

Building probation in Latvia

(State Probation Service)

**Mihails Papsujevičs, Head
Imants Jurevičius, Project Manager
and CEP Board Member**

6th June 2014

Some facts about Latvia

- Regained independence from Soviet Union in 1991 – 50 years under Soviet regime
- EU member from 2004
- Population 2,025 milj.
- Territory 64 559 km²
- In transition from retribution to social inclusion



Prisoners per 100 000 inhabitants:

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| •1992 year – 314 | 2010 year – 314 |
| •1995 year – 374 | 2014 year - 264 |
| •1998 year – 410 | |
| •2001 year – 373 | |
| •2004 year – 353 | |
| •2007 year - 287 | |

Source:

www.prisonstudies.org

Some facts about probation

- The State Probation Service (SPS) is a public organization under supervision of the Ministry of Justice
- Founded in year 2003
- The SPS has a centralized structure. General policy and standards are made by the headquarters (HQ)
- Probation officers are civil servants
- Any person above the age of criminal responsibility (14 years) can become client of SPS
- Number of staff in 2014: 380 (HQ=54)
- Number of clients: ~20 000 per year (16 604 in 2013)

Some facts about probation

Community work service in 1999 (municipalities) – 1st real alternative

Functions:

2004 – Aftercare + Assessment reports (pre-sentence and parole)

2005 – Community work service (centralized approach) + Offender-victim mediation + Treatment programmes + RNA tool

2006 – Community supervision (suspended sentence, release on parole, conditional release from criminal liability) (*from police*)

2009 (economical crisis):

- shutting down aftercare

- assessment reports + mediation limited (*came back in 2013*)

Some facts about probation

Functions:

2011 – Additional punishment «probation supervision» (*from police*)

2013 – Community supervision combined with community work service (*criminal justice reform*)

Our resources goes to:

1. >50% community supervision
2. ~20 % community work service
3. ~12 % treatment programmes
4. ~12 % assessment reports
5. <6% other functions

Some facts about probation

We have national probation service because of the **European Council** and our wish to access EU

Development of our probation services influenced by:

- **Canada**
- Norway
- United Kingdom
- Estonia
- Ireland
- Netherlands

Some our challenges during last 10 years

What is «probation»?

- No word in Latvian with such meaning
- No academic knowledge
- People generally don't understand/read English, computer literacy low

Academic environment didn't reacted on creation of Probation Service

Lack of critical thinking for developers of probation

- Be aware from developed countries trying to transfer their policies to your country (they have their own interests)
- Look for caring relationships

Some our challenges during last 10 years

Very little public awareness

Stigmatisation of probation officers

- ‘Offenders’ lovers’ (*because of aftercare, support*)
- ‘Impotents’ (no guns, uniforms, 85% females)

Lack of trust from partners (police, prison, prosecution, court, social services)

Low population density+many functions = universal probation officers

- Need to know many legal acts, work methodologies, follow up their changes
- Need to have many skills, competencies

Some our challenges during last 10 years

Implementation of Risk + Needs + Responsiveness model

- 1st step: Implementation of RNA tools
- 2nd step: Difficulties to find right balance between **control** and **support**
- 3rd step: Identity crisis: probation officers = police officers + social workers + psychologists + teachers
- 4th step: probation officers = agents for change

High level of staff turnover (12-34% per year)

- Rise of salaries in other institutions
- We became more demanding to staff – complexity of professional responsibilities increased

Some our challenges during last 10 years

Increasing gap between headquarters and local offices

Local offices increasingly demanded prescriptive policies – fears from responsibility, consequences

- Examples of supervision plans, assessment reports, etc.
- Very detailed methodologies
- Case management decisions done by HQ

Policies developed on a basis of profesional judgement

Sexual offenders – need other approach

Some our challenges during last 10 years

Implementation of treatment programmes

- Everybody should benefit from them (bad targeting)
- Only psychologists are competent enough to facilitate them
- Solution of offending problem in itself
- Weak understanding and adaptation of programme material, and fears to improve it because of [possible] copyrights issues

Staff 'burnout'

- Increased demands + lack of trainings
- Constant reforms and updates in legislation, internal methodologies
- Traumatic events (*mostly secondary traumas*)
- Identity crisis

Some our challenges during last 10 years

Too much paper work (*bureaucracy*)

Cooperation difficulties with non-governmental centers for social rehabilitation

- We were too bureaucratic and punitive (their perspective)
- They were incompetent (our perspective)

Almost non-existent multi-agency cooperation

- Your client = your problem

Solutions

Well developed legislation

Local Consultative Councils + national Council chaired by Probation – to solve cooperation issues with other institutions, partners

Extensive in-service training

Joint trainings with prison officers

Specialization on work with sexual offenders + treatment programmes (community + prisons)

Solutions

Cooperation with universities

- Master degree programme «Social Work (specialization in criminal justice)» (University of Latvia)
- Annual list of researches students are advised to chose (topics we are interested in)

In-service library

System of peer-reviews

Individual psychological supervisions for probation officers

Solutions

Integration of case management within HQ

- officers at HQ also have caseloads (link between 'clouds' to practice)
- case management experience is [almost] obligatory in recruiting staff for HQ

Case inspections include discussions with case manager

Developed IT infrastructure

- Case management system – digital caseloads
- Access to various national databases
- Intranet

Solutions

Network of trainers

- Sexual offenders (assessment + treatment)
- Motivational interviewing
- Peer-reviewers

Labour union of probation officers

Division of Trainings and Researches

Volunteers

- Victim-offender mediation
- Community supervision of sexual offenders (COSA)

Development of mental health services supported

Research on recidivism

Research sample included 1 767 offenders (community supervision and community work service vs. imprisonment)

Follow-up after end of probation period – 32 months

Results (recidivism):

- Conditionally sentenced (suspended sentence) – 15%
- Released on parole – 25%
- Community work service – 17%
- After full term of imprisonment (*no probation*) – 51%

~90% of re-offending occurred during first 300 days after end of probation period

In 2013 only ~3% of community supervision clients re-offended during probation period

Coming soon

Less dangerous offenders → The most dangerous ones

- Introduction of new additional punishment
- Probation officers take over some functions of court

Review and upgrade of tools

- Risk and needs assessment
- Treatment programmes (*Management of Emotions, Substance Abuse Management, Respectful Relationships*)
- Accreditation system of treatment programmes

Coming soon

Introduction of electronic monitoring (*back-doors model*)

More of *Good Lives* and *Desistance* within supervision

More volunteers

Formal multi-agency cooperation arrangements (MAPPA)

Cross-border cooperation within EU

Joint development projects with prisons

Differentiation of probation case managers

Coming soon

Special interventions for young offenders in community

In-service e-learning system

More in-service trainings and trainers available

Access of mental health services to probation clients

Consolidation of legislation

Active international cooperation

Contacts

Imants Jurevičius

Project Manager

Norwegian Financial Mechanism Project No. LV08/1

«Development of Alternatives to Imprisonment in Latvia»

and

Board Member of the Confederation of European Probation

State Probation Service of Latvia

E-mail: imants.jurevicius@vpd.gov.lv