

SOLIDARITY AND COMPASSION. PRISONERS AS HPC VOLUNTEERS IN POLAND BRASOV, ROMANIA, 2018

**ZOSTAŃ WOLONTARIUSZEM
W HOSPICJUM!**



WHAT – Wolontariat Hospicyjny jako narzędzie
uczenia Akceptacji i Tolerancji
dla osób opuszczających placówki penitencjarne

Hospicjum
to też Życie

ul. PLO
20-033 Toruń

Rev. prof. dr. hab. Piotr Krakowiak
pkrakow@umk.pl



**NICOLAUS COPERNICUS
UNIVERSITY
IN TORUŃ**

PRISONERS AS HOSPICE VOLUNTEERS IN POLAND

Since 1998: a programme called *BONA* has been used. Women serving imprisonment volunteer for a nursing home, where they take care of intellectually and physically disabled children. Convicts as volunteers were introduced into social and health care institutions

Since 2002: the penal institution and Hospice in Gdańsk have been cooperated in a project of hospice voluntary work for the convicted.

2015 – 41 HPC HOUSES AND OVER 100 NURSING HOMES WITH CONVICTS AS VOLUNTEERS IN POLAND



Convicts as hospice-palliative care volunteers

2003-2013: 10 years of good experiences – cooperation of hospice with detention center in Gdansk (semi-open penitentiary institution)

2008-2009: National pilot program with 15 hospices and 15 semi-open detention structures, has given a chance to the best, carefully selected prisoners, who after training became hospice volunteers

2009 - Program received first prize from Council of Europe „THE CRISTAL SCALE OF JUSTICE” for the best program of social rehabilitation of prisoners into the society in Europe

2009-2012: 30 hospices and over 100 Nursing Homes in Poland continue cooperation with local Detention Centers in volunteering

P. Krakowiak et al., Prisoners as palliative care volunteers in Poland, EJPC, 2012; 19(5), 246-251.

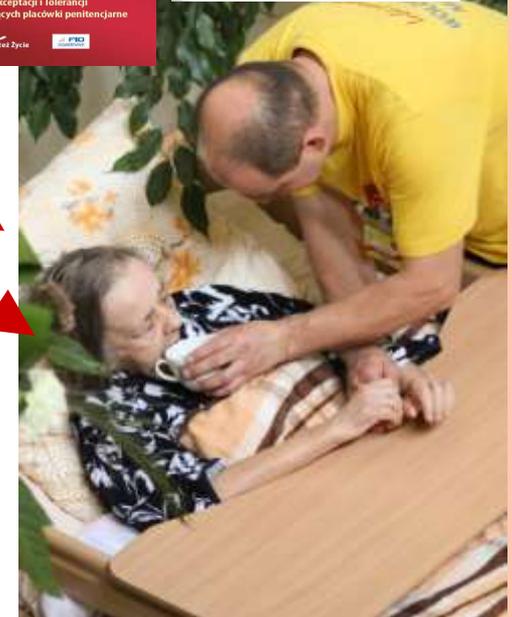


PRISONERS AS HOSPICE VOLUNTEERS

WHAT (Hospice Voluntary Work as a Tool of Acceptance and Tolerance for People Leaving Penal Institutions). UE funded project in 2007-2008.



Prisoners cannot be trusted



Convicts as HPC volunteers

PRISONERS AS HOSPICE VOLUNTEERS

In June 2009 Poland was awarded a prestigious prize 'The Crystal Scales of Justice' by The European Commission and The Council of Europe for a project called *Voluntary service of the convicted in Poland* implementing an innovative form of cooperation among prisons, hospices and social welfare homes.

A distinguishing feature of this awarded project was a nationwide programme called *WHAT (hospice voluntary work as a tool of acceptance and tolerance for people leaving penal institutions)*.

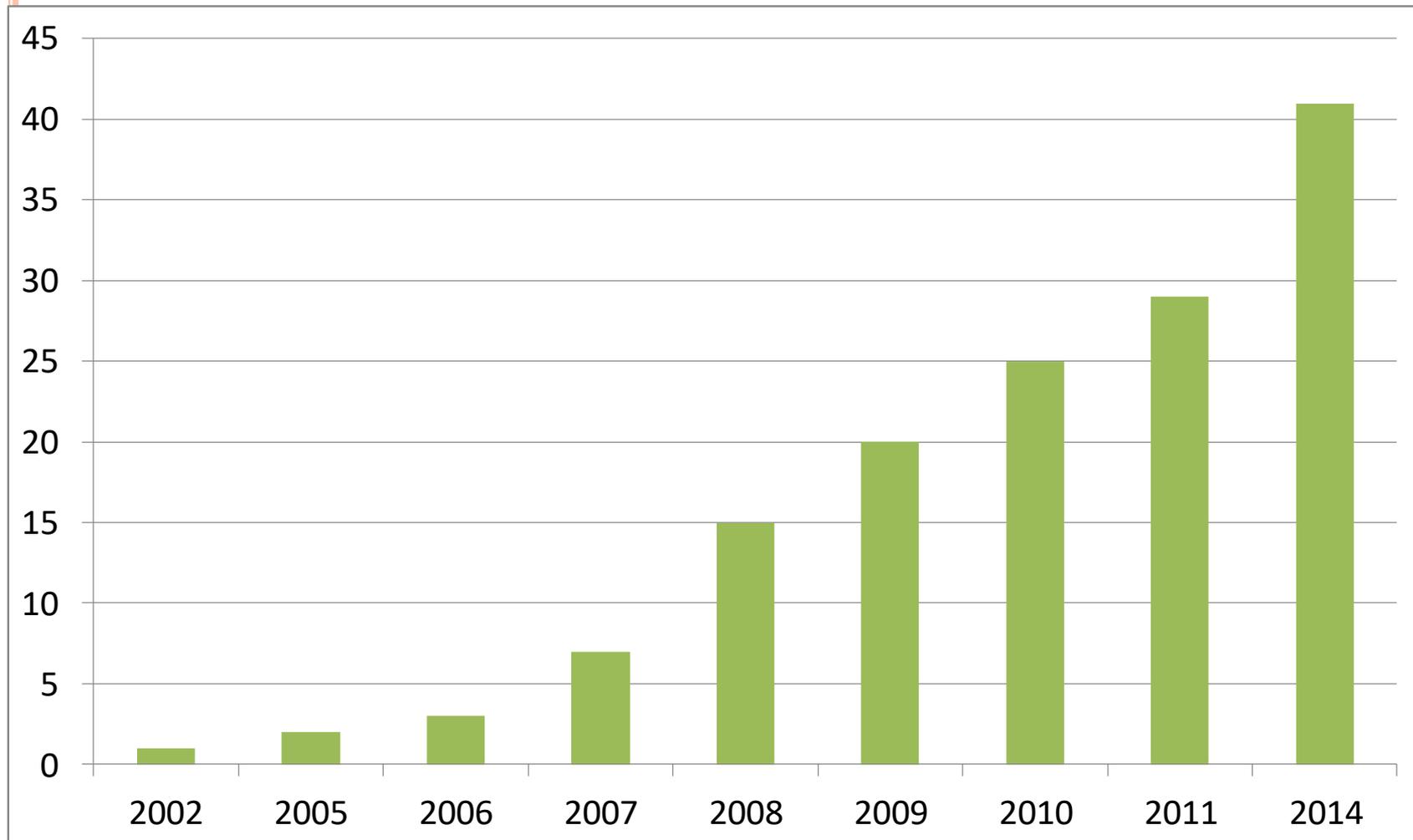




Hospice is a terrible death house



THE DYNAMICS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF COOPERATION BETWEEN PENITENTIARY UNITS AND HOSPICE-PALLIATIVE CARE CENTRES IN POLAND (2002-2014)



THE POSITIVE EFFECTS OF HOSPICE VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES OF PRISONERS

The programme provides prisoners with rehabilitation opportunities and supports limiting the isolation of people suffering from social exclusion.

It creates opportunities for its participants to **increase their self-acceptance and self-confidence** as well as acceptance by others.

Teamwork has a positive influence on the improvement and formation of interpersonal relations and openness, and provides the convicted with abilities to coexist in the society thanks to their relationships with people, who are free.

It is also of significant importance to show them **how to help others**, how to **form the sense of responsibility** for another man, and how to **improve sensitivity to his needs**.

It is also important to **overcome negative prejudices and stereotypes** against people deprived of their freedom in the community of hospice workers and volunteers.



THE STUDY OF THE MEANING OF LIFE AMONG THE PRISONERS OF THE PENAL INSTITUTION IN GDAŃSK AND IN ELBLĄG (2012, 2017)

The purpose of the study:

Focusing on the core of the meaning of life the aim of this study is to:

- characterize the meaning of life among prisoners doing voluntary work for a hospice, and those not involved in volunteering;
- conduct qualitative characteristics of the meaning of life among the prisoners involved in the study.

The study had been done twice – in 2012 and in 2017. In both we have a group of prisoners who do not work in a hospice (13 subjects) and a group of prisoners who work in hospice (13 subjects).

Due to the preliminary nature of this research and a small group of subjects, the description of the study will be a qualitative analysis of the results obtained.



METHOD

The study used the **PIL (*Purpose in Life*) questionnaire** by J. C. Crumbaugh and L. T. Maholic adapted by Z. Płużek. This test is based on the assumptions of the theory by V. E. Frankl. Its full version consists of three parts: A, B and C.

Part A consists of 20 questions regarding the need for the meaning of life.

Part B consists of 14 unfinished sentences, which should be completed with the first thought which comes to the subject's mind after having read each of them. In this analysis the categories including the most frequent answers are isolated.

In the final part of the test (C) the respondents are instructed to write a few sentences regarding their own aspirations, ambitions and objectives of life.

Parts B and C PLT undergo only the qualitative analysis of the data obtained.

Participating in this study was voluntary and anonymous.



THE QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF PART A PLT (2012)

In the first category *The objectives of life* both groups express clear aims and aspirations.

There are also no significant differences in the category *Self-evaluation* as all prisoners describe themselves as enthusiastic towards life. However, while analysing their responsibility, the subjects from the first group indicate more moderate intensity of this feature than the subjects from the second group.

The category *Responsibility and freedom* shows further similarities of responses. The majority of subjects claim that every man entertains the freedom of choice throughout his whole life. They also express experiencing the feeling of directing and controlling their own lives.



THE QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF PART A PLT (2012)

The differences between the two groups can be only noticed while analysing some of the responses.

The most significant difference can be seen in the category *The meaning of life*. The prisoners – volunteers marked more positive answers than the prisoners not involved in volunteering.

In the category *The evaluation of their own live*, the prisoners – volunteers gave more moderate answers, describing their lives as average, in comparison with the responses provided by the prisoners from the first group.

In the category *The attitude to death and suicide* more differences can be noticed. Prisoners – volunteers assessed positively their preparation in case of death and expressed the lack of fear of dying. Two of them admitted that they were unprepared for and terrified of death. The majority of prisoners not involved in hospice volunteering described themselves as prepared for death. Only two of them expressed a negative attitude towards their own preparation for dying.



THE RESULTS OBTAINED IN PART A PLT (2012)

Intervals of results obtained	Przedziały nasilenia poczucia sensu życia Intricate ranges of feeling sense of life	The percentage of people in the survey (%)	
		1st group	2nd group
131-140	Very high	14,3	14,3
111-130	High	28,6	57,1
90-110	Average	42,8	28,6
80-89	Reduced	14,3	0
60-79	Low	0	0
20-59	Very low	0	0



THE PRISONERS - VOLUNTEERS ABOUT HIS WORK IN HOSPICE (2008)

Convicted - volunteers in the hospice openly say that working with the dying and dying affects change their thinking and behavior.

They are proud of being volunteers.

They admit that this experience caused a change in the hierarchy of personal values.

They talk about changes in the approach to life, other people, and the fact that they accept these changes.

They do not return to commit crimes.

They return to the hospice after leaving the penitentiary.

They become full-time hospice workers.

These are arguments supporting the idea that by creating opportunities to experience helping others, we give the condemned - a volunteer a chance to return to society as a person with a mature, responsible, integrated personality.



THE PRISONERS - VOLUNTEERS ABOUT THEIR WORK IN HOSPICE



"Thanks to this experience in a hospice I can prove that I am a normal person and I deserve a second chance in life! I show that I can do something good and honest"

"In my life, since I work in a hospice, a lot has changed. I'm more patient, understanding, nicer, I have a different approach to older people and others. This job helped me to further thoughts what I can do with my life in the future."

THE PRISONERS - VOLUNTEERS ABOUT MOTIVATION TO WORK IN HOSPICE

MOTIVATION FOR VOLUNTARY CONVICTED

Willingness to help others

Acquire qualifications suitable for living in the wild

Spiritual transformation

Personal experiences (severe family illness)

**Alleviation of boring life during the punishment by contacting
people in the wild**

Take on the challenge and prove yourself and your other values.

(Survey - Hospice, Gdansk, 2012)



HOSPICE WORKERS ABOUT CONVICTS-VOLUNTEERS (2017)

- "I think this is the best way I could think of. This is the place that transforms them, it does not really transform. Of course one more, the other less. But he was, for example, Mariusz. He was hired here at all because he was so great. After being punished, here until another job was found, he was employed. In fact, he did so with such devotion. ,,
- "They value this life I think they appreciate and it is their most transformative, because I always admired them above all for this approach. Because it is difficult sometimes, these intimate activities, it is a matter of a certain bad smell, it is something that would seem that men, so hard will have a problem with it. And here they are, they have patience. There is such a lady with Alzheimer and we really sometimes lack patience because it is a person with very advanced disease. She was terribly difficult. And in fact, most of the patience was for her one of the convicts,, 

HOSPICE WORKERS ABOUT CONVICTS-VOLUNTEERS (2017)

- "They definitely increase their sensitivity to another person. They learn to enter into interpersonal relationships. This place teaches humility, they appreciate it themselves. ,,
 - "And I think the prisoners also see that life is important and that helping other people gives you a lot of fun. ... they also appreciate the value of the family because we often have single patients here. ,,
 - "It may not be a rule, but at least a few such cases that you are condemned to the max, enter into this volunteering and relationship, so much so that they even take care of the graves of those homeless people they care so much here. Some intimacy. ,,
 - "I'm built with the attitude of the convicts, they are often surprised by my empathy and commitment to work."
- 

Solidarity and compassion. Prisoners as HPC volunteers in Poland Brasov, Romania, 2018

THANK YOU

Rev. prof. dr. hab. Piotr Krakowiak

pkrakow@umk.pl



NICOLAUS COPERNICUS
UNIVERSITY
IN TORUŃ