COPPer
European Volunteering in Probation



Volunteer's Manual

European training for volunteers in probation services

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CEP Confederation of European Probation

aproximar

DGRSP Direção-Geral de Reinserção e Serviços Prisionais

Reclassering Nederland

An tSeirbhís Phromhaidh The Probation Service

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Introduction

This manual is intended for volunteers who will be participating in the *European training for volunteers in probation services* or are interested in it. The manual provides context for the training.

- Chapter 1 describes the CoPPer project. One of the outcomes from this project is the *European training for volunteers in probation services*.
- Chapter 2 discusses the *Competency Framework*. The competency framework consists of a set of knowledge and skills, combined with qualities and attitudes that a volunteer who works with probation clients should possess.
- Chapter 3 addresses the content of the training. It provides an overview of the five modules, their aims, and the topics addressed.

1. The CoPPer project

What is the CoPPer project?

'The CoPPer project (Cooperation to promote a European Volunteering Programme in Probation Services) responds to the EU Strategic Agenda 2019-2024 by promoting the active engagement of citizens and civil society as supporters in the social inclusion of offenders and ensuring that we all play our role as key guarantors of a common European culture of the rule of law and democracy' (CEP, 2023).

The CoPPer Project brings together European organizations including probation services, civil society, academia, and volunteering fields to create a transnational network focused on sharing knowledge and grassroot experience to co-explore ways of both increasing engagement and valuing the role volunteers and community play in offenders' rehabilitation journeys.

Training for volunteers in probation services

One of the CoPPer outcomes is to create a European training for volunteers in probation services. For this training volunteering in probation is especially envisaged as complementing the supportive and community building aspect of reintegration, while leaving the role of risk management to professional probation officers. The training is based on the Competency Framework for volunteers in probation.

Vision on volunteering

Across various European probation practices, probation work is completed in different ways. Two aspects in the reintegration of probation clients are always essential: risk management and community building. These aspects are interrelated, and both occur in probation practice. Sometimes the emphasis is more on the one, sometimes more on the other.

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- Risk management

In risk management, the approach of the probation officer is based on methodology and methods that are in line with the risk factor paradigm. The goal is the re-learning and internalization of social norms combined with sentence compliance management.

- Community building

In community building, the focus of the probation officer is on building a bridge between the judicial domain and the community. The goal is for the justice involved person to regain access to social ties and institutions and acquiring an accepted social position.

The involvement of volunteers can especially strengthen the community building aspect of reintegration. Reintegration is a process which involves communities beyond the individual client of the probation service. Reintegration is a two-way street where the community supports and welcomes the client from the probation service.

For this training volunteering in probation is especially envisaged as complementing the supportive community building aspect of reintegration. Leaving the role of risk management to professional probation officers.

2. Competency Framework for volunteers in probation

The competency framework consists of a set of knowledge and skills, combined with qualities, and attitudes a volunteer should have. This forms the basis for the expected conduct that enables volunteers to carry out the voluntary work at a certain level within the domain of the probation service.

There are differences within European probation practices regarding the approach of the probation service, roles & tasks of the volunteers and the way volunteers and probation cooperate. Despite these differences, several standard competences can be identified for volunteers in probation work.

The competency Framework below consists of three clusters that are divided into eleven competences. Main points of interests are mentioned for each competency.

Cluster 1 Attitude and qualities: how should the volunteer position himself?

Throughout the recruitment and selection process of volunteers it's important to keep in mind the competences mentioned in this cluster. During the process, the probation service should make an assessment as to what extent these competences are present in the potential volunteer.

The competences in this cluster exist of attitudes and qualities which are not trainable. They already should be part of the of character and attitude of the potential volunteer. Therefore, these competences are not part of the training programme. Although of course one can observe in the training if these attitudes and qualities are present. Thus, the probation service might consider using the training program as a part of the selection process.

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The competences are:

1.1 Reliability

- The volunteer acts in line with generally accepted beliefs, norms, and values.
  Points of interest: ethics, standard of conduct, power relations, act consistently (do what you say & say what you do).
- Adheres to the organization's policies and procedures.
  Point of interest: security, confidentiality, privacy, incidents, integrity.

1.2 Collaboration

- The volunteer contributes to an agreed result.
  Points of interest: consultation about tasks, transfer of information.
- Maintains good working relationships.
  Key topics: coordination, an eye for the well-being of others, collegiality.
- Supervises own work.
  Points of interest: systematic work, time management.

1.3 Reflective skills

- The volunteer evaluates their own behaviour and views.
  Points of interest: learning by doing, learning from one's own experiences, adapting.
- Is accountable for his own actions.
  Points of interest: receiving and giving feedback, adjust behaviour after receiving feedback.

1.4 Emotional stability

- The volunteer acts surely and calmly.
  Points of interest: dealing with setbacks, disappointment, or counter-play.

Cluster 2 Knowledge: what should the volunteer know?

To volunteer in probation volunteers needs to know some basics about the professional field and the body of knowledge on which probation work is based.
More importantly volunteers need to have knowledge about their role: expectations and responsibilities, the position of the volunteer in the organisation and the relationship with the client and probation officer. The training programme addresses the competences in this cluster through several short e-learning modules and webinars.

The competences are:

2.1 Knowledge of the professional field

- The volunteer knows the probation service.
  Points of interest: core tasks, goals, mission, vision.
- Is aware of the criminal justice system.
  Points of interest: key cooperation partners, place of the probation service in the justice system.
- Has knowledge of the criminal justice process.
  Points of interest: criminal justice procedures.

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2.2 Knowledge of theories and methodologies

- The volunteer is familiar with the basic principles of probation work.
  Points of interest: principles of criminology, behavioural change, risk-assessment.
- Is familiar with clients of the probation service and their problems.
  Points of interest: common problems and issues, target groups.

2.3 Knowledge of the volunteer role

- The volunteer knows what is expected.
  Points of interest: tasks, dos and don'ts, pro-social modelling.
- The volunteer knows their place in the service.
  Points of interest: accountability, collaboration with the probation officer.

Cluster 3 Skills: how should the volunteer act?

Volunteers in probation need a set of skills in order to make a connection with the probation client (communication and relational skills) and to identify and address issues in an effective way (relational and observational skills).
The training program addresses these competences in this cluster in a face-to-face training. Most of these skills need a hands-on approach, with plenty of opportunities to practice the skills in interaction with volunteers.

The competences are:

3.1 Relational skills

- The volunteer enters a relationship with others.
  Points of interest: fundamental attitudes, empathy, non-judgemental, autonomy, reciprocity. The working alliance; direction, trust, bond, friction.

3.2 Communication skills

- The volunteer has conversational skills that can convey empathy and support dialogue.
  Point of interest: conversation skills, verbal and nonverbal communication, active listening, summarize, open and closed questions.
- Has writing and digital skills.
  Points of interest: reporting, working with a computer.

3.3 Observation

- The volunteer identifies problems.
  Points of interest: interpretation, objectivity, subjectivity, personal biases, emotions, and false beliefs.

3.4 Problem-solving ability

- The volunteer recognizes problems and has the skills to deal with them.
  Points of interest: life areas, clients in their context, the repair reflex, effective approaches, solution orientated questioning.

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3. What is the European training for volunteers about?

The *European training for volunteers in probation services* consists of five modules.
Module 1 is an e-learning, volunteers follow this at home on any digital device.
Module 2-5 is an in-person training, this will take approximately 6-7 hours.

Module 1: Knowledge of the professional field of probation (home study)

Main aim: increase knowledge of the professional field of probation.

Basic principles of probation work
Topics addressed are:

- The development of offending behaviour.
- Reducing offending behaviour.
- Most common offences, target groups.

The criminal justice system
Topics addressed are:

- The criminal justice system, main procedures.

The probation service
Topics addressed are:

- The probation services
- Professional partners of the probation service
- The mission and vision
- Main tasks: advisory and supervisory role, community service

Role and tasks
Topics addressed are:

- Role and tasks of the probation officer
- Role and tasks of the volunteer
- How probation officer and volunteer work together
- Volunteer rights and responsibilities

Module 2: Relational skills

This module focuses on equipping the volunteer to make the connection with the probation client.

Main aim: raise awareness about the importance of the relationship and understanding the most important aspects of the relationship and attitude.

Topic addressed are:

- Aspects of the working alliance: Trust, Bond, Direction & Goals, Friction
- Fundamental attitudes: Empathy, Being non-judgemental, Autonomy.

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Module 3: Communication skills

This module focuses on equipping the volunteer to make the connection with the probation client.

Main aim: volunteers have a better understanding of the skills involved in effective communication.

Topics addressed are:

- Verbal and nonverbal communication
- Active listening
- Ask questions: open and closed questions
- I-message

Module 4: Observe and Interpret

This module focuses on equipping the volunteer to support and activate the probation client.

Main aim: raise awareness about biases. Volunteers know difference between facts and prejudices.

Topics addressed are:

- Subjectivity
- Objectivity

Module 5: Problem solving

This module focuses on equipping the volunteer to support and activate the probation client.

Main aim: to practice (communication) skills with the focus on problem solving. Volunteers analyse client needs and have a solution orientated attitude.

Topics addressed are:

- Client needs: personal & social factors

Good luck with the training!

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CoPPer

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