

European Forum for Restorative Justice

Editorial

We begin 2012 with an issue focusing on victims and policing. Martin Jelínek provides an interesting account of co-operation between probation services in different countries, between state and voluntary sector organisations and between the Czech government and local providers of services. For those who are inclined to think that moving forward in restorative justice is likely to be slow and beset by many obstacles, this offers a refreshing example of how co-operation can bring about remarkably rapid change in attitudes among professionals, politicians and the general public. The responses of victims in this study also remind us of the need for a holistic response to victims' needs, not one based solely on the offence, something demonstrated forty years ago in the treatment of twins who had been victims of appalling domestic abuse in what was then Czechoslovakia (Koluchová 1972).

Focusing on a single organisation Martin Wallwork describes how a police service in the UK, seeing the progress with restorative justice being made elsewhere, decided to introduce restorative justice practices into the day-to-day work of all those who deal with incidents. They focused first on minor offences but also offered mediation in some more serious cases and plan a major expansion in what they offer. Adopting restorative justice has brought greater victim satisfaction and a reduction in their costs. He reminds us that police forces have often been at the forefront in the adoption of restorative justice perhaps because police officers have the sort of day-to-day contact with victims which few other people do and so recognise the strengths of restorative justice in enabling them to support victims more effectively.

Sónia Sousa Pereira describes another example of inter-country co-operation, in this case involving the Cape Verde Islands and with more of a focus on the training offered. Like the previous example, the focus was on enabling people to deal with minor incidents while making them aware of more formal resources and when to call on them. She reminds us that most victims and offenders come from the same families or communities and that the offence involves a breach of family or community relationships which needs to be healed, something which restorative justice is better placed to offer than criminal proceedings.

Finally, Karen Madsen provides a salutary warning against over-optimism with her account of the obstacles that have stood in the way of widespread adoption of VOM in Denmark, from ambivalent attitudes among the police to financial cutbacks at just the time when restorative justice appeared poised to move forward. Such experiences can be very depressing for those involved but they need to take comfort from the experiences of other members of the EFRJ who have faced similar problems and found ways of overcoming them.

In the 1990s much of the focus on restorative justice was on more effective ways of dealing with offenders,

not least because in some countries incarceration rates were rising and community sentences perceived as ineffective. In others restorative justice had proved to be more effective in reducing re-offending than traditional punishments. Only after the start of the new millennium did studies of the impact of restorative justice on victims begin to proliferate and its value in healing victims begin to be acknowledged. Most minor offenders grow out of offending and most serious offenders do not re-offend regardless of whether they get any formal 'treatment' but victims can remain scarred for years after the offence because no-one has responded appropriately to their needs.

For countries with adversarial systems of justice, restorative justice presents a particular challenge because the norm is to keep victim and offender completely separate. This prevents the offender from offering the victim what the victim most wants – emotional restoration (Strang 2002). For countries with inquisitorial systems, the challenge is perhaps less. However, both systems take the responsibility for healing the breach that has taken place away from the victim and the offender. Restorative justice offers an opportunity for the victim and offender the opportunity to take on that responsibility. Not all victims and offenders will want to do so but that is no reason for denying it to those who do.

Whatever the system, the attitudes of those who meet the victim at the point when they have become aware that they are a victim are likely to influence the victim's immediate responses and their later attitudes to whether they wish to be part of a restorative justice process. Victims often find themselves marginalised from criminal proceedings and left without any information on the progress of the case. If police officers are already sensitised to the needs of victims, whether the victims choose restorative justice or criminal proceedings, victims will have begun to experience a positive response to their needs on which others can build, whatever the later process. Using the metaphor of someone pushing someone else off a cliff, criminal proceedings often pay more attention to the offender at the top of the cliff than to victim at the bottom. Restorative justice pays attention both to the victim's immediate needs and to their longer term desire that the offender will not re-offend.

Robert Shaw
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Restorative Justice – Victim Support and Counselling: A Project in the Czech Republic

Project Goals and Vision

In 2011 and 2012, the Probation and Mediation Service (PMS) of the Czech Republic in partnership with the Association of Civic Advice Centres (ACAC) and the London Probation Trust (LPT) implemented a project called 'Restorative justice – victim support and counselling'. The project is financed under the EU Programme 'Criminal Justice' with contributions from the Czech state budget. The long-term goal of the project is to gradually develop a functional network of services for victims. One of the most important aspects of the project is the cooperation between the state and non-governmental sectors. This current project follows on from another project (called 'specialized comprehensive advisory for victims of crime') that started in 2007.

Project Partners

PMS is a state organization providing services for victims and offenders in 74 locations within the Czech Republic and is enshrined in law. PMS was founded in 2000 by law nr. 257/2000 Sb. The Association of Civic Advice Centres is a non-governmental organization founded in 1997 representing 40 civic advice centres (66 together with branches and contact places) responding to approximately 70,000 enquiries a year. The idea of the cooperation between PMS and the ACAC is to use the best practice of both types of organization, combine the particular activities they provide and create functional cooperation in project localities.

Counselling for victims

At the start of the project, ten locations within the Czech Republic were selected. The locations were equally spread in all three main regions of the Czech Republic – Bohemia (western and central region), Moravia (south-eastern region) and Silesia (north-eastern region). In each project locality – city/town – one PMS office and one Civic Advice Centre was selected for the project. There were in total 20 counselling sites, which included: Prague; Hradec Králové; Mladá Boleslav-Nymburk; Písek; Jihlava; Ostrava; Opava; Havířov-Karviná; Valašské Meziříčí-Vsetín; and Uherské Hradiště.

The project was launched in each of the sites on the 1st of April 2011, which involved 19 advisers from PMS offices and 18 advisers from Civic Advice Centres. In the first three months of the project the advisers reported 450 contacts with victims (by telephone, by e-mail or in person – 100 in April; 164 in May; and 186 in June). Advisers also reported 299 meetings with clients (57 in April; 121 in May; and 121 in June), in 50 cases they were re-consulted. The counselling was successful right from the beginning of the project. Clients were contacting the centres with a wide range of questions concerning mostly these topics:

- Issues relating to criminal proceedings and the rights of victims (how to determine whether an incident is a criminal offence or not; how to file a complaint; how to obtain information about the investigation; how to write an appeal; information about damages; information about not paying maintenance; information about mediation; the possibility of meeting with the offender; non-judicial conflict resolution; debtor-creditor relationships; information on enforcement proceedings; criminal and civil law).

- Issues affecting the psyche of the victims (how to deal with the situation when the offender refuses responsibility; psychological harm; feelings of helplessness; anger; expressing emotions; fear; hearing one's life story)
- Providing psychological support as well as accompaniment during the trial, stabilization of the family environment.
- Helping survivors of victims of crime.
- Helping in situations where the offender and victim are close persons, impact of this situation on family.
- Information about the forms of social assistance: social services – social benefits, housing, financial problems.
- Domestic violence: communication with the reported abuser; refuge accommodation; stalking.
- Ensuring aftercare with specialists (psychologists/therapists), frequent requests for the free services of a lawyer.

While PMS focuses more on criminal proceedings and facilitating restorative processes such as mediation, Civic Advice Centres specialize more on financial and debt counselling. The crucial aspect of the cooperation between PMS CR and ACAC therefore is the possibility of referring particular cases between the two centres in one project location according to the nature of the client's case. If necessary, different organizations (such as the police, the social care department, the social care for children department, other NGOs and so on) are involved in particular cases in the project locality.

Victim Liaison Officers

An important part of the project is the introduction of Victim Liaison Officers (VLOs). The idea came from our project partner LPT who is based in England where the use of VLOs is widespread. Two project locations – Havířov and Hradec Králové – were selected as sites to pilot the use of this new service. In spring 2011 Mrs Aneta Fukalová was selected as the VLO for Havířov and in Hradec Králové Mrs Marie Švadlenová was selected. They were both trained by Ms. Angela Bailey – a VLO from the LPT – between 11th July and 13th July 2011.

VLOs are required to provide information and coordinate services that are offered to victims of crime by the state and NGOs, which include mapping of potential risks to victims of crime, especially in cases of serious crime. Another task is to establish cooperation with relevant stakeholders and determine what services for victims these organizations provide or are interested in providing, maintaining contacts with representatives of these institutions and linking them to each other.

In late 2011 VLOs created multi-disciplinary teams (which include the VLO, representatives of Court, Prosecutors Office, Police, local authorities and NGOs) that analyse the monthly published statistics of the local PMS, Civic Advice Centre and Police; monitor crime ratios in the particular area; analyse the problems of victims visiting PMS and Civic Advice Centres; and try to connect all the organisations involved in the area into a network which can offer appropriate help to victims of crime.

Improving the professional approach to victims of crime

One of the main tasks of the project is improving the professional approach to victims of crime. In October 2011 one of the major project activities – 'Workshops for professional public' – was successfully completed in Hradec Králové and Havířov

in cooperation with the London Probation Trust. The aim of the workshops was to introduce the activities of the new VLOs in the particular localities and also introduce the work and mission of the British VLOs who were the inspiration for the introduction of the new service in the Czech Republic. Ms. Angela Bailey (LPT) together with her Czech colleagues presented the opportunities and benefits of VLOs in the Czech Republic. The workshops were held under the auspices of the President of the Constitutional Law Committee of the Senate Mrs Miroslav Antl (Hradec Králové) and Vice-President of the Committee of Health and Social Policy of the Senate, Radek Sušil MD.

Another important project activity will be held between May 16 and May 18, 2012 in the Justice Academy in Kroměříž. An 'International Czech - British seminar' for selected representatives of authorities active in criminal proceedings (police officers, prosecutors and judges) in the project locations will be held under the auspices of the Minister of Justice, Mr Jiří Pospíšil. The purpose of the seminar is to improve their professional approach and skills when dealing with victims of crime, thus preventing re-victimization. Several guests will be participating as well as advisers from the project activities. The seminar will include among other things a lecture by former Scotland Yard Detective Inspector John Harwood and a panel discussion with representatives of the Police, Attorney's office, Court and victims of crime.

The education of advisers

It was clear right from the beginning of the project that new activities will put pressure on the advisers involved. All project partners agreed on the need to improve the skills of the advisers through regular training and seminars. At the beginning of the project, all 37 advisers were given 'Introduction training' between 28th February and 4th April 2011, which included:

- Introduction to law (criminal and public law)
- Introduction to working with victims
- Impact of crime on a victim's life
- Difference between counselling and psychotherapy

Advisers can also use the 'National Guidebook for Advisers' created especially for working with victims of crime. On the 28th and 29th June 2011, a second course for advisers involved in the project took place in the Palace of Justice in Prague. In total 29 representatives of PMS and ACAC participated in the training called the 'Development of professional competencies in working with victims of crime'. This was led by Mrs Martina Venglářová and Mr Petr Stepanik and participants were trained in the following topics:

- Professional interviews with victims of crime
- Work with victims of sexually motivated crimes
- Work with loss and grief, the impact of crime on the victim's life
- Stalking – forms, impact on victim, recommendations for advisers
- Domestic violence – strategies to help victims of DV
- Principles of interviewing difficult clients

Participants especially appreciated the use of 'real life' examples by the course facilitators, particularly in relation to work with loss and grief. Supervisions are provided for all advisers every three months. The advisers are divided into two groups (Bohemian region with supervisions in Prague led by Mrs Martina Venglářová and supervisions for Moravian and Silesian region in Frýdek – Místek led by Mr Petr Stepanik) who are able to

discuss issues and experiences from their practice. VLO supervisions are led separately in Hradec Králové and Havířov every month.

PR for the project

One of the important tasks of the project was to inform the public about the activities provided in the project. The Minister of Justice Jiří Pospíšil together with the Director of PMS (Mr Pavel Stern) and the Director of ACAC (Mrs Stanislav Skalický) introduced the project and the information campaign to the public. The information billboard and leaflet campaign 'We will not turn our backs on you' was launched in January 2011. An external company chosen by tender created the design of the billboards; the same design was also used for the leaflets. On the 1st January 2011, the first part of the information campaign began in all project locations. Billboards were located in visible public places like supermarkets parking lots, locations around public transport stations, main streets and roads for one month. On the 15th January the second part of the information campaign was launched in public transport in all project locations. Leaflets were placed in buses and trams and circulated on different routes. The campaign attracted the attention of local media and several articles about the project were published with several interviews conducted with project advisers on local radio stations. The attention received more significance after a press conference with the Minister of Justice Mr Jiří Pospíšil was broadcast on Czech Television News Channel CT24 (20th January 2012). Thanks to the PR activities the demand for services provided by the project rose by nearly one hundred percent in January and February 2012 in comparison with the average for the year 2011.

Between the 1st April 2011 when the project was launched till the end of February 2012, Probation and Mediation Service offices and Civic Advice Centres involved in the project were contacted by 1158 new clients (in total 2332 contacts via e-mail, telephone or in person). The statistics show that most of the questions concerned these topics:

- Compensation for damage (25%)
- Information about criminal proceedings (21%)
- How to press charges or how to appeal (15%)
- Domestic violence (13%)
- Alimony/maintenance (7%)

Projected outcomes of the project

The main outcome of the project will be a functional network of services for victims, as well as a functional VLO service in two locations. PMS will also run a follow up programme aimed at victims of crime in the coming years using experience from the current project. One of the outcomes of the project will also be a Best Practice Manual which can be used as a guideline for countries where work with victims is not that developed and will offer methods and ideas how to make things work.

Martin Jelínek,
Project co-ordinator

Additional information can be found at:
www.restorativnijustice.cz

Newsflash: Update on EU Directive on Victims

Background

With a view to improving the position of victims in the criminal justice system the European Commission embarked on a widespread review of current EU policy documents including the Framework Decision on the Standing of Victims in Criminal Proceedings (2001). The Forum contributed to this review by, among other things, preparing a proposal document (November 2010 - available on www.euforumrj.org) and argued for references to restorative justice in any new policy initiative to reflect the positive evidence base for our work and include widely accepted fundamental principles of good practice. Based on this review the European Commission published a draft Directive on Victims for formal consultation on the 18th March 2011.

Forum Actions

The Forum actively participated in the formal consultation by:

- identifying strengths and weaknesses in the draft
- delivering a public response to the draft (available on website above) at a conference in Trier June 2011
- facilitating a presentation on the draft Directive by a representative of the European Commission at the Forum's seminar in Brussels in June 2011
- distributing newsflashes about the draft Directive to all our members and those associated with the Forum recommending clear actions to take in order to influence the final version
- preparing a formal response to the draft detailing our concerns and proposing concrete wording for an adequate regulation (November 2011 – available on our website above).
- expressing our views to all the MEPs on the LIBE and FEMM committees of the European Parliament
- meeting rapporteurs from the Parliament to inform them of our concerns

Restorative Justice Elements of the Draft Directive Recital 16 and Article 11 of the draft are about restorative justice. The Forum is relatively content with the measures in Article 11 to enable victims to participate safely in restorative justice services. We expressed

concerns about the negative presentation and the limiting definition of restorative justice. We know that some of our concerns regarding better definition, for example, have been incorporated into a revised draft. We have lobbied hard to include access to restorative justice as a right for victims and to retain the obligation on Member States to promote restorative justice but we are unable to confirm if the draft has been amended to take these into account.

Next Steps

The Parliament will vote on the Directive on the 27th March. After that, trilogues, that is, negotiations between the European Commission, the Council the European Union and European Parliament will commence on the 29th March. Three dates have been set for these negotiations, but the length of negotiations will depend on whether or not the Institutions can agree. The Danish EU Presidency is hopeful that the Directive will be agreed during their term but this may not happen by the end of June and Cyprus assumes Presidency from July. Regarding implementation, the Council is keen for a 4 years implementation period while the Commission is pushing for a 2 year implementation period, so nothing is decided yet.

Comment

The Forum welcomes the initiative of the European Commission but we are aware that any references to restorative justice in a policy on victims is necessary but not sufficient to deal with the broad perspective restorative justice brings to justice matters. The challenge for the restorative justice community in Europe is not only to adhere to the new Directive but also to work towards consensus on key elements that would ensure good restorative practice for offenders as well as victims.

Niall Kearney
Chair of the Board, Edinburgh March 2012

Readers' Corner

• **Crime, punishment and restorative justice: from the margins to the mainstream**, by Ross London (2011) proposes that restoration, and especially the restoration of trust, be viewed as the overarching goal of all criminal justice policies and practices. Within that context, he argues that punishment—far from contradicting the goal of restoration—is not only essential for the victim and the community, but also a necessary component for the reintegration of the offender.

• **Debating restorative justice**, by Chris Cunneen and Carolyn Hoyle (2011) explores the role that restorative justice should play in criminal justice from the two different perspectives of the authors. Carolyn Hoyle argues that communities and the state should be more restorative in responding to harms caused by

crimes, antisocial behaviour and other incivilities. She supports the exclusive use of restorative justice for many non-serious offences, and favours approaches that, by integrating restorative and retributive philosophies, take restorative practices into the 'deep end' of criminal justice. While acknowledging that restorative justice appears to have much to offer in terms of criminal justice reform, Chris Cunneen offers a different account, contending that the theoretical cogency of restorative ideas is limited by their lack of a coherent analysis of social and political power. He goes on to argue that after several decades of experimentation, restorative justice has not produced significant change in the criminal justice system and that the attempt to establish it as a feasible alternative to dominant practices of criminal justice has failed.

Police-led Restorative Justice in Durham, UK

Durham Police took up restorative intervention in 2010 after pilot schemes in other areas proved successful. Chief Inspector Colin Williamson, who led its introduction, said the force was attracted to the concept as it was very much a victim-focused approach:

It gives victims a chance to ask 'why me', which they rarely get if a case goes to court. Now the procedures are in place and working well. We want to get to the point where there is the potential for a restorative justice intervention for every victim of crime.

All Durham's frontline first response officers (those who deal with ongoing incidents) as well as staff based in neighbourhood policing teams have been trained to deal with level 1 offences – for example, less serious criminal damage. Around 20 neighbourhood-based officers have been trained as mediators, enabling them to deal with wider issues that may affect more than one individual and a further eight have qualified to 'train the trainers'. These officers are also equipped to deal with more complex cases, for example, burglaries or assaults. These interventions are co-ordinated with the local offender management unit.

Recent successes include: a teenager who broke several windows at his local youth centre, and as part of his reparation apologised and committed himself to joining in some of the activities run by the centre; a youth who damaged a car and was instructed by his parents to sell his Xbox to help pay for the damage; and a 13-year-old from Darlington, who agreed to pick up litter from a local park after he was caught throwing objects at moving cars.

A couple from Seaham spoke positively to the local media following their restorative justice meeting with a prolific offender who had crept into their house and stole the keys to their car:

I was expecting to meet this great big brute but when I saw him I just thought, 'poor bairn' [child]. You could walk past him in the street and not look at him twice. At the end of the meeting we were all drained but glad we went through it. Even if it only works with one in ten, it has to be worth trying. We know now that he didn't target us or his other victims specifically; he was just on the lookout to pinch anything to help pay for his drugs habit.

As well as providing increased victim satisfaction and confidence, restorative interventions are more cost-effective and take up less police time. The average time for a level 1 disposal is 50 minutes, compared with up to five hours for a traditional approach. Custody and bail times, as well as officer attendance at court are all reduced, re-offending

rates are lower and fewer offenders are criminalised for less serious matters.

'So far we have recorded more than 720 'positive outcomes' since we introduced restorative justice in Durham. But that still represents only a tiny fraction of all offences, so there is scope to expand it greatly. This is about dealing with what matters to local people and raising their confidence not only in the police, but the criminal justice system', said Chief Inspector Williamson.

After the successful introduction of restorative justice across Durham, police are planning to set up teams of volunteers to tackle a range of community issues. Detailed plans are being drawn up to recruit members of the community to serve on the new Neighbourhood Resolution Panels, which should be in place across County Durham and Darlington by the end of the year. The proposal is based on similar programmes being run in South Yorkshire, Norfolk and Somerset and all potential members will need to go through a Criminal Records Bureau check. If the plans go ahead, training will be carried out by 'Restorative Solutions', a not-for-profit community interest company. Mike Barton, Deputy Chief Constable of Durham provides the following explanation for this approach:

We are hoping to use our existing police volunteers to drive through the process of recruiting suitable panel members from across our communities. Our panels will represent community interests in restorative interventions, help prepare and facilitate conferences and supervise reparative activities. Low level crime and anti-social behaviour make an enormous impact on communities, destroying confidence and blighting lives. By giving local people the opportunity to play an active part in restorative solutions we can both address the needs of the victims and force the offenders to face up to the consequences of their actions. Modern day policing is all about reducing offending and changing people's lives for the better. We are no longer – if we ever were – a law enforcement agency only. Restoration for victims and communities is at the heart of what we do.

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Implementing Victim-Offender Mediation in Denmark

A handful of Danish policemen were introduced to restorative justice at the second European Forum conference in Oostende in 2002. Two years earlier, a small pilot scheme had been set in motion offering victim-offender mediation in 3 small police districts in Denmark. The pilot scheme was funded sufficiently for a delegation of not only policemen but also mediators and prosecutors to participate and the conference was a tremendous eye-opener to us all. Inspired, we went back with a better understanding of not only what we were already doing but with new ideas of what could be done.

This encouragement was much needed as it had not been easy to gain support for victim-offender mediation, neither politically nor within the police. Victim-offender mediation had met significant resistance at all levels and in spite of the enthusiasm of the involved policemen and mediators few cases (about 50 per year) were referred to victim-offender mediation. Victim-offender mediation in Denmark is offered as a supplement, not an alternative to court procedure, though participating in victim-offender mediation can be taken into consideration in sentencing.

When an evaluation of the organizational model was conducted in 2006, it found that the possibility of a reduced sentence was one reason why the police did not have a strong incentive to refer cases to victim-offender mediation. While there was a positive attitude towards the victim there was no similar feeling towards the offender in regard to victim-offender mediation. A positive outcome for the offender was actually seen as contrary to the core of police work and the time and resources spent on the referral procedures did not, in spite of positive feedback from the mediators, match the outcome. The evaluation rightly concluded that if victim-offender mediation was to be implemented successfully, the following elements had to be achieved:

- The referral process had to be institutionalized as part of ordinary police work and not be a resource-consuming appendix to other police work;
- Victim-offender mediation had to be given unambiguous political support; and
- A change of attitude within the police force through training and information was to be initiated by the management.

The pilot scheme lasted for more than ten years. It was kept alive by a few devoted police officers and mediators and although it was slowly withering away nobody dared close it down.

In 2010 legislation was drafted and the Act on Victim-Offender Mediation was finally passed. The responsibility for the implementation of nation-wide victim-offender mediation was placed within the National Police. However, this unfortunately coincided with the launch of an extensive

reform project of the police and the discovery of a significant financial deficit within the National Police and subsequent cutbacks. Last but not least strong political winds had for years had been blowing towards harsher punishment as the way towards reducing crime. All in all, not the best time to introduce the idea of restorative justice to either the police, the large new corps of lay mediators or the public.

Implementing victim-offender mediation anew was in fact like starting from scratch again, only this time in a situation of financial stringency. What was envisioned as a thriving national secretariat responsible for the development of restorative justice practices in Denmark became a lonely position of one police officer. What should have been an appointment of a full-time co-ordinator of victim-offender mediation in each police district was reduced to either part-time roles or, as was mostly the case, the task of coordination was required on top of the ordinary daily police work. The training offered to the police, as well as mediators, was insufficient and management poor.

Quite a few of the appointed co-ordinators resigned and were subsequently replaced. The general feedback from the police as well as the mediators sounded almost like an echo from the past: Without strong support from the management and substantial funding it is difficult to turn the ship around and change the attitudes of the police to becoming more restorative. As a result few cases were being referred to victim-offender mediation during the first year (2010) and the coordinators – regardless of their enthusiasm – had a hard time getting their colleagues on board.

Nevertheless, changes are underway. Slowly but surely information on the good results of victim-offender mediation is spreading and there is a growing interest in restorative justice, especially among the younger generation of the police force. As referral procedures are being established the number of referred cases is increasing and by now almost living up to the desired estimate. Whether this result will pave the way for further funding is yet unknown but hopefully one day soon the Danish police will again have the chance of participating and being inspired at a European Forum conference!

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The adoption of RJ and the role of the Police in Cape Verde

The Minister of the Home Affairs in Cape Verde (based on small communities along the ten islands located in the Atlantic Ocean) has supported a course for high graduates of the National Police in mediation techniques. This training, which has been offered twice, is viewed as a means to promote a paradigm shift in the role of the police towards conflict management and social relationships. Public safety is no longer an exclusive task of the State and restorative justice is viewed as promoting the strengthening of social bonds as stakeholders assume responsibility for the management of the public sphere – *res publica*. The strong communitarian and inclusive nature of society in the Cape Verde has meant that a restorative justice approach is considered to be quite appropriate for this context.

The main goal of the course was to provide the high graduates of the National Police with the proper skills to deal with crime and disorder in a restorative way, mainly in the framework of the new neighbourhood police model that is currently being implemented. It was not an ambition of this course to transform police officers into mediators; therefore the most spoken word during the course was “limits” – limits to the use of the techniques only to the cases and circumstances where it is suitable; limits deriving from the principle of legality; limits concerning the parties’ capacity to deal with conflict in a restorative way; limits related to the very object of the conflict.

The top-down approach was considered to be the most efficient way to spread the new paradigm of police intervention by means of on-the-job training. Each course was 70 hours long, combining theory and practice. The need for extra practice in a training environment was highlighted and some networking with the existing trained mediators that practice mediation within the Ministry of Justice project “Casas do Direito” (Houses of Law) was proposed. The first course took place in the island of S. Vicente, in the city of Mindelo, from 10-14 October 2011 in the Regional premises of the National Police. The second course was held in the capital of Cape Verde on the island of Santiago, in the city of Praia, from 30th October to 12th November 2011 in the premises of the National Police Training Centre.

Some major theoretical references were made to the work of Ivo Aertsen, Lode Walgrave, Martin Wright, Christa Pelikan, Howard Zehr, Tony Marshall, John Braithwaite, Kathleen Daily, and several others. The trainees were also introduced both to the maximalist and the purist approaches to restorative justice, as well as to the existing programmes related to police procedures, proceeding to a comparative analysis of systems. The idea was to provide them with the theoretical ground in order to enable them to make their own informed choices when implementing projects in this field.

In order to combine the theoretical approach with the practical reality of Cape Verde, the course had a Portuguese trainer (myself) and three more local mediators who provided relevant input to the course. A particular reference is due to Daniel Barros, who is assuming voluntarily the coordination of the mediation project in Cape Verde and who was a valuable facilitator on both courses.

The final presentation focused on the implementation of restorative practices within four potential neighbourhood police projects: 1) Safe Neighbourhood; 2) Safe Tourism; 3) Safe School; and 4) Violence Zero. The intent of this final presentation was to deliver a draft project to the Minister of the Home Affairs in order to put into practice all they have learned throughout the training, combining deliberative democracy processes with restorative approaches within the community based police work. At the same time, it was meant to be a product of the training, and, finally, a part of the evaluation process.

The results were outstanding considering the tough conditions the trainees had: 7 hours training per day during for 2 weeks; homework every day; and a final presentation. It required significant effort by the trainees to achieve the results they did. I often received calls late in the evening to provide feedback on the ideas that were arising. Everyday the groups arranged meetings to work on the final presentation after the 7 hours training day. It was thrilling to see their involvement and the growth of enthusiasm each day.

The best final presentation – chosen by the training group – was publicly presented, in the presence of the Minister of the Home Affairs, who was really happy with the results as she expressed the will to develop the draft project with the trainees.

Cape Verde has a rather strategic position - both on geographic and cultural grounds - for the EU, as it is one of the most European influenced African countries and, therefore, it is a privileged door to Africa. I believe that the European Forum for Restorative Justice could play an important role on the development of restorative practices in Cape Verde, either through the exchange of experiences and theoretical foundation either through consultation on future projects. Most probably, very soon we will have new associates to exchange experiences and maybe a new beautiful venue for an upcoming conference of the EFRJ.

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Events

Connecting People – Linking Victims, Offenders and Community, 14-16 June 2012, Helsinki, Finland. The 7th International Conference of the European Forum for Restorative Justice focuses on the potential of restorative justice to build bridges and repair conflicts between people. Victims and offenders are not the only ones affected by crime – frequently members of the community are greatly disturbed by violence, abuse and other crimes, but they rarely get to voice those concerns. Therefore, this conference seeks to provide a platform to explore the relationship between restorative justice and each of its key stakeholders – victims, offenders and communities. More information can be obtained from: <http://www.euforumrj.org/Activities/conferences.htm>

Justice for Victims: Cross-cultural perspectives on conflict, trauma and reconciliation, 20-24 May 2012, The Hague, Netherlands. The World Society of Victimology, together with the International Victimology Institute (INTERVICT) Tilburg, Victim Support Europe and the Leuven Institute of Criminology (LINC), are hosting the 14th International Symposium of the World Society of Victimology which invites victimology scholars, researchers, practitioners, teachers, and students from around the world to examine and discuss current and

emerging issues in the field. A number of workshops, roundtables and panel sessions on victims and restorative justice. More information may be found at: <http://www.14thsymposiumwsv.nl/home/>

Restorative Justice and Sexually Harmful Behaviour: learning from practice across Europe, 26 May 2012, Manchester, United Kingdom. AIM and the Restorative Justice Council are hosting a one day conference to examine from a European perspective the potential for the application of restorative approaches to cases of sexually harmful behaviour. The day consists of a short plenary to outline the issues around restorative practice in this area of sensitive and complex casework with a variety of workshops outlining how this has been taken forward in practice in England (AIM Project), Northern Ireland (Youth Conferencing Service), Denmark (The Janus Project) and Belgium (Bemiddelingsburo).

More information may be found at: <http://www.restorativejustice.org.uk/events>

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