



Community Based Health & First Aid Prison Programme in Ireland

BACKGROUND

Community Based Health & First Aid (CBHFA) *in Action* was originally designed by the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to be facilitated globally in communities in a simple and flexible way through the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Society of each of the 187 countries where the Movement is present

Ireland was the first country in the world to introduce the Community Based Health and First Aid *in Action* programme through special status Irish Red Cross Volunteer Inmates in a prison setting. This began in June 2009 at Wheatfield (sentenced prison) Dublin and extending to Cloverhill (remand prison) and Shelton Abbey (open prison) in 2010/11. The programme operates under a partnership between the Irish Red Cross (IRC), Irish Prison Service (IPS) and City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee (VEC).

The programme (see modules & topics attachment 2) is a unique approach to raising community health and hygiene awareness and first aid in prison communities through peer to peer education. During 2012 it is being extended to the Mountjoy Complex of four prisons (training unit, women's, sentenced and juvenile) and will be operating in all prisons in the Irish State by 2014

OUTCOMES:

- The programme has benefitted 1,450 prisoners directly and 5,800 indirectly including staff and the families of the prisoners.
- HIV & AIDS Awareness and Anti Stigma Campaigns in two prisons, over 56% of prisoners were tested for HIV, prior to this event only 2% had been tested.
- Volunteers are actively conducting practical demonstrations in CPR and Basic First Aid around the prisons
- Volunteer-led smoking cessation programmes with 40% success rate
- A marked improvement in personal and in-cell hygiene in all prisons. Volunteers provide instructions on good hand washing techniques and cleanliness.
- Contributed to TB awareness during a TB outbreak, reducing its impact
- Increased local awareness about Seasonal and Swine Flu Prevention
- Carried out the Irish Heart Foundation's Stroke Awareness Campaign
- Hepatitis awareness and survey work supporting the planning of a mass Hepatitis screening and vaccination programme in partnership with prison health care and St. James Hospital
- Advocacy work in setting up unit based nursing, primary care systems improvements such as the allocated days for GP appointments and the medications "in-possession" system
- Noticeable improvement in trust, communication and relationships amongst prisoners and with staff

- IRC volunteers ensure that minority groups and foreign nationals are accessed for health awareness and have produced multilingual posters and provided information sessions.
- The groups are able to provide evidence of impact about their work within their local community as well as gain valuable skills in conducting and analysing survey information.
- Volunteers at Wheatfield have instigated an important prisoner support network particularly aimed at 'lifers'
- An awareness of the Red Cross, its principles and work that was previously unknown. These are adapted for a prison environment e.g. 'What does Humanity mean in a prison context in terms of how people relate to each other?'
- The concurrent activities of classroom learning AND the implementation of projects is working well.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Won the World Health Organisation 2011 Award for Best Practice in Prison Health

LESSONS LEARNED

- All prisoner volunteers have expressed views of being personally empowered and recognising changes in themselves directly as a result of the programme (see attachment 2).

CREATING SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH TRAINING OF TRAINERS FOR CBHFA

- This is resulting in qualified volunteer inmates taking on the role of teaching new volunteers and supervising their project work, thus creating sustainability of the project in each of the three prisons.

CBHFA SUPPORTING CHANGE IN THE IRISH PRISON SERVICE (IPS)

The Irish Prison Service (IPS) is going through a period of change where it's Strategic Goals and Aims will make a dramatic change to how custodial care is administered in Ireland and the programme fits very well into these with its community and voluntary service focus. The Irish Red Cross will work towards identifying how volunteer inmates can continue to contribute to their community after they leave prison. It may be possible to look at ways in which new plans to use community service as an alternative to imprisonment can also be linked into the partnership between the Irish Red Cross, Vocational Education Committee and the Irish Prisons Service.

Finally, at a time of fiscal constraint and shortages of healthcare staff, it provides the means by which IPS can still provide for health education and awareness as part of the 2004 Health Care Standards.

Footnote: The Irish Red Cross agrees to have prisoners become special status Irish Red Cross (IRC) Volunteer Inmates within a prison. This is on the condition that on release from prison, if the volunteer wishes to continue volunteering with the IRC, they must apply in the normal way as a member of the public through membership application, and Garda (police) vetting forms. It will then depend on the nature of the criminal offence what action is taken in this regard.

Community Based Health & First Aid *in Action*

Summary of Modules & Topics

7 Modules, some compulsory, others optional depending on the health needs identified

- Modules 1, 4 topics
 - The International Red Cross Red Crescent's history and organizational structure, Emblems, Seven Fundamental Principles, National Red Cross Society, Community Based Health & First Aid (CBHFA) *in action* volunteer.
- Module 2, 4 topics.
 - Communication and building relationships, volunteers identify groups and meet with potential partners for the CBHFA programme, implement an awareness-raising meeting to inform the community, promote CBHFA *in action* activities.
- Module 3, 8 topics.
 - Assessment of the community by volunteers through direct observation and community mapping, identify and prioritize health, first aid and safety issues, develop a CBHFA action plan, learn specific skills and knowledge based on needs identified during the assessment, report on activities in the community.
- Module 4, 20 topics.
 - First Aid (National Award FETAC level 5), volunteers learn how to assess, plan, implement and evaluate first aid for various injuries and illnesses, practice communicating injury prevention messages with members of their community.
- Module 5, 2 topics.
 - Major emergencies and how that may affect the community, preventing and responding to epidemics.
- Module 6, 16 topics.
 - Disease prevention and health promotion including Nutrition, Immunization and Vaccination Campaigns, Safe water, Hygiene and Sanitation, Diarrhoea and Dehydration, Acute Respiratory Infections, HIV and Sexually Transmitted Infections, Reducing Stigma and Discrimination, Tuberculosis, Influenza. Volunteers support the community to adopt healthy behaviours.
- Module 7, 4 topics.
 - Supplementary topics you may wish to include in order to provide community education and assistance, for example, volunteers learn about safe blood and excessive substances use

The projects that are undertaken by the IRC Volunteer Inmates either emerge from the Community Assessment in Module 3 or as a result of a Health Emergency that arises

Impact of the Irish Red Cross Prison Programme on the Volunteer Inmates

Wheatfield Volunteer Inmates group outputs

<u>Before CBHFA in Action</u>	Levels of Thinking	<u>After Completing CBHFA in Action</u>
Just do my jail time, no goal - CEO of my own company. Take as much as I could. Limiting to the confines of the prison.	Goals	Have a better and brighter future. Can't wait to give my knowledge to the community. I can do something good. Do lots of voluntary work and give back to the community by volunteering my skills and time
Did not know who I was. A waster – worker, business man. Did what suited me. Limited sense of freedom. Independent, self-reliant. Careful with relationships	Identity	Positive – Know someone who can do some good. Study things. Volunteer attending school. Freedom of mind and body. Willing to help people more. Unlimited goals – the sky is the limit!
Not much, no beliefs. Go for pension in 45 years. Look after No. 1. Repressed – stifled. Myself, family and loyalty. I am the only person I can trust.	Beliefs and Values	I believe in myself now. I can do better. Do more volunteer work – money is not important. Help other people. Less selfish. Listening, loyalty to the team. I value life!
Surprised, didn't think I had any capabilities. Not capable of doing anything. Wouldn't speak in a group. Always putting myself down	Capabilities	Believe in myself. Mathematics and computer skills. Can get up and speak unlimited. Take criticism and recognizes limitations.
Messer, working, self-centred, repressed, personal rewards	Behaviours	Well behaved. Thinking of others' needs. Rewards no longer important.
Dull, dark, dirty, no care, no respect	Environment	Brighter, improved community - something I want

Cloverhill Volunteer Inmates group outputs

<u>Before CBHFA in Action</u>	Levels of Thinking	<u>After Completing CBHFA in Action</u>
Little or no goals – just get by without trouble.	Goals	To find a structure to influence others and your environment.
Being a prisoner	Identity	Being respected for views
Look after number ONE. Don't get involved. Don't rock the boat.	Beliefs and Values	Self belief. Desire to help. Willing to negotiate
Limited to previous life. Not appropriate	Capabilities	To communicate. Plan, negotiate. Help others be assertive.
Self-centred	Behaviours	Willing to help. Communicate. Listen and work in a group
Dirty kip – no interest	Environment	Cleaner with more hope

Shelton Abbey Volunteer Inmates group outputs

<u>Before CBHFA in Action</u>	Levels of Thinking	<u>After Completing CBHFA in Action</u>
Help try new things Nothing	Goals	Self improvement. Improved environment Realizing future plans
Student, selfish, uncaring, independent, facilitator prisoner	Identity	Red Cross volunteer Active member of my community
You get what you give	Beliefs and Values	The power of change. More to gain
Try new things. Learning things	Capabilities	Planning, Organization skills, Group Skills. Changing the future
Treat people the way they treat me Work for myself independently	Behaviours	Care about community More respect and well organized More actively involved.
Ok, Dirty, Separate	Environment	Cleaner community