



## WORKING GROUP ON RESTORATIVE SCHOOLS

The **Working Group on Restorative Schools** is focusing on the question of how restorative practice (the term usually used for the application of Restorative Justice values and principles applied in settings other than criminal justice) can be used in schools to build healthy relationships amongst all members of a school community and repair these relationships when they are damaged by challenging behaviors, conflict or crime.

From a restorative practice perspective, it is particularly important that the school environment is a place where children and adolescents can experience another way of managing their relationships with themselves and others, based on communicating their thoughts, feelings and needs. The example given by all staff in the way they interact with students teaches them how to deal with conflict and challenge in constructive ways, how to take responsibility when they get things wrong and to put things right. In these ways they learn to become responsible citizens who can make a change in our societies by spreading values such as connectedness, solidarity, responsibility, inclusion, core in restorative justice and restorative practice. Furthermore, it is important that staff, children and adolescents learn to think of conflict as an opportunity for learning and for change and not only as a threat.

This suggests an overall change of the school culture from a punitive and conservative approach to a restorative and innovative one. Schools adopting a restorative culture will engage the whole school community, beginning with the senior leadership team and the administration who will set the tone and be the models of best practice with their staff team, with families and with the students themselves.

For the restorative culture to flourish in a school a range of restorative practices can be introduced and modeled by leaders and staff, including one-to-one restorative conversations to address challenging behavior; pro-active circles to build community and trust in staffrooms and classrooms; restorative circles to address problems and conflicts as well as practices involving students as facilitators such as peer-mediation.

### The Working Group:

- Produces a short document explaining the potential contribution of restorative justice in this domain;
- Works together to develop a specific training of the EFRJ;
- Supports and encourages research on the potential application of restorative justice at schools;
- Commits to regular virtual meetings and exchange of emails;
- Can be consulted on this topic by EFRJ staff and members.
- Initiate project proposals on the topic.

**4-6 members** will compose the core team of the Working Group and they will be selected based on their experience, profession, motivation to participate, and country representation.

The deadline for applications is **7 September 2020**. We invite interested members to fill this form including a short bio and a short motivation note

