



CoSA in Europe

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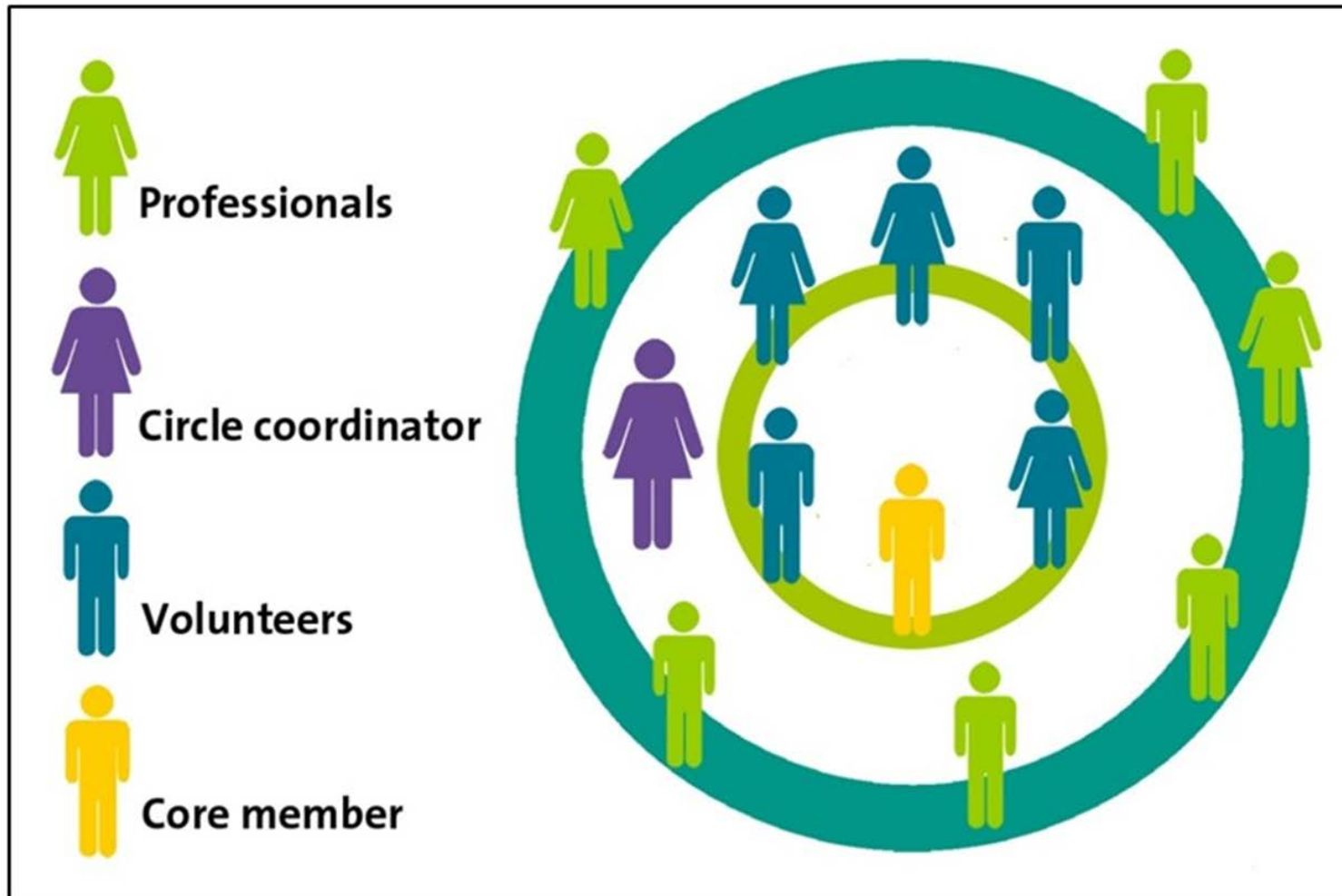
Research in Circles4EU



- COSA
- The international project
- Research projects
- Conclusions & questions for the audience



Circles of Support and Accountability



Evidence base

1 rct

3 control trials

44% less reoffending

67% less sexual reoffending

(Clarke et al. submitted)



2 projects: Circles Together for Safety (CTS) & Circles4EU

CTS: 2010-2011; Funded by EU; Daphne III Program

Participants:

UK (Circles UK)

NL (Circles-NL; Tilburg University, Avans)

B (Antwerp House of Justice)

CEP

Results:

- (Further) development of circle projects in NL and B
- Development of European intervention model and European Handbook
- Research and dissemination of results (intervention model, effectiveness study design)
- Interest from other EU countries



Exit strategy:

- “Since COSA seems to become better known and is perceived as both a possible answer to national problems in sex offender management and being in accordance with EU policy, the Project Board proposes to create a European platform for the further dissemination of COSA, within a framework of treatment adherence, quality management and research cooperation”.



EU-grant (Daphne III programme)

2013-2014

Aims:

- Dissemination of the model to other countries
- Assist high quality implementation in new projects
- Ensure program fidelity in new projects
- Support project development and building of expertise through research

Partners

Operating countries

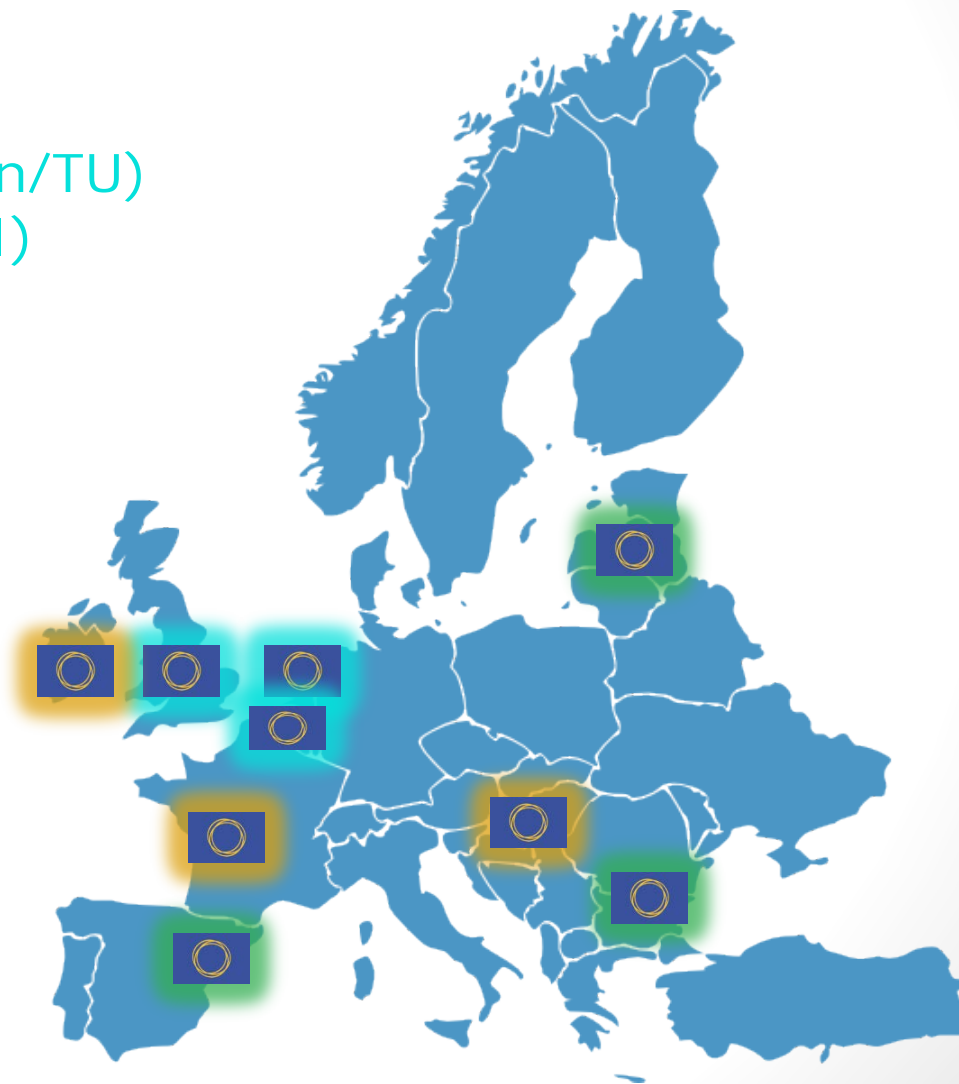
- UK (Circles-UK)
- NL (Avans/Probation/TU)
- Belgium (CAW/DJBI)

Starting countries:

- Latvia (Probation)
- Catalonia (Prison system)
- Bulgaria (NGO)

Orienting countries:

- Ireland (Probation)
- France (Treatment centre)
- Hungary (NGO)



Research Group:

Nottingham University:

Birgit Vollm, Sue Brown, Laurie Hare Duke

Tilburg University:

Stefan Bogaerts

Avans University:

Bas Vogelvang, Mechtild Hoing, Romulus Petrina

University of Barcelona:

Antonio Andres Pueyo; Nina Frerich

University of Latvia:

Liga Rasnaca, Anvars Zavackis

IGA Bulgaria:

Andrey Momchilov



Research in Circles4EU:

- Shared research agenda
- National feasibility/adaptation studies
- Websurvey on community support
- Best practices
- Proces-evaluations of starting countries
- Format for core member database
- Research proposals
- Effectiveness study designs



Shared research agenda

1. Database of existing research on OSA
2. Feasibility study of RCT's in combination with process evaluation
3. Longitudinal desistance study (qualitative & quantitative) & Evaluation of quality of risk assessment by volunteers (DRR)
4. Impact of Cosa on society
5. Impact of CoSA on victims



Adaptation studies: assessment of the national context

- Sex offenders: numbers, characteristics
- Specific sex offender legislation: notification; conditional release
- Sex offender treatment
- Sex offender management in the community: infrastructure, rules and regulations, collaboration and cooperation
- Professional support for COSA
- Volunteering climate
- Community reactions



“No go” criteria:

- The problem of sexual violence is denied by the government
- There is very little or no chance to find sustained financial support for Circle projects
- There is very little or no professional expertise available in sex offender treatment
- There is no structured risk assessment available to circle projects and circle staff members are not competent to apply structured risk assessment by themselves
- There are no legal possibilities for mandated supervision of sex offenders
- There are no professional institutions that are involved in sex offender rehabilitation
- The project organisation has no legal status and is not involved in the local network of sex offender aftercare
- There is no willingness to comply to the basic quality standards of COSA (the code of practice)
- There is no likely engagement of citizens in some form of non-paid activities for community development or community justice
- There is no willingness to cooperate with other Circle Projects in an international framework



National adaptation & feasibility studies

Starting countries:

- Latvia
- Catalonia
- Bulgaria

Orienting countries:

- Ireland
- France
- Hungary





Websurvey

Mechtild Höing, Romulus Petrina, Birgit Völlm,
Laurie Hare Duke, Bas Vogelvang & many others

- Knowledge about sex offenders
- Community notification needs
- Attitudes towards
 - sex offenders (CATSO, Church et al.2008)
 - sex offender treatment (ATTSO, Wnuk et al. 2006)
 - sex offender rehabilitation (PATSOR, Rogers et al. 2011)
- CoSA awareness
- Intentions to volunteer
- Support for CoSA volunteers
- Attitudes towards volunteer work with sex offenders
- N=200 per country; webpanels
- Report & article in preparation



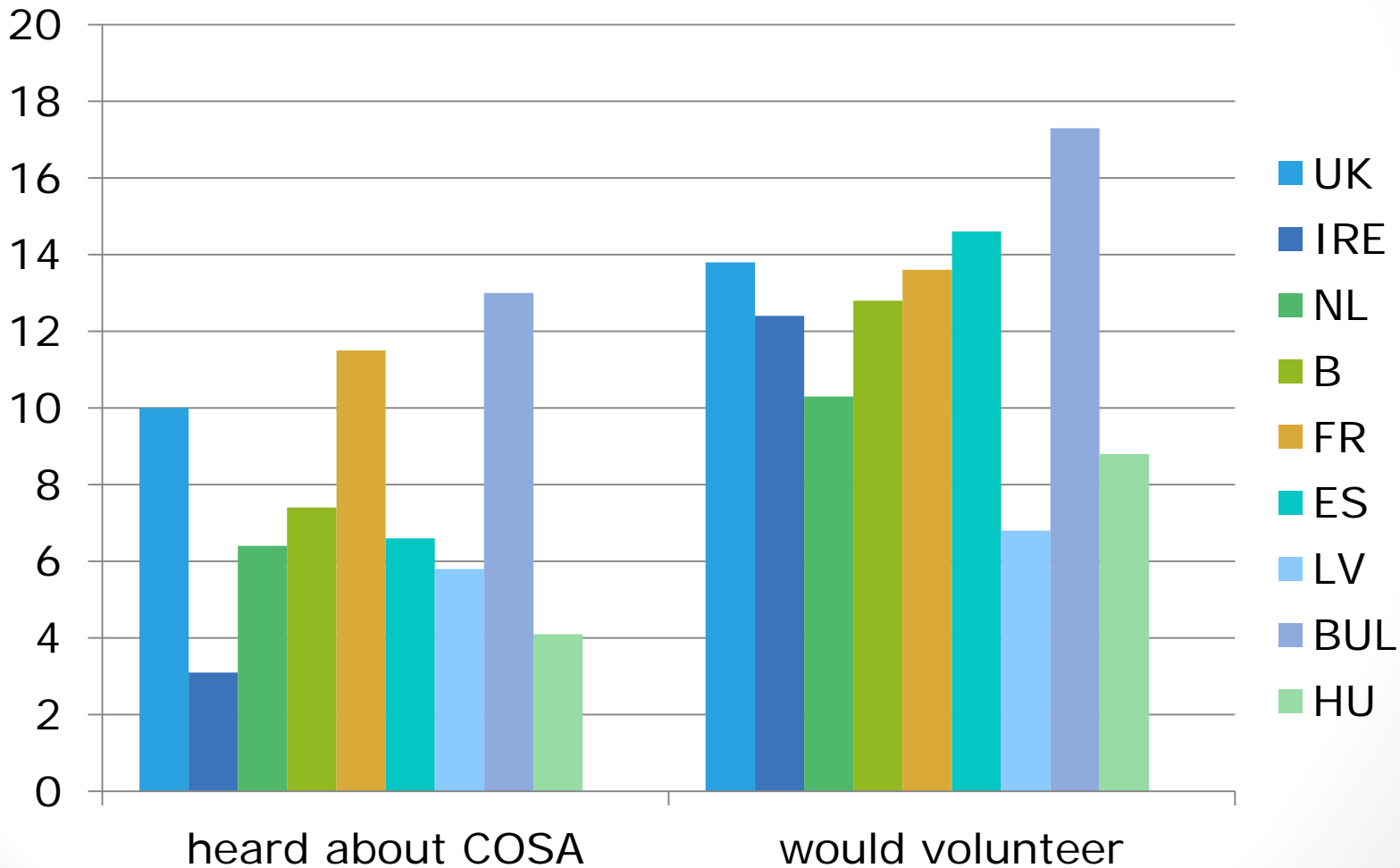
Some results

- Low number of clear misperceptions (< 22%)
- Notification needs vary by country (45-75%)
- Negative attitudes, but not extreme
- Pessimism about capacity to change is universal
- Yet: high support for mandatory treatment
- High support for CoSA volunteers
- National differences : UK ← → NL/B/H
- Lower education → more negative attitudes
- Victims- > more negative attitudes, more positive about CoSA

Manuscript in preparation



CoSA potential: % of pop.



Code of practice

Susan Brown, Birgit Völlm, Nottingham University

Circles4EU Definitions and Standards



created through a process of consultation amongst members of the Circles4EU network.

www.circles4.eu





Guiding principles:

- **Safety** – We work towards the objective of no more victims
- **Responsibility** – Holding individuals and organisations to account for their actions
- **Inclusiveness** – Managing risk through inclusion not exclusion
- **Community Involvement** – Recognizing the importance of community involvement
- **Growth and Learning** – Recognizing that with necessary support and challenge, people have the ability to grow, learn and change their behavior
- **Individuality and Respect** – Treating people with humanity and respect





Operating principles:

- **Formal processes**
 - selection and training of volunteers
 - selection and training of circle coordinators
 - recruitment of outer circle members
 - recruitment of core members
- **Formal exit strategy**
 - for core members
 - for volunteers
- **Formal procedure**
 - for recidivism

More detailed description of procedures, best practices and available tools: European Handbook



Best practices

Romulus Petrina, Mechtild Höing, Avans University
Audrey Alards, Dutch Probation



Blog via Circles4EU website

Personal communication during study and
accountability seminars (3)

E-mail





Process evaluations

“Can Circles be operated as intended?”

No written reports yet;

Communications at study and accountability seminars

- Latvia
- Bulgaria
- Spain





Circles Database

Nottingham University

- Template for routine data collection
- Anonymized database
- Separate datacollection by country, merging during projects only
- Achieved through discussion in research group

Example items:

- Socio-Demographics
- Risk (Static 99R)
- Disability
- Mental health problems
- Offence history
- Detention history
- Treatment history
- Start/End of circle: type of ending
- Recidivism (different types)
- Sociodemographics



European Handbook

Revision based on project results

Theoretical background and COSA intervention model

Implementation guide

Guide on tools and materials (the paperwork)

Evaluation guide (monitoring of quality & outcome)

Research section:

- Overview existing research
- Stepped research plan for project evaluation
- Basic information for lay-researchers



Research designs & proposals

Tilburg University

Feasibility of RCT's

Longitudinal desistance study

Impact on victims





Concluding

- Cirles4EU research:
 - indispensable for practice development
 - structured careful implementation
 - supported communication
 - gives credibility

How to maintain high level of quality control?

- Sustainability:
 - CEP is to adopt Circles EU Network



Questions to the audience:

How should the network improve the evidence base for circles?

How would you study CoSA effectiveness?

Is less recidivism all that needs to be proven, or does community peace also count as “ effect” ?



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