

CRIMVOL: The International Criminal Justice Voluntary Sector Research Network

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Conference Report



SHEFFIELD UNIVERSITY
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LEVERHULME
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Table of Contents

About CRIMVOL	2
Acknowledgements	2
Introduction	3
CRIMVOL Panel Sessions	4
The Penal Voluntary Sector: Author Meets Critics	4
The Penal Voluntary Sector: Thematic Panel A	5
Outside In: Voluntary Sector Involvement Within Prisons in England, California, and Uganda.....	5
A Matter of Carceral Citizenship	6
Expanding and Subverting the Carceral Net through the Voluntary Sector: The Case of US Youth Justice	7
Inclusionary Control? Theorising the Effects of Penal Voluntary Organisations' Work.....	8
The Penal Voluntary Sector: Thematic Panel B	9
The Penal Voluntary Sector in England & Wales: Adaptation [and Resilience] in a Turbulent Era	9
'Not Just in it for the Money': Community Chaplaincy and Desistance in England and Wales	10
'We Serve Forgotten Men': Structural Charity v. Religious Freedom in Serving Ex-offenders.....	11
Providing Mechanisms of Desistance to Convicted Sex Offenders: The Role of Circles of Support and Accountability in England and Wales	12
The Penal Voluntary Sector: Thematic Panel C	13
Cross-National Perspectives on Role of the Voluntary Sector in Re-entry Service Provision for Young Adults... ..	13
Promise, Prevention, and Possibility: Prisoner-Led Youth Programs.....	14
Doing More for Less in Changing Times? The Use of Volunteers in Policing.....	16
Negotiating Hope and Frustration: Volunteer Experiences on a Prison Television Channel.....	17
Key Themes	18
Concluding Thoughts	19

About CRIMVOL: The International Criminal Justice Voluntary Sector Research Network

CRIMVOL is an international, multidisciplinary criminal justice voluntary sector research network for academics, practitioners, and policymakers. The network fills an important gap in scholarship and infrastructure: the criminal justice voluntary sector is more topical than ever before, but has not received academic attention commensurate with its importance anywhere in the world.

The network is chaired by Dr. Philippa Tomczak (Leverhulme Trust Early Career Fellow, University of Sheffield Centre for Criminological Research, Author of *The Penal Voluntary Sector*). Philippa won funding from the British Academy (Rising Star Engagement Award) and the Socio-Legal Studies Association (Seminar Competition) to launch the network at an inaugural international conference in June 2017. The network already has over 70 members.

Thanks to generous funding from the British Academy Rising Star Engagement Award scheme, the network benefits from a steering group of specialist early career researchers drawn from England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Eire, Finland, Denmark, and Canada. The network is championed by Professor Sir Anthony Bottoms (Universities of Cambridge and Sheffield) and Professor Joanna Shapland (University of Sheffield). Dr. David Thompson (University of Sheffield) supports the running of the network and has recently authored a book exploring the involvement of the voluntary sector in criminal justice.

The network brings academics, practitioners, and policy makers together to establish a 'state of the art' criminal justice voluntary sector research agenda, paying particular attention to:

- Identifying needs and gaps in the research capacity of academics, practitioners, and policymakers;
- The range and adequacy of theoretical and methodological tools used in criminal justice voluntary sector research, and the ethics of such research;
- Voluntary sector governance, regulation and safeguarding in commissioning, contractual and informal service delivery relationships with statutory agencies; and
- The effects of contractual provisions in shaping voluntary organisations' activities.

Acknowledgements

On behalf of the Early Career Researchers, the authors would like to thank Dr. Philippa Tomczak for organising and co-ordinating the CRIMVOL panels at the American Society of Criminology (ASC) conference. Without your continued hard work, support, and enthusiasm the valuable contribution of this network would not be possible. Thanks also to Professor Sir Anthony Bottoms, Professor Joanna Shapland and Dr. David Thompson for their continuing support in developing the network. A huge thank you to all who presented or contributed to the four excellent CRIMVOL panels that featured at the ASC conference. After our inaugural conference in Sheffield in June 2017, it was a pleasure to meet again in Philadelphia. We look forward to continuing this exciting and important work together.

Introduction

Following a successful [inaugural conference in Sheffield in June 2017](#), Dr. Philippa Tomczak put out a call for papers to the CRIMVOL network for the American Society of Criminology (ASC) conference. An impressive response from network members led to four CRIMVOL sessions at the conference held in Philadelphia, 15th to 18th November 2017. The sessions included an 'author meets critic' event during which five academics reflected on Philippa's prize winning book - *The Penal Voluntary Sector* - and three thematic panels featuring 15 academics representing 14 institutions across the UK and USA.

In each session, presenters shared empirical findings, theoretical reflections, innovations, frustrations, successes, and thoughts on future research and policy implications within the field. These papers contribute to limited yet growing knowledge around the role of the voluntary sector within criminal justice settings, and the benefits and challenges faced by those involved. This report summarises and reflects on these sessions and hopes to stimulate further research and collaboration in this area.

The first section of the report gives an overview of the CRIMVOL sessions that featured at the ASC conference. The second section draws out key themes emerging across papers, highlighting the common threads that weaved their way throughout sessions. This is the second CRIMVOL conference report, building on the paper produced after the inaugural event in June 2017. It is hoped that through future conferences and joint working between academics, practitioners, and policy makers, the CRIMVOL network will continue to add to the evidence base around the role of the voluntary sector in the criminal justice system.

CRIMVOL Panel Sessions

The Penal Voluntary Sector: Author Meets Critics

An author meets critic session for Dr. Philippa Tomczak's monograph 'The Penal Voluntary Sector'

Critics included: Dr. Deborah Jump (Manchester Metropolitan University, UK); Dr. Tim Goddard (Florida International University, USA); Dr. Nicole Kaufman (Ohio University, USA); Dr. Reuben Miller (University of Chicago, USA); and Dr. Randy Myers (Old Dominion University, USA).

The first of four CRIMVOL sessions on day one of ASC proceedings commenced rather fittingly with an 'author meets critic' panel featuring CRIMVOL founder and author of *The Penal Voluntary Sector*, Dr. Philippa Tomczak. Dr. Tomczak's critics represented institutions from the UK and USA and brought a range of academic and practitioner experience around incarceration and prisoner re-entry, inclusionary and exclusionary practices, social welfare, alternative approaches to punishment, and youth justice. Dr. Tomczak's book explores the role of penal voluntary organisations in the delivery of prison and probation services – an expanding, yet poorly understood, part of an ever-pluralising justice system.

The session started with a conversation about the role of the penal voluntary sector in delivering justice services. Charity organisations often enjoy privileged access to inmates' lives who may not see them as part of the state. This raises questions around net widening or 'inclusionary control' and the positive and negative effects that this poses. Critics expressed caution around over-determining what features are considered 'control' or 'emancipatory', pointing to interpretation and contestation between power relationships 'on the ground'. Issues around control, care, advocacy, empowerment, and support often form part of a shifting continuum of services – rather than mutually exclusive features.

Critics often reflected on the relationships between the state, policy makers, practitioners and service deliverers, policy impact and implications, and the role of academia in this space – key themes within Dr. Tomczak's book. The text explores these formalised and non-formalised relationships through the lens of Actor-Network Theory, and considers the benefits and challenges of each arrangement. While informal processes may offer increased autonomy, access and innovative 'scope', secure ongoing delivery is often precarious. Formalised arrangements may be more stable; however can be subject to increased oversight or re-tendering on the open market. The panel discussed the three-tiered funding system under which the voluntary sector currently operates: services entirely funded by the state; services part state/part charity funded; and services entirely funded by the charity sector. Delivering services in a neo-liberal climate is complex and poses challenges around responsibilities of the state and the point at which the voluntary sector starts to subsidise rather than enhance. Critics agreed on the important contribution that Dr. Tomczak's book makes, filling a vital gap in knowledge. Moving forward it is important that service workers' and users' voices are reflected in much-needed ongoing research in this area.

The Penal Voluntary Sector: Thematic Panel A

Chair: Tim Goddard

Discussant: Deborah Jump

Outside In: Voluntary Sector Involvement Within Prisons in England, California, and Uganda Emma Hughes (California State University, Fresno USA)

Abstract: Drawing on qualitative research, this paper will examine and compare the impact of volunteers and non-profit organisations working to expand programming and rehabilitative opportunities in three distinct settings. A range of programs will be considered and relevant policies explored. The effect of such programming on incarcerated participants and on community-based volunteers will be addressed. The consequences for prison culture, and for the promotion of desistance, will be assessed.

This paper reflected on findings from a cross-national study incorporating fieldwork in England, the United States, and Uganda exploring the motivations of volunteers and their impact on the prison system. [Dr. Emma Hughes](#) highlighted the capacity that volunteers have to ‘bring the free world inside’. Interaction and engagement with others and feeling valued and respected can be a ‘humanising’ experience for prisoners and encourage the development of different identities (e.g. ‘student’). These relationships are largely unique to volunteers from the outside world: it is often not possible for prisoners to have a similar relationship with prison officers. This is an important part of the desistance process and can offer prisoners a sense of validation, another chance, and a ‘stamp of approval’. These factors can also impact on volunteers, providing a better understanding of criminalisation and punishment, and breaking down stigma – often when volunteers reflect on prisoners being ‘just like me’.

Access, geographical location, culture of surrounding community, and attitudes of prison management affect the likelihood of volunteers being welcomed in to the prison setting. As state resources continue to decrease, there may be an enhanced focus on volunteer led services. However, capitalising on prison access opportunities while retaining a critical ‘outsider’ voice to ensure that volunteers can operate within these systems without becoming part of it, will continue to pose challenges in this area.

A Matter of Carceral Citizenship

Reuben Miller (University of Chicago, USA)

Abstract: The growing literature on mass incarceration has examined the emergence, causes and consequences of criminal justice expansion on and within the social body. Among the most productive work in this area, scholars have documented the severity and impact of criminal justice contact on a large and growing segment of the population, raising questions about the character of U.S. democracy. Arguing forcefully that mass incarceration has transformed American citizenship, these scholars have shown how formal processes of legal exclusion coupled with ubiquitous criminal justice contact has relegated the largely black poor targets of the carceral state to a kind of second class citizenship. Building upon and extending this work, we argue that carceral expansion has not just resulted in the relegation of the black poor to second class citizenship, but the emergence of an alternate form of political membership—what we call carceral citizenship. This article delineates the features of carceral citizenship, and discusses its implications for how we understand the role, force and consequence of the state in the lives of the raced and criminalised poor.

Dr. Reuben Miller's work considered the changing concept of citizenship for the formerly incarcerated. The criminal justice system is pervasive and cyclical, and disproportionately affects black, poor citizens. Dr. Miller argued that while prison often 'gets all the attention', community is 'where the action is', and where collateral consequences are most acutely felt. There are many thousands of regulations that limit civic participation for those with criminal records, across business, employment, family, housing, civic participation, and property. This results in almost every 'actor' that a formerly incarcerated person has contact with – across the criminal justice system and beyond – wielding power over his or her choices and opportunities.

This fundamentally alters the nature of interactions with the formerly incarcerated starting from a place of disadvantage. Family and friends become resources of first and last resort with every act rendered a 'favour'. This creates a deep and unaccounted for vulnerability where each interaction has potential for large consequences (e.g., an argument with a partner can result in homelessness, being late for an appointment with a parole officer, a return to prison). This leads to a new kind of citizenship with unique restrictions ('laws on top of laws'), limited rights, and enhanced responsibilities (e.g., convincing others that one is good, 'giving back' in order to access to services). Dr. Miller referred to this as 'carceral citizenship', in which a criminal record transforms everyday life.

Expanding and Subverting the Carceral Net through the Voluntary Sector: The Case of US Youth Justice

Randolph R. Myers, Kaitlyn J. Robison (Old Dominion University, USA) and Tim Goddard (Florida International University, USA)

Abstract: Recent work in the sociology of punishment literature has called attention to how the state punishes through non-punitive means, forming what Beckett and Murakawa call the 'carceral shadow state.' This paper situates the 'carceral shadow state' within the community-based voluntary sector and marketisation of punishment and service provisions under neoliberalism. In the case of US youth justice specifically, through partnerships with voluntary community-based organizations, the carceral state extends the state's ability to punish and control marginal youth through non-criminal punishments. But the partnerships that arise out of this privatized arrangement also make possible various points of resistance to this carceral control, as progressive and critical community groups that compete (often successfully) to serve as partners in delivering 'services' manage to do so with a social justice-focus or welfarist-orientation. In this way, the turn to voluntary community organisations under neoliberalism gives rise to the escalation of the carceral state project and progressive alternatives to it.

In this paper, [Dr. Randolph Myers](#) *et al* highlighted actions to extend the carceral state through non-carceral routes. Young people in homeless shelters or accessing recreational facilities etc. are finding themselves excluded, punished, and part of a carceral net via non-criminal justice routes. The role of the criminal justice voluntary sector in this process of net widening has been problematic; however, in this session, Dr. Myers and colleagues considered the potentially transformative and protective role of the criminal justice voluntary sector, creating alternative channels of engagement, supporting those in need, and mitigating the impact of, and minimising contact with, the formal criminal justice system. Voluntary organisations can offer positive role models to young people and design their services within an ethos of 'inclusive care'.

The session considered arguments around governance, responsibility, and delivering services in a neoliberal climate. While voluntary organisations acknowledge that they are often shouldering the burden of responsibility, and must compromise to strike an 'imperfect deal', their work helps to shift resources away from traditional criminal justice routes and harnesses the power of grassroots organisations to influence policy and practice change. By navigating the space between idealism and realism, responsabilisation and revolutionism, the voluntary sector could have the potential to bring more community-led, and more progressive, alternatives to fruition.

Inclusionary Control? Theorising the Effects of Penal Voluntary Organisations' Work Philippa Tomczak (University of Sheffield, UK)

Abstract: Recent penal policy developments in many jurisdictions suggest an increasing role for voluntary organisations. Voluntary organisations have long worked alongside penal institutions, but the ways that their programmes affect (ex-)offenders remain ill understood. This paper addresses the unclear and undertheorised implications of voluntary organisations' work with (ex-) offenders, using empirical data from England and Wales, and considering how these findings are relevant in other jurisdictions. It adds nuance to net widening theory, reframing the effects of voluntary organisations' work as inclusionary and exclusionary, with exclusionary effects having inclusionary aspects, and inclusionary effects being nested within a framework of control. This provides more complete theory and has implications for penal practice.

This paper highlighted the expanding role of the penal voluntary sector involving a range of agencies working with prisoners, offenders, families, victims and communities. It has been suggested that aspects of the prison system could not function without the voluntary sector, while some services across Europe (e.g., France, Nordic states) are almost solely reliant on voluntary sector delivery. Despite this, understanding around the role and effect of the penal voluntary sector remains limited. Dr. Tomczak reflected on her own fieldwork referring to a prison based sewing club that literally saved lives, giving a prisoner a focus for his attentions, away from suicide. The distinctive interpersonal relationships offered by the voluntary sector operate at a distance from punishment and can enable desistance from crime, giving prisoners a role and aspirations for the future. Penal voluntary organisations shape lives and play a significant role in the justice system; however, the evidence to support this contribution is currently under developed.

Dr. Tomczak highlighted that debates in this area do not necessarily support the current penal system as a reasonable response to the actions of often-marginalised communities, nor the continued roll back of state funded services. However, they shine a spotlight on the currently underdeveloped role of the voluntary sector in delivering inclusionary services within exclusionary contexts. Voluntary led services can satisfy basic need, reduce stigma, help to improve prisoners' social connections giving them a stake in community, and support desistance. The penal voluntary sector can help to make life 'inside' more manageable, offering an element of agency/choice to prisoners in an environment where they have very little. Further research is needed to explore the subtle exclusionary and inclusionary forces and complex power relationships that operate within the context of the penal voluntary sector. Understanding issues around security and risk, and the detailed practices within which power operates, can help to sharpen the debate and develop important research in this area.

The Penal Voluntary Sector: Thematic Panel B

Discussant: Philippa Tomczak

The Penal Voluntary Sector in England & Wales: Adaptation [and Resilience] in a Turbulent Era

Mary Corcoran (Keele University, UK)

Abstract: This paper will report on the findings of a major research project on voluntary sector adaptation and resilience in a mixed penal services market during a period of deep disruption to the social economy. The study took place in England and Wales from Spring 2015 to Spring 2017 and involved participants from over 100 agencies. Our findings show that the combination of marketisation, austerity, the outsourcing of probation and resettlement, and decentralised criminal justice management have the voluntary sector's standing and role with stakeholders. These range from the national and local state, statutory criminal justice services, the private sector, beneficiaries and the public. The paper will present evidence of the repositioning that has taken place within the sector in order to surmount current challenges. We suggest, qua Salamon (2013), that while the voluntary/third sector has overcome previous moments of rupture, its survival has been at a cost to its conventions of autonomy and distinctiveness. The paper will also propose, however, that attention needs to be paid to burgeoning counter-narratives from the sector which may be understood as 'resilience'.

[Dr. Mary Corcoran's](#) paper drew on interview data collected across over 100 volunteer sector agencies to explore adaptation and resilience against the backdrop of a changing and disrupted social economy. At least half of the organisations interviewed had been merged or were part of acquisitions. Interviewees highlighted themes around the impact of austerity on charities, shifts from grant funding to competitive contracting and ensuing tensions, the need to diversify core services, penal mission drift (often with an obligation to include a punitive element), lack of user 'voice' in service delivery, marketisation, and the displacement effect of this on others in the field. This long term and systemic pressure has prompted re-engineering and re-invention within voluntary organisations, drawing attention to the adaptability of the sector.

Dr. Corcoran shared reflections on a state voluntary dyad, now evolving in to a fluid, tripartite comprising private capital, government agencies and charities, and tensions between theory and the complex reality of delivering these services 'on the ground'. These changes are driving patterns of institutionalisation, and creating new kinds of organisations. Pragmatism has served to weaken capacity for critical advocacy and campaigning, increase demand for data and 'success measurement', and normalise practices that were previously resisted.

'Not Just in it for the Money': Community Chaplaincy and Desistance in England and Wales
Jane Dominey (University of Cambridge, UK)

Abstract: The Community Chaplaincy Association (CCA) is a voluntary sector organisation working with people leaving prison in England and Wales. The CCA is an umbrella organisation for a diverse group of small charities that, sharing a faith-based ethos, provide practical help, emotional support and mentoring. This paper presents the findings of a study investigating the extent to which the work of community chaplaincy is congruent with principles for desistance focussed practice. The research gathered data from interviews with 19 service users (a number of whom were interviewed on three occasions over a nine month period from September 2016), staff employed by CCA member organisations, and individuals volunteering to support and mentor former prisoners. These data were then analysed, exploring themes such as individualising support for change, building hope and working through relationships. The paper concludes with observations about the significance, from the perspective of all stakeholders, of the CCA as a voluntary sector organisation. The extent to which the voluntary sector is able to make a contribution to service delivery which is distinctive from, or adds value to, that of existing statutory services is critically examined.

[Dr. Jane Dominey's](#) research on the impact of community chaplaincy on desistance sheds light on the complex role of the voluntary sector in criminal justice and re-entry processes. Narratives from service users, paid staff, and volunteers from various faith-based charities demonstrate the extent to which the community chaplaincy approach either supports or hinders successful desistance. This research also highlights the heterogeneity of the voluntary sector (different funding sources, organisational structures, volunteer to paid staff ratios, program and service options) and the benefits of this diversity. By offering a variety of re-entry and desistance resources such as one-on-one mentoring, practical help, and emotional support, community chaplaincy services help to increase levels of positive social interaction therefore increasing successful community integration.

In her conversations with research participants, Dr. Dominey discovered that many service users made no link between community chaplaincy and faith, or at least no one felt that faith was being pushed on them at any point during their interactions with staff or volunteers. For some, it was an issue at first as they had poor experiences with religious institutions in the past while for others, faith was central to why they sought out this service. Overall, service users appreciated that there were people in the community who were willing to work with them on a voluntary basis. Volunteers appreciated the flexibility in the services provided by community chaplaincy organisations (e.g., going for a coffee and having a chat) and the opportunity to provide real help to individuals in need. Motivations for volunteering included altruism, personal or family experiences with the criminal justice system, professional and personal development, and expression of faith.

As we often see in the criminal justice voluntary sector, the community chaplaincy services provide a mix of inclusionary and exclusionary controls. These services also demonstrate the 'fuzzy' boundary between the voluntary and criminal justice sectors and the impact of this on staff, service users, and volunteers. What is clear is that the community chaplaincy services function more on principles of trust and compassion rather than risk and management. For example, while service users report that probation services have "too little time to care about offering services that actually make a difference" many claim that without the support of faith-based organizations they would not be where they are now.

'We Serve Forgotten Men': Structural Charity v. Religious Freedom in Serving Ex-offenders
Michael Hallett and Megan Bookstaver (University of North Florida, USA)

Abstract: Despite widespread reliance by correctional officials in the United States upon faith-based programs for delivering 'cost-effective' services to prisoners and ex-offenders, religious volunteers often find themselves unwelcome participants in correctional programming. As a result of an emphasis on lowering costs, legislation for faith-based programming in several states has explicitly identified the fiscal and human capital resources made available from religious volunteer organisations as a proxy resource for strategic reductions in correctional spending. This paper offers a case study of a 'religious freedom' lawsuit filed against a volunteer faith-based correctional services provider in Jacksonville, Florida. While the religious volunteers won the lawsuit against them, their experience is instructive regarding the structural contradictions of late-modern American corrections.

In his presentation, [Dr. Michael Hallett](#) talked about what is happening within the criminal justice voluntary sector from the bottom-up (he contrasted this to Dr. Mary Corcoran's paper which focused on what is happening from the top-down within the same sector). He spoke specifically about a faith-based program – Prisoners of Christ – that serves prisoners who have been incarcerated for ten years or more and who are often heavily institutionalised. The program, which responds to a lack of resources in the community for formerly incarcerated individuals, offers services such as substance abuse treatment, employment supports, and transitional housing. Despite offering services that are clearly beneficial to safe and successful re-entry and desistance, the program remains grossly underfunded and runs at a deficit every year.

Dr. Hallett continued to outline the problems with funding by explaining that the Department of Corrections in Florida has now started to issue *Requests for Qualifications* as opposed to *Requests for Proposals*. This means that voluntary sector organisations must prove that they have enough pre-existing funds and resources to 'win the bid' and run the program. Essentially, in order to secure grants an organisation must put forward the highest dollar amount so that the funding agency can spend less of their own money. This funding structure is particularly restrictive for non-profit organisations that wish to provide essential services to vulnerable and marginalised populations.

To make matters worse, Prisoners of Christ was sued by the Council for Secular Humanism for violating the [Blaine Amendment](#) which stipulates that public funds cannot be used to support any religious institutions. While Prisoners of Christ managed to win the lawsuit, it is not viewed as a victory due to an ongoing lack of state funding for the programme. While the staff and volunteers of Prisoners of Christ continue to 'serve forgotten men' they continue to spend time, energy, and resources navigating the 'hooks' that come with depending on the state for funding.

Providing Mechanisms of Desistance to Convicted Sex Offenders: The Role of Circles of Support and Accountability in England and Wales
David Thompson (University of Sheffield, UK)

Abstract: Drawing on data from 70 interviews with sex offenders (or Core Members), volunteers and criminal justice professionals throughout England and Wales, this paper describes the 'added extra' which volunteers can offer to the reintegration of convicted sex offenders returning to the community. More specifically the paper examines how Circles of Support and Accountability – an organisation which uses volunteers to work with a convicted sex offender or Core Member – provides the opportunities to access desistance pathways and supports pro-social narratives among Core Members, while also monitoring Core Members for signs of risky behaviour.

[Dr. David Thompson's](#) contribution to this panel included a discussion of Circles of Support and Accountability (Circles), a program that offers community support to people convicted of sexual offences. The program, founded in Canada in 1994, involves forming a Circle around an individual to provide them with the support required for successful re-entry and desistance. This research highlights the experiences of individual participants, volunteers, and criminal justice professionals in England and Wales who are involved with Circles.

Much of the literature on Circles is about how 'nice' it is to participate in this program. Circles offers something to participants (known as Core Members) that is not often found in traditional criminal justice programs – compassion, care, and empathy. Volunteers create a safe space for persons convicted of sexual offences and treat them like human beings. A lot of time within the Circles is spent talking about *stuff*. Volunteers go for coffee and other outings with the Core Members and talk about day-to-day life, including struggles and successes in the community. Unfortunately, it is hard to secure funding for this *stuff* and therefore Circles must always remind their volunteers of the importance of the accountability piece. Some see the increased focus on accountability (and risk) as an expansion of the carceral net and it is not often what volunteers sign up to do.

While it would be easy to dismiss Circles as yet another arm of the criminal justice system that serves to 'manage risky people' in the community, Dr. Thompson's research demonstrates that Circles is far more nuanced than this. While accountability is an *integral* part of the program (specifically when it comes to maintaining public safety and preventing further victimisation) volunteers use their own skills, experience, and judgement in deciding what information to share and what not to share about Core Members. The focus for volunteers is on creating opportunities and space for desistance. Acceptance of the individual (rather than a focus on the offence) enables Core Members to (re)build social capital and a sense of belonging within the community.

Volunteers offer something that criminal justice professionals cannot. They balance support and accountability delicately – they prioritise support but are also very aware of the control function of the program and report risky thoughts and behaviours when necessary. All in all, volunteers want to work with Core Members on a human level and encourage them to make (and maintain) positive changes in their lives.

The Penal Voluntary Sector: Thematic Panel C

Chair: David Thompson

Discussant: Rosie Meek

Cross-National Perspectives on Role of the Voluntary Sector in Re-entry Service Provision for Young Adults

Laura Abrams (UCLA Luskin, USA)

Abstract: The provision of specialised criminal justice services for young adults is a growing field of interest in the US and around the globe. Spurred by advances in brain science and continued, high rates of criminal recidivism among peak age offenders, many countries are beginning to experiment with specialised young adult courts, correctional institutions, and re-entry services. These young adults (roughly aged 18 to 24), thought to be caught in between the needs of characteristics of 'adolescents' and 'adults', albeit with distinct characteristics. To date, the field of practice with young adult offenders can best be described as a burgeoning science, and little is known about the role of the voluntary sector in providing specialised services for this population. This paper draws on analysis of semi-structured interviews (n=40) with stakeholders in four nations: Finland, England/Wales, Belize, and Argentina, archival program literature, and site visit observations. The paper will describe various models for the provision of young adults services and examine the role of the non-profit sector in intervening in criminal justice sector services. Particular attention will be paid to the presumed service and other needs of young adults, intersecting boundaries in systems of care, and barriers to cross-sector collaboration.

In her presentation, [Dr. Laura Abrams](#) focused on youth re-entry and resettlement – an issue that does not receive a lot of attention in criminological literature, especially when it comes to the role of the voluntary sector. Considering the growing (and international) interest in criminal justice interventions for youth, it is important to have a better understanding of what is happening and what works in both prevention and intervention. Interviews with stakeholders from Finland, England and Wales, Belize, and Argentina provide an international snapshot of services available for youth involved (or at risk of being involved) in the justice system.

According to Dr. Abrams' research, Finland is getting things right when it comes to youth. First, there is a lot of funding available for new programs and interventions as Finland funds these services through their national lottery. This means that no one is required to compete for funding which leaves more time and energy for building collaborative and cooperative relationships. This generous funding structure is certainly different to other countries such as England and Wales, the United States, and Canada. Finland also provides a lot of excellent training opportunities in mental health and trauma, meaning that service providers are better prepared to deal with a variety of issues. In England and Wales, Dr. Abrams stated, "the whole area of training is unclear" and there is no requirement for a degree when working for private probation companies. Finland also comes out on top when it comes to providing individualised care, a strengths-based approach, and prevention and diversion programs. The combination of these programs, services, and approaches results in a minimal use of incarceration and leaves more funding and resources for community-based supports.

The cooperation that is fostered between programs and services across Finland was an important takeaway from this presentation. With appropriate funding (and the appropriate management of that funding) voluntary sector organisations can rid themselves of the competitive mentality and instead work together towards a shared philosophy of justice and public safety. A stronger focus on rehabilitation and community integration is beneficial not only for youth involved in the justice system, but for everyone.



Promise, Prevention, and Possibility: Prisoner-Led Youth Programs
Michelle Inderbitzen (Oregon State University, USA)

Abstract: When thinking of the work of the voluntary sector in prisons, we often overlook the contributions of the prisoners themselves as volunteers, leaders, and advocates. This paper focuses on youth outreach programs in one maximum-security prison. Four different prisoner-led clubs have developed curriculum and community contacts for monthly meetings with at risk youth and the adults who care for them. They struggle in being associated with negative “Scared Straight” programs and focus their own efforts on Positive Youth Development, encouraging youth to lead their best lives. The potential of such prisoner-led programs and the efforts of current prisoners to share their hard-earned wisdom and perspective with vulnerable youth will be examined and discussed.

[Dr. Michelle Inderbitzen's](#) work focused on justice-involved youth from quite a unique perspective. Her presentation highlighted prisoner-led youth outreach programs developed in Oregon State Penitentiary that aim to educate young people (and their families) about the harms of incarceration while also encouraging them to focus on their individual strengths and more positive possibilities for the future. Although prisoner-led clubs are not something new, programs that connect adult prisoners to young people in the community have been the target of much criticism in the past (i.e., Scared Straight programs) and therefore new research is needed to demonstrate the benefit (or lack thereof) of these new initiatives.

There are many structural constraints for prisoners who wish to work with the outside community. Distrust of prisoners, the stigma that surrounds people with criminal records, and a general fear of prison itself makes it difficult for incarcerated people to give back to the community. Therefore, as Dr. Inderbitzen shared, a lot of patience and persistence is required to keep these initiatives going. Prisoners are highly motivated to work with youth. They want to share their experiences and wisdom in the hope that it prevents more people from experiencing criminalisation, incarceration, and punishment.

Dr. Inderbitzen shared several examples of programs that serve to strengthen the ties between prisoners and the community (e.g., Inside-Out, RISE UP!, and letter-writing programs). While there is often support from frontline staff for these programs, what is usually missing is buy-in from administrators and the community. Each of these stakeholders wants to see evidence that initiatives ‘work’ in preventing youth from committing crimes, but it is hard to conduct meaningful evaluation when there is such little support.

During her presentation, Dr. Inderbitzen asked if it is ever a good idea for prisoners to work with youth and insists that if we are going to continue to do it we need to do it right. This means that more resources and support are required from administrators and more trust is needed from the community in order to truly fulfil the restorative goals of these prisoner-led initiatives.

Doing More for Less in Changing Times? The Use of Volunteers in Policing Melissa Pepper (University of Surrey, UK)

Abstract: Police Support Volunteers (PSVs) - citizens who give their time freely to perform tasks that complement the duties of police officers and staff - are a relatively new addition to an established police volunteer history. Against a backdrop of reducing budgets, a pluralising workforce, and recent legislative changes enabling chief officers to confer a wider range of powers, it is likely that PSVs will become an increasingly prominent feature of UK policing. However, little is known about PSVs: who volunteers, what is their contribution to policing, and what are their experiences within an organisation that is traditionally characterised by danger, suspicion, social isolation and group loyalty, and a resistance towards tasks that do not conform to a tough 'crime fighter' image – compounded by a general sense of apathy towards 'others'? Drawing on empirical research conducted within London's Metropolitan Police Service, this paper explores these issues through the voices of 'on the ground' volunteers themselves, at a time when politicians, policy makers and practitioners are exploring methods for delivering criminal justice services in an ever-changing terrain.

Starting from the place of a pluralising police service, this paper reflected on the increasing role of volunteers within policing. Similar to the wider criminal justice system, volunteers within policing are not a recent phenomenon, with an unpaid workforce in operation both prior to and since the development of the modern service. The focus of this study – Police Support Volunteers, citizens who give their time freely to perform tasks that complement the duties of police officers - are a more recent addition to an established volunteer presence which comprises a range of agencies across crime prevention and reduction, community engagement, and victim support. Drawing on results from an online survey and interviews with volunteers, volunteer managers, and key stakeholders, Melissa reflected on volunteer motivations (often altruistic or personal social reasons, rather than career development driven), and the experience of being a volunteer in London's Metropolitan Police Service with a focus on co-ordination, management and training, and feeling integrated and involved.

Research participants highlighted the importance of understanding and effectively tapping in to volunteer skills and interests, providing access to opportunities for development, and ensuring that volunteers can undertake tasks that are seen to be worthwhile and useful. However, the study acknowledged barriers to delivering this – often unique to those posed by the paid workforce. Feeling part of a team, valued and involved in decision making and the delivery of services is important for volunteer morale, satisfaction and retention and, while there were some positive messages emerging from the fieldwork, this also continues to pose challenges. The role and position of volunteers is often contested within the policing arena with ongoing debates around their contribution as 'additionality' or 'substitution' for previously paid positions as police budgets continue to tighten. Recent UK legislation enabling Chief Officers to make the most efficient and effective use of their workforce by giving them the flexibility to confer a wider range of powers on police staff and volunteers, has brought debates around volunteers in policing to the fore. Melissa highlighted that currently limited research in this area leaves a notable gap in knowledge around the actual and potential contribution of police volunteers, impacting on forces' ability to capitalise on opportunities presented by these new legislative guidelines.

Negotiating Hope and Frustration: Volunteer Experiences on a Prison Television Channel Kristenne M. Robison (Westminster College, USA)

Abstract: The Hope Channel, a resident-generated television channel in Ohio, delivers 35 hours of original content a week to the incarcerated population. In order to make this happen the channel relies heavily on volunteers to share their filming and editing knowledge, to serve on an advisory board, to help re-entering members secure jobs, and to help fundraise for the unusual venture. The channel, the brainchild of an innovative administrator, strives to cultivate hope in the viewing audience, contributors, and residential media teams. But how do the volunteers experience The Hope Channel? This study, using qualitative interviews and observations, discusses the ways that volunteers negotiate their hope for the television channel and the residents who work for it, with their frustration with correctional policies and employees who are not supportive of the channel.

In the final presentation of the CRIMVOL panels, [Dr. Kristenne Robinson](#) talked about her work with The Hope Channel – a prison television network that serves as an education and training opportunity for prisoners. The Hope Channel provides prisoners with information about re-entry supports and gives them a positive and productive way to spend their time inside. The focus on *hope* allows prisoners to move past bad experiences and instead encourages a focus on individual strengths, resilience, and optimism. This innovative prison program brings together prisoners, academics, employers, and other community volunteers to provide meaningful opportunities to those behind bars.

As we see with other programs that involve bringing the community into the prison, The Hope Channel also experiences some difficulties when it comes to delivering their program. Due to high staff turnover rates there is a constant need to re-build trusting relationships with administrators. The program also experiences issues with technology, and volunteers often feel hopeless when having to deal with getting proper equipment and resources into the prison. Dr. Robison shared that a lot of people involved with The Hope Channel think that the program itself is a great idea, but that it often feels like the “cart is being put before the horse.”

Despite the difficulties encountered when dealing with prison bureaucracy, volunteers with The Hope Channel continue to push forward to ensure appropriate re-entry supports for prisoners. Innovation is essential in correctional programming, and those with the money and resources to support such innovation need to 'step up to the plate'.

Key Themes

Themes that emerged from the four ASC conference sessions reflected many of those discussed at the first CRIMVOL meeting in June 2017. Presentations spoke directly to the important – yet under researched – role of the criminal justice voluntary sector, and the benefits that these diverse organisations offer to prisoners (current and former), volunteers, criminal justice practitioners, and the community as a whole. Once again, an international panel of speakers highlighted instances of innovation and collaboration across a range of countries that contribute not only to the personal (and sometimes professional) growth of service users and service providers/volunteers, but also to broader goals of public safety and (re)integration.

Other key highlights from the ASC CRIMVOL panels included:

- The **important link that volunteers foster between prison and the community**, and the effect this can have on prisoner integration, personal identity, and desistance. At times, the work of the criminal justice voluntary sector is able to offset the harsh, punitive environment that is often maintained by prison staff and administration.
- A more nuanced discussion about **‘net widening’, inclusionary and exclusionary control**, and the challenges and opportunities available to voluntary organisations who bid to deliver services traditionally facilitated through the state.
- The impact of **current funding structures** on the mission and culture of the criminal justice voluntary sector.
- The **relationships between academia, practitioners, policy makers, and persons with lived experience of criminalisation and incarceration**, and the importance of nurturing such connections to ensure that the criminal justice voluntary sector retains a critical voice when engaging in discussions around program and policy development.

Concluding Thoughts

The ASC conference was the second opportunity for members of the Criminal Justice Voluntary Sector Research Network (CRIMVOL) to come together to share and reflect on findings from a limited yet growing evidence base around the criminal justice voluntary sector. As highlighted throughout this report, issues around purpose, relationships, and the role of the criminal justice voluntary sector in a changing criminal justice system have emerged clearly, focusing attentions for future CRIMVOL work.

Members of CRIMVOL will meet again [at the British Academy in January 2018](#) and continue to set the direction for this important research agenda. As outlined in the [first CRIMVOL report](#), future progress towards this goal will result from:

- (1) Open dialogue between academics, practitioners, policy makers, activists/advocates, persons with lived experiences, and community members who have an interest in/experience with the criminal justice voluntary sector.
- (2) An international research network that spans sectors and disciplines.
- (3) Conducting research *with* the voluntary sector.
- (4) Developing theoretical and methodological tools that best capture the experiences, processes, and outcomes of the work conducted by the criminal justice voluntary sector.
- (5) Thinking about ethics, responsible advocacy, and resistance to penal practices.

Early career researchers look forward to sharing their ongoing research with the CRIMVOL network at this next meeting, and continuing the valuable conversations started in Sheffield and Philadelphia. It is through this collaborative, cross-national approach that we hope to develop knowledge and inform policy and service delivery in the criminal justice voluntary sector.