

## COST Action IS1106 Working group 3

### Practising offender supervision: The Netherlands

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#### Introduction

In The Netherlands three organisations are responsible for probation work: the Dutch Probation Service (Reclassering Nederland, **RN**, 64% of probation work), the Social Rehabilitation for Addicted Offenders (Stichting Verslavingsreclassering GGZ, **SVG**, 28% of probation work) and the probation division of the Salvation Army (Leger des Heils, Jeugdzorg & Reclassering, **LJ&R**, 8% of probation work). These organisations work together intensively. Most policy, methods and instruments are (mandatory) applied by all three. Main differences are the offender population: the SVG focuses on addicted offenders, the LJ&R on homeless and multi-problem offenders, and RN on all other offenders. The organizational culture and mission of the three organizations also differs. RN focuses in its mission on reducing recidivism and improving the safety of society, SVG focuses on restraining individual and social damage, and LJ&R focuses on rehabilitation "because everybody deserves a place in society" (De Jonge, 2011). Aftercare for prisoners is a responsibility for the municipalities. However, some municipalities make use of the probation services to do the actual rehabilitation work.

Organisational feature	The Netherlands
Maturity of main probation organisation (when established)	In 1823 probation started as 'Nederlandsch Genootschap tot Zedelijke Verbetering der Gevangenen' [Dutch assembly of moral Improvement of Prisoners]
Size of main probation organisation (number of practitioners employed)	RN: about 2000 employees SVG: about 1000 LJ&R: about 300 employees
Organisational Context	Three independent organizations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- RN: national organization, with 10 regions</li><li>- SVG: 11 Regional organizations, represented at the national level by a central office</li><li>- LJ&amp;R: national organization, with 7 regions</li></ul>
Agency type	Law enforcement
Leadership	RN: Local managers responsible to general director RN. SVG: Local managers responsible to general director of local addiction health care. National director represents

	local management at a national level. LJ&R: Local managers responsible to general director of Salvation Army. National director represents local management at a national level.
Funding	Ministry of Justice.  Small amount of work funded by local government (municipalities)
Inspection	Inspectorate for Implementation of Sanctions
Status of practitioners	Employees of three probation organisations
Professional education	Diverse: diploma in social work, university degree in criminology or psychology etc.

*About the review*

In the review below, we summarize recent empirical research about practising offender supervision in The Netherlands on six theme's:

1. The roles, characteristics, recruitment and training of key actors in the delivery of offender supervision.
2. Interactions and relationships between key actors in the delivery of offender supervision and other relevant professionals.
3. The delivery/practice/performance of offender supervision.
4. The role of tools and technologies in the delivery of OS.
5. The management, supervision and/or regulation of practitioners and their practice.
6. Reflections / contextual issues

Ongoing research is discussed in the descriptions of the different theme's. We conclude with a short reflection about research on practising supervision in the Netherlands.

The review is limited to studies about adults. Studies on community sentences have not yet been addressed, we will do this in the next version.

1. The roles, characteristics, recruitment and training of key actors in the delivery of offender supervision [who may be located in public, private and/or third sector organisations; 'characteristics' could include things like skills, values etc.]

In The Netherlands, very little research is available about the roles, characteristics, recruitment and training of probation officers. About recruitment and training, no actual research was found. In ongoing research of **Bosker and Menger** of the University of Applied Sciences Utrecht (described in paragraph 3), data on the educational background and working experience of probation officers has been collected, using a survey that has been sent to a selection of probation officers. Results are expected in 2013.

A few years ago, a task specialisation was implemented in probation, separating advise and offender supervision. Shortly after the implementation, **Vos et. al.** 2007 (management consultants) studied how task specialisation was experienced by probation officers by interviewing them. In general, most probation officers from RN and SVG were positive about the specialisation and probation officers of LJ&R were negative about it. Positive results probation officers mentioned were: the improvement of the quality of the separate tasks because probation officers can focus, standardize their way of working and specialize peer discussions; task specialisation facilitates the organisation of probation work; supervision officers got more time for their cases. Negative results that were mentioned: loss of expertise, difficulty in building a working alliance, the workload of probation officers with advising tasks increased. Some probation officers also thought task specialisation led to a deterioration of service and flexibility in organising the work. It was found that task specialisation leads to a time gap between advise and supervision. Offenders temporary are out of sight of the probation service, with the risk of losing them (Vos et. Al., 2007). The effects on longer term have not been studied yet.

**Butter and Hermans (2012)** of the University of Applied Sciences Utrecht studied the impact of experienced professionalism on professional culture in probation, using a questionnaire that had been sent to probation officers who attended a conference from the professorship of Anneke Menger of the University of Applied Sciences in 2011 (N = 128, 76% response). They concluded that work engagement of probation officers was influenced by the extend humanistic values play a role in the perception of their work, by the extend probation officers are embedded and supported in their actual working organisation, and to a small extend by the years of working experience. They also found that the average scores for professional ethos and professional facilitation are rather low.

**Krechtig & Donker (in press)** of the University of Applied Sciences Utrecht conducted a study on the moral basis of probation work. Probation officers of the LJ&R organization were interviewed about their perception of core values of their work, perceived dilemma's or tension between values. Second part of the study focused on how and when probation officers tend to moralize in their work. This study will be extended to the other two probation organizations. Results of this first study are going to be published December 2012.

Graaf and Veldhuizen, students of the Avans University of Applied Science Den Bosch, have studied whether relatives of the offender (partner, family) can have a role in offender supervision. Based on

interviews with relatives, probation officers and professionals in forensic organizations that do work with relatives, they conclude that the probation services should make more use of relatives, both in supporting and monitoring the offender (**Graaf & Veldhuizen, 2009**). This advice has not been put to practice.

2. Interactions and relationships between key actors in the delivery of offender supervision and other relevant professionals [e.g. sentencers; police; social workers etc.]

The interaction between key actors in the delivery of offender supervisions and other relevant professionals is studied relatively often and from different perspectives in the Netherlands. Most of this research is initiated by the Ministry of Justice.

#### *Probation and sentencers*

The Inspectorate for Implementation of Sanctions studied the cooperation between public prosecutors offices and the probation service regarding offender supervision, including community sentences (**Inspectie voor de Sanctietoepassing, 2006**). The researchers interviewed practitioners and managers of the probation service and public prosecutor's office, observed four coordination meetings between the probation service and public prosecutor's office, and studied documents. Cooperation is organized both on a policy level about cooperation in general and between practitioners about specific cases.

Regarding community sentences, the probation service is found to be well informed by the public prosecutors offices. Problematic are cases without an advice report prior to the sentence. Because of a lack of information about the case, it can be difficult to make the right match between an offender and a specific place or project to work, or the offender may not be able to perform the community sentence because of a mental illness or physical disability. Although the inspectorate concludes that the completion messages of the probation service need improvement, public prosecutors are content with the contents of the messages. Regarding supervision, the level of communication between the probation service and public prosecutors offices differs per region. Completion messages from the probation service about the compliance of conditions is considered sufficient by most public prosecutors. However, the Inspectorate thinks the supervision on the execution of the conditions should be improved because there is no control on the probation service whether conditions are actually executed.

In 2006, so called *reclasseringsbalies* (probation bars) were implemented at the prosecutor's office in order to function as a central contact point for organizations who instruct the probation to deliver services, improve quality, and to divide the work between the three probation services according to agreed criteria. In an evaluation study based on interviews with professionals (probation officers, public prosecutors, management and administration) **Vos et. al. (2007)** (consultants) concluded that the

probation bars functioned as a centre of inflow for all probation tasks. However, stakeholders kept on focusing on administrative processes of their own organization. Only a few locations succeeded in improving quality of probation work. The established criteria to divide the probation work were applied differently. Some region's used extra criteria, and the processes used to divide the work differed per region.

Quick sentencing is one of the priorities of the Dutch Ministry of Justice. In five pilots, initiated by the public prosecutor's office, policy about selection and sentencing is developed. Smart cooperation between relevant judicial organizations is one of the means to enlarge speed. **Drost and Jongebreur (2012)**, working as management consultants, studied the role of the probation service in these pilots by interviewing probation officers. Probation officers screen all cases on paper in order to advise the public prosecutor which cases need further assessment by probation in order to develop an intervention plan. The evaluation resulted in an advice about the way probation tasks should be financed.

**Van Wingerden and colleagues (2011)** of the University of Leiden examined the extent to which conclusions about the risk of recidivism in pre-sentence reports of the probation service influenced the severity of the sentence. Based on regression analyses of data of 26,000 offenders, they conclude that there is no correlation between the risk of recidivism that was reported and the severity of the sentence. In additional interviews with judges, the judges stated that the risk of recidivism is relevant for the sentence, but that they make up their own mind about this risk, and they do not necessarily follow the assessment of the probation officer.

#### *Probation and prison service*

To improve the effectiveness of prison sentences, a cooperation model was implemented in the beginning of this century. For prisoners with a prison sentence of at least four months, the probation service developed a sentence plan in cooperation with the prison service. Based on this plan, interventions were delivered in prison. This cooperation model was evaluated by **Bostelen and colleagues** (management consultants). They used different research methods: a survey, interviews and workshops with practitioners, a desktop research of relevant documents, and participation at relevant meetings. Material was gathered in three periods: February 2004 – April 2004, September 2004 – October 2004 and December 2004 – January 2005.

They found that although most practitioners committed themselves to the model, their believe in a successful implementation decreased over time. The complexity of the model, a lack of integration of information systems (ICT), the large gap between policy makers responsible for the development of the model and the actual practitioners, and the changing context of both prison and probation service worked against a smooth working relationship (Bostelen et.al. 2005). Based on their evaluation the cooperation model was simplified.

### *Probation and forensic hospitals*

The Dutch penal system contains a specific measure for mentally ill offenders, the TBS-measure, a form of forced clinical treatment in a closed setting. When the risk of recidivism and harm are reduced to an acceptable level, conditional release under supervision is possible. The probation service is responsible for the supervision. To increase the number of conditional releases and reduce the number of violent incidents of former TBS-patients, a new way of supervision was created, the Forensic Psychiatric Supervision (FPT) involving more intensified working together between the forensic hospital and the probation service. The plan and process of FPT has been evaluated (**Harte et al., 2010**) from the Free University Amsterdam.

The plan evaluation contained a comparison of the FPT-plan and literature on effectiveness of offender supervision and cooperation. This comparison showed that reducing reoffending might be realized by the plan because of its focus on conservation of knowledge about the patient, early identification, continuity, gradual reduction of supervision and more forensic psychiatric expertise of the professionals. Less positive conclusions were made about the other goal, more outflow (Harte et al., 2010). The implementation process evaluation was done by interviewing policy makers and professionals and by studying patient files. Harte et al. (2010) concluded that FPT improved cooperation between forensic hospitals and the probation service, but working relations with other relevant organizations stayed behind.

Another study of **Heij and Trapman (2011)** of the University of Applied Sciences Utrecht, based on interviews with professionals of both forensic hospitals and the probation service, also concluded that FPT improved the working relations between forensic hospitals and the probation service, which is a condition for the gradual reintegration of offenders with a TBS-measure.

### *Probation and local cooperation in the community*

At a local level, cooperation between different Judicial organizations (public prosecutors, probation, police), municipalities and welfare organizations is realized in so-called safety houses. Working together in a specific location, complex and priority cases are discussed and sentence- and supervision plans are developed in cooperation.

**Rovers (2011)**, a self-employed researcher, reviewed all 18 Dutch studies about safety houses on several themes. The research methods in most studies were a combination of (some) of the following methods: document search, interviews, observations, case studies, expert meetings, surveys. When focusing on effects, studies often are limited in scope and methodological weak. Rovers did not find reliable and valid studies about the effects of safety houses.

There is strong evidence that safety houses lead to more cooperation and coherence in interventions. There is some weak support for other positive consequences of the cooperation in safety houses: better signaling of problems and earlier intervention, volumes realized are larger, decrease of criminogenic needs and therefore decrease of recidivism, improvement of well-being of offenders. Some studies

mention positive cost-benefit results, though questions are raised of the methodology used. No prove is found for shortening turnaround.

Safety houses also suffer a lot of problems: information sharing about cases is insufficient, alignment with mother organizations is often problematic, coordination and management of safety houses, often relevant organizations are missing, not enough aftercare, goals of the safety houses are not defined (smart enough), internal communication. Often studies focus on the evaluation of processes and organization.

### *Aftercare*

Aftercare for mature prisoners is primary a responsibility for the prison service and municipalities. Probation only has a formal role when the prison sentence is followed by a condition release or sentence. Focus of the aftercare by prison service and municipalities is on the arrangement of basic needs: housing, income, work, insurances, identity license. In an evaluation of the cooperation of the prison service and municipalities, conducted by the project leaders and based on interviews, **Van Duijvenbooden and Pattje (2010)** emphasize the importance of imprisonment in the region where offenders will reintegrate. This facilitates the cooperation between the prison and the municipality and makes it easier to prepare the return to society while the offender is still in prison. They also conclude that the exchange of necessary information should be improved on both sides.

**Moerings and colleagues** of the University of Leiden studied the effectiveness of the so-called Exodus houses, a sort of halfway houses for ex-prisoners with a focus on living, work, relationships and meaning (not a part of probation but often part of supervision plans). The first results of this study indicate that Exodus does not seem to have a well described method. Nevertheless, they do seem to be rather successful in supporting ex-prisoners to find a house, supporting them in (re)building positive relations. They seem to be less effective in supporting offenders to find a job and supporting offenders to give meaning to their life (Vijfhuize & Moerings, 2005).

A program of voluntary aftercare was designed for juveniles that had been given the PIJ-measure (*Plaatsing in Justitiële Jeugdinrichting*), a youth-version of the TBS-measure for mentally ill offenders, including forced clinical treatment in a closed setting. Until a modification of the penal law in July 2011, aftercare was not organized for this group. Therefore, the three Dutch probation services organized a voluntary aftercare program.

**Homburg and colleagues (2010)**, working at a research and advise company, evaluated this aftercare programme. Based on file research, interviews with young offenders and with professionals of municipalities and the Council for Youth Protection, Homburg et. al. conclude that probation officers have difficulty in motivating the young offenders to cooperate in the aftercare phase, and aftercare is dominated by organizing practical affairs whereas helping offenders and continuation of the change process that was started in the institution gets too little attention. On

the other hand, because the youngsters are primary extrinsic motivated, and are most interested in practical aid, the choices probation officers make are understandable. The researchers conclude that the way aftercare gets form is influenced by the trajectory ahead, in the institution and during conditional leave.

A study on the prediction of acceptance of voluntary aftercare was conducted by **Donker & De Bakker (2012)** of the University of Applied Sciences Leiden. This study encompassed all juveniles of whom the PIJ-measure was terminated in 2008, 2009 and 2010 (N=494). Family related factors like neglect and maltreatment were found to be significant predictors of acceptance of aftercare, increasing the chance of acceptance about three times. It was also found that the chance that aftercare was accepted increased threefold when the LJ&R organization presented the offer, compared to an offer by the RN, the largest organization. However, moderation analyses showed that this effect was influenced by the safety climate of the juvenile institutions where juveniles had been living during the year prior to termination of their PIJ-measure. The effect was found for those who had been living in seriously unsafe institutions, it was smaller for medium unsafe institutions and the effect was not present for the relatively positive and safe institutions (background info: Institutions were ranked into three categories from a relatively safe living, working and treatment climate, to a medium unsafe and even seriously unsafe category of institutions, based on a categorization made by the inspection organization for juveniles in 2007). How this moderated effect best be explained will hopefully be studied in the nearby future.

3. The delivery/practice/performance of offender supervision [this will include specific aspects of 'offender supervision' such as assessment processes, face to face supervision of individual offenders, group work, enforcement etc.; but it should also include any studies of 'practice cultures' more generally]

### *Risk assessment and intervention planning*

Since 2004 probation officers work with tools for risk assessment in order to write pre-sentence reports and formulate intervention plans. Some studies describe the effects of the use of these instruments on the quality of probation work. In an ongoing phd-research, **Bosker et. al.** (in press, a) of the University of Applied Sciences Utrecht study the quality of intervention plans of probation officers using a tool for structured risk assessment. In order to measure the agreement between probation officers about intervention plans, they asked 44 probation officers to write an intervention plan about the same four cases in which the risk and needs assessment was given. Described decisions about different domains in the intervention plans were clustered to a small set of possible options, and agreement was measured using pairwise Cohen's Kappa. Results showed that the overall agreement about the intervention plan is poor. Probation officers agreed fairly about the advice on the sanction, conditions, criminogenic needs to be addressed, and programs. On all other domains (instructions, control, intensity of supervision, and goals), agreement is poor. It was also studied if experienced probation

officers have better agreement about the intervention plan than inexperienced officers. The results showed that experience of the probation officers did not influence the agreement about the intervention plans substantially.

In another study, **Bosker et al.** (in press, b) studied the quality of the intervention plans using seven quality criteria that are based on literature about effective practice. An analysis of 300 intervention plans from the Dutch probation service showed that the match between the assessed criminogenic needs and the goals and interventions in the intervention plan is fairly low. It was also found that the so-called risk principle is not fully applied by probation officers. The correlation between the intensity of the plan and the risk of recidivism is significant but low. Comparing the intervention plans with self reports of the offenders, it was found that personal goals that the offender values are often not taken fully into account, especially offender goals about basic needs and social relationships. It was concluded that the intervention plans have a strong focus on improving human capital, while improving social capital and basic needs often is not part of the intervention plans, even if they were assessed as dynamic criminogenic needs.

In ongoing research **Bosker, Witteman and Hermanns** study the effects of intervention plan on the way supervision plans are formulated and performed, and on the effectiveness of supervision in terms of compliance, goal attainment and recidivism. They also study the effect of structuring the decision making about intervention plans. Results are expected in 2013 and 2014.

In a pilot the B-Safer, used to assess the risk of spousal assault, has been tested for use by the Dutch probation service. **Thijssen and De Ruiter (2010)** of the University of Maastricht used the data of this pilot (N = 146) to examine the relationship between the subtypes of spousal assaulters that can be identified with the B-Safer and advises of the probation officers to the court. Four subtypes of assaulters were identified: family-only, generally violent/antisocial, low-level antisocial, and psychopathology. Ten possible advises were identified, varying from a behavioural program or treatment to a community sentence or prison sentence (more than one advise can be given in a specific case). Using ANOVA and MANOVA analyses, Thijssen and De Ruiter found that the extent to which the advises match the risk profiles and risk factors is limited. However, they did find a strong relationship between the region of the probation officer and the advise they give. They conclude that advises of probation officers are mainly influenced by current opinions and available interventions in a specific location.

#### *Pre-sentence reports / Advise*

In 2009, standardized formats for presentence reports and short advises were introduced. The probation service studied how these reports were evaluated both by the public prosecutors (using a survey that was linked to specific reports) and by probation officers (evaluating reports of colleagues based on a fixed set of quality criteria). The public prosecutors turned out to be positive about the reports. They think the reports are clear, relevant and concrete. However, they would like to be better informed about whether the proposed interventions are enforceable. It was also found that

improvements should be made on timelines, answering specific questions of the public prosecutors and substantiate when advises do not match with the risk and needs assessment. Probation officers are more critical about the reports (**Stegeman, 2011**).

### *Face to face supervision*

**The Working Alliance study (Anneke Menger & Andrea Donker** of the University of Applied Sciences Utrecht). Working alliance is expected to be a key factor in the effectiveness of probation work, similar to the central role of therapeutic alliance in the effectiveness of psychotherapy. Establishing a qualitatively solid working alliance requires, however, a different approach when working with mandatory clients. Probation officers have to guide and control their clients at the same time. This hybrid or dual role creates a different dynamic than created in a voluntary psychotherapeutic setting.

The study has two aims:

1. The development of a working alliance measurement instrument for the probation context.
2. Gaining insight in characteristics and development of the working alliance between probation officers and offenders.

Ad 1. (researchers are **Menger, Donker, de Bakker, Hoogink**) An instrument is developed and validated using a sample of approximately 300 dyads of probation officers and offenders of all three probation organizations. These dyads are followed through the two year period of the supervision trajectory in a longitudinal study. Working alliance and some (potentially convergent) constructs (motivation, changeability perception) are measured at the start of probation (before the 5<sup>th</sup> contact) and again 6 months later. Third and fourth measurement waves are anticipated for 1 year after the start and 2 years after the start. Also all clients who drop out preliminary will be followed up.

Ad2. (researchers are **Menger, Degener, Sturm, Donker**) In order to gain insight in characteristics of working alliance, this study uses a multimodal research design, combining the longitudinal data collection described above with a qualitative study of (group and individual) interviews about their views and thoughts and experiences with regard to the nature and characteristics of working alliance.

The first measurement wave will be completed January 2013. The second measurement wave has just started in fall 2012. First English publications are expected in 2013.

Wrap around care principles in the probation context (**Butter, Casteleijn, de Croes, Heij & Menger** of the University of Applied Sciences Utrecht). In this study, the usability of the principles of the wrap around methodology are being studied in a participatory way (action study method). One

principle concerns a more central role of the client in determining a plan of action (in this case offender under probation supervision). Another principle concerns organizing support around the client, taking the client and his or her needs as the starting point. The study is conducted in the SVG organization and will be published in 2013.

A study on potential moderator variables of the effect on recidivism after probation supervision is conducted in a thesis research project by **W. Lamet** of the Free University Amsterdam. Her study is part of a large study on detention effects on several life domains. In this study several registration data is combined, data from the probation organizations, data from the prosecutor's office, and also data from a survey among probation workers. This study is ongoing.

**Abraham and colleagues (2007)**, working at a research and consultancy firm, studied how probation officers perform in one-to-one supervision and tried to find factors that contribute to effective offender supervision. The results are based on a review of relevant literature, a quantitative analyses of 8,354 supervisions that were closed in 2004, thorough analyses of 106 cases, 16 interviews with professionals and 12 interviews with (ex)clients of the probation service. Abraham et. al. concluded that the differences between supervisions are substantial. Probation policy about the frequency of contact is not realized in practice, and small offences during supervision are not always reported. In cases of breach, the public prosecutor's office often does not inform the probation service about the continuation. The researchers also conclude that the probation service does not have a clear program theory about supervision. About the effectiveness of supervision, Abraham and colleagues report that 12% of the supervisions do not start because contact with the offender is not possible. Another 26% of the supervisions end because of non compliance, in 1/3 because of a new offence. More than half of the parolees do not follow a behavioural program. This research did not result in concrete conclusions about the effectiveness of offender supervision.

Penitary programs are introduced to execute the last part of the prison sentence in the community with supervision by the probation service. **Balogh and Jans (2009)**, working at a research and consultancy firm, evaluated whether this type of supervision is performed according to the quality criteria described in policy, by studying 150 files and interviewing 31 professionals. They conclude that the advises that precede the supervision and describe the way the supervision will be filled in, match the quality criteria. Offenders do work the required 26 hours a week. However, probation officers often do not see the offenders at least once a week, as is required according to policy. Frequency is lower because they do not think it is necessary to see the offender every week (for example in cases of low risk) or because of a lack of time for the probation officer. Probation officers also report having difficulty in organizing control on drugs or alcohol use.

In 2008 a new law was implemented that reintroduced the conditional release of prisoners. This new type of offender supervision was evaluated by **Flight and colleagues** (working at a research and consultancy firm). They performed a plan evaluation by studying documents and interviewing 6

respondents who developed the law, and a process evaluation by studying the files of conditional releases and interviewing 31 professionals of different organizations. Flight et. al. conclude that only 2.1% of offenders that left prison in 2010 are qualified for conditional release. The main reason for this low percentage is that only 7% of the prisoners have a prison sentence of one year or more, and a lot of prisoners have a combined prison sentence and conditional prison sentence. So most prisoners are excluded from conditionals release. About 5% of the prisoners that have a conditional release recidivated and 33% violated conditions during conditional release. In cases of violation, probation and prison service often do not agree about the desired consequence. Probation service often wants to give the prisoner a second chance while probation service doesn't. Judges decide differently on violations of conditions and recidivism. Recidivism more often leads to revocation of the release (Flight et. al. 2011).

Based on literature research and interviews with probation officers, partner organizations and offenders, **Grandia and colleagues (2010)** of the Free University Amsterdam evaluated whether probation policy and instruments for offender supervision were suitable for young adult offenders (18 to 25 years). They ascertain a lack of specific research and knowledge about effective interventions and supervision for young adult offenders. 36% of the supervisions concern young offenders. The percentage of breach is relatively high (24% for young offenders, 16% for older offenders). This percentage is even higher for young offenders with other ethnic backgrounds. Probation officers say their practice is different with young offenders: more outreaching, intensive, and with more focus on family, friends and school. However, information from case files does not show a higher frequency in contacts. In some locations, specific units for young offenders are introduced. The advantage is exchange of knowledge between probation officers, but does not in itself lead to better cooperation with other organizations.

The scientific documentation and research centre of the Ministry of Security and Justice (WODC, researchers are **Wartna, Zebel, Alberda**) has started research into the recidivism of several groups who were under supervision of probation organizations. They focus on recidivism after community service and after one to one supervision. The study aims at determining the predictability and more specifically the predictive value of some static (judicial history, sex, age) and dynamic (housing, work, attitude towards criminal activities) variables. First publications are expected in 2013.

In order to improve supervision for young adult offenders, the Dutch Probation Service initiated four pilots. One of the aims of these pilots was to improve the education or working situation of these offenders. **Krechtig and Heij (2010)** of the University of Applied Sciences Utrecht evaluated the effects of the innovation. They conclude that due to the pilot, probation officers have a stronger focus on problems concerning education or work, they have more knowledge about regulations and different intervention options, and the cooperation with organizations in the field of education and work has been improved. Based on this study, a manual is developed for probation officers to support them in intervening in offender needs concerning education or work.

### *Ethnic minorities*

A relatively large part of the probationers are first or second generation immigrants. **Boone (2002)**, working at the University of Utrecht, studied how probation officers work with clients from ethnic minority groups, what specific problems they encounter and what solutions they have found. Boone concluded that one of the largest problems seems to be language. Language problems makes communication difficult and can lead to exclusion from interventions, whereas using an interpreter often is not possible. Secondly, the fact that some ethnic minorities (Moroccans and Antilleans) relatively often deny the offence makes working with these groups more difficult because probation officers consider the offence as the starting point for supervision. For example, in pre-sentence reports, probation officers often withhold from advising the court when the suspect denies the offence. A third problem is accessibility: ethnic minorities more often do not comply to appointments. Finally, probation officers have difficulty in motivating offenders for supervision or interventions when they legitimize their offence to values that belong to their cultural background. Some probation officers encounter these problems by working more outreaching, involve family members of the offender or take more time to motivate offenders for interventions or talk about culture offered values.

### *Offenders with intellectual disabilities*

Initiated by the Dutch Probation Service, **Van den Braak and De Jong (2010)** (working at a research and consultancy firm) studied the way probation officers work with offenders with intellectual disabilities. Based on interviews with 14 probation officers, they conclude that working with these offenders takes more time, which is not always available in daily practice. Not only do these offenders need more practical support, but also the intensity of working with the informal (family) and formal (organizations that offer treatment or support) network of these clients is higher. Often, clients have to wait too long before they get the support or intervention they need. Another problem a lot of probation officers mention is the difficulty of recognizing an intellectual disability because these offenders often present themselves as competent and streetwise (see also paragraph 4).

### *Community sentence*

(We will add studies about community sentences in the next version. )

Relevant studies:

- Lünemann, K. Beijers, G., Wentink, M. (2005). Werkstraffen: succes verzekerd? Succes- en faalfactoren bij werkstraffen van meerderjarigen. Den Haag: WODC.
- Raad voor de Strafrechtstoepassing en Jeugdbescherming (2005). De tenuitvoerlegging van werkstraffen. Den Haag: RSJ.
- proefschrift Van Kalmthout over werkstraf uit 2001

4. The role of tools and technologies in the delivery of OS [e.g. manuals; programmes; assessment instruments – what is known about how these are used; their impact on discretion etc.]

*Risk and needs assessment*

Most research on risk and needs assessment in the Netherlands regards assessment tools that are used in forensic psychiatry or for young offenders. These studies are not reviewed here. The probation service for adults uses 4 different assessment tools: RISC, QuickScan, B-Safer and Static-99. Most research is available about RISC, the assessment tool that was introduced in 2004 and is based on OASys.

The psychometric qualities of RISC have been studied by Van der Knaap and colleagues of the research centre of the Ministry of Justice (**Van der Knaap et. al. 2007; Van der Knaap et. al. 2010**). In three sub-studies, the inter-rater reliability, factor structure, internal consistency and concurrent validity were studied. In order to study inter-rater reliability, 75 client were assessed by two probation officers, independently. Agreement between probation officers with regard to the items and sections was moderate to substantial, agreement regarding the risk of recidivism was substantial. Agreement between probation officers was poorer about items that are less factual, especially in the sections cognitive skills and attitudes. Factor structure and internal consistency have been studied on the basis of 11,666 assessments that had been carried out between November 2004 and may 2006. In general, the RISC sections proved to be adequate scales. Improvement were needed for the sections on relationships and alcohol abuse.

The concurrent validity of RISC has been studied by comparing (parts of) RISC with other instruments, using correlations: Statrec, a static risk assessment tool, was used to measure the concurrent validity of the risk of recidivism, three personality questionnaires were used to measure concurrent validity of the sections about emotional well-being, cognitive behaviour and attitudes (**Van der Knaap et. al. 2007**). Concurrent validity of the RISC total score that expresses the risk of recidivism, turned out to be fairly good with moderate correlations. The same conclusion was found for the sections emotional well-being and cognitive behaviour. The section attitudes however, correlation with relevant parts of the personality questionnaires was low. Therefore, it was questioned whether the items in the section attitudes actually assess offenders attitudes towards other people, society and criminal behaviour.

The predictive validity of RISC was studied in 2009 (**Van der Knaap et. al. 2009**). Based on a database of 16,329 assessments, it was concluded that the predictive validity of RISC assessing general recidivism was acceptable (AUC = .70). Specific recidivism such as violent or sexual recidivism, cannot be predicted with RISC. Van der Knaap and colleagues also studied the predictive validity for specific offender groups. It turned out that the predictive validity is comparable to that of the total group for most subgroups (male – female, younger – older offenders, offenders who committed (very) serious crimes, sex offenders, violent offenders). However, RISC cannot predict general recidivism for prolific offenders and first offenders. Looking at the sections, the strongest contribution to the prediction of recidivism is made by history of criminal behavior / actual offence, relationships with friends, alcohol abuse, education and work, and drug abuse. Based on the studies of Van der Knaap and colleagues,

improvements have been made to the assessment tool. The new version has not been implemented yet, so the extent to which these changes improve the psychometric qualities and predictive validity, is a question that remains to be answered in the future.

**Hildebrand et. al.**(2012) studied the possibility to predict non-compliance with RISC. Based on a set of RISC assessments of 14,363 male probationers under supervision, and using regression analyses, they found that a subset of 17 items was sufficient to predict non-compliance with sufficient predictive validity (AUC = 0,73).

The QuickScan, a short risk assessment tool that is used to assess the risk of recidivism and the responsivity based on some static and some dynamic items, has only been studied in a pilot with a focus on the usability of the instrument (**Von Bergh et. al. (2006)**). An evaluation survey was connected to every QuickScan applied in the pilot (N = 136). This information was supplemented with group interviews and some telephonic interviews with probation officers. In a majority of the cases, probation officers indicate they can assess the risk of recidivism and responsivity with the QuickScan. Probation officers think the QuickScan is a usable tool when used in the appropriate cases and situations. Critique concerns the temporary ICT tool. Probation officers also want a better (automatic) connection between the tool and the advise report that has to be completed after using the tool. In the pilot, actual information about the offence and offending history had to be scored by the administration. Probation officers did evaluate this practice as undesirable.

#### *Other assessments*

In order to support offenders to improve their social network, a tool has been developed that can be used to assess the positive and negative social contacts of offenders, the forensic social network analyses (FSNA). Using the FSNA should improve social control and support by the network of the offender. The FSNA has been tested with 15 TBS-patients and 50 significant others in the network of the patient, in the phase of conditional release (**Hoeben et. al. 2011**, Tilburg University). Using a quasi-experimental design (8 patients in experimental group, 7 in reference group), it was found that using the FSNA seemed to enlarge social control, enlarge the patients' value of getting acceptance for their behaviour and decisions from social relations, reduced the number of incidents or violations of conditional leave, but did not influence social support. The probation service has decided not to use the FSNA because of the amount of time required.

Recently, a lot of policy attention is focused on the impression that a substantial part of the offenders do have an intellectual disability. Reliable information about the percentage is not available but in several studies, a rough estimate of 20 to 25% is made (Van den Braak & De Jong, 2010). ; Kaal et. al., 2009) In a substantial part of the cases, the intellectual disabilities may not be assessed, leading to overcharging of offenders and failure of the supervision. In ongoing research of **Kaal and colleagues** of the University of Applied Sciences Leiden, a tool is developed that may help professionals to make a quick screening about possible intellectual disabilities. If necessary, leading to further diagnosis by a psychologist. In

addition, Kaal is also working on a version of the work alliance tool from Menger and colleagues (see paragraph 3) that can be used with offenders with intellectual disabilities.

### *Electronic monitoring*

Electronic monitoring (EM) has not taken a flight in The Netherlands. The number of studies about this topic is limited too. **Berends and colleagues (2008)**, working at a research company, studied the use of EM with TBS-patients and youth with a PIJ measure in a pilot setting. In the pilot, participation was voluntary. Conditional release with EM of 19 tbs-patients and 21 PIJ-youngsters was evaluated. The control group consisted of 14 tbs-patients who refused EM. The main goals of the tbs-professionals for using EM was improving responsibility and self esteem of the patients. Professionals from the youth institutions focussed more on control and structuring the leave. EM helped professionals in signalling non-compliance and facilitated a quick response to incidents. Some offenders thought that EM helped them to comply. Others felt ashamed and limited by EM.

Literature to add:

Nijboer, J.A., Elzinga, H.K., van der Flier, C.A., Keekstra, L., Elektronisch Toezicht met GPS: Mogelijkheden en onmogelijkheden van GPS volgsystemen bij toezicht op reclasseringscliënten, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, Faculteit der Rechtsgeleerdheid, Vakgroep Strafrecht en Criminologie, december 2005

### *Behavioural interventions*

Since 2005, all correctional treatment programs offered by the three probation organizations in the Netherlands are considered for accreditation by the Dutch accreditation panel for offender programs. The aim of this procedure is to select a limited, specific, and effective number of correctional programs for offenders which directly intervene in offending related problems and therefore lead to a reduction of repeat offending. Studies concerning the evaluation of these interventions are not part of this review.

**Fischer et al (2011)** of the University of Rotterdam analyzed whether the current set of available programs meet the requirements and which improvements can be made. They used a literature search, different data sources and they conducted interviews. The study shows that the available correctional treatment programs of the probation organizations include most of the elements necessary to address the relevant criminogenic needs and groups of offenders. However, certain deficiencies can still be found both in the *system* and in the *practice* of the correctional programs. These deficiencies have resulted in a situation where some important criminogenic needs are not addressed and certain groups of offenders are not reached by the programs. The improvements we suggest focus mainly on improving the currently available programs and only to a lesser extent on the development of new programs.

### *Volunteers and restorative justice*

Working with volunteers has had variable attention in the history of probation. Recently, this topic is back at the agenda because of the introduction of COSA (Circles of Support and Accountability) in The Netherlands. **Höning and Vogelvang (2011)** of the University of Applied Sciences Den Bosch addressed the question if COSA can be implemented in the Dutch practice by studying a pilot project. Different research methods were used: observation in meetings of the program bureau; interviewing project members, volunteers, so called core members, professionals and managers at the start and end of the pilot; document study of project (logbook), notes of meetings, implementation plans and progress reports. They conclude that it is possible to find motivated volunteers and core members, and develop a support structure for the project to improve the effectiveness of COSA. They also identified some factors that should be improved, like the selection and training of volunteers, organizing commitment with professionals, clearness about responsibilities of probation officers, caseloads, and integration in the policy of the probation service (Höning & Vogelvang, 2011). At the moment, the probation service is working on further implementation of COSA. Evaluation research of Höning is ongoing and will result in a dissertation about COSA in The Netherlands.

Based on interviews with probation officers and key experts, **Croes and Vogelvang (2010)** of the University of Applied Sciences Den Bosch studied the question if working with volunteers should be expanded to other parts of probation work. They conclude that volunteers can be of value in probation work in giving practical support like building a social network, finding a hobby, supporting offenders in their contacts with bureaucracy, and promoting social inclusion. Volunteers can in some cases also signal potential risks of recidivism, harm or non-compliance. Croes and Vogelvang conclude with some advises about the way introducing volunteers in probation work should be organized.

Restorative justice has been discussed in the Dutch probation practice but not been implemented on a large scale yet. In **2002, Homburg and colleagues** of the University of Applied Sciences Den Bosch evaluated a project that introduced restorative justice in three regions. The project was a joined venture between RN (Dutch Probation Service) and 'Stichting Slachtofferhulp Nederland' (Dutch organization for victim aid) and focused on meetings between offenders and victims. The research methodology consisted of a document study, a survey amongst potential referrers and interviews with representatives of the organizations that are connected to the project. Overall, the results of the project were limited. It was found that most of the applications did not lead to a meeting between the offender and the victim because of the severity of the offence or because 'the other party' does not want to cooperate. The aims, relevance and criteria of the project did not seem to be communicated enough to relevant organizations and professionals, and the project was not embedded in the responsible organizations.

5. The management, supervision and/or regulation of practitioners and their practice.

Very little research is found about the management, supervision or regulation of practitioners and their practice. A relevant and actual topic in The Netherlands is professional space. In the last 10 years, probation officers are confronted with an extensive growth of protocols and bureaucracy due to the urge to improve quality and a growing need of control by the Ministry of Justice and the management of the probation service.. The call from a lot of probation officers to enlarge their professional space was picked up by politicians. This led to an experiment where probation officers could do all things they thought necessary, without any policy or focus at the start. **Geuijen and colleagues (2010)**, of the University of Utrecht and the University of Applied Sciences Utrecht evaluated this project. Based on a survey, interviews and observations, they conclude that probation officers used their extra space to create continuity in supervision. They took extra time and effort to fill in the gaps caused by the transfer of a case from one organisation to the other (due to a lack of finance, waiting lists, or no instruction for supervision from the prosecutor's office). If necessary, they intensified their contact with the offender until other organisations take over. Geuijen and colleagues also concluded that probation officers have different perceptions about their tasks and professional space. Probation officers from the LJ&R turned out to have a broader perception about the regular activities of a probation officer than their colleagues from the SVG and RN. A focus on production, protocols and evidence based work seemed to have muddled the look of probation officers on 'doing what is necessary'.

Based on interviews with colleagues in one region of the RN, **Roelofs (2003)** (a probation officer) investigated secondary trauma's of probation officers due to the continuing encounter with often shocking stories or severe offences of the offenders they work with. Roelofs concluded that the probation service does have a protocol for handling aggression at work, but secondary trauma's are not a policy issue yet. She also concluded that aftercare after a primary trauma like telephonic threats should be improved. The probation service should implement a method that is developed to prevent secondary trauma's, the 'Intervisie Methode Incidenten' (peer counseling method incidents).

6. Reflections, contextual issues (Who does research into practice? How it is funded? How much is there? Why so much/so little? What are the main barriers to research into practice? (practical; cultural; etc) Are there any examples of research which has had an impact on practice or policy? Is there any current/ongoing research into practice you are aware of? (and if so, who is doing it; what are the research questions/topic and methods)

Research about probation work has taken a flight in the last years in The Netherlands. Until the millennium change, probation work was scarcely a research issue. Shortly after the millennium change, the 'what works' agenda was introduced in the Dutch probation practice. The growing focus on the use of scientific research to improve practice, might have had a substantial influence on the growing interest for research about probation work.

Regarding practising supervision, this research focuses on interactions and relationships between key actors, delivery of offender supervision and instruments or methods. Very little research is conducted about the characteristics, recruitment and training of probation officers, and about the management, supervision and regulation of probationers.

A lot of the research we described is initiated by the Ministry of Justice, and conducted by the research institute of the Ministry of Justice (WODC). This research institute is largely independent in its conductance of research, but somewhat less independent in decisions about the research programme. Looking at the review in this document, we conclude that this research is dominated by two types of questions:

- The evaluation of policy (often initiated by the Ministry of Justice), with a focus on plan evaluation and process evaluation;
- The evaluation of instruments or methods that were developed commissioned by the Ministry of Justice.

Strikingly little research about practising supervision is initiated by universities in The Netherlands. Recently, improvements have been made on this part by the realisation of three professorships about probation work, two at Universities of Applied Sciences (Utrecht and Avans), and one at the Free University of Amsterdam. These professorships are partly funded by the three probation organizations. An extensive part of the research described in this review is initiated or conducted by these universities. This research has a strong focus on the effectiveness of methods, instruments or probation officers.

Occasionally, there is research initiated and funded by the probation organisations. Often, this research follows questions of probation officers or the service about practising difficulties, for example about supervising specific offender groups. Besides, the probation services often agree to participate in research projects initiated by others.

A continuous flow of research about probation work is conducted by students of different universities. We did not integrate thesis of students in this review, unless it describes a relevant issue that has not been addressed by other research.

### *Barriers*

Until some time ago, an important barrier was the blind spot with scientists, policy makers and managers for research about probation work. As described, this barrier has been demolished in the past years. An actual barrier is the lack of finance for research about probation work. Budgets of the probation service are reduced, as are the budgets for the Ministry of Justice.

A growing barrier for research is the available time of the probation service. A growing pressure on producing their primary tasks and cuts in finances for the probation service makes it more difficult for the probation service to participate in research projects that take time from probation officers (interviews, expert meetings, testing new practices etc.).

We do not signal a lack of will with the probation offices. Probation officers and management seem to be very interested in research about probation work, willing to participate in it and to use findings to improve daily practice.

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