old.bvop.hu</a>
Ministry of Interior	<a href="http://www.kormany.hu/en/ministry-of-interior">www.kormany.hu/en/ministry-of-interior</a>
SZTÁV	<a href="http://www.sztav.hu">www.sztav.hu</a>
Tévelygókért Alapítvány	<a href="http://www.tevelygokertalapitvany.info">www.tevelygokertalapitvany.info</a>

## 4 / Italy

Organisation	Website
Associazione Alba	<a href="http://www.lalbassociazione.com">www.lalbassociazione.com</a>
Associazione Provincia Arci Quartu Sant'Elena	<a href="http://www.sardegna-solidale.it/ada-territoriale-quartu-santelena">www.sardegna-solidale.it/ada-territoriale-quartu-santelena</a>
Associazione Volontariato Giustizia	<a href="http://www.volontariatogiustizia.it">www.volontariatogiustizia.it</a>
Caritas	<a href="http://www.caritasitaliana.it">www.caritasitaliana.it</a>
Cooperativa Sociale Cellarius	<a href="http://www.coopcellarius.it">www.coopcellarius.it</a>
Ufficio per l'Esecuzione Penale Esterna (UEPE – Ministry of Justice)	<a href="http://www.giustizia.it">www.giustizia.it</a>



## 5 / The Netherlands

Organisation	Website
BONJO	<a href="http://www.bonjo.nl">www.bonjo.nl</a>
Custodial Institutions Agency	<a href="http://www.dji.nl">www.dji.nl</a>
Exodus Nederland	<a href="http://www.exodus.nl">www.exodus.nl</a>
Gevangenenzorg Nederland	<a href="http://www.gevangenenzorg.nl">www.gevangenenzorg.nl</a>
Humanitas	<a href="http://www.humanitas.nl">www.humanitas.nl</a>
Ontmoeting	<a href="http://www.ontmoeting.org">www.ontmoeting.org</a>
Stichting 180	<a href="http://www.180.nl">www.180.nl</a>
ToReachIt	<a href="http://www.toreachit.nl">www.toreachit.nl</a>
When The Eagle Learns To Fly	<a href="http://www.whentheaglelearnstofly.nl">www.whentheaglelearnstofly.nl</a>

## 6 / Portugal

Organisation	Website
Aproximar	<a href="http://www.aproximar.pt">www.aproximar.pt</a>
Associação Portuguesa de Apoio à Vítima	<a href="http://www.apav.pt">www.apav.pt</a>
Cruz Vermelha Portuguesa	<a href="http://www.cruzvermelha.pt">www.cruzvermelha.pt</a>
O Companheiro	<a href="http://www.companheiro.org">www.companheiro.org</a>

## 7 / Romania

Organisation	Website
Alternative Sociale Association	<a href="http://www.aoc.ro/alternative1.5">www.aoc.ro/alternative1.5</a>
Foundation for Promotion of Community Sanctions	<a href="http://www.fpsc.ro">www.fpsc.ro</a>
Gherla Prison	<a href="http://www.anp.gov.ro">www.anp.gov.ro</a>
GRADO	<a href="http://www.grado.org.ro">www.grado.org.ro</a>
Lasi Prison	<a href="http://www.anp.gov.ro">www.anp.gov.ro</a>
Penal Justice Reform (RPJ)	<a href="http://www.penalreform.ro">www.penalreform.ro</a>
Prison Fellowship Romania	<a href="http://www.pfr.ro">www.pfr.ro</a>
Probation Service Bucharest	<a href="http://www.just.ro">www.just.ro</a>
University of Bucharest	<a href="http://www.unibuc.ro">www.unibuc.ro</a>



# Justice Involving Volunteers in Europe

# JIVE



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