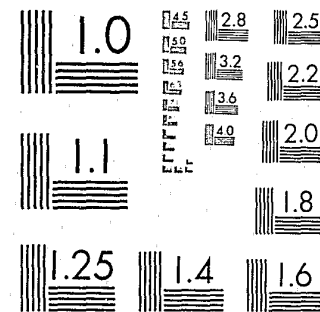


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PROBATION AND AFTERCARE SERVICE

RESEARCH PAPERS VOLUME VII

Report on the Survey of
the Problems and Needs
of
Volunteer Probation Officers

1980

80367

Probation and Aftercare Service

Report on the Survey of

The Problems and Needs

of

Volunteer Probation Officers

U.S. Department of Justice 80367
National Institute of Justice

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Dec 1980

Introduction

The seventh volume in the series of Research Papers is given to the Report on the Survey of the Problems and Needs of Volunteer Probation Officers in the Community Probation Service.

2 When there were less Volunteer Probation Officers the department knew their pulse rates. The programme has over the years grown to a membership of about 400 Volunteer Probation Officers. The survey became necessary.

3 Many of the Committee's recommendations can and should be implemented early but some of the major problems faced and recommendations to be implemented have of necessity to be approached on the basis of practical realism and within the limitations of available resources.

4 The department acknowledges its debt to the Chairman and Members of the Committee for their Report.

K V VELOO
CHIEF PROBATION & AFTERCARE OFFICER

Jan 1981

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A SURVEY OF THE PROBLEMS AND NEEDS,
IF ANY, OF VOLUNTEER PROBATION OFFICERS

On January 24, 1979 a Committee comprising the following VPOs and PAOs was appointed to assess the needs of VPOs in the Community Probation Service:

1. Mr Joseph Ang Teck Chia, GVPO
- Chairman
2. Mr Chew Sin Poon, PAO
- Secretary
3. Miss Koh Min Hua, SPAO
4. Mr A. Ramachandran, PAO
5. Mr Clifford B. Dragon, GVPO
6. Mr David Goh Thean Chye, GVPO
7. Mr Mohd b. Mohd Salleh, GVPO
8. Mr David Wang Mei Hsiong, GVPO

The terms of reference of the Committee were to :

- (a) Identify difficulties and problems, if any, faced by VPOs in the CPS and to suggest ways and means to alleviate them.
- (b) Study and evaluate existing measures and practices used to sustain the interest of VPOs in the CPS and make recommendations for improvement.
- (c) Consider any other problems and needs VPOs may have.

1. OBJECTIVES OF SURVEY

1.1 A Committee comprising Volunteer Probation Officers (VPOs) and Probation and Aftercare Officers (PAOs) was set up on 24.1.79 to assess the problems and needs of VPOs in the Community Probation Service (CPS).

1.2 The terms of reference of the Committee were :

- a. to identify difficulties and problems, if any, faced by VPOs in the CPS and to suggest ways and means to alleviate them.
- b. to study and evaluate existing measures and practices used to sustain the interest of VPOs in the CPS and make recommendations for improvements, and
- c. to consider any other problems and needs VPOs may have.

2. SURVEY METHOD

2.1 The mailed questionnaire method was adopted for the survey. The personal interview approach was also considered at the later stage but was not implemented due to limited resources.

Mr Chiew Seen Kong, a Sociology Lecturer from the University of Singapore, was consulted on the draft questionnaire for its reliability and validity. Unfortunately he was not able to comment on the final draft as he had to leave for the United States.

2.2 The final questionnaire contained 14 parts viz:

- Part 1 - Objectives of the CPS
- 2 - Selection of VPOs
- 3 - Training
- 4 - Reach Out
- 5 - Communication
- 6 - Case allocation and case/VPO contact
- 7 - Contacts with VPOs and supervising PAOs
- 8 - Case supervision
- 9 - Duties and responsibilities
- 10 - Reports
- 11 - Job employment unit
- 12 - Perception
- 13 - Social activities/community projects
- 14 - Other comments

2.3 A copy of the questionnaire appears in Appendix 1.

3. SURVEY SAMPLE

3.1 Questionnaires were sent out to all VPOs (432) in June 1979. However, only 146 or 33.8% completed questionnaires were returned by the end of August 1979. Response from VPOs by their service status is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 : Response from VPOs by Service Status

Status	No. of questionnaires sent	No. of completed questionnaires received
GVPO	116	55 (47.4%)
RVPO	183	52 (28.4%)
TVPO	133	39 (29.3%)
TOTAL	432	146 (33.8%)

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Part 1 - Objectives of CPS

4.1.1 In this part VPOs were requested to determine if CPS has achieved its 3 main objectives. Their views appear in Table 2.

Table 2 : VPOs' views on CPS Objectives

CPS Objectives	Achieved (Yes)	Not Achieved (No)	No Comments	Total
1. To bring the work of the Probation & After-care Department to greater public notice.	116 79.5%	29 19.8%	1 0.7%	146 100.0%
2. To recruit volunteers to supplement the work of the full-time PAOs.	121 82.9%	19 13.0%	6 4.1%	146 100.0%
3. To evoke greater public interest and involvement in the direct rehabilitation of offenders placed on probation.	112 76.7%	24 16.4%	10 6.9%	146 100.0%
Average	116 79.5%	24 16.4%	6 4.1%	146 100.0%

4.1.2 79.5% of the respondents believed that the CPS has attained its goals.

4.1.3 Table 3 portrays some observations of VPOs on the objectives of the CPS programme.

Table 3 : Typical reasons given by VPOs on CPS' objectives

Types of Objectives	Opinions given by VPOs who answered Yes	Opinions given by VPOs who answered No
1. To bring the work of the Probation & Aftercare Department to greater public notice.	1. Encouraging response to the Department's call for more volunteers. 2. Launching of the neighbourhood projects.	1. Mis-impression that VPOs are from SANA and are looking after drug addicts. 2. SANA has better publicity. 3. Majority of the public are not aware of the CPS programme. 4. CPS failed to adopt the stance of an active group to attract more volunteers.
2. To recruit volunteers to supplement the work of the full-time PAOs.	2. The number of VPOs has increased substantially. 2. Most of the VPOs are discharging their service creditably.	1. There is still a need to encourage more people to come forward as VPOs because PAOs continue to hold heavy case-loads. 2. Some VPOs are not handling cases.
3. To evoke greater public interest and involvement in the direct re-habilitation of offenders placed on probation.	1. VPOs are from all walks of life. 2. Many employers are employing probationers.	1. There would be more volunteers if it is successful. 2. Publicity is confined to those agencies and people who are directly or indirectly involved in some aspect of probation work. 3. Public is more aware of the CPS programme.

Table 3 (continued)

Types of Objectives	Opinions given by VPOs who answered Yes	Opinions given by VPOs who answered No
		<p>4. There are still many who brand offenders as incorrigible.</p> <p>5. Although public interest and involvement are evoked at various points in time, this interest and involvement are not continually maintained.</p> <p>6. Employers are not willing to employ rehabilitated offenders and are not involved in direct rehabilitation of offenders.</p>

4.1.4 It was generally felt that compared to SANA, the Department was unable to achieve its targets due to misconceptions and that SANA is more aggressive and active in its approach to recruit volunteers. Besides, the dangers of drug abuses has been given extensive coverage in the media, unlike the problems of juvenile delinquency which do not enjoy that type of publicity. VPOs were also disappointed by the negative attitudes adopted by some employers towards probationers.

4.2 Part 2 - Selection of VPOs

4.2.1 Part 2 was mainly designed to obtain feedback on the selection process in recruiting, registering and gazetting of VPOs. It was unfortunate that the column 'reasons' was inadvertently left out in the questions - "Do you consider the present system of selecting volunteers for the CPS adequate?" and "From your own experience, do you think the Department's selection method for RVPOs to become GVPOs fair?" thereby leaving the respondents with no chance to express their feelings and observations.

4.2.2 The question of adequacy in the present system of selecting volunteers to become VPOs (and the question of fairness in the selection method for TVPOs to become RVPOs and RVPOs to become GVPOs) were posed to the respondents for their comments. Their answers are produced in Table 4.

Table 4 : Response on the Selection Methods of Recruiting, Registering and Gazetting of VPOs

Questions	Yes	No	No Comments	Total
1. Do you consider the present system of selecting volunteers for the CPS adequate?	101 69.2%	30 20.5%	15 10.3%	146 100.0%
2. From your own experience, do you think the Department's selection method for TVPOs to become RVPOs fair?	107 73.7%	10 6.8%	29 19.9%	146 100.0%
3. From your own experience, do you think the Department's selection method for RVPOs to become GVPOs fair?	90 61.6%	13 8.9%	43 29.5%	146 100.0%
Average	99 67.8%	18 12.3%	29 19.9%	146 100.0%

4.2.3 69.2% of the respondents felt that the present selection process for Volunteer Probation Officers is adequate. 73.7% considered the selection process for TVPOs to be confirmed as RVPOs as fair and 61.6% thought that the selection process for GVPOs were also adequate and fair.

4.2.4 Table 5 below lists the reasons given by the respondents for their comments on the registration method of VPOs.

Table 5 : Reasons advanced by VPOs on the Method of Registration of VPOs

	Reasons given by VPOs who answered Yes	Reasons given by VPOs who answered No
From your own experience, do you think the Dept's selection methods for TVPOs to become RVPOs fair?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Only supervising POs know the abilities of their VPOs. 2. Only those who have shown interest and have done their work satisfactorily during the final period are selected. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It has shown much discrimination. 2. Favouritism. 3. Biased at times to suit specific needs. 4. More stringent measures should be employed to ensure better quality. 5. 6 months trial period is not sufficient. It all depends on the maturity of each individual. 6. To consider also their occupation, social status, qualifications and ages. 7. TVPOs should be given automatic promotion.

4.2.5 VPOs who are satisfied with the arrangement contended that the supervising PAO was the most appropriate person to assess their ability and work performance. On the other hand, some VPOs proposed that the evaluation was marred by favouritism and discrimination. While some proposed that more stringent measures be adopted to ensure better quality, others felt that TVPOs should automatically be qualified as RVPOs after the trial period. A suggestion calling for the consideration of one's occupation, social status, qualification and age was not justified as it would do more harm than good to the CPS programme. The VPO who suggested a longer trial period for particular individual probably was not aware that TVPOs would be given a second 6-month trial period should they fail to pass the grade.

4.2.6 In the past, some diligent RVPOs who contributed immensely to the CPS programme declined to become GVPOs. A question was therefore set to gauge response from RVPOs and TVPOs to find out if they preferred to remain as RVPOs or to become GVPOs if they were invited to do so.

Table 6 : Preference to remain as RVPO

	Yes	No	No Comment	Total
RVPO	26 50.0%	21 40.4%	5 9.6%	52 100.0%
TVPO	8 20.5%	25 64.1%	6 15.4%	39 100.0%
Total	34 37.4%	46 50.5%	11 12.1%	91 100.0%

4.2.7 37.4% of the respondents indicated their desire to remain as RVPOs. 50.5% had reservations on this matter, and 12.1% was non-committal. However, it is pertinent to note that 50.0% of RVPOs gave a negative reply compared to 20.5% from the TVPOs.

4.2.8 Reasons put forward by respondents who said "yes" included:

- their wishes to remain as RVPO since the nature of work is similar.
- their inability to assume greater responsibilities due to personal commitments.
- their unawareness of the roles of GVPO.

4.3 Part 3 - Training

4.3.1 Part 3 dealt with the various training programmes provided by the Department. It covered classroom training for newly recruited volunteers, practical training for TVPOs during the 6 months' trial, and refresher/advanced courses for RVPOs and GVPOs.

4.3.2 The adequacy of classroom training in preparing volunteers for a demanding job was posed to the respondents.

Table 7 : Adequacy of the Classroom Training

	Yes	No	No Comment	Total
On looking back, do you find the classroom training adequate for you to understand the problems and needs of the cases.	79 54.1%	59 40.4%	8 5.5%	146 100.0%

4.3.3 40.4% of the respondents gave a negative answer. This dissatisfaction centred on topics and substance of the lectures and training methods employed.

Table 8 : Reasons offered by VPOs on the Adequacy of the Classroom Training

	Reasons given by VPOs who answered Yes	Reasons given by VPOs who answered No
On looking back, do you find the classroom training adequate for you to understand the problems and needs of the cases.	<u>On Content</u> 1. Intensive and covered most of the subject. 2. Relevant and practical. 3. Sufficient for an initial understanding but not in-depth. 4. Coverage of case studies was comprehensive.	<u>On Content</u> 1. Coverage of topics was brief and superficial. 2. Some topics were not relevant. 3. More group discussions and case studies were needed. 4. Lack of knowledge on laws and counselling.
	<u>On Methods</u> 1. There were sufficient speakers all of whom dealt expertly in their fields. 2. It would be more helpful if slides and films were shown.	<u>On Methods</u> 1. Real case presentation not given. 2. Classroom training should be put under the charge of 2 SPAOs who should be able to give answers to any queries arising from the floor. 3. Lecture notes should be given. 4. Lack of good lectures. 5. Lectures were not well prepared. 6. Visits to institutions would be more helpful.

4.3.4 Generally VPOs found the training course useful as it was designed mainly to stimulate thinking and reading on crime and delinquency as well as to equip volunteers with basic skills and knowledge in the supervision of offenders on probation. The reasons advanced by those who gave negative answers indicated a strong desire to upgrade their knowledge and skills in the rehabilitation of probationers.

4.3.5 A question was posed to find out whether TVPOs had received sufficient professional support from the supervising PAOs during their 6 months' trial period.

Table 9 : Sufficiency of Professional Support Received from PAOs

	Yes	No	No Comments	Total
Do you think you had sufficient professional support from your supervising PAOs during the 6 months' trial period?	109 74.7%	28 19.2%	9 6.1%	146 100.0%

4.3.6 74.7% of the respondents found the assistance provided by supervising PAOs satisfactory whereas 19.2% were not satisfied with the support rendered. Their comments are listed in Table 10 below.

Table 10 : Reasons advanced by VPOs on the Sufficiency of Professional Support received from PAOs

	Reasons given by VPOs who answered Yes	Reasons given by VPOs who answered No
Do you think you had sufficient professional support from your supervising PAOs during your 6 months' trial period?	1. PAOs provided assistance readily. 2. PAOs were helpful and understanding.	1. Certain cases allotted were not complicated enough to evoke professional support. 2. Lack of communication between VPO and PAO. 3. Received no support from the PAO, and was left to handle the case single-handedly. 4. PAOs were unable to concentrate on individual VPOs because there were too many of them. 5. More contacts between SPAOs & TVPOs will boost the morale of the volunteers and make them feel that they are not neglected.

4.3.7 The majority of VPOs found their supervising PAOs helpful and understanding but there were some PAOs whose services were usually not available. Some felt that the SPAOs should also play their part in providing moral support.

4.3.8 VPOs' views were sought on the ways and means of reshaping and improving classroom training as well as practical training. The following were their suggestions :

Suggestions on course content

1. More lectures on laws, counselling and court proceedings.
2. More discussions on case studies.
3. Six monthly reports.
4. Enlarge training on dealing with all kinds of problems in different environments.
5. Do not repeat lectures.

Suggestions on improving teaching methods

1. Have more group discussions.
2. Get probationers to give testimony.
3. Have PAOs and VPOs relate personal experiences.
4. Introduce more audio-visual aids.
5. Organise visits to institutions.
6. Have tutorials after each session.
7. Introduce field attachments for new trainees.
8. Obtain more good and competent lecturers and group leaders.
9. Include role plays.
10. Hand-outs to be given.

Suggestions on organisation of courses

1. Limit number of trainees to 20 in a class.
2. New trainees to be grouped under one supervisor from the very beginning.
3. Prior to allocation of cases, discussions among VPOs from the same district would be helpful.
4. Saturday afternoons to be made available for practical training.
5. Name tags worn as all who attend the courses are strangers to one another.

4.3.9 A question was asked on the need to organise refresher/advanced courses for VPOs.

Table 11 : The Need to Organise Refresher/
Advanced Courses for VPOs

	Yes	No	No Comments	Total
Do you think there is a need to organise refresher/advanced courses for VPOs?	139 95.2%	5 3.4%	2 1.4%	146 100.0%

4.3.10 The need to organise refresher/advanced courses was well endorsed by VPOs as manifested by an overwhelming majority of 95.2% who said "yes".

4.3.11 VPOs' preference on frequency of refresher/advanced courses are shown on Table 12.

Table 12 : Frequency of Refresher/Advanced Courses

	Frequency						No Comments	Total
	Once a week	Twice a week	Once in fortnight	Thrice a week	Once a month	Full time seminar		
No. of Respondents	83 59.7%	29 20.9%	4 2.8%	2 1.4%	5 3.6%	3 2.2%	13 9.4%	139 100.0%

4.3.12 59.7% of the respondents felt that courses should be held once a week. 20.9% were in favour of twice a week. The rest preferred to have longer intervals ranging from once a fortnight to once a month. 2.2% suggested full time seminars.

4.3.13 Subjects suggested by VPOs for the refresher/advanced training courses are listed in Table 13.

Table 13 : Suggested subjects for Refresher/
Advanced Training Courses

Subjects	No. of Respondents
Updating of knowledge on laws	105
Drugs and drug abuse specialisation	66
Specific topics on Principles and Methods of Social Work e.g. counselling, interviewing, supervision	114
Case studies	78
Psycho-socio knowledge	81
Criminology	1

4.3.14 Specific topics on principles and methods of social work were the most popular choice. Updating of knowledge on laws ranked second followed by psycho-socio knowledge; case studies and, drugs and drug abuse specialisation. One respondent proposed inclusion of criminology.

4.4 Part 4 - "Reach Out"

4.4.1 The News Bulletin of the CPS, "Reach Out", was in its fourth year at the time of survey. A question was posed to gauge a general impression of "Reach Out" in comparison with other newsletters.

Table 14 : General Impression of "Reach Out"

	Very Good	Good	Can be Improved	No Comments	Total
No. of respondents	25 17.2%	77 52.7%	40 27.4%	4 2.7%	146 100.0%

4.4.2 17.2% of the respondents had rated "Reach Out" as "very good", 52.7% considered it as a "good" news bulletin and 27.4% felt that there was still room for improvement.

4.4.3 Contents of the various issues of "Reach Out" were generalised into 6 major topics. The interests of VPOs in these topics are shown in Table 15 below.

Table 15 : VPOs' Interest in the Various Topics Contained in "Reach Out"

Topics	Very Keen	Keen	No Interest	No Comments	Total
Case studies by VPOs	45 30.8%	92 63.0%	2 1.4%	7 4.8%	146 100.0%
Case studies by PAOs	53 36.3%	82 56.2%	2 1.4%	9 6.1%	146 100.0%
Survey Reports	39 26.7%	85 58.2%	14 9.6%	8 5.5%	146 100.0%
Excerpts of speeches	26 17.8%	73 50.0%	38 26.1%	9 6.1%	146 100.0%
News Items	47 32.2%	85 58.2%	3 2.1%	11 7.5%	146 100.0%
Professional Articles	67 45.9%	65 44.5%	7 4.8%	7 4.8%	146 100.0%

4.4.4 There was a great demand for professional articles as indicated by a high 45.9% who rated their interest in this subject as "very keen". Case studies by PAOs ranked second with 36.3% followed by news items at 32.2%, case studies by VPOs at 30.8%, survey reports at 26.7% and excerpts of speeches at 17.8%.

4.4.5 The following suggestions are contributed by VPOs on improving "Reach Out" if more funds are obtainable.

On Contents

1. Invite more professionals, PAOs, VPOs and general public to contribute articles.
2. Publish more case studies and model six-monthly/final summaries.
3. Publish more articles on VPOs and the Department's activities; "news on cases handled by VPOs; research and concepts on counselling and behavioural problems; and probation system in other countries.
4. Relevant literature and reviews.

On Presentation

1. Create special columns entitled "Know your PAOs and VPOs", "Suggestions and Questions from PAOs and VPOs" and "Probationers Column".
2. Special columns for crosswords, contests, jokes and cartoons.
3. More photo news.
4. Publish photos which create humour.
5. Publish articles with writers' photographs.
6. Have a colourful "Reach Out".

Others

1. Increase frequency of issue.
2. Publish in more than one language.
3. Issue special "Reach Out" annual edition.
4. Use better quality paper and make it appear more of a magazine.
5. Have a logo for special identity.
6. Solicit advertisements to generate funds.

4.4.6 "Reach Out" is mailed to all VPOs. However, some complained they have not received the news bulletin regularly. A question was thus posed to find out the regularity in receiving "Reach Out" by VPOs.

Table 16 : Regularity in Receiving "Reach Out"

	Yes	Irregular	Not at all	No Comments	Total
No. of respondents	103 70.6%	39 26.7%	3 2.0%	1 0.7%	146 100.0%

4.4.7 70.6% of the respondents received their copies regularly and 26.7% received it irregularly. Three respondents have not received "Reach Out" at all.

4.4.8 As indicated in Table 17 only a handful (7.5%) of the VPOs made it a point to share or pass on their copies of "Reach Out" to friends. 69.9% did it occasionally whilst 20.5% gave a negative reply.

Table 17 : Sharing of "Reach Out" with friends

	Yes	Sometimes	Not at all	No Comments	Total
No. of respondents	11 7.5%	102 69.9%	30 20.5%	3 2.1%	146 100.0%

4.4.9 Comments on "Reach Out" by VPOs' associates who had read the news bulletin are tabulated in Table-18 below.

Table 18 : Comments on "Reach Out" by VPOs' friends

	Very Good	Good	Uninteresting	Indifferent	No Comments	Total
No. of respondents	11 9.8%	77 68.1%	11 9.7%	1 0.9%	13 11.5%	113 100.0%

4.4.10 It was clear that "Reach Out" was generally well received among VPOs' friends as only 9.7% found it "uninteresting".

4.4.11 The majority (90.4%) of respondents found the articles published were educational and useful as training materials.

Table 19 : Usefulness of the Articles as Training Materials

	Yes	No	No Comments	Total
No. of respondents	132 90.4%	9 6.2%	5 3.4%	146 100.0%

4.5 Part 5 - Communication

4.5.1 Part 5 was intended to identify problems in communication between the Department and VPOs and vice versa. A question was asked to find out if current practice in communication helps to keep VPOs informed. Reports are tabulated in Table 20.

Table 20 : Degree of being kept informed

	Well Informed	Fairly Well Informed	Not at all informed	Total
No. of respondents	27 18.5%	111 76.0%	8 5.5%	146 100.0%

4.5.2 18.5% of the respondents said they were well informed by the Department. 76.0% stated they were fairly well informed and 5.5% complained at not being informed at all.

4.5.3 The avenues open to and exploited by VPOs in obtaining information are listed in Table 21.

Table 21 : Methods utilised by VPOs in Obtaining Information

Methods	No. of Respondents
Reach Out	88
Supervising PAOs	86
Follow VPOs	6
Newspapers	3
Circulars	3
Correspondence	3
Other PAOs	2
By self	1

4.5.4 It is concluded that "Reach Out" and "supervising PAOs" were the main sources utilised by VPOs in VPO/Department communication.

4.5.5 A question was posed to find out why some VPOs have not been responding to past correspondence from the PAS.

Table 22 : Reasons offered by VPOs for failure to reply to past correspondence

Reasons	No. of Respondents
A lack of time	54
Forgetfulness	14
Indifference	2
Non-receipt of mail	1
Late arrival of mail	1
Difficulties in meeting datelines	3
Too much repetition	1
Communication problem	1
Change of address	2

4.5.6 A majority of the respondents attributed "a lack of time" as the main reason for not responding to past correspondence from PAS. Another significant reason was "forgetfulness".

4.6 Part 6 - Case Allocation And Case/VPO Contact

4.6.1 Part 6 had two sections. The first, dwelled on the ideal caseload for VPOs and the Case-VPO matching process. The second, dealt with methods and procedures involved in the initial contact when a case was allocated to VPOs.

4.6.2 The ideal caseload for a VPO as seen by the VPO himself (if he is also holding a full-time job) appears to be one.

Table 23 : Ideal Caseload for VPOs

	Caseload			Total
	One	Two	Three	
No. of respondents	71 48.6%	67 45.9%	8 5.5%	146 100.0%

4.6.3 48.6% of the respondents preferred to hold only one case. 45.9% had no strong objection if given two cases to supervise. 5.5% claimed that they could manage 3 cases.

4.6.4 The Department expected a GVPO in particular, to handle a minimum of 2 cases at any one time. In practice, some GVPOs held only one case. A question was therefore set to find out the reasons as to why they were unable to hold two cases.

Table 24 : Reasons for GVPOs not holding two cases

	The number of cases handled would not make any difference	The supervising PAO is unable to allocate 2 cases, even if GVPO desires	It is too taxing in terms of spare time & resources	No Comments	Total
No. of respondents	55 37.7%	16 10.9%	58 39.7%	17 11.7%	146 100.0%

4.6.5 37.7% of the respondents did not anticipate any difficulties, if given two cases. 10.9% complained that their supervising PAOs were unable to assign two cases. 39.7% however, felt that two cases were a little taxing.

4.6.6 The general view of VPOs was sought on the VPO/Case matching process.

Table 25 : Satisfaction with Cases Allocated

	Yes	No	No Comment	Total
No. of respondents	132 90.4%	9 6.2%	5 3.4%	146 100.0%

4.6.7 As high as 90.4% of the respondents were satisfied with the cases assigned to them. Only 6.2% were not pleased with the matching process.

4.6.8 Five major considerations used by the Department in allocating cases to VPOs were posed for comments.

Table 26 : Criteria for Case Allocation

Considerations	Yes	No	Does Not Matter	No Comments	Total
<u>Require:</u>					
a) Case within same postal district or constituency as VPO.	100 75.4%	4 2.7%	31 21.2%	1 0.7%	146 100.0%
b) Language/dialect compatibility with cases.	114 78.1%	2 1.4%	26 17.8%	4 2.7%	146 100.0%
c) Cases to be of same sex (to be answered by female VPOs).	13 25.5%	7 13.7%	31 60.8%	- -	51 100.0%
d) Case to be younger than VPO.	84 57.5%	13 8.9%	46 31.5%	3 2.1%	146 100.0%
e) Case with no serious or complicated family or personal problems.	34 23.3%	13 8.9%	95 65.1%	4 2.7%	146 100.0%

4.6.9 Generally, the criteria of allocating cases within the same neighbourhood and language/dialect compatibility with cases were seen as important. "Age difference" ranked third with 57.5%. 65.1% felt that it did not matter if difficult cases with complicated family or personal problems were allocated to them. It would suggest that VPOs also looked for more challenging cases.

4.6.10 One VPO commented that the significance of religion in rehabilitating offenders should be seriously considered. Some suggested similar hobbies as another area which could be looked into in matching VPOs and Cases.

4.6.11 In Section 2, VPOs were asked about the methods employed by individual PAOs in allocating cases to them.

Table 27 : Methods of Case Allocation

Questions	Yes	No	No Comments	Total
Was your supervising PAO present?	120 82.2%	22 15.1%	4 2.7%	146 100.0%
Were parents of the probationers present?	68 46.6%	74 50.7%	4 2.7%	146 100.0%
Was the probationer present?	109 74.7%	33 22.6%	4 2.7%	146 100.0%

4.6.12 In most cases, both the PAO and the case were present when the case was allocated to the VPO. In about half of the instances, the parents of the cases were also present.

4.6.13 Table 28 lists choices of meeting places for first contact between VPOs/Cases.

Table 28 : Preference of Meeting Place for the First Contact

Meeting Place	No. of respondents
In PAO's office	73
At probationer's house	65
At a community centre	19
At VPO's house	3
Other places	4

4.6.14 'In PAO's office' and 'at the probationer's home' were popular choices. 19 VPOs felt that community centres could be used to arrange the first meeting between VPO, Case and PAO.

4.6.15 Experiences in the past had indicated that some VPOs prefer to meet only the probationer at the first meeting whereas some would like to meet both the probationer and his parents. The views of the respondents on this matter are tabulated in Table 29.

Table 29 : Persons to be Present at the first meeting

	PAO, VPO and Probationer	PAO, VPO, Probationer and his parents	Total
No. of Respondents	34 23.3%	112 76.7%	146 100.0%

4.6.16 76.7% of the respondents were in favour of seeing both the probationer and his parents at the first meeting. 23.3% preferred to see only the probationer. The response reconciles with that in Table 27 where 50.7% said that parents were not present at the first allocation of cases.

4.6.17 In most instances, supervising PAOs would accompany VPOs when making the first home visit. Some VPOs, however, had reservations on this practice.

Table 30 : First Home Visit

	Like PAO to Accompany VPO				Total
	Yes	No	Does not matter	No Comments	
No. of Respondents	65 44.5%	75 51.4%	2 1.4%	4 2.7%	146 100.0%

4.6.18 Only 44.5% of the respondents wanted to make the first home visit with the supervising PAOs. 51.4% preferred to do it by themselves. Reasons put forward by VPOs for their preferences are shown in Table 31.

Table 31 : Reasons Advanced by VPOs on their Preference of Making the First Time Visit with or without PAOs

Question	Reasons for Answering Yes	Reasons for Answering No
Do you prefer to make your first home visit with your supervisor?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Some parents may not be sufficiently acquainted with VPOs. 2. Yes, but case file should not be brought along so as to embarrass the family in front of the neighbours. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The presence of PAO only hampers one's own style. But for TVPOs, it is advisable to have the supervisor as a guide. 2. It would seem too formal and official. 3. Unless it is vital to the case.

4.7 Part 7 - Contacts With VPOs And Supervising PAOs

4.7.1 Part 7 centred on the communication flow between VPOs and the supervising PAOs. VPOs' responses on the effectiveness of the seven most commonly used methods employed by PAOs in maintaining contact with them are shown in Table 32.

Table 32 : Effectiveness of the Methods of Communication Employed by PAOs

Methods	Effective	Not Effective	No Comments	Total
Memo	105 71.9%	34 23.3%	7 4.8%	146 100.0%
Telephone	118 80.8%	28 14.4%	18 4.8%	146 100.0%
Case Conference	100 68.5%	28 19.2%	18 12.3%	146 100.0%
Visits of PAO to VPO's office	61 41.8%	69 45.2%	16 13.0%	146 100.0%
Visits by VPO to PAO's office	121 82.9%	20 13.7%	5 3.4%	146 100.0%
Contact with VPO at other appointed places	84 57.6%	46 31.5%	16 10.9%	146 100.0%

4.7.2 Visits by VPO to PAO's office was found to be effective (82.9%). Telephone contacts took second place with 80.8%, followed by Memo 71.9% and Case Conference 68.5%. Generally, VPOs were not in favour of PAOs visiting VPOs either at the VPO's office or home.

4.7.3 Comments on some of the listed methods included:

On memo - supervising PAO should write to VPO and not wait for VPO's visit to PAO's office.

On case conference - it is desirable to have a case conference once a month.

On visits - visits should not cause inconvenience to either party. PAO should visit VPO in VPO's office only when invited, as employer may not like it.

Others - Any form of contact is effective provided the two parties sustain the contact.

'My supervising PAO had not made use of the above methods to contact me but depended on me to call her at her office'.

4.7.4 Table 33 illustrates VPOs' views on the most suitable time for meeting their supervising PAOs.

Table 33 : Timing for Meeting with PAO

	During office hours	After office hours	During weekends/holidays	Over lunch
No. of Respondents	53	61	29	17

4.7.5 It is apparent that most VPOs would like to contact their supervising PAOs after or during office hours.

4.7.6 54.8% of the VPOs did not feel the need to contact the supervising PAOs more often than presently. The views of the VPOs are indicated in Table 34. (Also see Table 36).

Table 34 : Necessity to contact Supervising PAOs More Often Than Presently

	Yes	No	Depends	No Comments	Total
No. of Respondents	60 41.1%	80 54.8%	4 2.7%	2 1.4%	146 100.0%

4.7.7 Judging from the response tabulated in Table 35, supervising PAOs were generally available when the VPOs needed them for consultation. However, some VPOs found it difficult to contact PAOs as the latter were always out doing field-work or busy with other duties.

Table 35 : Availability of Supervising PAOs for contact

	Yes	No	Depends	No Comments	Total
No. of Respondents	89 60.9%	50 34.3%	2 1.4%	5 3.4%	146 100.0%

4.7.8 Table 36 shows frequency of contact by VPOs with their supervising PAOs under normal circumstances.

Table 36 : Frequency of contact between VPOs and Supervising PAOs

	Once a week	Once in 2 weeks	Once in 3 weeks	Once a month	More than once a month	Irregular	No Comments	Total
No. of Respondents	7 4.8%	13 8.9%	3 2.1%	27 18.4%	1 0.7%	93 63.7%	2 1.4%	146 100.0%

4.7.9 Most of the VPOs contacted their supervising PAOs when necessary. Some VPOs made it a point to see the supervising PAOs once a month (18.4%).

4.7.10 Table 37 illustrates how VPOs perceived their contacts with the supervising PAOs with regard to management of probationers.

Table 37 : Usefulness of Contact with Supervising PAOs

	Yes	No	Sometimes	No Comments	Total
No. of Respondents	96 65.7%	6 4.1%	41 28.1%	3 2.1%	146 100.0%

4.7.11 65.7% of the respondents found the supervising PAOs' help and guidance useful. 28.1% thought that they did not receive sufficient professional support.

4.7.12 The following are suggestions advanced for the improvement of the present PAO/VPO contacts.

- have more contacts on non-official business.
- PAOs' residential telephone numbers should be given for urgent consultation.
- phone calls/visits made by VPOs should be acknowledged if the PAOs were not available.
- VPOs should have the liberty to choose and change their supervising PAOs without giving reasons in order to avoid embarrassment.
- do not change the supervising PAOs so frequently.
- copy of recordings written by PAOs should be made available to the VPOs concerned.
- group discussions at regular intervals.
- organise informal meetings after office hours.
- usage of community centre facilities.

4.8 Part 8 - Case Supervision

4.8.1 Part 8 was intended to elicit information on the management of probationers by VPOs and the difficulties they encountered in discharging their functions. As indicated in Table 38, the majority of VPOs maintained close and regular contact with their cases. 47.9% of the respondents met their probationers once a week, 21.2% did it once in two weeks and 15.8% entertained their clients when necessary. Some VPOs met their cases at longer intervals ranging from once in 3 weeks (5.5%) to once a month (7.5%).

Table 38 : Frequency of contact between VPOs and Cases

	More than once a week	Once a week	Once in 2 weeks	Once in 3 weeks	Once a month	Irregular	Total
No. of Respondents	3 2.1%	70 47.9%	31 21.2%	8 5.5%	11 7.5%	23 15.8%	146 100.0%

4.8.2 The places of contact between VPOs and cases are listed in Table 39 below :

Table 39 : Places of contact between VPOs and Cases

Places of contact	No. of Respondents
Probationer's home	126
VPO's home	21
Community Centre	15
Recreational places	14
Probationer's place of work	9
Hawker Centre	5
VPO's office	4
Coffee shop	2
Temple	2
Shopping Centre	1
School	1

4.8.3 As shown in Table 39, it is apparent that VPOs have shown resourcefulness and initiative in choice of places for meeting their cases although majority of the VPOs met their cases in their homes.

4.8.4 Table 40 shows some difficulties encountered sometimes by VPOs in maintaining regular contact with probationers.

Table 40 : Difficulties encountered sometimes in maintaining closer contact with probationer

Types of Difficulties	No. of Respondents
Personal commitments	58
Shift duties performed either by VPO or probationer	45
Lack of time	28
Travelling distance	7
Probationer not cooperative	3
Probationer on National Service	2
Lack of conversational subjects	1

4.8.5 It would appear that many of the difficulties faced by VPOs like 'Personal commitments' (58) and 'Lack of time' (28) arise from VPOs' inability to alleviate their personal problems or to allocate their time rather than difficulties faced in the course of managing their cases. A significant problem involves shift duties performed either by VPO or probationer. The problem of 'Travelling distance' could be solved by careful matching of cases with VPOs.

4.8.6 Difficulties faced by VPOs in their dealings with probationers are illustrated in Table 41 below :

Table 41 : Difficulties sometimes faced by VPOs in Dealing with Probationers

Types of Difficulties	No. of Respondents
<u>Probationer :</u>	
Indifferent	41
Frightened	20
Hostile	5
Non-responsive	4
Dishonest	2
Shy	2
Suspicious	1
Residing at SAF Boys' School	1
Misbehaving	1
Difficulty in motivating probationer	1

4.8.7 Some of the VPOs were disappointed by the indifferent attitude shown by their cases towards rehabilitation.

4.8.8 Another area which wanes enthusiasm of VPOs involves the families of probationers.

Table 42 : Difficulties sometimes faced in dealing with Probationer's Family Members

Types of Difficulties	No. of respondents
Family :	
Indifferent	33
Fear authority	15
Hostile	9
Unco-operative	3
Protective	3
Relationship among family members poor	2
Embarrassed	2
Communication difficulties	1
Lack of response	1

4.8.9 Generally, difficulties faced by VPOs in dealing with probationers and their family members were similar. In dealing with family members, problems of indifferent attitude towards rehabilitation and fear of authority constituted some problems.

4.8.10 One of the major functions of VPOs is to befriend their cases. It was interesting to find out that many of them still keep in touch with their probationers after the probationers were discharged from probation.

Table 43 : Contact with Cases after Termination of Probation Orders

	Yes	No	Sometimes	No Comments	Total
No. of respondents	17 11.7%	31 21.2%	70 47.9%	28 19.2%	146 100.0%

4.8.11 47.9% of the respondents met their cases occasionally. 21.2% ceased to maintain any form of contact. 11.7% still see their cases even though their probation periods had expired.

4.8.12 34.9% of the families of probationers also maintained contact with VPOs. An equal percentage of families did not keep in touch with the VPOs after their children were discharged from probation.

Table 44 : Contact with VPOs after the Termination of the Probation Orders

	Yes	No	Sometimes	No Comments	Total
No. of Respondents	10 6.8%	57 39.1%	51 34.9%	28 19.2%	146 100.0%

4.9 Part 9 - Duties And Responsibilities

4.9.1 Part 9 was designed to obtain the response of VPOs on their degree of understanding of the various rules and regulations governing their work when they started work.

Table 45 : Understanding of Duties and Responsibilities

Questions	Yes	No	No Comments	Total
1. Were you sufficiently clear with regard to your duties and responsibilities when you first handled a case?	123 84.3%	21 14.4%	2 1.3%	146 100.0%
2. Do you have a good understanding of the various provisions of the Probation of Offenders Act, Cap 117?	77 52.7%	66 45.2%	3 2.1%	146 100.0%
3. Do you have a good understanding of the Probation of Offenders Rules, 1976?	74 50.7%	68 46.6%	4 2.7%	146 100.0%
4. Are you familiar with the procedures of the courts and the rules and regulations governing your work as a VPO?	74 50.7%	68 46.6%	4 2.7%	146 100.0%

4.9.2 As high as 84.3% of the VPOs were sufficiently acquainted with their duties and responsibilities as VPOs when they commenced work. However, only half of them are sufficiently clear of the laws, rules and procedures.

4.10 Part 10 - Reports

4.10.1 Part 10 was devoted to monthly reports. The types of difficulties encountered by VPOs in writing and submitting monthly reports are shown in Table 47.

Table 47 : Difficulties Encountered in Writing Monthly Reports

Types of Difficulties	No. of Respondents
Lack of time	47
Difficulties in expression	24
Poor design of forms	10
Difficulties in presenting facts	4
Others	1

4.10.2 47 VPOs attributed "lack of time" as the main cause which prevented them from submitting regular monthly reports.

4.10.3 43.2% of the VPOs made brief verbal reports to their supervising PAOs on the progress of their cases when they were unable to submit written reports.

Table 48 : Making of Verbal Reports

	Yes	No	No Comments	Total
No. of Respondents	63 43.2%	31 21.2%	52 35.6%	146 100.0%

4.10.4 Of the 63 VPOs who gave verbal reports, only 68.3% did so regularly.

Table 49 : Regularity in Making Verbal Reports

	Regularly	Irregularly	Total
No. of Respondents	43 68.3%	20 31.7%	63 100.0%

4.10.5 A question was posed to find out how active VPOs were in respect to submitting monthly reports.

Table 50 : Regularity in submitting monthly written reports

	Regularly	Irregularly	Not at all	No Comments	Total
No. of Respondents	99 67.8%	31 21.2%	7 4.8%	9 6.2%	146 100.0%

4.10.6 67.8% of the VPOs submitted written reports on a regular basis. 21.2% did so irregularly, 4.8% did not write reports at all and 6.2% had no comments to make on the matter.

4.10.7 47.3% of the VPOs submitted their statistical returns regularly. 18.5% did it irregularly and 20.5% did not submit it at all.

Table 51 : Regularity in Submitting Statistical Reports

	Regularly	Irregularly	Not at all	No Comments	Total
No. of Respondents	69 47.3%	27 18.5%	30 20.5%	20 13.7%	146 100.0%

4.10.8 The views of VPOs were sought on the question of combining the monthly report and the statistical report into one. 60.3% of the VPOs were in favour of the proposed change, 23.9% felt that it did not make any difference. 13.7% did not comment and 2.1% objected to the idea.

Table 52 : Response from VPOs on the Proposal to Combine the Monthly Report and the Statistical Report

	Yes	No	Does not Matter	No Comments	Total
No. of Respondent	88 60.3%	3 2.1%	35 23.9%	20 13.7%	146 100.0%

4.10.9 Table 53 shows that 88.4% of the VPOs preferred to use English when writing reports. 4.8% felt competent in Chinese. 5.5% wanted to communicate in Malay and 1.3% were in favour of using Tamil.

Table 53 : Preference of Language to be
Used for Report Writing

	English	Chinese	Malay	Tamil	Total
No. of Respondents	129 88.4%	7 4.8%	8 5.5%	2 1.3%	146 100.0%

4.10.10 Following are some suggestions advanced by VPOs to solve their difficulties in submitting written reports/returns.

- It should be sufficient to give a brief bi-monthly/quarterly report.
- Giving verbal reports should be sufficient since VPOs' main concern is to look after the case, and further, PAOs are also doing recordings.
- Reports should be written in a form of summary and not based on individuals' contacts made with cases and others.
- GVPOs should be given the freedom to decide whether there is a need to submit written reports (except six monthly reports).
- Written reports should not be insisted on in cases where VPOs are getting on well with their probationers.
- Written reports are to be submitted only when there are any new developments.
- Department to ensure supplies of forms are sufficient.
- Department should provide VPOs with 'On Government Service' envelopes.
- Department should re-design the format, some additional headings should be added.
- 'Tick in the boxes' format is desirable
- Department should re-design the present statistical report as it is confusing in its present state.

4.11 Part 11 - Job Emplacement Unit

4.11.1 Part 11 dealt with the Job Placement Committee which was set up in the Department with assistance from some VPOs. Its main function is to help probationers obtain employment.

Table 54 : Awareness of the Existence of
the Job Placement Committee

	Yes	No	No Comments	Total
No. of Respondents	115 78.8%	28 19.2%	3 2.0%	146 100.0%

4.11.2 Most of the VPOs were aware of the existence of the Job Placement Committee. 19.2% had not heard of the Committee and 2.0% did not comment.

4.11.3 Of the 115 VPOs who were aware of the Committee, only 6.8% referred cases for assistance. 71.3% had not made any contact with the Committee for employment.

Table 55 : Referral to the Committee
for Assistance

	Yes	No	No response	Total
No. of Respondents	10 6.8%	105 71.9%	31 21.3%	146 100.0%

4.11.4 Of the 10 VPOs who had sought the assistance of the Committee, only 4 were successful in getting jobs through the Committee's recommendation.

Table 56 : Success in Job Placement

	Yes	No	Total
No. of Respondents	4 40.0%	6 60.0%	10 100.0%

4.12 Part 12 - Perception

4.12.1 Part 12 centred on the perception of VPOs on their voluntary services. Listed below are reasons given by the respondents for becoming VPOs. Generally their motives could be categorised into "community service" and "personal development".

"Community Service"

- assist those who are less fortunate.
- render service to the community.
- help offenders become law-abiding citizens.
- improve the security of our society.

"Personal Development"

- desire to know, to learn and to experience.
- meet more friends.
- make use of leisure time in meaningful activities.
- broaden outlook.
- understand more about juvenile problems so that they may be better equipped to deal with their own children in future.

4.12.2 Table 57 shows that 43.8% of the VPOs felt that they were achieving their objectives. 8.9% claimed that they had yet to attain their goals, 41.1% felt that their aspirations were at most only partially fulfilled.

Table 57 : Degree of Achievement

	Yes	No	Not Just Yet	No Comments	Total
No. of Respondents	64 43.8%	13 8.9%	60 41.1%	9 6.2%	146 100.0%

4.12.3 Table 58 categorises some of the sacrifices VPOs had to make because of their voluntary services.

Table 58 : Sacrifices made by VPOs

Types of Sacrifices	No. of Respondents
Less time for personal recreation	36
Less time for family	23
Additional financial burden	20
Over-involvement with cases	8
Others	6
No response	53

4.12.4 It appears in Table 58 that generally, one has to sacrifice much of his personal life in becoming a VPO. Dealing with cases mean "less time for personal recreation" and "less time for family". Additional financial burden incurred during the course of service was also mentioned.

4.12.5 Table 59 reveals how the VPOs' family members react to their voluntary services. It is heartening to note that majority of the VPOs received support from their family members.

Table 59 : Reaction of VPOs' Family Members on Voluntary Services

Types of Reaction	No. of Respondents
Support for their activities	73
Indifferent towards their activities	21
Not objecting to their activities	17
Objecting to their activities	5
Unaware of their activities	2
No response	28

4.12.6 Table 60 indicates that only 22.6% of the employers of VPOs recognise their services to the community. 16.4% gave a negative reply. 50.7% were not sure of their employers' reaction and 10.3% did not comment.

Table 60 : Reaction of Employers of VPOs on their Voluntary Services

	Yes	No	Don't know	No Comments	Total
No. of Respondents	33 22.6%	24 16.4%	74 50.7%	15 10.3%	146 100.0%

4.12.7 Table 61 shows that 59.6% of the friends of VPOs look upon their voluntary services as commendable. 18.5% felt that it is "a waste of time", 17.1% did not answer this question. Other reactions included indifference (2.7%) and "unaware of the service" (2.1%).

Table 61 : Reaction of the Friends of VPOs
on Voluntary Services

	A Waste of Time	Commendable	Indifference	Unaware of the Service	No Comments	Total
No. of Respondents	27 18.5%	87 59.6%	4 2.7%	3 2.1%	25 17.1%	146 100.0%

4.12.8 With regards to their services rendered, 58.2% of the VPOs felt that they were well received by the probationers and the family members. 12.3% were not sure whether their efforts were appreciated. 1.4% gave a negative reply and another 28.1% reserved their comments.

Table 62 : Appreciation from Probationers and
their Family Members

	Yes	No	Don't Know	No Comments	Total
No. of Respondents	85 58.2%	2 1.4%	13 12.3%	41 28.1%	146 100.0%

4.12.9 Table 63 indicates that 43.8% of the VPOs found that their supervising PAOs had recognised their work, 27.4% were unsure of the reactions of their supervising PAOs.

Table 63 : Appreciation from PAOs

	Yes	Don't know	No Comments	Total
No. of Respondents	64 43.8%	40 27.4%	42 28.8%	146 100.0%

4.12.10 Table 64 tabulates the various reactions of RVPOs to cases which relapsed during the probation period. The majority of VPOs accepted failure in a positive manner and tried to strive for better results in their following case.

Table 64 : Reaction of GVPOs and RVPOs on cases
that failed

Types of Reaction	No. of Respondents
Made them try harder	62
Disheartened them to some extent	20
Accepted it as a natural thing	11
Made them feel like resigning	5
Disappointed them	1
No response	47

4.13 Part 13 : Social Activities/Community Projects

4.13.1 Part 13 was designed to gauge whether VPOs had participated in social activities and community projects organised by the Department. Table 65 shows 64.4% had occasion to meet their fellow VPOs, 31.5% did not have the opportunity for such meetings and 4.1% had no comments.

Table 65 : Participation in Social Activities/
Community Projects

	Yes	No	No Comments	Total
No. of Respondents	94 64.4%	46 31.5%	6 4.1%	146 100.0%

4.13.2 VPOs generally, meet each other at :

- social gatherings
- group discussions
- training sessions
- functions organised by other organisations
- Community Centres
- PO's office
- community projects.

4.13.3 Table 66 shows that the majority (82.9%) of VPOs were of the opinion that VPOs should meet regularly, 12.3% thought otherwise and 4.8% had no comments.

Table 66 : The Need for Regular Gatherings

	Yes	No	No Comments	Total
No. of Respondents	121 82.9%	18 12.3%	7 4.8%	146 100.0%

4.13.4 VPOs proposed either monthly or quarterly social gatherings (See Table 67).

Table 67 : Frequency of Gatherings

	Monthly	Bi- Monthly	Quarterly	Half- Yearly	Yearly	Others	Total
No. of Respondents	39 26.7%	3 2.1%	39 26.7%	27 18.5%	12 8.2%	26 17.8%	146 100.0%

4.13.5 Table 68 suggests informal atmosphere for such gatherings.

Table 68 : Atmosphere of Gatherings

	Formal	Informal	No Comments	Total
No. of Respondents	23 15.8%	117 80.1%	6 4.1%	146 100.0%

4.13.6 A question was set to gauge response on the Department's latest move to establish reporting centres at various community centres. As shown in Table 69, 71.9% of the VPOs felt that it is a good idea for supervising PAOs to use the community centres as meeting places in the evening.

Table 69 : Meeting VPOs at Community Centre in the Evenings by PAOs

	Yes	No	No Comments	Total
No. of Respondents	105 71.9%	33 22.6%	8 5.5%	146 100.0%

4.13.7 As for Community/Social Service Projects, 42.5% indicated their willingness while another 42.5% were not positive in their desire to take part in such activities.

Table 70 : Participation in Community/Social Service Projects

	Yes	No	May Be	No Comments	Total
No. of Respondents	62 42.5%	16 10.9%	62 42.5%	6 4.1%	146 100.0%

4.14 Part 14 - General

4.14.1 Part 14 allows VPOs to express their views on sustaining their interest. Following are some of their comments :

- The Department should accord due recognition to VPOs.
- "Letter of thanks" should be sent by CPAO after a case had been successfully closed. Supervising PAOs should also write to the VPO and not to take things for granted.
- Long service/appreciation certificates or medals should be given.
- VPOs should be invited to some of the government functions e.g. passing out parades.
- Send letters to employers informing them of VPOs' involvement in the CPS.
- It would be heart-warming to receive greeting cards from the Department.
- Complimentary tickets should be given for any national event.
- Appreciation should be shown by other government departments.
- GVPOs/RVPOs names should be given to police authority for their recognition.
- The Department should organise fully subsidised social and recreational activities for VPOs and their families.
- VPOs' activities should be entered in their service record card.
- Increase present status of GVPOs.
- Provide SBS concession bus passes for GVPOs as an incentive.
- Provide transport allowances for VPOs.
- Parking fees should be reimbursed or HDB parking attendants should be advised not to charge if the authority card is shown.
- VPOs be given special privileges to purchase at discount at certain shopping centres.
- The Department should organise cheap tours for VPOs.
- The Department should provide medical benefits for VPOs.
- Give VPOs concession rates for taking up VITEB courses/extra mural studies.
- Send VPOs for leadership training courses.
- Provide international exchange programme for VPOs.
- Get VPOs involved in department's activities.
- Provide assistance readily when VPOs encounter difficulties with cases.

- To have informal gathering chaired by SPAOs with refreshments provided.
- Conduct more courses and visits to institutions for VPOs.
- Show VPOs how they can do their work more effectively.
- Training courses should be recognised as academic credit.
- Urge employers to extend cooperation by granting time off or leave to VPOs to fulfill their duties.
- Organise projects which involve VPOs and probationers.
- For each case completed, there should be some points allocated to the VPOs and a list published in Reach Out.
- PAOs must first accept VPOs as their equal and be ready to listen to their views.
- GVPOs who show capabilities should be given an opportunity for other forms of probation work e.g. investigation.
- POs should be introduced at training courses.
- VPOs who are to receive certificates should be given name tags and not given cards with numbers.
- Courses should be held at community centre.
- The Department should not hand out cases during the last session of the training course.
- Certificates awarded should be signed by the Minister.
- Experienced and dedicated VPOs should be sent overseas for training.
- Appoint SVPOs as leaders of VPOs in their districts.

5. MAJOR FINDINGS

5.1 Objectives of the CPS

5.1.1 VPOs were of the opinion that the CPS had achieved its three main objectives though some felt there was still room for improvement. This latter group suggested that a more aggressive stance be adopted by the Department in harnessing uncommitted members of society to assist in the rehabilitation of offenders.

5.2 Selection of VPOs

5.2.1 Regarding the decision to select, register or gazette a volunteer, the criteria used were not sufficiently understood. As a result some doubts were expressed and some registered concern as to whether they would be able to make or accept the next higher grade (i.e. registered or gazetted) in the CPS.

5.2.2 More than half the RVPOs and 20.5% of TVPOs were not keen to be gazetted. Some declined for fear of additional workload whilst others preferred the comparatively less responsible roles of RVPOs and TVPOs. (A gazetted VPO is vested with similar legal powers as Probation Officers).

5.3 Training

5.3.1 There was a call for more in-depth classroom training. The returns showed that whilst VPOs were generally aware of their roles and responsibilities, half of them were not too familiar with the various statutes pertaining to Probation.

5.3.2 During the 6 month trial period (an extended form of training) certain VPOs complained that they did not receive sufficient professional support from their supervising PAOs.

5.3.3 The need to organise refresher/advanced courses for RVPOs and GVPOs were beyond doubt. VPOs were enthusiastic about updating their knowledge and skills in managing probationers.

5.4 "Reach Out"

5.4.1 The VPO newsletter "Reach Out" was well received by VPOs and their families and friends who have read it. They found "Reach Out" to be informative and educational. Informative in that they were informed of activities of the Department and VPOs and educational because of the various articles which were geared towards upgrading knowledge and skills.

5.5 Communication

5.5.1 Only 18.5% of the respondents were well informed of the department's policies and activities. The rest were either fairly well informed (76.0%) or not at all informed (5.5%).

5.5.2 In attempting to find out why VPOs were generally "lethargic" when corresponding with the Department the majority cited 'a lack of time' and 'forgetfulness' as reasons for failing to respond to

5.6 Case Allocation and Case/VPO Contact

5.6.1 The ideal caseload advocated by VPOs (gazetted and registered) was one to one.

5.6.2 Existing criteria used for case/VPO matching were deemed adequate. One laudable phenomena emerged from the findings. This featured in the older serving VPOs who, being more experienced, were very prepared to accept challenging cases (eg. those with difficult or complicated attendant family and personal problems).

5.6.3 Handing over of cases to VPOs did not seem to follow set rules. Different PAOs adopted different methods of dispensing cases. About half the cases were handed to VPOs without the presence of the probationers' parents (50.7%). Some cases were handed over without the probationers being present (22.6%) and some were handed over without the supervising PAOs present (15.1%).

5.6.4 The consensus of the introductory session where cases were handed over was for all parties to be present i.e. the VPO, the probationer and his parents and the supervising PAO.

5.6.5 The three popular choices for the introductory session to take place were the PAO's office, probationer's house and the community centre.

5.7 Contact with VPOs and supervising PAOs

5.7.1 The various methods employed by PAOs in contacting VPOs were acceptable although some had reservations about PAOs calling at their offices; such practice may interfere with their office routine.

5.7.2 It was generally expected that supervising PAOs initiate routine contacts with VPOs and it was further felt that the most suitable time for contacts were, either during or after office hours on weekdays. During crisis situations or when the need warranted it, it was the VPOs who contacted the supervising PAOs.

5.7.3 Trainee VPOs particularly, complained that support from supervising PAOs was inadequate during their training period. Other VPOs held varying views but it was generally felt that on-going support from PAOs could have been better.

5.8 Case Supervision

5.8.1 The majority of VPOs maintained close contacts with their cases by making regular visits, generally to their homes. 71.2% met their cases at least once a fortnight.

5.8.2 Shift duties performed by either VPO or probationers tended to be an inhibiting factor in establishing closer ties.

5.8.3 Indifferent attitudes of probationers and/or their families tended to frustrate VPOs in the course of their work. In extreme cases VPOs met with hostile receptions which led to fear for personal safety.

5.8.4 Contacts between VPOs and probationers usually ended on completion of the probation period. Only a handful of them kept in

5.9 Duties and Responsibilities

5.9.1 84.3% professed to be aware of their duties and responsibilities but some were not entirely clear of the laws governing the work of VPOs as well as the procedures of the Courts.

5.10 Reports

5.10.1 67.8% submitted their written reports regularly. 43.2% gave verbal reports to their supervising PAOs if they were unable to submit the written reports.

5.10.2 Most VPOs blamed 'a lack of time' for not submitting monthly written reports. Others blamed their inability to express clearly whilst some complained about the poor design of the report forms.

5.10.3 Language did not appear to be a problem in formulating reports as most VPOs were conversant in English.

5.10.4 60.3% were in favour of combining the monthly and statistical reports.

5.11 Job Placement Unit

5.11.1 Whilst most VPOs were aware of the existence of the JEU only a handful had sought its assistance as there did not appear any difficulty in obtaining jobs for probationers.

5.12 Perception

5.12.1 Two prominent reasons for VPOs joining the CPS were the desire to help others and personal convictions. Nonetheless whatever their motives most felt they have yet to realise their aspirations.

5.12.2 Involvement in CPS also meant a sacrifice of their leisure pursuits and disruption of family lives. The support of most family members and friends for their activities was a strong motivating factor which helped VPOs sustain interest in the CPS.

5.12.3 It is significant to note that most employers showed positive reaction for employees engaged in the CPS. This was another strong element in encouraging volunteers to continue their good work.

5.12.4 Most VPOs reported that additional financial expenses were incurred in the course of their voluntary work.

5.12.5 58.2% were confident their efforts were appreciated by probationers and their families. However, only 43.8% felt their supervising PAOs showed similar sentiments.

5.12.6 Certain VPOs claimed that although disappointed with unsuccessful cases they were not entirely discouraged. In fact failures posed as challenges which precipitated the effort to strive harder.

5.13 Social Activities and Community Projects

5.13.1 31.5% of respondents hardly met their colleagues. It is therefore noteworthy to realise that 82.9% suggested more informal gatherings be held on a regular basis.

5.13.2 VPOs welcomed the establishment of Reporting Centres at Community Centres as they found these to be extremely convenient to meet the supervising PAOs, probationers and their families in the evenings.

5.14 General

The views expressed by VPOs on the questionnaire varied fairly significantly. Salient points that surfaced included their call for better support from supervising PAOs, an improvement in classroom training, greater recognition of their work by the Department, optimising the organ 'Reach Out', the intent to establish more reporting centres at Community Centres and cultivating closer contacts among themselves.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary

6.1.1 A total of 432 copies of the questionnaire were mailed to VPOs. Breakdown of recipients :

GVPO	-	116	(26.8%)
RVPO	-	183	(42.4%)
TVPO	-	133	(30.8%)

146 or 33.8% responded in good time for the report to be compiled. Breakdown of respondents :

GVPO	-	55	(37.7%)
RVPO	-	52	(35.6%)
TVPO	-	39	(29.7%)

6.1.2 Initial reaction to a response of 33.8% would be one of disappointment and a conclusion that it reflects minority views. However on closer examination the Committee feels confident that the returns do reflect typical sentiments of the volunteers. Of course if more returns were received, a greater variety of side opinions may have surfaced. But the major questions appear to have been adequately answered as respondents do not differ radically in their views. Further, TVPOs made up 30.8% of the recipients and considering the questionnaire to be fairly exhaustive and their experience limited the Committee did not expect most of them to reply.

6.1.3 To ensure adequate coverage of areas where VPOs' interests are vested the questionnaire was subdivided into 14 parts viz :

Part 1	-	Objectives of the Community Probation Service
Part 2	-	Selection of VPOs
Part 3	-	Training
Part 4	-	"Reach Out"
Part 5	-	Communication
Part 6	-	Case allocation and Case/VPO contact
Part 7	-	Contacts with VPOs and Supervising PAOs
Part 8	-	Case Supervision
Part 9	-	Duties and Responsibilities
Part 10	-	Reports
Part 11	-	Job Emplacement Unit
Part 12	-	Perception
Part 13	-	Social Activities/Community Projects
Part 14	-	General

Following are comments and recommendations based on the results of the entire survey.

6.2 Objectives of the CPS

6.2.1 Many agreed that the CPS has succeeded in mobilising community effort in the rehabilitation of offenders. Some felt that SANA, with more powerful machinery in the recruitment of VAOs are crimping limited community resources to the detriment of the CPS.

As both the SANA VAO and CPS VPO programmes are now matured, there's a lot to be said for combining VAOs and VPOs into VPAOs. In this way both SANA's and PAS's rehabilitation programmes can be met using the same resources (the community). In terms of objectives and training both do not differ significantly. Another plus factor advocating combination is the desire expressed by VPOs to handle drug-related cases.

6.3 Selection of VPOs

6.3.1 From answers gleaned from Part 14 it is interesting to note that not all VPOs joined the CPS with the correct attitudes. Some negative responses included the hope of attaining job promotion, publicity, the desire for more privileges and/or authority. Fortunately these are minority views but it does not detract from the fact that present selection criteria are not entirely strict. The Department should therefore employ more probing methods when interviewing potential candidates. Using only experienced interviewers should also help weed out egoistic candidates.

The promotional tier of VPOs from Trainee to Registered to Gazetted appears to attract apprehension rather than encouragement. This basically stems from ignorance and a simple solution is to publicise the criteria employed in the selection of candidates for promotion. The attendant responsibilities attached to each higher grade in the VPO hierarchy adequately put across should also help to alleviate any misconceptions.

6.4 Training

6.4.1 It is heartening to note that the majority advocated advanced training. This commendable attitude indicates a desire by VPOs to adequately arm themselves in competency and manifest their hopes to inject more professionalism in their work. Some even requested for training in the investigative aspect of probation work and have expressed hopes that in the not too distant future the Department may consider them for doing investigations.

Although the Department does conduct advanced courses those run are obviously inadequate. More courses should be organised and serious consideration should be given to VPOs' request to perform investigation. Many RVPOs and GVPOs are fairly experienced and permitting them to do investigation will go a long way in alleviating the workload of the Department. However should the recommendation be accepted stringent selection procedures must be adopted to ensure that only competent VPOs are selected to do investigations. A formal examination at the end of such training courses will be one way of ensuring professionalism.

With the success of the Neighbourhood Reporting Centres basic and advanced training courses could perhaps be held at these Centres as well. This measure may indirectly help to propagate the CPS.

In view of the demand by VPOs to handle drug related cases consideration for VPOs to attend SANA training courses is advocated. The Department is urged to consult SANA on this possibility. A further recommendation is to propose to SANA the foregoing so that training on a reciprocal basis may be achieved. If this is done interested VAOs may ultimately be qualified to supervise probationers as well.

6.5 "Reach Out"

6.5.1 It is apparent that the quarterly publication "Reach Out" has proved popular and is widely read by volunteers, their families and friends. Owing to its effectiveness in carrying across news and views it is recommended that issues be made bi-monthly rather than quarterly.

6.5.2 VPOs' request for professional articles goes to prove that this publication can be effectively used as a training tool. The Department should fully exploit this opportunity by devising systematic dissemination of educational materials.

6.6 Communication

6.6.1 Communication in the context of the survey refers to the interaction between VPOs and the Department. Due to previous disappointing responses from VPOs to Departmental communication an attempt was made to detect deficiencies in the communicating process and establish which is the most effective means of exchange of information.

6.6.2 It was unanimous that VPOs were reasonably well informed about activities of the Department. Again "Reach Out" is the outstanding media whereby they are updated. This is closely followed by dissemination of news by supervising POs.

"Reach Out" should start a "forum" page to enable 2-way communication.

6.6.3 Scarcity of free time is the main reason VPOs who do not acknowledge Departmental correspondence. Some honestly admit "forgetfulness" as another reason.

Nothing radical can be recommended for the first problem except to suggest the Department considers simple replies (e.g. fill in the blanks type of responses, self-addressed envelopes etc) if replies are warranted. It is appreciated these may not always be possible but at least the major portion of correspondence can be geared to meet the suggestion.

"Forgetfulness" is an unpardonable excuse and must be taken to mean disinterest on the part of the volunteers to affairs of the Department. VPOs who repeatedly fail to respond and give forgetfulness as an excuse should be brought forth for censure.

6.7 Case Allocation And Case/VPO Contact

6.7.1 Most considered a one-to-one ratio (VPO/Probationer) as an ideal caseload although some were quite prepared to accept two Probationers at a time. In view of the foregoing no change to the present arrangement is advocated i.e. everyone holds a case except GVPOs who are expected to take on two. Problematic cases should only be allocated to experienced VPOs as requested by them.

6.7.2 As far as possible the introductory session (handing over of cases) should take place in the supervising PO's office with all parties present.

Though the PO's office appears to be a favourite choice for cases to be handed over the importance of the environment is over-shadowed by VPOs other preference for all parties to be present at handover. The Department must therefore endeavour to request the Probationers and their parents to call at the PAO's office to meet their VPOs in the presence of the POs.

To minimise dislocation to parents and VPOs work routine the Department may perhaps wish to consider the Neighbourhood Reporting Centres as possible places for the first encounter if calling at PO's office by all parties is not possible.

6.8 Contacts with VPOs and Supervising PAOs

6.8.1 PAOs are requested to be discreet whether to call personally at VPOs place of work. This may seem a frivolous point but the committee feels that the wish of some VPOs for PAOs not to visit their work sites should be respected as they (VPOs) are probably not senior enough to enjoy the privilege of meeting guests in the office.

6.8.2 VPOs complaints of insufficient support from supervising PAOs can safely be assumed to have stemmed from their failure to appreciate the tremendous workload faced by the latter. Because PAOs cannot physically devote their entire attention to VPOs it is recommended a "Resource Committee" manned by GVPOs be established. Outstanding and capable GVPOs should be invited to form this committee whose primary function is to monitor progress of junior VPOs and assist them and be accessible to them at all times. Those invited to serve on this Committee may perhaps be dispensed from holding cases. It is believed that adoption of this suggestion is a natural development of the CPS. This Committee may perhaps have the VPO Coordinator as an ex-officio member.

6.9 Case Supervision

6.9.1 Problems brought up under this section appear to be typical hurdles expected in a job of this nature although hostility from some probationers' families is a very real threat. The Department must prepare such families to accept VPOs assigned to them.

6.9.2 VPOs tendency to sever ties with their charges after their probation detract from their concept to be friend and assist them. Here the Department may wish to consider emphasising to VPOs the desirability of continued association as in a lot of cases ex-probationers are equally in need of support.

6.10 Duties and Responsibilities

6.10.1 VPOs do not appear to have difficulties in appreciating their commitments but because of the lack of academic attainments some of them experience difficulties in understanding the statutes and procedures of court. An effective way of solving this problem is for the Department to convene a one session training whereby a simplified short lecture on the subject is given to serving VPOs. The rest of the session should be devoted to questions from participants to help clear their doubts. Subsequent training courses should have this format built in.

6.11 Reports

6.11.1 Whilst it is not expected that all VPOs will religiously submit monthly and statistical reports it is unfortunate that written reports are indispensable; reports are tools for monitoring cases.

6.11.2 To help achieve 100% report submission the Committee recommends the Department :

- (a) considers redesigning present report forms with a view to simplify returns.
- (b) educates VPOs in report writing through "Reach Out".
- (c) organises special courses in report writing.
- (d) accepts oral reports provided they are subsequently recorded by a PAO.
- (e) uses the "Resource Committee" advocated in 6.8.2 to assist VPOs who experience difficulties in writing or submitting reports. Members of this Committee may even be used as recorders to oral reports.

6.12 Job Emplacement Unit

6.12.1 In spite of its under-utilisation the JEU should not be disbanded as there are still VPOs who really need the services.

6.13 Perception

6.13.1 The returns reveal that this topic is highly subjective. The Committee thus refrains from commenting except to suggest the Department communicates more with employers of VPOs. This is put forth in the belief that it is a tangible gesture which may assist the volunteers in job progression.

6.14 Social Activities/Community Projects

6.14.1 There is a strong desire among volunteers to meet their colleagues in an informal setting. Considering that there are now about 450 VPOs the urge becomes more compelling in that majority of them have not met each other.

The Annual Dinner & Dance is a step in the right direction in offering them an opportunity to socialise. However, more should be done. A social committee could be formed to draw up an annual social calendar or even establish a clubhouse. The Department should seriously consider extending an annual financial grant if a clubhouse is to be established.

6.15 General

6.15.1 This section allowed for free expression on topics not covered in Parts 1 - 13. Nothing very significant was contributed as most comments were related to reinforcements or arguments for the following items - more support from PAOs, training, recognition/perception, "Reach Out" and Neighbourhood Reporting Centres. Recommendations put forth earlier do incorporate suggestions/comments collated from this section. Other points which merit mention are contained in subsequent paragraphs. Comments which follow may appear offensive but VPOs who responded to the questionnaire are assured that no poor reflection is cast on them; the Committee has faith that they expressed themselves in the most honest and forthright manner.

16.5.2 There appears to be a great psychological need for status and recognition. Respondents requested for letters of appreciation, certificates, medals, recognition by other government departments, recommendation for various matters, etc. The Department should make it known that it does communicate with employers and recommend deserving cases for award of certificates. VPOs should be told that awards are made on merit and should not be solicited or that being a VPO would automatically qualify one for a citation.

16.5.3 Transport reimbursement is one subject which has been brought up for discussion on several occasions. The Department has endeavoured to minimise expenses of volunteers by careful case matching (residential aspect) but it could again remind VPOs that whilst it sympathises with them for incurring additional expenses this is one area volunteers are aware of when they joined the CPS. However if VPOs are accepted as investigators as proposed in 6.4.1 they should then enjoy transport reimbursement per the I.M.

16.5.4 Some VPOs requested concessional travel on public transport and some for medical benefits. The former is a complicated business and should not be entertained. The Department could however consider requesting for the extension of medical benefits to them. The suggestion is the "Regular Blood Donor" type of medical privilege at government medical outlets and to qualify for the scheme say, a 3-year service period is mandatory.

16.5.5 The Committee wishes to express its appreciation to the Probation & Aftercare Service for providing the guidance and secretarial service for the survey and to all VPOs who responded.

QUESTIONNAIRE

A Survey of the Problems and Needs, if any, of Volunteer Probation Officers

You need not indicate your name, but if you wish to do so we would appreciate it. Please return this questionnaire by 31 July 80.

VPO Name:

VPO Ref:

You can provide more than one answer where appropriate. Where your views and comments are sought, please provide us with as much information as you can.

PART I

1 OBJECTIVES OF THE COMMUNITY PROBATION SERVICE

Based on your experience and from what you gather from others around you, do you consider the Community Probation Service has achieved its objectives:

- 1.1 to bring the work of the Probation and Aftercare Department to greater public notice.

() Yes () No

- 1.2 reasons, if any _____

- 1.3 to recruit volunteers to supplement the work of the full-time Probation and Aftercare Officers.

() Yes () No

- 1.4 reasons _____

- 1.5 to evoke greater public interest and involvement in the direct rehabilitation of offenders placed on probation.

() Yes () No

- 1.6 reasons _____

PART II

2 SELECTION OF VOLUNTEER PROBATION OFFICERS

- 2.1 Do you consider the present system of selecting volunteers for the Community Probation Service adequate?
() Yes () No
- 2.2 From your own experience do you think the Department's selection methods for Trainee VPOs to become Registered VPOs fair?
() Yes () No
- 2.3 reasons _____

- 2.4 From your own experience, do you think the Department's selection methods for Registered VPOs to become Gazetted VPOs fair?
() Yes () No
- 2.5 Some of the Registered VPOs have preferred to remain as Registered VPOs to becoming Gazetted VPOs. Are you one of them?
() Yes () No
- 2.6 If yes, can you please say why you prefer to remain a Registered VPO?

PART III

3 TRAINING

- (a) Classroom Training
- 3.1 On looking back, do you find the classroom training adequate for you to understand the problems and needs of your cases?
() Yes () No

- 3.2 Please comment: _____

- (b) Practical Training
- 3.3 Do you think you had sufficient professional support from your Supervising Probation and Aftercare Officers during your six months' trial period?
() Yes () No
- 3.4 Please comment: _____

- 3.5 You can help us to re-shape or improve our classroom training and methods, in particular the aspects pertaining to practical training. Please be free to record here your suggestions, however insignificant they may appear to you:

- (c) Refresher/Advanced Courses
- 3.6 Do you think there is a need to organise refresher/advanced courses for VPOs?
() Yes () No
- 3.7 If yes, would you prefer them to be conducted at an interval of:
() Once a week () Twice a week
() Others _____
- 3.8 Do you prefer advanced courses to be concentrated on:
(a) Updating of knowledge on Laws ()
(b) Drugs and Drug Abuse specialisation ()
(c) Specific topics on Principles and Methods of Social Work eg Counselling, Interviewing, Supervision ()
(d) Case Studies ()
(e) Psycho-Social Knowledge ()
(f) Others _____

PART IV4 REACH OUT

4.1 REACH OUT is in its fourth year. What is your general impression of it when compared to other newsletters?

() Very good () Good () Can be improved

4.2 How would you rate your interest in the following topics contained in REACH OUT?

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------|----------|-----------------|
| (a) Case Studies by VPOs | () Very Keen | () Keen | () No Interest |
| (b) Case Studies by PAOs | () Very Keen | () Keen | () No Interest |
| (c) Survey Reports | () Very Keen | () Keen | () No Interest |
| (d) Excerpts of Speeches | () Very Keen | () Keen | () No Interest |
| (e) News Items | () Very Keen | () Keen | () No Interest |
| (f) Professional Articles | () Very Keen | () Keen | () No Interest |

4.3 Assuming we have more funds can you suggest ways to improve REACH OUT?

4.4 Do you receive your copy of REACH OUT regularly?

() Yes () Irregular () Not at all

4.5 Do you share or pass on your copy of REACH OUT to your friends?

() Yes () Sometimes () Not at all

4.6 What do your friends think of the newsletter?

() Very Good () Good () Uninteresting

Others: _____

4.7 Do you think some of the articles are useful as training materials?

() Yes () No

PART V5 COMMUNICATION

5.1 What is your opinion of the communication between yourself and the Probation and Aftercare Service? Are you -

- () well informed with up to date information
- () fairly well informed
- () not at all informed

5.2 If well informed, is it through:

REACH OUT () Yes () No

Supervising PO () Yes () No

Others: _____

5.3 If you have not been replying to past correspondence from the Probation and Aftercare Service, was it due to:

- () a lack of time
- () forgetfulness
- () indifference
- () other reasons: _____
- _____

PART VI6 CASE ALLOCATION AND CASE/VPO CONTACT

(a) Case Allocation

6.1 In your opinion how many cases can a VPO hold, if he is also holding a full-time job?

() One () Two () Three

6.2 A GVFO is expected to handle a minimum of 2 cases at any one time, do you think:

- () the number of cases handled would not make any difference
- () the Supervising Probation and Aftercare Officer is unable to allocate two cases, even if GVFO desires.
- () it is too taxing in terms of spare time and resources.

(b) Matching Process

6.3 Are you generally satisfied with the cases given to you?

- () Yes () No

6.4 The following are some of the criteria used in allocating a case to a Trainee. (They also generally apply to the Registered. The Gazetted are expected to take on greater responsibilities; therefore the criteria might differ in some instances). Are these criteria important to you?

- | | | | |
|---|---------|--------|---------------------|
| (a) Cases within your Postal District or Constituency | () Yes | () No | () Does not matter |
| (b) Language/Dialect compatibility with cases | () Yes | () No | () Does not matter |
| (c) Sex (to be answered by female VFOs only) | () Yes | () No | () Does not matter |
| (d) Age difference (case must be younger than VFO) | () Yes | () No | () Does not matter |
| (e) No serious or complicated family or personal problems | () Yes | () No | () Does not matter |

6.5 List any other instances of common interest between the case and VFO that could be taken into consideration.

6.6 When your case was first allocated to you:

- (a) Was your Supervising Probation and Aftercare Officer present? () Yes () No
- (b) Were the parents of the probationer present? () Yes () No
- (c) Was the probationer present? () Yes () No

6.7 When a new case is allocated to you:

- (a) Would you prefer to meet your case -
- () in PO's Office () at the probationer's house
- () at a Community Centre () Others _____

(b) At the first meeting, would you prefer to meet:

- () only the probationer () probationer and his parents

(c) Do you prefer to make your first home visit with your Supervisor?

- () Yes () No

PART VII

7 CONTACTS WITH VFOs AND SUPERVISING PROBATION AND AFTERCARE OFFICERS

7.1 Following are some of the methods used by Supervisors to maintain contact with VFOs and to provide guidance on cases. What do you think of these types of supervisory methods? Are they effective?

(a) Memo

- () Yes () No

(b) Telephone

- () Yes () No

(c) Case Conference

() Yes () No

(d) Visits to VPO's Office

() Yes () No

(e) Visits to VPO's home

() Yes () No

(f) Visits by VPO to PO's office

() Yes () No

(g) Contact with VPO at other appointed places

() Yes () No

7.2 Comments for above questions:

7.3 If it is a physical meeting do you prefer to see your Supervisors --

() during office hours () after office hours

() during weekends/
holidays () over lunch

7.4 Do you feel the need to contact your Supervisor more often?

() Yes () No

7.5 Are they normally available when you need to contact them?

() Yes () No

7.6 Under normal circumstances, how often do you contact your Supervisor about your case(s)?

() More than once a week () Once a week

() Once in 2 weeks () Once in 3 weeks

() Once a month () Irregular

7.7 How often does your Supervisor contact you regarding the case(s)?

() More than once a week () Once a week

() Once in 2 weeks () Once in 3 weeks

() Once a month () Irregular

7.8 Do you find your Supervisor's help or guidance adequate?

() Yes () No

() Sometimes

7.9 If you think the present Supervisor/VPO contacts are inadequate and ineffective, please suggest ways to improve them.

PART VIII

8 CASE SUPERVISION

8.1 What is the frequency of contact between yourself and your probationers?

() More than once a week () Once in 3 weeks

() Once a week () Once a month

() Once in 2 weeks () Irregular

8.2 Where do you normally meet your probationer?

- () Probationer's home () Community Centre
 () Other places () Recreational Places
 (Please quote examples)
-
-

8.3 If you have difficulties in maintaining regular contact with your probationer, is it due to:

- () a lack of time () shift duties performed
 either by VPO or probationer
 () travelling distance () personal commitments
 () others
-
-

8.4 Do you face the following difficulties in dealing with:

(a) Probationers

- () indifference () hostile
 () fear () not respectful
 () others
-
-

(b) Probationers' family members/relatives

- () indifference () hostile
 () fear () others
-
-

8.5 Do you keep in touch with your probationers after the expiration of their probation period?

- () Yes () No () Sometimes

8.6 Do your probationers or their families see you after the probation period?

- () Yes () No () Sometimes

PART IX

9 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

9.1 Were you sufficiently clear with regard to your duties and responsibilities when you first handled a case?

- () Yes () No

9.2 Do you have a good understanding of the various provision of the Probation of Offenders Act, Cap 117?

- () Yes () No

9.3 Do you have a good understanding of the Probation of Offenders Rules, 1976?

- () Yes () No

9.4 Are you familiar with the procedures of the Courts and the rules and regulations governing your work as a Volunteer Probation Officer?

- () Yes () No

PART X

10 REPORTS

10.1 If you have not been submitting your written report(s) regularly, could it be due to:

- () difficulties in writing
 () difficulties in presenting facts
 () a lack of time
 () the poor design of the reports/returns forms
 () others
-
-

10.2 If you do not submit written reports, do you make verbal reports?

- () Yes () No

10.3 If yes, do you do them:

() Regularly () Irregularly

10.4 How often do you submit your monthly written report(s)?

() Regularly () Irregularly () Not at all

10.5 How often do you submit your statistical report?

() Regularly () Irregularly () Not at all

10.6 Do you think we should combine the monthly report and the statistical report into one?

() Yes () No () Does not matter

10.7 Which official language would you prefer to use when writing reports/returns?

() English () Chinese
() Malay () Tamil

10.8 Can you suggest some practical ways of improving the situation or solving your difficulties in submitting written reports/returns?

PART XI

11 Job Emplacement Unit

11.1 Are you aware of the Job Placement Committee within the Probation and Aftercare Service?

() Yes () No

11.2 If yes, have you ever referred any case for employment to the Committee?

() Yes () No

11.3 If yes, has it been successful in getting a job for your case?

() Yes () No

PART XII

12 PERCEPTION

12.1 What did you hope to achieve when you applied to be a VPO?

12.2 Do you feel that you have achieved your aspirations?

() Yes () No () Not just yet

12.3 Do you face any of the following personal difficulties in being a VPO?

() less time for your family () additional financial burden
() over-involvement with cases () less time for personal recreation
() others: _____

12.4 In the course of your voluntary service do you find that your family members are:

() encouraging you
() discouraging you
() indifferent towards your activities
() objecting to your activities
() others: _____

12.5 Does your employer recognise your service to the community?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

12.6 Do your friends look upon your voluntary service as:
☐ a waste of time ☐ commendable

☐ others: _____

12.7 Do you think your probationers and their family members appreciate your assistance?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

12.8 Do you feel that your Supervising Probation and Aftercare Officer appreciate your work?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

12.9 In the event that your case(s) fail, does it:
☐ dishearten you ☐ make you feel like resigning
☐ make you try harder in the next case ☐ others: _____

PART XIII

13 SOCIAL ACTIVITIES/COMMUNITY PROJECTS

13.1 Have you had occasion to meet your fellow VPOs?
☐ Yes ☐ No

13.2 Under what circumstances did you meet?

13.3 Do you think VPOs should meet regularly?

☐ Yes ☐ No _____

13.4 If yes, at what intervals do you consider it an ideal time for VPOs to meet?

☐ Monthly ☐ Quarterly
☐ Half-yearly ☐ Yearly
☐ Others: _____

13.5 Under what atmosphere would you consider it conducive for VPOs to meet?

☐ Formal ☐ Informal

13.6 Do you think it is a good idea for the Supervising Probation and Aftercare Officers to work in the evenings eg using the Community Centres to meet their VPOs?

☐ Yes ☐ No

13.7 Some VPOs have in conjunction with their cases and some of the PAOs hold Community/Social Service Projects for other handicapped groups. Would you like to take part in such activities?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ May be

PART XIV

14 GENERAL

- 14.1 How can we try to sustain your continued interest without providing monetary rewards. Please let us have your honest opinion.

- 14.2 Is there anything else you wish to add or say which is not covered by any of the earlier questions on the Community Probation Service?

END