



**CEP AWARDS 2019 - EXAMPLE NOMINATION  
(2016 awarded project)**

<b>Nomination</b> <i>Name of the organisation, project or research being nominated.</i>	<b>CIRCLES OF SUPPORT AND ACCOUNTABILITY</b>
<b>Award Category</b> <i>Indicate the category this nomination is for. Only 1 category may be chosen.</i>	Social inclusion

**1. Description of work being nominated (max 500 words)**

See the attached guidelines.

Circles of Support & Accountability (COSA) is a unique and innovative community justice initiative for the post-release monitoring of medium and high-risk sex offenders in and by the community. Circles aim to achieve 'no more victims'.

Founded on the principles of restorative justice in Canada in 1994, the method involves a group of 3 to 5 volunteers (the 'inner circle') supporting a sex offender (the 'core member') after his release from prison. They visit him regularly, providing social and practical support, but also reinforce pro-social behaviour and compliance with the conditions of his release. Volunteers are trained to be supportive and act as role models.

The 'inner circle' focuses on the daily life of the core member and his participation in society. Wherever possible, volunteers in the 'inner circle' are drawn from the local community. They are trained to recognize behaviour which may indicate that the core member is presenting an increased risk. If this happens, they alert the circle coordinator. There is an expectation of mutual honesty: the volunteer must be open about any emerging risk concerns with the core member; the core member must be honest with the volunteers about his thoughts and feelings. This helps the volunteers to gain insight. The focus is on the practicalities of how the offender can manage their everyday life so as to help integrate them while at the same time preventing new victims.

The 'outer circle' consists of a circle of professionals. The composition depends on the situation and needs of the core member. For example, members of the outer circle could include a probation officer, therapist, police officer, etc.

The 'circle co-ordinator' has overall responsibility for the co-ordination of the 'inner circle' and 'outer circle' and for ensuring focus on key principles and standards to monitor behaviour change and risk levels. In addition, the circle co-ordinator is responsible for recruiting, training, supporting and supervising volunteers.



COSA Netherlands started at the end 2009. By June 2016 over 100 circles had been established in total, of which about 65 active circles run annually.

**2. Why does this work deserve an award? (Max 500 words)**

Describe how the work meets the criteria for the award outlined in the guidelines.

COSA deserves an award, because it is a good example of how volunteers can positively contribute to a safer society working alongside professionals. COSA is a highly innovative project which has been well implemented. It has been running for 7 years and has supported over 100 sex offenders is resettling safely back into the community.