

Themes for abstracts - 9<sup>th</sup> international conference of the EFRJ Leiden, 22-24 June 2016

**'Realising Restorative Justice: Human Rights and Personal Realities'**

Deadline for the call for abstracts: 31 March 2016

**1. Human rights and restorative justice**

This theme invites RJ and human rights advocates to engage in a dialogue concerning different notions and issues relevant for both fields. For example, how does the notion of justice appear from a human rights and a RJ perspective? How to reconcile the impunity discourse of human rights advocates with RJ values and principles? What is the place of victims and redress in human rights court proceedings? What are the links between RJ, transitional justice, peacebuilding, community work? Is RJ a need, a right, and/or a duty? If RJ is seen as a human right, what would this imply in practice for institutions? Looking at criminal justice procedures, how can RJ ensure that offenders' and victims' rights are equally ensured?

**2. Dignity and equality – RJ and vulnerable groups**

How can RJ contribute to the protection, support and empowerment of all human beings, especially if vulnerable, in our societies? Although international and European human rights instruments call for equality and dignity of all human beings, in practice, certain vulnerable groups still don't have access to these rights. The focus of this theme is on the needs of different vulnerable groups (e.g. children, women, people with disabilities, victims, prisoners, minority groups, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers) and the role of RJ practices in recognising their needs and in supporting access to their rights. Workshops can be initiated around themes like RJ in cases of domestic violence, in cases of sexual offending and/or RJ and children's rights.

**3. Liberty and access to justice – RJ and detention**

What role can RJ play in situations when access to justice and security are uncertain or unattainable? According to international and European human rights instruments, life, liberty, justice and security are core values to be granted to all human beings. Still, in some parts of the world, inhuman treatment, arbitrary detention, and even exile, are common practices. The focus of this theme is on different types of limitations of freedom and detention centres present in our societies in the context of criminal justice (e.g. prisons, house arrest), the welfare system (e.g. educational institutions, rehabilitation centres, psychiatric institutions), or administrative procedures (e.g. reception or deportation centres for undocumented migrants), and the potential of RJ in such a context, either to solve concrete conflicts or to organise an institution.

VICTIMS, OFFENDERS, COMMUNITY

#### **4. Freedom of movement and protection from persecution – RJ and the refugees**

What role can RJ play in addressing the new challenges in relation to the treatment of refugees in Europe? How can RJ be used at the preventive and reactive levels? International and European human rights instruments mention the right to freedom of movement and residence in each country, the right to leave and return to a country, the right to seek asylum to escape persecution. In practice, these rights may not be granted. Every day, all over the world, people leave their homes to improve their economic situation, pursue their education or to escape from persecution and armed conflicts, torture or extreme poverty. After a long and dangerous journey, people may experience exploitation, discrimination, racist behaviours, even slavery and detention. How can RJ practices be used to encourage social dialogue around these issues and between all the stakeholders without stigmatizing or excluding different voices?

#### **5. Security, justice and prohibition of discrimination – RJ and radicalisation**

How can RJ approaches address especially dangerous or even frightening phenomena such as terrorism, extreme violence, and radicalization, and their aftermath? How can RJ be implemented at the preventive and reactive levels? Among the many causes of terrorism and radicalization, it seems that 'social exclusion' may play a role in making some individuals more vulnerable to violent extremism. The most common practices to fighting terrorism and radicalization are the intensification of surveillance and an increase in security measures. This theme would like to explore whether and how RJ can offer alternative approaches including a possible role for civil society in addressing these challenges.

#### **6. Education, the arts and cultural life – RJ and creativity**

What creative methods and tools can be used in RJ to inform, educate and interact with conflicting parties and the broader public? The themes that we explore in this conference challenge some of the methods and the individual focus of RJ, and therefore call for creative thinking in expanding and multiplying our methods and tools. This theme focuses on the role of the arts, social media, documentaries, filmmaking, websites and other digital platforms can have in encouraging restorative dialogue between conflicting parties, decreasing social distance between people and promoting the right to freedom of speech. Human rights education can be part of it. Furthermore, methods or restorative works that go beyond mediation and conferencing and that focus on collective social conflicts remain interesting to explore.