COPPer
European Volunteering in Probation

Building Capacity, Building Communities: A Step-by-Step Guide for Community-Based Organisations

For CBOs that want to offer volunteer support, resources, and guidance, and build stronger partnerships at all levels within the probation system

Partners

Confederation of Europe Probation (CEP)

Stitching Reclassering Nederland (RN)

Direção-Geral de Reinserção e Serviços Prisionais (DGRSP)

Aproximar, Cooperativa de Solidariedade Social (APX)

The Probation Service, Department of Justice (IPS)

University College Cork – National University Of Ireland, Cork (Ucc)

European Strategies Consulting (ESC)

Authors

Aproximar

Publication date

June 2025

Agreement Number: 2022-1-NL01-KA220-ADU-000089938

Contents

Introduction

1.1 Context and purpose

This guide aims to support Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) and interested national stakeholders in promoting social inclusion and community engagement around people who have committed offences. It provides a **practical, step-by-step resource** to help CBOs design and manage volunteer programmes that strengthen cooperation with probation services and foster rehabilitation through community participation.

The guide seeks to empower CBOs to deliver not only high-quality volunteer support, resources, and supervision, but also to cultivate **stronger partnerships across local, regional, and national levels**. By following this roadmap, organisations can enhance their internal capacity and contribute to a more coordinated, humane, and sustainable probation system.

This document is part of the **CoPPer Project – Cooperation to Promote a European Volunteering Programme in Probation Services**, co-funded by Erasmus+ under *Cooperation Partnerships in Adult Education*. Running from 2022 to 2025, CoPPer brings together organisations from The Netherlands, Portugal, Ireland, Romania, and Serbia to create a transnational network that values the role of volunteering in promoting rehabilitation and community reintegration.

The partnership includes:

- *Confederation of European Probation (CEP)*
- *Aproximar, Cooperativa de Solidariedade Social*
- *Direção-Geral de Reinserção e Serviços Prisionais (DGRSP)*
- *European Strategies Consulting (ESC)*
- *Stichting Reclassering Nederland (SRN)*
- *University College Cork – National University of Ireland, Cork*
- *The Probation Service, Department of Justice of Ireland*

By aligning with the EU Strategic Agenda 2019–2024, CoPPer supports a European vision of citizen engagement, democratic participation, and social responsibility, ensuring that everyone plays a role in upholding the values of inclusion, freedom, and justice.

1.2 Target audience

For Community-based organisations (CBOs)

CBOs play a crucial role in working alongside probation systems to support people serving community sentences, helping them reintegrate and live law-abiding lives. They also offer vital support to families and communities affected by imprisonment, contributing to a culture of respect for the rule of law and social cohesion.

Given the complexity and responsibility of this work, CBOs need to possess **specific competencies and tools** to maximise their impact. This guide offers a **comprehensive training resource** for CBO leaders and volunteers, focusing on:

- Designing and implementing volunteer programmes in probation contexts;

- Recruiting, training, and managing volunteers effectively;

- Building sustainable partnerships with statutory and community actors.

By equipping CBOs with practical guidance and tested methodologies, the guide aims to strengthen their organisational capacity and deepen their contribution to safer, more inclusive communities.

For policymakers and practitioners

Although this document was developed primarily for CBOs, it also serves as a reference for policymakers and justice professionals seeking to develop or expand volunteering in probation in their countries. It demonstrates the value of volunteers as bridges between justice systems and communities, offering evidence-based strategies for integrating civic engagement into probation policy and practice.

By applying the practices and insights presented here, countries can promote stronger community partnerships, more effective rehabilitation pathways, and a more humane approach to justice.

1.3 Volunteering in probation: The CoPPer view

CoPPer envisions a shared European approach to volunteering in probation, grounded in solidarity, community building, and democratic participation (Powell, 2013). Reintegration is understood as a community process, not merely an individual journey (Carlen, 2013; McNeill, 2023).

Volunteers play an essential role in making communities more welcoming and inclusive for people leaving the justice system. Their involvement enhances public understanding, supports community safety, and strengthens the legitimacy of probation sentences (Ang, 2003).

Beyond the social benefits, volunteering also enriches those who give their time: it fosters empathy, personal growth, and social connection (Vecina et al., 2022). A study in Australia, for instance, found that probation volunteers valued contributing to society, helping others change, and forming new relationships (Government of South Australia, 2023).

Particularly impactful are volunteers with lived experience of the justice system—the so-called "*wounded healers*"—whose insights can transform both the volunteers themselves and the people they support (Martin, 2011; Zerubavel & Wright, 2012).

Finally, it is important to note that the concept of volunteering varies across European contexts. In some countries, volunteers may receive symbolic compensation, while in others, volunteering is strictly unpaid. Each organisation should ensure compliance with national legislation governing voluntary work.

Through this initiative, CoPPer invites CBOs, volunteers, and justice institutions to reimagine rehabilitation as a shared responsibility, building inclusive and resilient communities where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

1.4 The CoPPer training course for CBOs

As part of the CoPPer initiative, a dedicated online training course was developed to strengthen the capacity of CBOs working with or willing to work with volunteers in probation. The course equips CBOs with the knowledge, tools, and confidence to collaborate effectively with Probation Services and to design sustainable, community-based programmes that support reintegration.

Developed through consultation with 49 CBOs across four partner countries, the course is structured into seven practical modules covering the main dimensions of volunteer management in probation — from understanding the system and clients to building partnerships and measuring impact.

Modules overview

Module 1	**Introduction to the Probation Services**
Module 2	**How to design the volunteer service**
Module 3	**Knowing the client and the risk**
Module 4	**How to recruit and use different channels for recruiting potential volunteers**
Module 5	**How to communicate and develop a relationship with the Probation Services**
Module 6	**Building effective inter-agency partnerships in the justice sector**
Module 7	**Service measurement and recognition practices**

Check out *Annex II* for full course structure

This guide builds directly on the course methodology. Section 2 explains the **conceptual framework** that shaped the capacity-building process, while Section 3 presents a **step-by-step roadmap** that explains how to replicate it in other contexts.
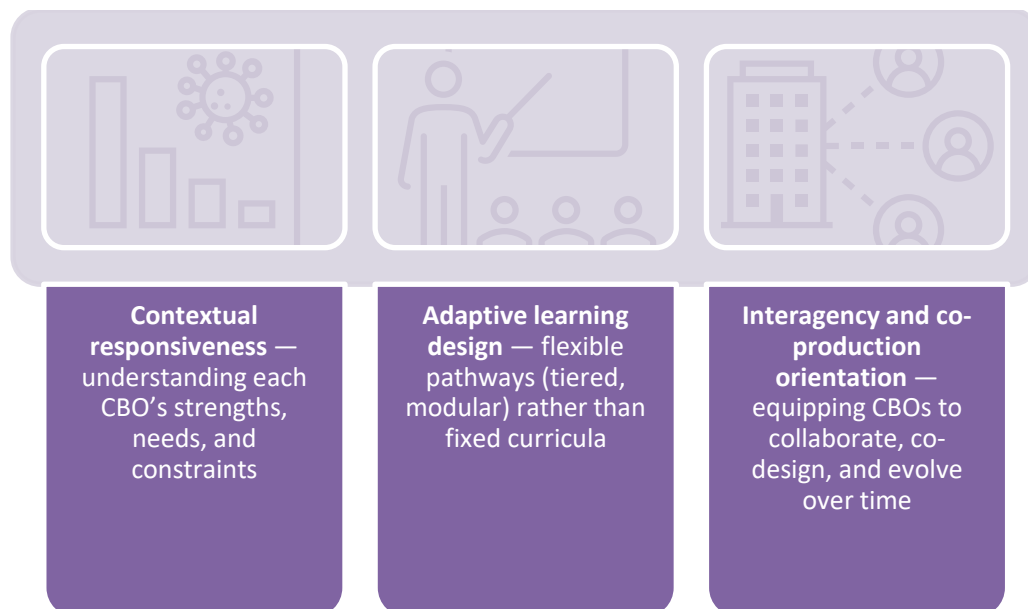
Conceptual framework

In this section, we outline the core principles, rationale, and design choices that shaped the capacity-building of CBOs within the CoPPer project. This is the **why** and **how** behind the process: the lens through which the step-by-step roadmap (in Section 3) should be read.

1.5   Rational and vision

Volunteering in probation is, at its heart, a bridge between justice systems and communities. The CoPPer project envisions that reintegration is not the sole responsibility of individuals or institutions, but rather a shared, collective endeavour. By empowering CBOs with capacity to host, supervise, and integrate volunteers, we seek to foster community ownership, interagency trust, and sustainable engagement.

The CoPPer path was built around a core conviction: one-size-fits-all training does not work when CBOs differ widely in experience, resources, and context. Instead, the methodology needed to be **responsive, flexible, participatory, and scalable**. To that end, we began with data-gathering from the field — listening to CBOs themselves — and used those insights to co-design the training, piloting it in multiple countries.

In short, the conceptual framework rests on three pillars:

| **Contextual responsiveness** — understanding each CBO's strengths, needs, and constraints | **Adaptive learning design** — flexible pathways (tiered, modular) rather than fixed curricula | **Interagency and co-production orientation** — equipping CBOs to collaborate, co-design, and evolve over time |

1.6   Contextual responsiveness

Capacity-building must respond to real needs. The CoPPer partnership conducted a survey with 49 CBOs across Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Romania to assess

current practices in recruiting, training, managing, and valuing volunteers within probation and related fields.

Key findings

Volunteer Participation & Reach

- 69% of surveyed organisations already engage volunteers in probation-related work
- Volunteers' roles are varied: from mentoring, supervision, and monitoring to practical supports (e.g. helping with documents, access to services)
- Many organisations operate both inside and outside the criminal justice ecosystem (56% inside, 44% outside), indicating cross-sector overlap

Scale & Resources

- Almost half reported more than 20 active volunteers in the past year, reflecting significant reliance on volunteer input
- Volunteer management responsibilities are uneven: sometimes assigned to multiple staff, sometimes centralized, sometimes informal

Recruitment & Selection Practices

- Most organisations have formal recruitment and selection systems and attempt to match volunteer interests/skills to roles
- However, outreach strategies are inconsistent: not all feel they use the most effective channels to attract potential volunteers

Training & Continuous Learning

- Orientation and role-specific training are standard in many organisations
- Yet there is a notable gap in offering ongoing learning and leadership development for staff and volunteers alike
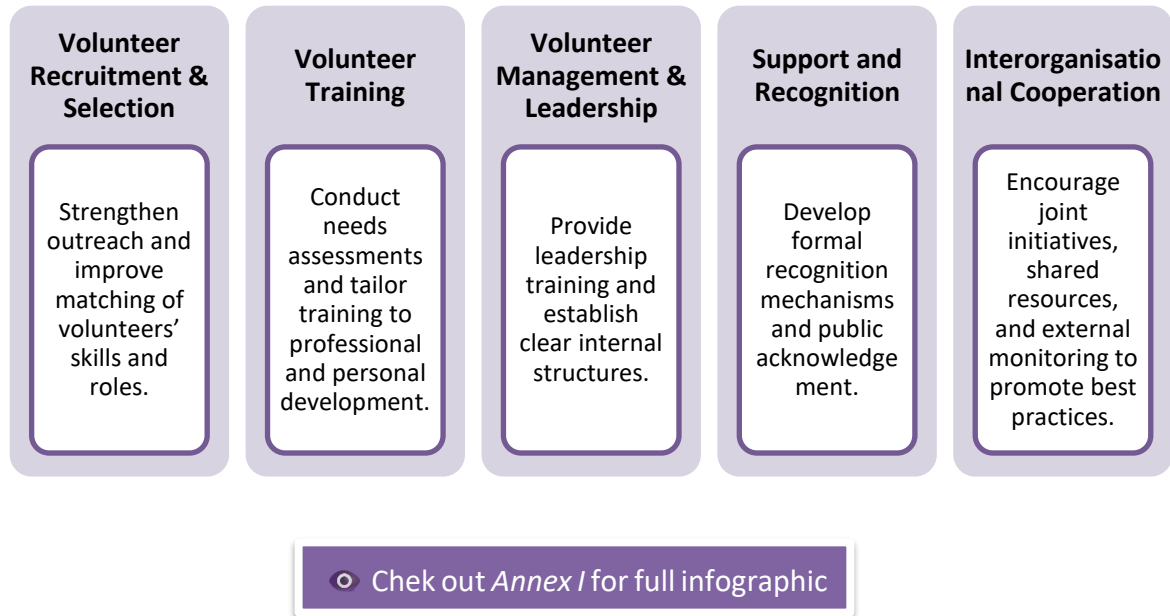
Recognition & Retention

- Volunteer appreciation is common, but rarely institutionalised: few organisations have formal recognition programmes
- Clear internal policies, leadership structures, and communication channels are underdeveloped in many cases

Inter-organisational Cooperation

- While collaboration is viewed positively, actual joint training, resource sharing, or shared volunteer pools are limited
- Only about half of the organisations report engaging in shared volunteer use or joint training exercises
- Membership in broader volunteer networks is modest, indicating missed opportunities for cross-learning

Recommendations emerging from the Survey

Volunteer Recruitment & Selection	Volunteer Training	Volunteer Management & Leadership	Support and Recognition	Interorganisational Cooperation
Strengthen outreach and improve matching of volunteers' skills and roles.	Conduct needs assessments and tailor training to professional and personal development.	Provide leadership training and establish clear internal structures.	Develop formal recognition mechanisms and public acknowledgement.	Encourage joint initiatives, shared resources, and external monitoring to promote best practices.

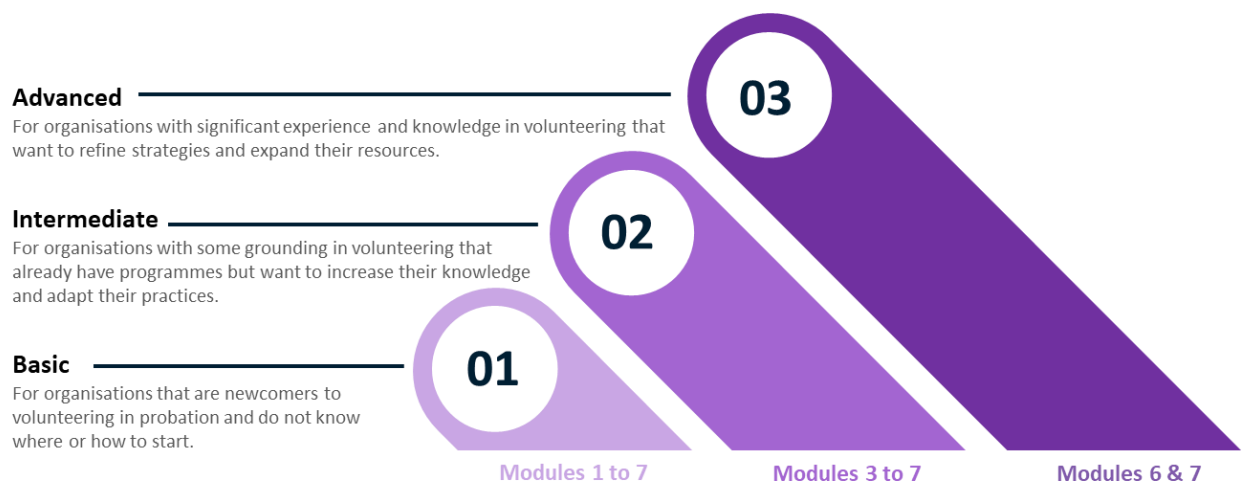◉ Chek out *Annex I* for full infographic

1.7 Adaptive learning design

The CoPPer methodology is grounded in the belief that learning must be **adaptive, inclusive, and co-created**. It responds to the diversity of CBOs across Europe, some with long-standing volunteer programmes, others just beginning to engage with probation services.

Instead of a rigid, linear training, the CoPPer course offers flexible entry points and modular content, allowing CBOs to build capacity progressively and sustainably. As such, two complementary approaches were developed:

By Level – a tiered learning pathway

Organisations can choose the level that best reflects their current experience with volunteering in probation.

Advanced
For organisations with significant experience and knowledge in volunteering that want to refine strategies and expand their resources.

03

Intermediate
For organisations with some grounding in volunteering that already have programmes but want to increase their knowledge and adapt their practices.

02

Basic
For organisations that are newcomers to volunteering in probation and do not know where or how to start.

01

| Modules 1 to 7 | Modules 3 to 7 | Modules 6 & 7 |

By Module – a modular approach

Alternatively, organisations can take a more tailored path, selecting *stand-alone* modules that match their current priorities. For example, a CBO already running volunteer programmes might focus only on *Module 6 (Building partnerships)* and *Module 7 (Service measurement)*.

⊙ Check out Annex III for a full overview of modules and their contents

1.8 Interagency and co-production orientation

Capacity-building is not only about delivering content; it is about fostering collaboration, shared decision-making, and adaptive practices that enable CBOs to work effectively with probation services, other NGOs, and local authorities.
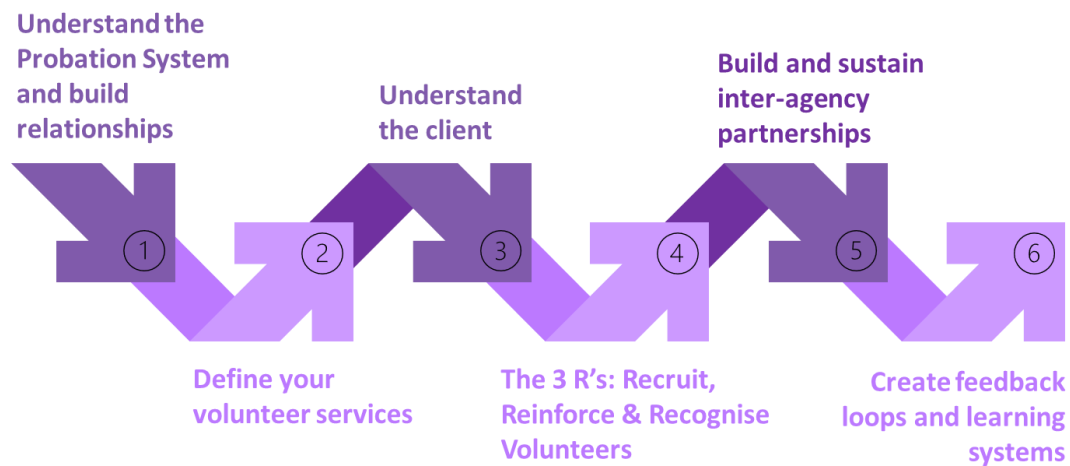
To support this, CoPPer piloted training in online, in-person, and blended formats, each offering unique opportunities for co-production:

- *Online:* facilitated asynchronous collaboration, allowing CBOs from different countries to exchange experiences, co-develop solutions, and access resources at their own pace.

- *In-person:* encouraged direct interaction, joint problem-solving, and real-time feedback with peers and statutory actors, strengthening trust and mutual understanding.

- *Blended*: combined the flexibility of online learning with the rich collaboration of face-to-face workshops, providing an adaptable framework that could evolve based on participant needs and local context.

Step-by-Step for meaningful programme impact

This section provides a clear, practical roadmap for CBOs and countries interested in setting up volunteer programmes within probation work. Each step outlines key actions, guiding principles, and tools to ensure that every stage — from planning to evaluation — contributes to lasting, community-driven impact.

Following these steps will help organisations build programmes that are credible, collaborative, and sustainable, strengthening both reintegration outcomes and community resilience.

Understand the Probation System and build relationships

Understand the client

Build and sustain inter-agency partnerships

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥

Define your volunteer services

The 3 R's: Recruit, Reinforce & Recognise Volunteers

Create feedback loops and learning systems

STEP 1 – Understand the Probation System and build relationships

Related training modules: Module 1 — Introduction to the Probation Services & Module 5 — How to communicate and develop a relationship with the Probation Services

Before designing any volunteer activity, CBOs must first **understand how probation services operate**: their mission, structure, client pathways, and legal boundaries. A solid understanding of how probation operates within the wider criminal justice system allows CBOs to position themselves as credible, reliable partners.

But this step goes beyond technical knowledge. It's also about **building relationships**: the invisible architecture of cooperation. Establishing trust and open communication channels is crucial for designing interventions that complement, rather than duplicate, the work of probation.

Key actions

- Learn the language of probation: concepts like risk assessment, supervision, compliance, and reintegration.

- Map the Probation Service structure in your region (departments, referral pathways, decision-makers).

- Identify and connect with key contacts within probation (e.g., volunteer coordinators, case managers, or community officers).

- Schedule introductory meetings to align expectations, clarify roles, and co-design areas of collaboration.

- Formalise partnerships through Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) or informal cooperation agreements.

Checklist

☐ Do we have up-to-date information on probation's procedures and referral system?

☐ Have we identified our main contact points?

☐ Do we understand the boundaries of volunteers' roles and confidentiality requirements?

☐ Is there an established communication channel between our organisation and probation?

STEP 2 – Define your volunteer services

Related training modules: Module 2 — How to design the volunteer service

Volunteering is more than an act of goodwill; it is a powerful engine for inclusion, learning, and innovation. As underlined by the European Year of Volunteering (2011), supportive environments for volunteering amplify these positive effects, strengthening communities and promoting lifelong learning.

Designing a volunteer service, however, is not a one-size-fits-all process. Each organisation and context requires a balance between structure and flexibility, ensuring the programme is effective, sustainable, and meaningful for all involved (from probation partners to volunteers and clients).

Creating a volunteer service requires careful planning and coordination. There is no universal timeline, but following a structured process helps ensure that every key element is addressed and that the programme rests on a solid foundation.

According to the *Justice Involving Volunteers in Europe (JIVE)* initiative (2016), the following elements are crucial in designing a high-quality volunteer programme:

1. Clear definition of the programme's objectives and target outcomes;
2. Identification of the roles and responsibilities of volunteers;
3. Recruitment and selection procedures;
4. Comprehensive training and ongoing support for volunteers;
5. Mechanisms for supervision and feedback;
6. Evaluation processes to measure impact and effectiveness;
7. Strategies for recognition and retention of volunteers.

These elements ensure that volunteer programmes are well-structured, adaptable, and aligned with both organisational goals and volunteer motivations.

Just as important, collaboration with Probation Services should be embedded at every stage. Their expertise ensures that activities are safe, ethical, and consistent with justice and rehabilitation goals. A co-designed approach promotes shared responsibility and enhances programme credibility (JIVE, 2016).

Key actions

- Clarify the purpose and target group: define *why* your organisation wants to involve volunteers in probation work and *who* will benefit (clients, families, communities).
- Engage probation officers early to jointly identify where volunteers can add value without replacing professional roles.
- Develop clear volunteer role descriptions specifying tasks, skills required, supervision structure, and expected outcomes.

- Plan the full volunteer journey — from recruitment to onboarding, training, supervision, recognition, and exit. Each stage should reflect your organisation's values.

- Build support and feedback mechanisms, including supervision routines, reflection sessions, and a safe channel for volunteers to raise concerns or suggestions.

- Pilot before scaling up: start small, review outcomes, and refine the model before expanding across sites or client groups.

Checklist

☐ Have we defined clear objectives and outcomes for our volunteer service?

☐ Are volunteer roles and responsibilities co-designed with Probation Services?

☐ Do our recruitment and selection processes promote inclusion and transparency?

☐ Have we planned induction, supervision, and feedback processes?

☐ Is there a system for evaluating impact and recognising volunteer contributions?

☐ Do we have resources and partnerships to sustain the service over time?

STEP 3 – Understand the client

Related training modules: Module 3 — Knowing the client and the risk

Understanding the client is a core foundation of a volunteer programme in probation. Probation services work with clients from diverse social, cultural, and economic backgrounds. While all have come into contact with the criminal justice system, the pathways that led to offending are varied and often complex.

For volunteers to be effective, CBOs must ensure they are **informed, supported, and aware of both risks and strengths in each client's context**. Understanding the client is not about labelling or diagnosing, but about recognising the person behind the offence – their unique life story, set of experiences, and challenges. When volunteers take the time to genuinely get to know the people they support, they can build trust, offer more meaningful assistance, and tailor their approach to better meet individual needs.

Volunteers are not responsible for risk management — this remains the role of probation professionals — but they can play a supportive and complementary role by recognising potential risk factors, encouraging positive behaviour, and communicating concerns responsibly to the assigned Probation Officer. They also contribute to strengthening protective factors in a client's life, such as social connections, self-esteem, and belonging, which are crucial for rehabilitation and reintegration.

CBOs play a central role in preparing and supporting volunteers for this task. This includes offering training on client diversity, risk awareness, and communication protocols, and ensuring a clear channel for collaboration with probation officers.

Key actions

- Map the client profiles typically referred by Probation Services (e.g., offence type, age, needs, risk factors).
- Work with probation partners to define what information volunteers need to know — and what must remain confidential.
- Design induction and ongoing training on understanding clients' backgrounds, needs, boundaries.
- Establish clear reporting and supervision structures so volunteers can share concerns safely with staff or probation officers.
- Embed reflective practice into your programme (e.g., regular debriefs, supervision, or case discussions).

Checklist

☐ Have we mapped the typical client profiles and needs our volunteers will engage with?

☐ Do volunteers receive structured induction on risk awareness and professional boundaries?

☐ Are there clear communication protocols with probation for managing client-related concerns?

☐ Do supervisors regularly support and monitor volunteers' experiences with clients?

☐ Do we collect feedback to continually improve how volunteers engage with probation clients?

STEP 4 – Three R's: Recruit, Reinforce & Recognize Volunteers

Related training modules: Module 4 — How to recruit and use different channels for recruiting potential volunteers; Module 7 — Service measurement and recognition practices

Engaging volunteers effectively is central to any successful probation-related initiative. The volunteer journey begins with promotion and recruitment and extends through their active involvement, support, and recognition. Research highlights that strong engagement practices not only enhance retention but also reduce future challenges, increasing both efficiency and volunteer satisfaction (SAMSHA, 2005; JIVE, 2016).

Volunteers often enter programmes with idealised expectations, driven by values, empathy, or a desire to make a difference (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008). CBOs play a key role in **transforming this motivation into sustainable, informed engagement**.

This requires clear communication, structured onboarding, and consistent reinforcement.

A well-designed volunteer engagement process ensures that every volunteer understands their role, receives proper support, and feels valued throughout their journey.

Key Actions

- Develop clear recruitment materials and role descriptions outlining expectations, responsibilities, and required competencies.

- Adopt a multi-channel communication strategy to reach diverse candidates, using community networks, local events, and digital platforms.

- Establish transparent selection and matching procedures, including interviews or observation periods, ensuring roles align with volunteer strengths and motivations.

- Designate a Volunteer Manager or Coordinator as the main contact point to oversee onboarding, supervision, and feedback.

- Implement a recognition plan that includes regular appreciation, development opportunities, and pathways for continued involvement.

Checklist

☐ Have clear volunteer role descriptions and expectations been defined?

☐ Are multiple communication channels used to reach potential volunteers?

☐ Is a fair and transparent selection and matching process in place?

☐ Has a Volunteer Manager or Coordinator been designated and trained?

☐ Are regular supervision and feedback mechanisms established?

☐ Are volunteers' contributions recognised and reinforced through formal or informal measures?

STEP 5 – Build and sustain inter-agency partnerships

Related training modules: Module 6 — Building effective inter-agency partnerships in the Justice Sector

Inter-agency collaboration is fundamental in probation work. By pooling resources, sharing expertise, and coordinating efforts, agencies can provide comprehensive support that addresses multiple aspects of reintegration, including education, employment, health, housing, and social inclusion (Duggan & Corrigan, 2009; CEP, 2020).

Effective inter-agency relationships are especially critical during the transition from prison back into the community. Strong collaboration helps prevent service gaps, reduces the risk of reoffending, and ensures that individuals receive the right support at the right time. Building these relationships requires **ongoing commitment, clear communication, and trust**, benefiting not only justice-involved individuals but also families, volunteers, and the wider community.

Key Actions

- Map relevant stakeholders, including probation services, local authorities, NGOs, and community groups, and understand their roles and capacities.

- Establish communication channels by setting up regular meetings, joint reporting systems, and shared contact points to ensure clear and consistent information exchange.

- Formalise roles, responsibilities, and expectations through Memoranda of Understanding, partnership agreements, or joint action plans.

- Involve partners in planning and implementing programmes to align objectives, share resources, and avoid duplication of efforts.

- Monitor and maintain partnerships by regularly reviewing collaboration effectiveness, addressing challenges promptly, and celebrating joint achievements to strengthen trust and sustainability.

Checklist

☐ Have all relevant stakeholders in the local probation ecosystem been mapped and contacted?

☐ Are communication channels clear, consistent, and regularly used for updates and coordination?

☐ Have roles and responsibilities been formalised through agreements or memoranda?

☐ Are partners actively involved in co-designing volunteer programmes and activities?

☐ Are joint monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place to track partnership effectiveness?

☐ Are successes and challenges shared openly to strengthen trust and collaboration?

STEP 6 – Create feedback loops and learning systems

Related training modules: Module 7 — Service measurement and recognition practices

One essential step towards building a transparent and trusting partnership is establishing a "feedback loop" from the very beginning of the volunteer programme.

This ongoing process helps ensure that communication is clear, expectations are aligned, and decisions are made collaboratively. By embedding direct and continuous feedback early on, CBOs, volunteers and partner agencies can stay on track and work more effectively together throughout the programme. This approach, as highlighted in the JIVE report (De Maat et al., 2016) promotes mutual understanding and accountability in community-based programmes.

Key Actions

- Organise consistent progress meetings with partners, volunteers, and other stakeholders to review activities, address challenges, and share insights.

- Use multidisciplinary discussions that involve all relevant parties (the client, volunteer, CBO, probation service, and community) to design coordinated responses.

- Prioritise face-to-face interactions. Whenever possible, complement written reports with in-person discussions to clarify complex issues and strengthen relationships.

- Ensure monitoring outcomes, lessons learned, and good practices are communicated to stakeholders, funders, and the broader community in accessible formats.

- Assign coordinators to oversee volunteer activities, provide support, and act as a communication bridge between volunteers and partner organisations.

Checklist

☐ Are regular progress meetings scheduled with all relevant partners and stakeholders?

☐ Do meetings include integrated discussions involving clients, volunteers, CBOs, and probation services?

☐ Is there a system for combining written reports with face-to-face feedback to clarify and act on findings?

☐ Are monitoring outcomes, lessons learned, and recommendations shared with all relevant audiences?

☐ Is a volunteer coordinator in place to monitor performance, provide guidance, and communicate feedback between volunteers and partner organisations?

Conclusion

This guide is designed to help CBOs take practical steps to implement and sustain volunteer programmes in probation, regardless of your current experience or national context. Following the guidance provided will help ensure programmes are effective, sustainable, and impactful.

Key takeaways for CBOs:

- ✓ **Empower volunteers.** Invest in training, supervision, and recognition to support those who work directly with justice-involved individuals.

- ✓ **Collaborate actively.** Build and maintain strong partnerships with probation services, NGOs, and community stakeholders to deliver holistic support.

- ✓ **Focus on the client.** Ensure volunteers understand the needs, strengths, and challenges of individuals under probation to provide meaningful, tailored support.

- ✓ **Embed learning and improvement.** Use feedback loops and monitoring mechanisms to continuously refine practices, respond to challenges, and share lessons with partners.

By applying these steps, CBOs can strengthen their organisational capacity, enhance community reintegration efforts, and contribute to safer, more inclusive communities.

This guide is a *starting point*: your actions, adaptations, and ongoing learning will turn it into real impact for individuals, volunteers, and society.

References

Ang, B. L. (2003). *Volunteer management in the Probation Service: The case of Singapore.* In *Annual Report for 2002 and Resource Material Series No. 61* (pp. 174-179). NCJ-205803. https://www.unafei.or.jp/publications/pdf/RS_No61/No61_16VE_Ang2.pdf

Berry College. (2024). *The in-person advantage: Why face-to-face education has benefits.* Retrieved July 16, 2025, from https://www.berry.edu/articles/blog/2024/in-person-advantage

Carlen, P. (2013). Against rehabilitation: For reparative justice. *Criminal Justice Matters, 91*(1), 32-33. https://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/publications/cjm/article/against-rehabilitation-reparative-justice crimeandjustice.org.uk

CEP Probation. (2020, January 9). *Interagency cooperation.* https://www.cep-probation.org/knowledgebases/interagency-cooperation/

De Maat, O., Hulsebosch, A., & de Groot, K. (2016). *Building successful partnerships involving volunteers in the criminal justice system: A good practice guide.* JIVE – Justice Involving Volunteers in Europe. https://www.clinks.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/jive_report_building_successful.pdf

Duggan, C., & Corrigan, C. (2009). *A literature review of inter-agency work with a particular focus on children's services.* WRC Social & Economic Consultants Ltd. https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/15690/1/IAC+Literature+Review[1].pdf

European Youth Forum. (2012). *Volunteering Charter: European Charter on the Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers.* https://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/volunteering_charter_en.pdf

Government of South Australia. (n.d.). *Benefits of volunteering.* Department for Correctional Services. Retrieved May 16, 2023, from https://www.corrections.sa.gov.au/volunteers/become-a-dcs-volunteer/benefits-of-volunteering

Haski-Leventhal, D., & Bargal, D. (2008). The volunteer stages and transitions model: Organizational socialization of volunteers. *Human Relations, 61*(1), 67-102. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726707085946

JIVE. (2016). *Good practice guide: Recruitment, training and support of volunteers working in the criminal justice system* (No. 978-989-99698-1-0). Clinks & Aproximar. https://www.aproximar.pt/uploads/4/3/4/4/43445821/jive__good_practice_guide.compressed.pdf

Martin, P. (2011). Celebrating the wounded healer. *Counselling Psychology Review, 26*(1), 10-19.

McNeill, F. (2023). Beyond the individual: Correcting corrections. *Journal of Community Justice, 32*(2), 5-11.

Ministry of Home Affairs Singapore. (2025). *Yellow Ribbon Project Volunteer Scheme.* Retrieved July 9, 2025, from https://www.mha.gov.sg/volunteers/home-team-volunteer-scheme/detail/Details/yellow-ribbon-project

Ministry of Justice, Japan. (2020). *Hōgōshi: Volunteer Probation Officers in Japan.* Rehabilitation Bureau, Ministry of Justice. Retrieved July 7, 2025, from https://www.cep-probation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Hogoshi-Volunteer-Probation-Officers-in-Japan.pdf

NEUSTART. (2025). *Probation service: Together we come ahead.* Retrieved July 8, 2025, from https://www.neustart.at/en/probation/

OctoProctor. (2024). *Online vs in-person classes: Choosing the best for your learning style.* Retrieved July 16, 2025, from https://octoproctor.com/blog/online-vs-in-person-classes

Oxford College. (2023). *Advantages & disadvantages of distance learning.* Retrieved July 16, 2025, from https://www.oxfordcollege.ac/news/advantages-disadvantages-distance-learning/

Per Scholas. (2024). *Online vs in-person classes: Weighing the pros and cons.* Retrieved July 16, 2025, from https://perscholas.org/news/online-vs-in-person-classes-weighing-the-pros-and-cons/

Photopoulos, P., Tsonos, C., Stavrakas, I., & Triantis, D. (2022). Remote and in-person learning: Utility versus social experience. *SN computer science*, *4*(2), 116. https://doi.org/10.1007/s42979-022-01539-6

Powell, F. (2013). *The politics of civil society: Big Society and small government.* Bristol: Policy Press.

SAMHSA. (2005). *Successful strategies for recruiting, training, and utilizing volunteers: A guide for faith- and community-based service providers.* Retrieved July 17, 2024, from https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/volunteer_handbook.pdf

Singapore Prison Service. (2025). *Our impact.* Retrieved July 9, 2025, from https://www.sps.gov.sg/about-us/our-impact/

United Nations Asia & Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. (2021). *Report of the Workshop: Reducing Reoffending: Identifying Risks and Developing Solutions* (p. 169). UNAFEI. Retrieved July 7, 2025, from https://www.unafei.or.jp/publications/pdf/14th_Congress/01_WholeText.pdf

Unity. (2024). *Online vs in-person classes: Is one better than the other?* Retrieved July 16, 2025, from https://unity.edu/articles/online-vs-in-person-classes/

Vecina, M. L., Poy, S., Benevene, P., & Marzana, D. (2022). The subjective index of benefits in volunteering (SIBiV): An instrument to manage satisfaction and permanence in non-profit organizations. *Current Psychology, 41*, 7968-7979. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-020-01224-y

Zerubavel, N., & Wright, M. O. (2012). The dilemma of the wounded healer. *Psychotherapy, 49*(4), 482-491.

Appendixes

Appendix I: CBOs Volunteer Management in Probation – Survey

Survey Results

Infographic

Appendix II: CoPPer's training course structure

Title	
Empowering Community-Based Organizations in Probation: Volunteer Management and Collaboration	
General description	
An online course designed to build capacity on Community-Based Organizations working with volunteers in probation (or willing to work with) to better collaborate and to increase their social impact.	
Target group	
Leaders and staff of CBOs working with or intending to work with volunteers in the probation system.	
Keywords and phrases (see glossary for definitions of these terms)	
Community-Based Organizations (CBOs); Online (internet) based learning; Volunteering in Probation; Volunteers	
Language of instruction	
Dutch; English; Portuguese; and Romanian.	
Course delivery	
E-learning.	
Objectives	
- Learn common ground concepts related to volunteering and volunteering in probation; - Learn how to design and deliver a volunteer programme in the probation field; - Increase organisational capacity for working with volunteers in probation; - Strengthen organisational cooperation at the cross sector level; - Sustain community-based initiatives in the probation field.	
Learning outcomes	
- At the end of the training, the participants should be able to: - Understand the role and value of volunteers in probation; - Describe the probation clients and their unique needs;	

- Develop strategies to effectively recruit, train, manage and retain volunteers in probation settings;
- Build and maintain strong partnerships with other organisations and stakeholders;
- Apply valuable techniques for the recognition of the volunteers work;
- Understand the value of measuring outcomes and volunteer program social impact.

Course content

- Introduction to the Probation Services (25 min.)
- How to design the volunteer service (40 min.)
- Knowing the client and the risk (30 min.)
- How to recruit and use different channels for recruiting potential volunteers (30 min.)
- How to communicate and develop a relationship with the Probation Services (30 min.)
- Building effective inter-agency partnerships in the Justice Sector (30 min.)
- Service measurement and recognition practices (25 min.)

Learning hours

3h 30min.

Teaching and learning methods

Two approaches are presented:

By level: organisations can view the course as being structured into different levels. Each level is designed to cater to varying degrees of knowledge, resources, and understanding related to the criminal justice system and volunteering in probation. This tiered structure allows organisations to select the level that best matches their current capabilities and expertise.

- Organisations starting in the field of volunteering that do not know where or how to begin need to complete the course from module 1 until the end.
- Organisations with some grounding in volunteering that have already developed programs and activities in the area but want to gain more experience and be involved in this direction, can start the course from module 3 until the end.
- Organisations with a lot of experience and knowledge in volunteering but need to further develop this knowledge and their resources can start the course from module 6 until the end.

Individually: organisations can consider the implementation of stand-alone modules. This means that the course is divided into independent modules, each focusing on a specific topic. Organisations interested in the course can review the available modules and choose only those that align with their specific requirements and objectives. There is no obligation to complete all modules, allowing for a customized learning experience tailored to the unique needs of each organisation.

Assessment method

Quizzes

References

All the modules resulted from the analysis of the questionnaire on CBOs' current situation and performance standards.

Code of conduct

Basic knowledge of community engagement and programme management is recommended.

Appendix III: CoPPer's training modules overview

Module 1: Introduction to Probation Services

Module I	Introduction to Probation Services
Module Summary/Main Content	This module explores the role of Probation Services as part of Criminal Justice Systems. It examines some of the key principles for working with those involved in the criminal justice system. The module also focuses on the role of volunteers in enhancing outcomes for both clients and stakeholders.
Schedule	Duration: 25 mins • Introduction • What is the role of Probation Services within criminal justice systems and who are the relevant stakeholders? • What are the principles of client-centred and strengths-based approaches to working with probation clients? • How can volunteers support the work of probation services? • What is cultural competence and why is it important? • Quiz
Learning outcomes of the module	**Upon completion of this module, trainees should be able to:** • Explain the role and function of probation services within the Criminal Justice System. • Describe the principles of client-centred and strengths-based approaches to working with individuals involved in the justice system. • Outline the benefits and challenges of volunteering in probation settings, including ethical considerations and boundaries. • Understand cultural competence and its importance in working with diverse populations within probation services.
Module objectives	• Provide participants with an overview of the work of probation services. • Identify the key objectives, responsibilities, and stakeholders involved in probation services.

	• Learn about the role of volunteers in supporting probation services and enhancing outcomes for clients, communities, and stakeholders.
	• Introduce key concepts to engaging effectively with probation clients.
Evaluation methods	• Review Quiz.
	• Module satisfaction assessment.

Module 2: How to design the volunteer service

Module II	How to design the volunteer service
Module Summary/Main Content	This module outlines CoPPer's vision for a shared European approach to volunteering in probation, starting by defining volunteering and its role in probation. The module also provides guidance for learners and essential steps for planning a probation volunteering programme.
Schedule	**Duration:** 40 min. • Introduction • What is volunteering • Volunteering in probation • How to design a probation volunteering programme • Quiz
Learning outcomes of the module	**Upon completion of this module, trainees should be able to:** • Define volunteering and its role in supporting reintegration in Probation, • Understand the importance of having a shared European approach to volunteering in probation, • Identify the key benefits of involving volunteers in the probation field, • Design a tailor-made volunteering programme to complement the supporting and reintegrative role of Probation.
Module objectives	• Learn key concepts about volunteering in probation, • Understand the shared European approach to volunteering in probation, • Identify key roles and benefits of volunteering in probation, • Learn the essential steps for designing and implementing a volunteer programme in probation.

Evaluation methods	• Review Quiz.

Module 3: Knowing the client and the risk

Module III	**Knowing the client and the risk**
Module Summary/Main Content	This module introduces community-based organizations (CBOs) to the client group served by probation services and their volunteers. It explores clients' areas of risk and need, equipping CBOs with strategies to support volunteers in working effectively with clients. Through this content, CBOs will better understand how to prepare volunteers for meaningful and impactful service in probation settings.
Schedule	**Duration:** *30 mins* • Introduction • Backgrounds of probation clients • Risk and protective factors • Responding to risk factors • Communicating concerns about risk • Quiz
Learning outcomes of the module	**Upon completion of this module, trainees should be able to:** • Understand and address the diverse and complex backgrounds of clients on probation. • Understand the factors contributing to an individual's risk of reoffending, including criminogenic needs, protective factors, and dynamic risk factors. • Identify strategies for addressing the risk factors and promoting positive outcomes for clients on probation. • Communicate concerns about risk assessment findings effectively, including using plain language and avoiding stigmatization.
Module objectives	• Enable CBO staff to understand and appropriately respond to the complex and diverse backgrounds of probation clients. • Provide an overview of risk factors and protective factors in relation to re-offending.

	• Explore strategies to address risk factors and promote successful outcomes for clients on probation.
	• Develop effective communication skills for conveying risk-related concerns to probation officers, clients, and other stakeholders, emphasizing plain language and avoiding stigmatization.
Evaluation methods	• Review Quiz. • Module satisfaction assessment.

Module 4: How to recruit and use different channels for recruiting potential volunteers

Module IV	How to recruit and use different channels for recruiting potential volunteers
Module Summary/Main Content	This module explores the international frameworks and guidelines that support volunteering in probation and how they affect the process of recruiting and selecting volunteers in probation. It focuses on the strategies and communication channels needed to effectively reach and engage potential volunteers.
Schedule	**Duration:** 30 min. • Introduction • The Tokyo Rules and The UN Handbook on Probation Services: Guidelines for Probation Practitioners and Managers • Possible roles and functions of volunteers in delivering probation services • CoPPer shared vision for a European training approach to volunteering in probation • How to recruit volunteers and use different channels • Quiz
Learning outcomes of the module	**Upon completion of this module, trainees should be able to:** • Understand and differentiate roles and functions of volunteers in probation; • Identify different channels and methods for recruiting volunteers; • Develop a practical communication strategy for recruiting volunteers that includes at least two distinct methods of outreach; • Establish clear criteria for matching volunteers to roles, considering their skills, interests, and the needs of the beneficiary organisation;

	• Design and conduct a multi-method volunteer selection process; Understand the role of volunteer screening and selection in ensuring a positive volunteer experience and organisational success.
Module objectives	• Recognise the importance of effective communication in recruiting and selecting volunteers in probation services; • Analyse the roles and functions of volunteers in delivering probation services; • Explore effective recruitment strategies using various communication channels to reach potential volunteers; • Recognise the importance of establishing clear matching criteria for volunteers; • Present the multi-method selection process of volunteers; • Highlight the role of volunteer screening and selection in ensuring a positive volunteer experience and organisational success.
Evaluation methods	• Review Quiz.

Module 5: How to communicate and develop a relationship with the Probation Services

Module V	How to communicate and develop a relationship with the Probation Services
Module Summary/Main Content	In this module, you will learn the importance of developing a good relationship and communication with the probation services to enhance or strengthen the mission of your volunteering programme. Specifically, you will learn strategies for initiating and maintaining inter-agency collaboration, and how fostering communication and relationships can facilitate information sharing, idea exchange, and mutual learning, ultimately helping you work together towards achieving shared goals.
Schedule	**Duration**: 30 min. • Introduction to the topic • Key stakeholders within Probation Services: roles and responsibilities • What is inter-agency collaboration? • Why is inter-agency collaboration important? • How to collaborate effectively • How to communicate effectively
Learning outcomes of the	• Upon completion of this module, trainees should be able to:

module	• Identify key stakeholders within probation services and their respective roles and responsibilities.
	• Define inter-agency collaboration and its challenges and opportunities in the probation context.
	• Learn effective communication strategies for initiating and maintaining relationships with probation officers and staff.
	• Recognize the importance of building trust and fostering open communication to facilitate effective inter-agency collaboration.
Module objectives	• Understand the structure and roles of key stakeholders in probation services, including their duties and responsibilities.
	• Explore inter-agency collaboration, the challenges and opportunities of collaboration with probation services.
	• Develop effective communication strategies to build and maintain positive relationships with probation officers and other team members, promoting ongoing and effective collaboration.
	• Identify the importance of building trust and establishing close relationships with probation services, facilitating open communication and effective joint working.
Evaluation methods	• Review Quiz.
	• Module satisfaction assessment.

Module 6: Building Effective Inter-Agency Partnerships in the Justice Sector

Module VI	Building Effective Inter-Agency Partnerships in the Justice Sector
Module Summary/Main Content	This module will help develop skills, practice and approaches to developing stronger inter-agency relationships and partnerships within the justice sector. These are key practices to develop as an agency and to build more collaborative approaches to working with the client group.
Schedule	**Duration**: 30 min.
	• Understanding Partner Agencies
	• Effective Communication Strategies
	• Leveraging Technology
	• Overcoming Challenges
	• Developing a Collaborative Culture
	• Practical Exercises for organisations to undertake
	• Quiz

Learning outcomes of the module	**Upon completion of this module, trainees should be able to:** • Identify who to work with and how this might best be approached; • Effectively communicate with Probation Services in developing joint working arrangements; • Leverage technology in the approach used; • Address some of the potential challenges faced in developing and sustaining relationships with Probation Services; • Develop a collaborative culture.
Module objectives	• Improve skills and approaches in communicating and working with Probation Services; • Build lasting and effective relationships within the justice sector.
Evaluation methods	• Review Quiz.

Module 7: Service Measure and Recognition Practices

Module VII	**Service Measure and Recognition Practices**
Module Summary/Main Content	This module aims to equip participants with the knowledge and skills to effectively measure the impact of volunteers in probation and implement meaningful recognition practices that foster motivation and commitment among volunteers.
Schedule	**Duration:** 25 min. • Introduction • Why measure the impact of probation volunteers? • How to measure the impact of probation volunteers? • Recognising and rewarding volunteers in probation • Quiz
Learning outcomes of the module	**Upon completion of this module, trainees should be able to:** • Explain why measuring the impact of probation volunteers is essential for accountability, programme improvement, recognition, and sustainability. Identify and apply different methods and designs for measuring the effectiveness of probation volunteer programmes, • Develop an evaluation strategy that includes setting measurable goals, identifying evaluation questions, and selecting appropriate qualitative or quantitative methods

	• Recognise the importance of rewarding and appreciating volunteers and its effect on volunteer satisfaction, retention, and programme success. • Explore different strategies and practices for recognising and rewarding volunteers' contributions within probation programmes.
Module objectives	• Understand the importance of measuring the impact of volunteering programmes in probation services • Explore various methods and tools for evaluating volunteer impact within probation services • Design effective evaluation strategies for probation volunteer programmes • Analyse the role of recognition and reward in volunteer retention • Develop practical skills for recognising and rewarding volunteers in probation programmes.
Evaluation methods	❖ Review Quiz.

Copper

European
Volunteering
in Probation