ALTERNATIVE

Justice and security through restorative justice approaches to conflicts in intercultural settings

Final report

This **final report** is based on the findings of the **FP7 Project ALTERNATIVE** (02/2012-01/2016), which looked into the possible use of restorative justice approaches when dealing with conflicts in intercultural settings. The project focused on theoretical research as well as action research with regard to social housing conflicts in **Austria**, a village with minorities in **Hungary**, and ethnic/societal/ political conflicts in **Serbia** and **Northern Ireland**.

Project ALTERNATIVE Developing alternative understandings of security and justice through restorative justice approaches in intercultural settings within democratic societies

Website www.alternativeproject.eu **Blog** projectalternative.wordpress.com **Films** alternativefilms.euforumrj.org

An executive summary

The ALTERNATIVE project (2012-2016) aimed to develop alternative understandings of justice and security through the implementation of restorative justice approaches in intercultural settings. As European societies are witnessing an increased diversity, including new phenomena such as the refugee crisis, extremism and terrorism, questions arise on how communities can cope with these new challenges. In public opinion, media and political discourses, the increasing diversity has often been portrayed as a threat to security, because of growing tensions and according to some even higher crime rates. Although criminological research does not provide evidence for the latter, these images persist and configure social insecurity to a large extent.

The ALTERNATIVE project challenged the link between security discourses and diversity as well as the shielding mechanisms through which communities are separated. The starting base was found in the framework of restorative justice, which views crime in a relational and social context, looking at the harm created by a conflict and searching for means to address this harm. Most well-known practices are mediation, conferencing and peacemaking or sentencing circles.

In order to work with various types of intercultural settings, four rather diverse case studies were set up, with the aim to conclude for various contexts throughout Europe. In these exemplary cases, restorative justice approaches were implemented through action research: researchers were closely working together with practitioners and citizens, observing and examining practices, giving feedback and input to local participants and seeking ways to improve practices on the ground. In Austria, the Institute for the Sociology of Law and Criminology (IRKS) worked closely with two community organisations in social housing in the city of Vienna. In Hungary, Foresee Research Group implemented circles and broader community and trust building activities in a small town with a recognised Roma community. The Victimology Society of Serbia (VDS) did surveys and held workshops in border towns were people from a different ethnic background live together. Lastly, Ulster University (UU) studied restorative community organisations in Belfast dealing with tensions between Catholics and Protestants as well as conflicts with migrant communities, and worked with a community organisation on drug problems and serious violence in Derry/Londonderry.

The research points to the following important findings, amongst others:

- *Understanding complexity*. Security and justice are not entities on their own and therefore cannot be studied in an isolated way. Concepts and practices have to be related to other topics and ongoing developments in the social field. Moreover, more than interculturality as such, various conflict lines are often constitutive for local or regional settings.
- *Acting within a context*. The concrete context of intercultural settings and their influencing factors and conditions need to be taken into account: practices cannot be implemented or administered in a top-down manner since they require preceding processes such as trust building and awareness development.
- *Action research as scientific tool*. Action research in intercultural settings offers a methodological framework for mutual exchange between theory and practice in general, and for practical cooperation between researchers and well-established organisations and individuals specifically.
- *Notions of security*. Security refers to personal safety but also amongst others to socio-economic conditions. Furthermore, technical and institutional approaches to security may be replaced with, or complemented by, forms of relational understanding, trust building and cooperation.
- *Justice approaches*. Intercultural settings lend themselves to processes where justice is built bottom-up through the direct involvement of citizens: conflicting parties have their own conceptions of what (social) justice entails, are able to participate and to perform a dialogue, and thus to contribute to justice. Through this process, they may come to a common understanding, but they may also realise that their views are irreconcilable while still getting a chance to acknowledge and respect each other's position.
- *Restorative justice*. Restorative justice provides a framework for a plural understanding of justice and therefore transcends current understandings of criminal justice. Its approaches can offer a way to build upon other initiatives such as community work to enable different communities to communicate both within their group and to one another.
- *The role of professionals*. People dealing with conflict, including mediators and facilitators, should become more aware of intercultural issues and their specific role.

A summary description of project context and objectives

Project context and overall objective

Starting from the finding that (1) Europe is changing due to an increasing diversity as well as (2) the fact that diversity and migration are often considered as a security threat, the European ALTERNATIVE project set off to look for alternative understandings of justice and security in diverse contexts. The central approach to do so was to actively involve citizens in communication processes in order to develop effective and sustainable security solutions.

The increasing diversity has led to framing social conflicts and tensions in cultural terms. Rather than going along with the tendency to provide a solution through shielding and exclusionary mechanisms, the project set out to develop mechanisms to enhance communication between individuals and groups, in order to provide Europe with concrete tools to better handle everyday social conflicts.

Objective 1: To develop a theoretical framework

In restorative justice approaches, victims and offenders go through a communication process, possibly including supporters and/or professionals. Since these approaches have not been linked to security or intercultural conflicts, the project's first objective was to develop a state-of-the art theoretical framework.

The most important progress to be facilitated by ALTERNATIVE was to conceptualise security as the result of a dynamic and participatory process, thus from a bottom-up approach rather than as technical condition to be implemented through top-down measures. Rather than adhering to a narrow technical understanding of security as a protecting mechanism, we studied security as a field for resilience and emancipation, within a framework of human security.

Justice, conflict (transformation) and restorative justice were central concepts to be studied. Rather than sticking to criminal and legal justice, justice theories were studied to come to a broader idea of social justice, which is particularly relevant in the context of European welfare regimes. Furthermore, against the European baseline attitude in which rules and

techniques are generally implemented top-down, the project set out to promote the direct involvement of citizens.

The concept of crime was left behind to look at the broader concept of conflict and conflict transformation. In a negative way, conflict can be seen as a competition over scarce resources. Put more positively, conflict can also be viewed as an opportunity for change, especially when people are involved in communication processes through which the 'real' story can come to the fore. In order to get to conflict transformation, restorative justice approaches were implemented in four different settings (Austria, Hungary, Serbia and Northern Ireland).

Research on restorative justice has so far focused mostly on individualising approaches such as victim-offender mediation. However, peace circles and social mediation seem to offer an added-value when it comes to conflicts that affect broader communities. Secondly, restorative justice approaches are often studied within the framework of criminal justice while the role of civil society may be crucial, especially in intercultural settings. Thirdly, communication *processes* have been underexposed as part of the *outcomes*. ALTERNATIVE sought to broaden up the concept of restorative justice beyond criminal justice, beyond individualised approaches and beyond 'conventional' crimes to include intercultural civil conflicts.

Objective 2: Implementing restorative justice approaches in four security-sensitive areas through action research

Until recently, restorative justice has sparsely been linked to conflicts in intercultural settings, whereas these are obviously socially relevant. The main indicator of the project's impact therefore lies with implementing restorative justice in such contexts. Starting from a theoretical framework, but going beyond the theory, the project aimed at implementing restorative justice approaches in four very diverse security-sensitive settings and to study conflicts at the micro-, meso- and macro-level. The theoretical concepts were thus evaluated in practice.

Through action research case studies, ALTERNATIVE aimed at directly involving citizens in dealing with their conflicts and reaching out for justice as a means for promoting democracy and active citizenship. Thus, citizens acquire the necessary capabilities for safeguarding security. In action research, researchers actively involve both citizens and institutions in the set-up, implementation and evaluation of the research. An objective of ALTERNATIVE was,

coherent with restorative justice philosophy, to include citizens in various steps of the local research, but also to set up the whole project as an action research in which theory feeds practice and vice versa. Besides the restorative objective of including citizens in the handling of their own conflicts, another objective was to give scientific input into the further understanding and development of action research methodology within the security field.

Four diverse security-sensitive areas in Europe were identified, in which conflicts at various levels occurred:

- In Vienna, social housing estates were the site to study conflicts between neighbours including 'Austrians' and residents with a migration background (conflicts between persons = micro-level);
- In Hungary, a mall village with a mixed Roma and non-Roma population was selected (conflicts between population groups = meso-level);
- In Serbia, three towns at the borders were chosen to address conflicts between people of different ethnicity (=macro-level);
- In Northern-Ireland, conflicts with youth gangs (meso-level), groups of recent immigrants (meso-level) and between the main communities, i.e. Catholics/Protestants (macro-level) were studied and addressed.

Selecting such diverse settings did complicate the comparison, but at the same time helped us to draw general lessons relevant for diverse contexts in the whole of Europe.

Objective 3: Compare diverse settings in order to learn lessons for Europe

Considering the diversity challenges that Europe is facing today, the project set out to include intercultural settings, with the aim to draw more general lessons. Therefore, as mentioned above, settings were chosen that, at first sight, included conflicts on a micro-, meso- and macro-level. Furthermore, the settings are situated in different parts of Europe and include longer-lasting (Roma, different ethnicities in Serbia and Catholics/Protestants in Northern Ireland) as well as more recent tensions (recent opening of social housing to migrants in Vienna, recent migration in Northern Ireland).

Comparison was not only challenging because of the different nature of the settings, but also because of the implementation of very different practices including mediation and circles as restorative justice models *sensu stricto*, and the development of broader community work approaches. Furthermore, research methods were diverse, including

observations, interviews, surveys, film making, and recordings of community gatherings and workshops. In order to compare the four settings, an innovative framework was to be designed through which the data could be systematised and analysed.

Objective 4: Dissemination in order to have impact

Rather than focusing on the dissemination of the results at the end of the project, ALTERNATIVE set out to include dissemination as a central theme so the project could have impact throughout its life-course. Goals of the dissemination activities were: to gain attention of all target groups (mediation services, municipalities, policy-makers, intercultural organisations, the scientific community and professional SMEs) on the application of restorative justice in intercultural settings; to inform and increase public knowledge about the benefits of mediation, especially in areas of (potential) conflict in multicultural settings; to confront and compare findings with other projects and practices in the security field throughout Europe; to stimulate and support implementation by contributing to the development of alternative restorative justice-oriented models of conflict resolution in different European countries; and to plan further cooperation and discuss a further research agenda.

To this end, various activities were foreseen:

(1) Filming was used as a participatory research and dissemination tool: citizens were invited to assist in the filming process on-site and to co-decide on what activities to film. The films are presented on an online platform: http://alternativefilms.euforumrj.org/.
(2) Preliminary results were presented at (inter)national conferences as well as in regional workshops, for end-users to reflect upon the research findings.
(3) A website was constructed to present updated information (http://www.alternativeproject.eu/) and public reports (http://www.alternativeproject.eu/publications/public-deliverables/) while more personal opinions were gathered on a blog (https://projectalternative.wordpress.com/).
(4) The European Forum for Restorative Justice organised a Summer School on the topic of restorative justice and intercultural settings, issued a thematic Newsletter (http://euforumrj.org/assets/upload/EFRJ_Newsletter_Vol_14_2_.pdf) and

addressed the topic as one of the key elements at its biannual conference in Belfast (June 2014).

(5) Practitioners' manuals and policy briefs provided concrete insights in how to go about practicing or enabling restorative justice in intercultural settings (http://www.alternativeproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Deliverable-9.6-Practitioners-manual.pdf and http://www.alternativeproject.eu/news/alternative-in-a-nutshell/).

(6) Finally, publications of articles and books gave more detailed information about some of the main research results (http://www.alternativeproject.eu/publications/other-publications/).

A description of the main results

The ALTERNATIVE project is set up as an action research: theoretical research constructs the framework for the four action research sites where restorative justice approaches are implemented in practice. The evaluation of the practices then informs both the comparative analysis and the theoretical framework. This is a continuous and cyclical process in which theoretical concepts are first written out, then operationalised and evaluated in practice. Concepts are adapted and revised where needed and then again evaluated in practice. Because the four settings are very different – focusing on conflicts on micro-, meso- and macro-level in different countries – and so are the research methods, an innovative comparative research method had to be developed: action researchers in the four settings translated their local findings based on surveys, observations and interviews into so-called 'evaluation grids'. These grids were collected in a web-based system in order to be analysed. In what follows, we summarise the leading theoretical concepts, the main findings of the action research as well as the comparative framework. This summary cannot do justice to the complexity of the research and the local realities. We therefore advise the reader to consult the project's website (www.alternativeproject.eu), the research reports and the films to get an in-depth view on the more nuanced findings.

1. Theoretical framework: justice, security, conflict (transformation) in intercultural settings and restorative justice approaches

1.1. Justice

When it comes to justice, the project refers to scholars such as Rawls, Habermas, Young and Fraser since they provide a political conception of (social) justice in relation to the increasing plurality in democratic societies. Rawls (1971) focused on justice as a means of narrowing the range of public disagreement and maintaining social cooperation, and highlighted that rights belong to a political order. He pointed out that only political justice, namely justice as fairness, can allow a plurality of conflicting doctrines. Since Rawls, justice has become to coincide with the concept of social justice within a distributive paradigm, defined as the proper moral distribution of social benefits and burdens among members of society.

Habermas' idea of justice as ongoing 'deliberative process' (1984, 1987, 1995) became central in the four diverse intercultural and security-sensitive settings, where restorative approaches were tried out in order to enhance communication between individuals, communities and groups. Heller (1987) has built upon Habermas' communicative ethics to suggest that justice is about people deliberating about problems and issues, thus shifting the focus from distributive and recognition patterns to procedural issues of participation in deliberation and decision-making. This is precisely what ALTERNATIVE aimed at: to implement processes in order for citizens to co-construct justice through deliberation and communication.

Young and Fraser, building upon the writings of both Habermas and Rawls, can be situated within the social movement of "politics of difference", under which both positional and cultural differences come to the fore. They argue for recognising differences and reflect on a three dimensional theory of justice: redistribution (the 'what' of justice), recognition (the 'who' of justice) and (political) representation (the 'how' of justice). Fraser in particular elaborated on questions of participation and democratisation through proposing a politics of representation in which framing the questions of justice becomes a matter of democratic deliberation. For her, the more general meaning of justice is parity of participation: justice then requires social arrangements for all (adult) human beings to be conceived as partners of interaction who possess equal worth in order to participate as peers in social life. Fraser (2003) perceives two obstacles to participatory parity, namely economic structures that

deny people resources to be able to act as peers (distributive injustice) or institutional hierarchies of cultural value. Besides the economic and cultural dimension, the political dimension refers to who is included and who is excluded, and is thus mainly concerned with representation.

1.2. Security

Since restorative justice approaches have not been linked to security or intercultural conflicts, the project first set out to develop a framework on what security entails. Theoretical analysis showed that after the end of the Cold War, the concept of 'security' was both widened (to include different sources of insecurity other than military threats) and deepened (to include different referents of security other than the state), evolving from a narrow concept of (inter)national security to concepts like societal and human security. Societal security is concerned with situations where societies perceive a threat in identity terms, while human security has been defined as: "safety from chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression. And second, it means protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life – whether in homes, in jobs or in communities" (United Nations Development Program 1994: 23).

Implications of widening the field include the issue of a 'security trap', which – non-intentionally - can lead to a 'security dilemma': the more one tries to securitise social phenomena in order to ensure security, the more one creates a feeling of insecurity. Various themes, such as migration, are indeed becoming more and more securitised, which may be related to a heightened focus on cultural differences, growing intolerance and (hidden) racism. Once a topic becomes securitised and thus subject to strengthened and stricter reaction, reversal of this process becomes difficult. Next to the convergence of external with internal security (leading to a merge of security with culture and identity) a second tendency is the constitution of (in)security in terms of risk, visible in routinised day-to-day practices and apparatuses of security (see Pali 2015 for a discussion).

Rather than adhering to a restricted view on security as technological measures, we opted for a positive understanding of security as a lever to emancipation and thus operating within a framework of human security. Furthermore, to include citizens as active participants in the creation of both justice and security, the focus lay with people's perceptions of safety. When studying the tension between justice and security in nowadays society, restorative justice has come to the fore as an attempt to combine the moral

approach of confronting the past (what happened?) with a risk-based approach to governing the future (what is to be done?) (Crawford 2015, Shearing 2001).

1.3. Conflict (transformation) and intercultural settings

In a 'negative way', conflict has been defined as competition over resources. Avruch (s.d.: 1) for example defines conflict as "competition by groups or individuals over incompatible goals, scarce resources, or the sources of power needed to acquire them." This competition is determined by the individual's perception, as well as culture which Avruch defines as "the socially inherited, shared and learned ways of living possessed by individuals in virtue of their membership in social groups." According to the author, "[c]ross-cultural conflict" refers to "conflict occurring between individuals or social groups that are separated by cultural boundaries." (p.5).

Conflict in a more positive framework can be viewed as an opportunity to communicate and create understanding (Christie 1977, Kremmel & Pelikan 2013). Conflict can be seen as "a potential for social change" (Christie 1977): the victim gets a chance to have his say and relate his/her personal story while the offender can explain why he/she did what he/she did, which does not lead to exoneration. The neighbourhood and state can be involved and norm-clarification becomes possible (see Walgrave 2008).

Terms like 'ethnicity', 'culture' and 'religion' are often used to refer to socio-cultural differences in the population. However, in conflict situations the use of these terms may sometimes not only result in confusion, but also in maintenance and escalation of conflicts. In ALTERNATIVE we have therefore deliberately chosen to use as a central term 'conflicts in intercultural settings' rather than 'intercultural conflicts' (see Foss et al. 2012). The four settings studied in ALTERNATIVE are defined or described as intercultural from the outset, but the conflicts may comprise as their central aspects e.g. gender, age, class or income. The framing of the conflict as comprising an intercultural element will then depend on various factors, including public opinion and politics (Ragazzi 2015).

1.4. Restorative justice approaches

Against the baseline research of restorative justice as limited to victim-offender mediation between parties involved in a criminal justice process in cases of 'conventional' crime, ALTERNATIVE wanted to broaden the knowledge by:

- Including cases of conflict, in which a crime was not necessarily yet committed;
- Broadening the approach beyond the criminal justice system through investigating the role of restorative justice in civil society;
- Applying restorative justice approaches other than mediation to include circles;
- Studying the internal dynamics of the practices through the use of qualitative research methods such as (participatory) observations and filming;
- Focusing on intercultural settings since restorative justice had not been explicitly used in cases of intercultural conflict, despite the increasing diversity throughout Europe;
- Studying whether restorative justice could be linked to perceptions of security;
- Evaluating what the concept of justice entails in restorative justice, since this has not often been addressed in restorative justice literature.

Rather than taking a firm stand-point on broadening the restorative justice umbrella, ALTERNATIVE aimed at exploring what conflicts in intercultural settings could mean for restorative justice. The topics mentioned formed the central points of attention throughout the research and have been addressed in various reports. Here we highlight how restorative justice is defined in theory and what practices are mostly discussed in restorative justice literature.

<u>Restorative justice in theory</u>

Justice has been interpreted in the restorative justice literature mostly in the narrow sense of criminal justice. Therefore, the theoretical debates have often discussed restorative justice as an alternative to punishment (see Walgrave 2008 for an overview). In ALTERNATIVE, we have therefore tried to open the concept through the description of four core elements to describe what restorative justice is about: lifeworld, participation, reparation (Pelikan 2003, 2007) and transformation (Pali 2015). The lifeworld or social element entails that crime is considered as a disruption or disturbance of social relations. Therefore, a response to crime means starting from the concrete personal and social experience of the parties involved and addressing the needs originating from the harm

experienced. This then comes to an approach through which the parties are recognised in their individuality, rather than through generalising and abstract definitions (the 'who' of justice). The lifeworld element corresponds to the element of recognition in social justice, as a reciprocal interaction to overcome societal dynamics of domination and submission (Benjamin 1988). Through restorative justice, a social dialogue around the boundaries of wrongdoing can be held (Walgrave 2008).

Since restorative justice starts from the concrete experiences of the parties involved, the participatory or democratic element (the 'how' of justice) implies active participation of those concerned and affected by the conflict. This can then contribute to grass-root democracy in which the citizen and the community play a crucial and active role (Braithwaite 1999). Participation in that sense makes restorative justice a manifestation of political relevance (Pali & Pelikan 2010). Related to this, it remains important to keep the neo-liberal context into account through being aware of the risk of responsibilising the individual without addressing social inequalities (Walgrave & Vanfraechem 2012).

The focus within restorative justice lies on the harm caused as well as its reparation (the 'what' of justice). The idea of reparation is more down-to-earth than the concept of restoration as returning to the original state. Reparation is future-oriented and may be linked to an ethic of responsibility. It can thus be brought closer to the distributive dimension of social justice.

Pali (2015) builds upon Pelikan's European model of restorative justice and includes the dimension of transformation to point out that restorative justice is more than a simple restoration of the status quo. Instead an intervention must lead to transformation of certain elements within the social situation. Restoration then entails not only restoring the situation, but also adding new elements thus making things right with a vision on the future (restoring the future). Furthermore, Pali (2015) argues that the transformation element enables restorative justice to bring social justice on the agenda, for example through Christie's vision of participatory justice as a means to create opportunities for norm-clarification and action (see also Walgrave 2008).

Restorative justice in practice

At the start of the project, a research paper focused on both principles of and practices in restorative justice (Törzs 2012). The main practices seen as core to restorative justice are mediation, conferencing and circles. The mediation process offers victims and offenders an

opportunity to meet in a safe, structured setting and engage in a mediated discussion of the crime. With the assistance of a trained mediator, the parties are able to share their stories and views on what has happened, as well as the crime's physical, emotional and financial impacts (Liebmann 2000, Umbreit 2002). In a conference, support people for both parties as well as professional actors such as a police officer or lawyer may be involved (Zinsstag & Vanfraechem 2012). Peacemaking or healing circles furthermore include other professional actors and representatives of the community/society and besides the harm and needs arising from it, focus more on societal implications and values (Pranis 2005, Weitekamp 2014).

From the start, ALTERNATIVE was looking towards exploring the circles' approach to deal with conflicts on a community level. Broader models of social mediation and other practices based on non-violent communication could offer concrete examples of how to address conflicts in broader settings besides crime and the criminal justice system, to which restorative justice practices were mostly confined. The ALTERNATIVE survey showed that 24 out of 33 respondents state they apply restorative justice in intercultural settings, although none of their organisations are specifically aiming at those conflicts: they deal with conflicts in general but the background of participants may bring intercultural elements to the fore. Training on the topic, including mediators with a migrant background or bringing in translators in a mediation are the methods most used to address interculturality. Summarising, Törzs (2013: 24) "affirm[s] that although RJ is not yet widely used in case of intercultural conflicts in Europe and specific RJ practice methods for intercultural conflict settings only exist sporadically, the topic is addressed at the level of professional trainings and a general awareness to the topic of interculturality is present in the respondent RJ organisations." Since the response-rate was rather low, the author concludes that the topic on interculturality remains under the radar (see also Pali 2014).

1.5. Other concepts

Besides the abovementioned central concepts which appear in the full title of the project, other concepts proved to be useful to understand not only the project's approach but especially the local realities. Concepts such as ethnicity, gender, age and time were explored. Moreover, the concepts of participation, identity and victimisation were analysed along the following lines.

Active participation is not only central to our understandings of restorative justice but was also an important concept to understand the Viennese context of social housing. Kremmel & Pelikan (2013: 21) have therefore spelled out the concept in relation to civil society, community and dominion, as they state: "active participation is meant to counteract the detrimental effects of modernity, the effects of bureaucratisation and of the abstractedness of criminal law and the criminal procedure on people's lives and ways of living together. Applied and restricted to the field of criminal law it meant a more satisfactory, more sustainable, a more humane way of going about conflict regulation. Beyond that the wider political implications of active participation of those concerned was expected to both promote democratic values and serve as an exercise ground for democratic practice." This shows how ALTERNATIVE was indeed seeking to include citizens in conflict-handling using an emancipatory approach.

Chapman, Campbell and Wilson (2012) connect the concepts of belonging and community to *identity*. They demonstrate how, on the one hand, identity can easily lead to ethnocentrism and radicalisation if activated by social and economic conditions and political leadership. On the other hand, identity can be "multi-dimensional and open rather than singular and closed" (p.15) if activated through the communicative action of restorative processes. In the project we argue for moving away from an idea of identity as monolithic and noncontradictory; in contrast, we need to work on an understanding of identity that accentuates its historicity and insists on the 'madeness' of culture and, therefore, on the inventedness of every identity. This concept of identity accepts that identities are never unified and singular but multiple and constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions. Far from being a static thing then, identity of self or of Other is a historical, social, intellectual and political process (Vanfraechem 2012).

Victimisation in the narrow sense may refer to the breaking of penal law and the effects this has on the crime victim. In the broader sense, victims of other types of man-made harm, such as road traffic accidents or negligence, may be included as well. Besides the directly harmed person (primary victims), the secondary victims are "dependants or relatives of the deceased and first responders", while tertiary victims are "all others" that do not fall under primary or secondary victims, but that are affected by the crime/conflict because they become aware of it (Letschert & Staiger 2010: 20, Spalek 2006: 12). In case of hate crime for example, tertiary victims could be the people belonging to the same group as the victim,

who was targeted because of certain characteristics: as the community has the same characteristics, its members could feel targeted as well (Spalek 2006: 144). According to Nikolić-Ristanović and colleagues (2013: 30) "the bare fact that someone is hurt or suffered is usually not sufficient to be recognised as a victim. Social recognition of the victim status, protection of certain rights and providing support and protection depends on many factors." They further point out that lots of victims do not get or want a legal status; that the 'ideal victim' (Christie 1986) is used as a standard; and that victim and offender are often posited in a binary position while according to Nikolić-Ristanović and colleagues (2013: 38) restorative justice "needs to recognise all those who feel victimised."

2. Action research: implementing restorative justice approaches in intercultural settings

We explicitly opted to implement restorative justice approaches in intercultural settings because, on the one hand, diversity is increasing throughout Europe and, on the other hand, these settings can be viewed as security-sensitive areas: since the discourse is increasingly equating diversity with security threats, we wanted to examine whether this is indeed the case. Although we did not carry out quantitative studies as a general method for the project to evaluate e.g. the number of crimes or unsafety feelings of citizens in these areas, the topic of security and safety was addressed in interviews and observations. This would give us a more in-depth view on why security matters for citizens, rather than measuring more 'dryly' what we as researchers supposed to be of most importance for the people living in those areas. Since the project is based on restorative justice approaches and culture proves to be at the heart of conflict resolution techniques (see Hoffman 2015), we found these intercultural settings to be most challenging to develop restorative justice practices and theory further.

Furthermore, we studied both the phenomenon of conflict and the conflict responses. To get as broad a view as possible, we looked at conflicts at the micro-level (between individuals), at meso-level (between communities) and at macro-level (on society level). The settings were chosen accordingly: micro-conflicts between neighbours with a migrant background in social housing in Vienna (Austria), meso-conflicts at the level of small town with Roma (Hungary), and macro-conflicts between citizens of different ethnicity (border towns in Serbia) and between people of different religion (Catholics and Protestants) or with immigrants and drug users (Northern Ireland).

Through this holistic perception of conflicts related to intercultural issues, we hoped to arrive at findings that can be translated throughout Europe, always taking the local situation into account. The research shows that societal ecology (Bolivar et al. 2015, APAV 2016) is crucial: findings can never 'just' be transposed from one context to another since the socio-economic, historical and societal context needs to be understood in order to enable implementing practices. Therefore, during the first year, the action researchers studied the local context to evaluate how restorative justice approaches could be implemented. While the idea was to then start implementing these practices, in all settings it became clear that further work was needed to provide the conditions for implementing restorative justice: community work and trust building as well as training citizens in conflict resolution and non-violent communication proved to be necessary.

2.1. Action research as a democratic endeavour

Action research, Aertsen stated (2010: 1), implies that "(t)he separation between practitioners and researchers is fading away to some extent in favour of a relationship of cooperation and a process of influencing each other. Researchers and researched are equal in the discussion, and a priori expertise from only one corner is not accepted. But expertise can be specific: knowledge about own experiences and insights on the one hand, and expertise about collecting, analysing and presenting data on the other hand." Moreover, the role and contributions of the partners in action research, of researchers and practitioners, are different. To reconcile their different perspectives and to make use of theoretical concepts for analysing and interpreting the material produced, they have to become partners in a dialogue. The dialogical turn characterising the restorative approach does therefore also become manifest in the rationale and practice of action research. And action research was indeed the core piece of the ALTERNATIVE endeavour.

2.2. Neighbourhood conflicts in social housing in Vienna (Austria)

The action research in Vienna focused on public housing estates, the so-called 'Gemeindebau', which were rather recently opened to third country nationals. The research first looked into existing neighbourhood conflict resolution techniques used by the community work organisations wohnpartner and Bassena, as well as how the neighbourhood is perceived by the inhabitants (Kremmel & Pelikan 2014: 89): "Active participation as a political goal, a pathway to more democratic societies is still difficult to evince when it comes to living together in the Viennese Gemeindebau. Reliance on the

authorities to step in and to enforce various sets of rules, using administrative fines and ultimately eviction is still the most pervasive and the dominant mode of reacting to conflicts - the same kind of conflicts that have been there for decades: noise, garbage, pets, cars. Problems have become exacerbated with an increased influx of people with 'migration background' after the 'opening' of access to public housing estates." Furthermore, "The organisations that are partners of the Viennese research group within ALTERNATIVE, namely wohnpartner and Bassena, deploy a wide range of strategies that are meant to support residents that get in trouble with each other."

Building upon these existing practices of conflict resolution, the action researchers found out it was important for citizens to find ways to communicate with one another and accept that there are more structural causes to the daily conflicts, such as poor isolation leading to noise, that cannot always be resolved. At one research site (Bassena), the action researchers conducted workshops on (intercultural) communication capacity building. These were followed by workshops on restorative circles introducing participating residents to circle processes by theoretical inputs and role plays based on the residents' own conflict stories, to allow for an experiential and practical engagement with the different phases of restorative circles.

In another site, the Women's Café ('Frauencafé') became the central locus of attention: the 'Frauencafé' had been established by wohnpartner as a reaction to conflicts between 'Old Austrians' and mainly 'Turkish' residents in one of the housing estates of Vienna's 21st district. In the Frauencafé, women of the two groups come together in fortnightly breakfast meetings. In 2014, an intra-Muslim conflict had emerged in this café. The wohnpartner team of the 21st district invited the ALTERNATIVE team to work in the Women's Café since they considered the tensions there as a suitable, albeit difficult case to deal with by way of restorative circles (Kremmel & Pelikan 2015). Two communication workshops were to prepare the ground for the group to enter an actual conflict resolution process, which could potentially lead to a restorative circle. These two communication workshops were followed by workshops on restorative circles, during which the participants discussed the existing tensions in the group.

Researchers (Kremmel & Pelikan 2015: 17) found that "[a]ctive participation proved indeed the basis of our work in the workshops. Our overall aim consisted in strengthening the capacities of the participants to work out and to resolve conflicts in their neighbourhood on their own, without resorting to authorities. This implies that during the workshops we were

not only concerned with promoting a more adequate understanding of conflicts (one's motives, goals, needs and emotions as well as those of the others) but also with further developing the scope of the participants' possibilities for action. However, in most conflict cases we heard of during our workshops, participants had in fact already started self-initiated activities to improve the situation. It was therefore important to find out which strategies had been tried so far and to which degree and in which respect these strategies had been successful. We have further promoted this attitude by identifying possibilities for action in each of the case-stories narrated by the participants. The pivotal aim was always to enable the participants e.g. through active listening to enter into communication and exchange about a conflict with one's adversary."

2.3. Working on a community level: Roma and non Roma living together in Hungary

In Hungary, the idea was to include a town in which a Roma community was present. Although the terms Roma/non-Roma are not always self-evident (Berkovits & Balogh 2012) and the researchers wanted to approach the field with an open mind-set, this was the original focus. The action researchers approached a small town just outside of Budapest, in which Roma and non-Roma seemed to be living well together in order to learn about existing conflict resolution methods. The researchers went to the town (Kisvaros) with an open question, namely to learn about living together and conflict resolution, rather than focusing on the 'Roma issue' as such. On the one hand, this proved to be fruitful since the analysis of the field showed that Roma/non-Roma was but one of the demarcation lines or fractions in the town, next to e.g. Catholic/non-Catholic, rich/poor, left/right wing. On the other hand, there were indeed some inhabitants worried about Roma, while Roma themselves were experiencing exclusion. These issues were not talked about though: the researchers came across a 'culture of silence' in which problems or conflicts are not openly discussed, at least not between people belonging to different groups in the community. As Szegö and colleagues (2015: 24) pointed out: "Focusing on the Roma and non-Roma conflicts were also limiting labels. Terms such as 'Roma', 'minority' and 'racism' were potentially delicate issues. Local people were afraid of being labelled as 'racist'. The sensitivity has manifested itself in the situational avoidance of using the term 'Roma' or 'minority' and substituting them with 'poor people' or 'cultural differences' by the local non-Roma, although it became obvious that they referred to Roma people."

The action research team developed a methodological research protocol for working with conflict cases in the frame of the action research. According to the protocol, mini-research-teams would be created around each case referral, which resulted in a case study. A four step research methodology was designed taking care of the respective phases of referral, preparation, encounter and impact. Mini-research-teams generally included both a researcher and a dialoguer (mediator, facilitator or circle-keeper or other impartial/all-partial third party), always working in close cooperation. A special role of local researcher was created, namely a person coming from the local community who joined the team of action researchers.

A characteristic of the research site was the lack of existing organisations dealing with conflicts or community development (which is typical of Hungarian settlements the size of Kisvaros). Therefore a lot of time and energy was spent on laying the ground to be able to implement restorative justice approaches: a local support group was established in the first year, as an official communication platform in which citizens, thought to be representing the groups of Kisváros, and researchers discussed, planned and evaluated the actual processes of the fieldwork. After the first year, the local support group dissolved, but most members reappeared in different roles the progressing research offered to them, i.e. members of the conflict handling learning group, local researchers, referees, event organisers. Before the end of the field work, a participatory community theatre initiative was launched by a partner organisation, which also promoted an alternative way of dealing with local disputes: breaking the silence with the help of performative art combined with situated dialogue.

Action researchers mediated in six concrete conflict cases, which was fewer than expected. Formal processes were hardly completed, primarily because of the lack of locals' readiness to take up formal referrals, and some were blocked in the preparation phase. The six cases are The Civil Guard Case, The Butcher Festival Case, Charity Provision Case, School Case, Roma Issues, and Healing Circle. The finding linked to this is that a broader spectrum of offers should be made available for restorative approaches, partly beyond classic case work. Action research showed that vocational education and awareness raising might appropriately complement case work on the palette of restorative models.

A conflict handling learning group was established to provide a free of charge learning opportunity about the restorative approach and methods for locals interested, to develop

their conflict-management skills and to enable them to use these practices to handle local conflicts. Training programmes for pupils were established in the local schools.

This comes back in the different action research sites: rather than going into the field and implementing restorative justice approaches, it became important to offer trainings, workshops and enhance trust and community building. As Szego and colleagues (2015: 33) point out for Hungary: "From a conceptual viewpoint, the main lesson that we learned from these unique scenarios of restorative interventions with different degrees of involvement was that instead of the aspiration for dialogue processes as tools to resolve conflicts, dialogue 'as a goal to reach' was a more feasible approach in the intercultural village setting. In accordance with that, in those cases where a dialogue took place, the fact of a dialogue as a symbolic gesture was more important than the outcome and formal agreement as such."

Especially for the Hungarian action research, filming was integrated in the research process. Three films, so called video diaries, were produced during the field work: The Great Journey, Building the Bridges of Trust and Way-Out. Discussions about how to select images to represent Kisváros at its best and how to involve locals in the construction of the third and last film helped to understand the difficulties of representation and the power of self-understanding through images, thus about filming as a research tool. It started with a conflict where some local people reflected their dissatisfaction about the second film, which partly focused on local conflict lines and partly on doubts about the positive role of impartial third parties intervening in conflicts. This was followed by a most interesting dialogue about their viewpoints and needs related to the images representing the village. Within the framework of a participatory editing process, the researchers met several times with inhabitants and representatives of the local municipality discussing the edited footages of the film. They ended up with a third film that involved new perspectives and represented the village from a new angle that was not shown before including the perspective of the new local leaders and their supporters, mostly middle class 'native villagers'. Besides that, the third film also accompanied the last period of the action research activities and the evolution from formal restorative interventions towards less directly conflict-related activities, such as the conflict-handling learning group and restorative school classes.

Another example is an original rap song that Perec, a local songwriter created, inspired by the ALTERNATIVE project. The refrain goes as follows:

We ask for security, but what we get is threat.

Life is our peace, life is our combat,

We ask for justice, but what we get is lies,

Music's our reality, and weapons make us die,

We don't understand no tales, our face is all real,

Our deeds are all just, we don't sleep a great deal,

We are intermediate, the rookie times are long gone,

And if there's some trouble we use the mic to get done.

2.4. Action research in Serbia: Fostering victim-oriented dialogue in a multi-ethnic society

The VDS research team intended to look for the potential that exists in Serbia for using alternative restorative approaches; to arrive at ideas of how to involve citizens from multi-ethnic communities, particularly victims, in democratic processes for peace-building and conflict transformation; and to stimulate cooperation of citizens and state institutions at the local level in order to develop long term human and civil security, and justice solutions for multi-ethnic communities, based on restorative justice principles.

In order to achieve these objectives, the project started with theoretical research, i.e. a literature review, and qualitative research of civil society's and state's dealing with interethnic and related political and intercultural conflicts in Serbia in the period 1990-2012 (Nikolić-Ristanović et al. 2013). This provided a basis for developing and operationalising the empirical study on conflicts, victimisation and justice in multi-ethnic communities in the border regions of Serbia as a preparatory phase for the action research (Nikolić-Ristanović et al. 2014). The empirical study was conducted in three multi-ethnic communities in Serbia: in Medvedja (South Serbia, near the border with Kosovo), Prijepolje (South-West Serbia, near the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Bačka Palanka and Bač (North-West Serbia, near the border with Croatia). These are communities which were most affected by ethnic conflicts in the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s. VDS explored

relations and conflicts between Serbs and Croats, Serbs and Bosniaks/Muslims, and Serbs and Albanians. This was followed by the action research, which consisted of two main parts: participatory seminars entitled "From the conflict towards peaceful life in the community" (intervention phase) were implemented in the same multi-ethnic communities as the empirical study (Nikolić-Ristanović et al. 2015) and a participatory process was set up to develop the "Manual on best practices of applying restorative approaches in intercultural settings" (Ćopić & Nikolić-Ristanović 2015), which will serve for raising awareness and education on restorative approaches in conflict transformation in intercultural settings.

The main conclusions and lessons learnt are the following:

- Present-day relationships and conflicts between members of different ethnic groups in Serbia are still very much affected by the legacies of the wars from the 1990s and how the Serbian state dealt with them: the research suggests that conflicts existed or still exist in all three multi-ethnic communities encompassed by the research on different levels: conflicts between citizens; conflicts between citizens and the state, i.e. state institutions; and conflicts between citizens and state's representatives (e.g. police officers).
- Conflicts with the state have a prominent place, which is tightly connected to the non-functioning or inadequate functioning of the state and the lack of rule of law, a characteristic of post-conflict societies. Thus, the state is not seen as a guarantor of security, but is rather perceived as one of the main sources of insecurity. The research suggests that citizens' perception of security goes much beyond physical safety of people (in terms of freedom from crime, war or violence); it also refers to social, economic, legal and political safety.
- In Serbia, as a post-conflict society, there is a continuity of conflicts from the war to the post-war period, but new conflicts have emerged as well. Apart from interethnic, there are also intra-ethnic conflicts. Thus, conflicts do not exist only along one particular line, e.g. ethnic belonging, but they are also based on religion, gender, age or other personal characteristics, or are tightly connected to the political situation in the multi-ethnic communities and the political and economic transition in the country in general. Therefore, the research confirmed the need to speak about 'conflicts in intercultural settings' rather than intercultural conflicts (Foss et al. 2012: 24, Vanfraechem 2012: 36).

- For the security/safety of citizens in Serbia it is necessary to deal both with past and present interethnic, but also other (intra-ethnic) conflicts, while taking care of their very complex interconnectedness in an inclusive way.
- Theoretical research conducted at the beginning of the project suggested that in dealing with past and present interethnic conflicts by the state, the security discourse prevails and state institutions focus primarily on judicial mechanisms (legal justice). Therefore, we may argue that justice in post-conflict settings (transitional justice), as is the case in Serbia, is primarily identified with legal approaches (legal justice). However, theoretical research suggested the predominance of an inefficient and mostly counterproductive use of retributive justice and security discourses in Serbia. There is a permanent increase of repression in the name of protecting victims, but the effects of such a policy are not visible: conflicts still exist and they become even deeper. Victims are not actively involved in conflict transformation: they are rather passive observers of the processes, particularly of the criminal justice procedure.
- A potential for restorative justice exists in Serbia, but restorative justice discourse and restorative activities are not visible and recognised enough both on the level of the state and civil society organisations, which is partly connected to a lack of awareness and knowledge on its approaches. It is relevant that both respondents in the empirical research and seminar participants in the action research gave relevance to restorative approaches for conflict transformation in their local communities, in particular for those that are based on encounters and dialogue. These findings are important if we consider restorative justice as an important social force that contributes to revival of participatory democracy (Walgrave 2008: 194-195). This finding is also relevant bearing in mind that Serbian society is predominantly authoritarian and punitive.
- The main methodological approach of the action research in the form of participatory seminars was setting the laboratory/experiment conditions for optimal contact and communication between members of different groups as the seminar participants, which allowed for exploring the applicability of the 'Third way' model in three multi-ethnic communities and coming to ideas about its possible further development. This included three main components. Firstly, we took care that most of the conditions for optimal contact are met (Allport 1954, Amir 1998, Nikolić-Ristanović 2015, Pettigrew 1998). Secondly, the communication framework was set as part of the ground rules, with elements of mindfulness included. Thirdly, different relaxation and empowering

techniques, including yoga breathing techniques and meditation, were used throughout seminars as the generator of inner peace and positive personal and intergroup change. Therefore, we intended to explore how seminar participants communicate/change their communication patterns about difficult topics, including their own conflicts/victimisations and related needs, when conditions are controlled and space is created for them to feel safe and relaxed. In this way, the seminars also provided a space for experiential learning, further networking, and building relationships and cooperation.

- The action research suggests that the 'Third way' model of communication as a form of restorative dialogue and the restorative circle model are applicable and appropriate approaches for multi-ethnic communities in Serbia for conflict prevention and transformation. Meeting conditions for optimal contact contributes to changes of communication patterns and enables constructive communication (dialogue). The action research suggested that participants found setting the communication framework to be important since it allows for mutual respect and trust, which fosters openness, mutual understanding and support, providing people a space to communicate about difficult issues in a more easy way. Recognising similarities in different experiences may contribute to a better understanding of one's own self, for understanding others, for making people feel closer to each other and preventing estranging. The importance of using different aspects of yoga that contribute to concentration on present (mindfulness) as well as to inner peace and balance (e.g. breathing techniques, relaxation and meditation), was also recognised by the seminar participants.
- Since the change of the state policy towards dealing with conflicts, tensions and discrimination in intercultural settings is a long-term task in post-conflict societies, working on (re)building relationships, trust and mutual understanding, and developing restorative approaches on the local community level (bottom-up approach) seems more realistic and effective, which was also confirmed by the action research. Participants of the seminars showed interest and readiness to work together, to share their experiences and to communicate, which is an important condition for further networking and joint work on promoting and implementing restorative approaches in multi-ethnic communities.

There are three main outcomes of the research conducted in Serbia:

- The initiation of local inter-sector bodies in two research sites (restorative teams), which will serve for promoting, developing and implementing restorative approaches in their communities.
- The development and publication of the *Manual on best practices of applying restorative justice in intercultural settings*, which shall serve for the promotion of and education on restorative approaches to conflict transformation in multi-ethnic and multi-cultural communities in Serbia.
- The identification and definition of crucial elements of the restorative approach to conflict prevention and transformation applicable in intercultural settings: conditions for optimal contact, communication framework in the spirit of restorative justice, yoga and mindfulness, peacemaking/restorative circle model (a circle format) and a solution-focused approach. These elements would make it a unique and original model of conflict transformation in intercultural settings not only in Serbia, but also in the region.

2.5. Activating community in Northern Ireland

The research programme in Northern Ireland chose to examine how effectively restorative justice can be implemented in civil society with the support of the state so as to contribute to justice and security within local communities experiencing conflict in intercultural contexts. As a consequence, the research focused upon community based restorative justice (Chapman et al. 2015).

A baseline study of each area was carried out using a range of socio-economic factors (Chapman et al. 2013). The data indicated that the areas in which the ALTERNATIVE research took place were amongst the most deprived communities in Northern Ireland. Many residents in these areas live precarious lives surviving on social security payments or poorly paid jobs that offer little or no financial security. Consequently it is very difficult for them to participate actively in politics, careers and civil society. As this group becomes more segregated from others, there is less contact and communication between them. This disconnection facilitates the stigmatisation and scapegoating of other groups perceived as further threatening the group's security. The community based restorative projects are also subject to precarity: they receive low levels of funding over short periods with no commitment to continue to fund. As a consequence, practitioners are often unpaid and have

to seek temporary work elsewhere. This precarity makes it extremely difficult to plan a sustainable restorative justice service in the communities.

A consultation with key stakeholders in each area enabled the research team to identify conflicts in an intercultural context which would be studied. These included sectarian conflict in South Belfast and West Belfast, ethnic conflict mainly in South Belfast (and later in East Belfast), and intergenerational conflict in all three areas and especially concerning the problem of using and dealing in drugs in Derry/Londonderry and the often violent response to that problem. The needs identified by the organisations in relation to conflict became the focus of the ALTERNATIVE research programme. The Ulster researchers worked collaboratively with the partners to document and film the initiatives they took to address these needs. The research team also undertook to support the building of the capacity of each organisation to deliver new restorative approaches to the problems that their communities face.

Unlike the Austrian and Hungarian action research, the Ulster team was not involved in implementing practice, but set out to enter into dialogue with each partner on the conflicts that they were addressing, to observe their practice where appropriate and when asked by the partner to support capacity building. In Derry/Londonderry the researchers did not work directly with a community based restorative justice project but instead worked with a Centre that supports and offers treatment to addicts, the Northland Centre. The aim was to engage in a restorative process in partnership with a community organisation that was respected across all communities in the city. The researchers facilitated the Centre to conduct a consultation within civil society on the problems that drug and alcohol use causes in the wider community and then facilitated a community conference to explore these problems. Two researchers along with a representative of Northlands spoke with a range of people representing those who have a stake in the harms associated with drug use and dealing in the city. This led to two community conferences and one workshop led by David Kennedy (John Jay College, New York) in local areas where people entered into dialogue in groups to share their understandings and responses to the problem. A visit to the United States at the end of the project helped to identify tools to further address the challenges in Derry.

In South Belfast and later in other Loyalist areas UU worked with a community project, CARE, which aspired to become a community based restorative justice project. The

researchers' roles in this site were: (1) to observe and tell the story of the struggles of this project to establish itself; (2) to support it to build its capacity to become the service to the community it wishes to provide; and (3) to observe and understand its restorative practices. Two researchers developed a strong relationship with the activists in this community and were invited to observe them as they participated in events, attended meetings and engaged in restorative processes. The University also actively supported CARE to produce a strategic plan, to consider its governance arrangements, to gain access to funding for its restorative practices, to be trained in restorative practices and to design training programmes that its workers could deliver to the community. This engagement enabled the activists to trust the researchers sufficiently to speak openly about their history and struggles.

In West Belfast, UU was in partnership with a mature community based restorative justice project, CRJI, to capture the narrative of their relationship with the state and their struggles to find and sustain a space in which they could both serve their community restoratively and be supported rather than dominated by the state system. The research involved many in-depth conversations about the history of the project and their current practices. Due to the relationships UU had built over many years before ALTERNATIVE, the activists spoke openly and honestly about their dilemmas and struggles. Because of the University's previous engagement with a range of state agencies, the researchers were also able to conduct dialogues with judges, prosecutors, senior police officers, senior managers in the probation service, lawyers and senior Department of Justice officials about their views of community based restorative justice.

Some important findings of the research in Northern Ireland are the following (Chapman et al. 2015):

- By comparing two Loyalist areas (South and East Belfast) and their attempts to address conflict in an intercultural context it has become clear that, if the situation is politicised and if the parties act strategically to achieve political goals, it is less likely that there will be a positive outcome. Where activists focused on maintaining safety through restorative principles, honest dialogue and negotiation, conflict was more likely to be resolved satisfactorily and there was less violence.
- Even in serious cases such as murder in which the criminal justice system must take the lead, there is much that a community based restorative justice project can do to keep the peace. This was demonstrated when a person of Turkish descent killed a

local person in West Belfast. CRJI did much to prevent a general reaction against Turkish people and businesses. Other incidents of conflict between local people and recent immigrants provided evidence that these conflicts could be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties more effectively through restorative processes than through the security response of the formal criminal justice system.

- The University is following the development of a new social housing programme in South Belfast which is bringing to the fore tensions between different discourse of justice: the state system's commitment to human rights and the lifeworld's sense of entitlement to the new housing due to local people's longstanding residence in the area. This is proving an interesting challenge to the local project's commitment to the principles and practices of restorative justice.
- In Derry/Londonderry the community conferences enabled local people to speak of their frustrations with the state and expert discourses which limited their access to the resources that people with drug problems needed. It was clear that the security responses from both the police and the armed groups were not satisfying the community's need for justice and security. Furthermore neither the security response nor the medical model could respond effectively to ordinary people's narrative of the hidden harm of drugs. This opens a space for more restorative responses to these concerns.
- These empirical findings have enabled the researchers to refine their understandings of core concepts such as justice, security, and community in a way that supports the contribution of restorative justice in conflicts in intercultural settings.

3. Comparative research

Comparing such diverse settings and conflicts formed a challenge for the comparative research. Nevertheless, the aim of the project was to come to results that would offer input on how to deal with conflicts in intercultural settings throughout Europe and therefore we have developed an innovative comparative method to include data from the different sites, gathered through an online database. This ensured that ALTERNATIVE as a whole would be an action research, in which the theoretical concepts were examined in practice and the local data fed the theoretical insights.

3.1. Action research: theory and practice intertwined

The various action sites used different methods, such as surveys, observations and interviews. An evaluation grid was developed for the local researchers to fill out after an event (which for example could be a mediation case, an interview, or the observation of a local event). The local researchers kept a logbook, discussed events in their local team and then filled out an evaluation grid to be sent to the coordinator at KU Leuven. This grid was comprised of the central concepts, some basic information (the researcher, what the grid was about, the date) and room for the local researcher to describe in detail ('thick description') what the situation was about. The exact wording of the citizens was used to stay as close as possible to the reality in the field. These grids were collected in an online database and analysed through Nvivo (see Ragazzi 2015 for technical details). Following Nelken (2010) we thus looked at similarities as well as differences between the settings, relying on the local researchers who have a good insight into the 'real' situation on the ground.

The research team in Leuven gave feedback to the local researchers on the concepts and how they could be understood, while the local researchers explained more in detail how they interpreted the local data (Ragazzi 2015). Furthermore, the intermediary findings were discussed at the project's steering committee meetings that took place twice a year. Towards the end of the project, the loop back to theory was made throughout the various research reports (Chapman et al. 2015, Hera et al. 2015, Kremmel & Pelikan 2015, Nikolić-Ristanović et al. 2015, Pali 2015, Ragazzi 2015, Szego et al. 2015).

3.2. Loop back to theory

What did the action research learn us with regard to the theory? Although we cannot go into the details, we here hint at some of the theoretical alignments (see Aertsen & Pali 2016 for more details).

<u>Restorative justice between justice and security</u>

ALTERNATIVE is, as far as we know, the first thorough attempt to link restorative justice and security. As Pali (2015: 117) explains: "the project has argued that it is necessary to move away or at least correct an idea of security based on an excessive focus on technology, surveillance and control which produce feelings of insecurity instead towards an idea of security that is less paranoiac and nourishes human relations through participation,

encounter and dialogue. Thus if security must be, then let it be a deep kind of security, based on relations and trust. By focusing on human relations, on rebuilding and revitalising communities, with its contact and dialogue approach, restorative justice can challenge the current immunitary [shielding] tendencies that characterise the security discourse." Restorative justice can thus be "realigned with the emancipation approach of the security studies which argues that the study of security must be oriented towards the identification, analysis and redressing of the insecurities affecting individuals and groups in particular contexts (Both 1991)" (Pali 2015: 117).

Participants in the research voiced concerns of economic and job security along physical safety, confirming the human security approach taken in the project as well as the importance of socio-economic factors and distributive justice (Ragazzi 2015). Looking at security through participation and dialogue relates restorative justice to social justice: disputes in the action research sites were related to distribution policies and since cultural diversity reduces the willingness to redistribute income and public goods, restorative justice may have a role to play towards revitalisation and restoration of trust in the communities, with a focus on redistribution issues (Ragazzi 2015).

In heavily securitised settings, justice is threatened and restorative justice may seem to have not that much to offer: deliberation and dialogue do not fit well with a sense of urgency. Nevertheless, it is exactly in those settings that restorative justice has a role to play, in counteracting the sense of fear through promoting trust and solidarity. Restorative justice in that sense sits between justice and security: there is a tension between the two and restorative justice is embedded in that tension that can create possibilities for the future. Through encounters and dialogue, security can become sustainable through recognising 'the other' as human.

Active participation

Participation, in particular the nature and quality of participation, has been researched throughout the project. Active participation has been central in the Viennese study. Kremmel & Pelikan (2015: 65) point out that their research path was winding and active participation was not always self-evident. Their concept has been enriched with nuances and they contend that "we regard the 'discovery' of the quest for togetherness as a major achievement of our research and we think it fortunate that this ties up so well with the concepts of community and immunity as put forward by Roberto Esposito", concepts that

are explicated in Pali (2015) and Ragazzi (2015). Kremmel & Pelikan (2015: 66) further point out that "[t]he experience of togetherness rests on active participation as a core element of restorative justice. This participatory element, i.e. getting actively involved, culminating in the experience of togetherness makes security/safety emanate from the experience, the feeling of being held and supported, of being and ultimately of 'doing' something together with others."

Action researchers in Hungary found that locals interpreted active participation and justice as two closely related phenomena: injustice was perceived in relation to the lack of participation in decision-making processes or the lack of gaining access to information, goods or services. In two cases, the conflict was centred around the lack of opportunity for the Roma people to participate in a local event and in a local organisation. In another case, the Roma people who felt the charity distribution to be unfair, agreed that more information and more active participation in the distribution process would have helped to improve their sense of fairness. In a school case, the parents perceived it as unjust not being involved in the procedure when their kids were accused of a theft. Their need for participation was violated. The key for achieving mutual recognitions in a case was to move from the level of 'grand narratives' to the level of personal stories. The grand narratives were often built upon several, previous negative experiences – like discrimination against the Roma – and hid the complex reality and uniqueness of each other's stories and personal motivations behind those stories (Szego et al. 2015).

Community and identity

Community came up in the theoretical work of IRKS when studying active participation and the role of civil society (Kremmel & Pelikan 2013), but community is also a central topic in Northern Irish society: it is assumed that one belongs to the Catholic or Protestant community. The ALTERNATIVE research in Northern Ireland showed though that community and identity are simply concepts, which mean very little in the daily lives of people unless they are activated. If these concepts are used to mobilise a form of politics based upon shared identity, they can sustain frontiers in society, which divide people and may result in violent conflict. However, the ALTERNATIVE research has also observed how the communicative action of restorative justice can activate a sense of community, which enables people in conflict to respect each other's identities and resolve conflict to their mutual satisfaction. Chapman and colleagues (2015) therefore no longer define community

as a place or as a group of people with common interests or purposes since these definitions are too static to be meaningful in reality. Community only comes alive through action, for example a celebration, a wedding or a funeral, a response to a personal or a collective crisis or when addressing a conflict. People yearn for the experience of community (Esposito 2013, Nancy 1991) but understand in reality that the experience is fleeting and cannot be sustained. So for Chapman et al. (2015: 156), community is "an active and reflexive communicative practice, which enables people to live equitably in interdependence with an increasingly diverse range of others."

Pali (2015: 116) refers to Esposito (2008) and his idea of 'communitas': a common munus which can mean both gift and obligation to another. When diverse groups live together, one might have different opinions and ideas, but still live together through a process of 'conviviality' as "cohabitation and interaction that have made multiculture an ordinary feature of life" (Gilroy 2004: xi). Pali (2015: 114) explains how "different metropolitan groups dwell in proximity but where their racial, linguistic and particularities do not (…)." Conviviality then encompasses both conflict and friendliness. Restorative justice has a role to play in the art of living together, through "creating and multiplying the parochial spaces that can increase togetherness and community" (Pali 2015: 115) as well as revitalising communities through preventing the lowering of trust, which could make communities 'hunker down' and shield one off from another.

Restorative justice, community work and capacity building

The communication capacity building workshops in Vienna clearly "share[d] restorative 'principles' (dialogic, non-judgmental, participatory, needs-oriented), but in our view a key element was missing, namely the direct encounter of the parties affected and involved. At second thought (…) we might arrive at a less rigid and puristic assessment. These workshops, representing the other party in the imagination and according to the imaginary identification of participants only, have contributed towards a restorative conflict resolution – indirectly, albeit quite effective for all participants present and 'acting'. On the other hand, we saw that at a few instances residents voiced the concern that they would not be able to handle things this well outside of our 'laboratory' and in the real world (…). Maybe more of the same is needed in order to bridge what appears to be a gap between training and real-life situations? More workshops, more practice, more assistance to communicate in currently unfolding conflict situations?" The authors conclude (Kremmel & Pelikan 2015:

22) that "these workshops [can be seen] as a 'rehearsal' and as a 'preparation' for restorative justice practices."

Action researchers in Hungary found that because of a lack of conflict solving organisations, a lot of time had to be spent on trust building within the community, for which they installed various activities. They realised through the research that although these actions could not be considered as restorative justice approaches as such, they were nevertheless crucial for people to become aware of restorative principles, to learn communication skills and to use these skills in daily life. This then could lead to referrals of cases for a restorative intervention, but this was not always done (Szego et al. 2015).

In Serbia, the option was taken to implement workshops and role play a circle, to evaluate whether participants would be open to the idea of restorative justice. Although the case was based on a true story that came out of the survey, the researchers thought the time was not ripe to deal with real cases in the workshops (Nikolić-Ristanović et al. 2015). However, participants in the workshops did see the added value of implementing restorative justice. Moreover, in two research sites they formed local restorative teams in order to further examine the possibilities of restorative justice in the future. The manual of best practices of applying restorative approaches in intercultural settings (Ćopić & Nikolić-Ristanović 2016) is considered to be a good tool in that regard.

In Northern Ireland, the researchers guided the organisations in their path to finding a more sustained way of working (CARE) or establishing a relation with the state (CRJI). In Derry, community conferences were held to enable citizens to voice their thoughts and concerns regarding drug use. At first, the Ulster team were keen that the local community should have ownership of the conferences by hosting each meeting and leading the dialogue. However, the community organisations felt that the conferences would be seen as more neutral and safer if the University was seen as the convener. This arrangement meant the conferences were located in community venues with invitations coming directly from the University. This confirmed the idea of the University offering a safe, neutral space for difficult conversations. Each table at the community conference had a University facilitator who asked the questions, encouraged dialogue and clarified what conclusions were being made. The facilitator also kept a record of the key points made.

All action research sites were set up to examine the field during the first year, implement restorative justice approaches during the second and third year, and then evaluate the

effectiveness during the last year. In reality, community development and trust building were crucial elements for citizens to realise restorative justice approaches. This community building took a lot longer than anticipated, but restorative principles provided an added value to the existing community building initiatives. Furthermore, the comparative analysis showed that when cases are morally framed as wrongdoing (as opposed to harmful behaviour), they are rather dealt with by formal restorative justice practices following a standardised victim-offender-community participation model (Ragazzi 2015).

4. Lessons for Europe today: Restorative justice in intercultural settings

A variety of research results has been summarised above. The research has also shown a European relevance of the findings.

First of all, Europe is looking for ways to deal with growing diversity. ALTERNATIVE has looked for constructive ways of dealing with conflicts in intercultural settings, inspired by restorative justice principles. Rather than shielding communities off, we have found ways of enabling communication through methods such as circles, training and workshops on non-violent communication, and restorative learning groups.

At the outcome level, three dimensions came out as important: restoration of communication, restoration of trust and restoration of cooperative action for justice (Ragazzi 2015). These dimensions enable people to meet and come to a dialogue in order to create justice bottom up with a view on social justice. The intercultural context is a background concern, rather than a central variable in the conflict. Furthermore, conflict as such is not necessarily negative but can offer opportunities for change. As to the level of conflict: while the project started with demarcating conflicts on micro-, meso- and macro-level, this distinction could not always be maintained in practice: micro-conflicts could be framed as a societal conflict or vice versa. Ragazzi (2015: 177) in that regard concludes: “Restorative justice approaches to conflicts in intercultural settings as practiced in ALTERNATIVE’s action research sites operate directly at the micro-meso level in local communities, neighbourhoods, housing estates and small towns. But there is evidently a need to be active at the macro-institutional level too, contributing to the debate about the future of welfare, justice system and public provision in general.” This is where national and European policies could come into play.

Törzs, when evaluating European policies, concludes (2014: 4) "that restorative justice approaches in conflicts within intercultural settings may contribute to better understanding, mutual tolerance, more amicable relationships and formulation of common European values. Wider application of these approaches could also empower participants, lower societal tensions and promote active citizenship. While these outcomes certainly contribute to the societal stability and better economic performance of the EU, they are also relevant to further the democratic foundations of Europe." In this respect, the ALTERNATIVE research findings offer a perspective to develop and implement EU policies in a more comprehensive way: here, reference can be made to Directive 2012/29/EU which defines and supports restorative justice practices, be it mainly in a criminal justice context. With regard to local policy-making, the policy brief from the project (http://alternativefilms.euforumrj.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Policy-brief-final.pdf) shows how policy-makers can contribute through establishing restorative justice services in combination with community work; set standards; monitor practices; and be ready to communicate openly about tensions.

When practitioners want to establish restorative justice practices in intercultural settings, they need to be aware of the importance of getting to know the setting and organisations at work. The project's manuals give hands-on input on how to go about this. Building trust, both with citizens and local organisations; exploring different restorative justice interventions; seeing ongoing dialogue as a goal in itself; and follow-up after the conflict are but a few points of attention.

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The potential impact, dissemination and exploitation of results

1. Impact

1.1. Target groups

Throughout the project, different target groups were envisaged: mediation services, municipalities, policymakers (social sector), intercultural organisations, scientific community and professional SMEs. Through the European Forum for Restorative Justice, we were able to reach European mediation services as well as international organisations. By attending various conferences, especially the European Society of Criminology annual conferences, we opened up to the broader scientific community. We were in contact with the European Forum for Urban Security (EFUS), who helped us disseminate the information on the final conference as well as the website. The policy briefs, targeting policy-makers on a local, national and European level have been spread through our contacts and offer hands-on recommendations for promoting restorative justice in intercultural settings. We have specifically asked some policy-makers to give us feedback on the policy briefs.

Members of the Advisory Board of the project were selected for representing our target groups and helping us to disseminate our results on a national and European level. The Advisory Board consisted of the following people: Marieke Arnou (Belgian Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism, now: Unia) Martina Fischer (Conflict Research Berghof Foundation), Sandra Gutiérrez (International Red Cross), Joachim Kersten (Deutsche Hochschule der Polizei, Münster), Tove H. Malloy (European Centre for Minority Issues), Ilina Taneva (Council of Europe) and Bas van Stokkom (Radboud University Nijmegen). They gave input and feedback to the project, participated in the final conference and were very helpful in disseminating the results.

1.2. Citizens and diverse communities throughout Europe

In local research sites, citizens and communities benefitted directly from the action research: they were trained in conflict resolutions skills; they could refer cases to mediation services; they were able to broaden their understandings of justice and security; and they were offered tools to enter into dialogue with groups they do not normally communicate with.

ALTERNATIVE results are being spread and especially the manuals and policy briefs offer concrete tools for mediation services, researchers and policy-makers to follow this example throughout Europe. With diversity and migration being high on the agenda, ALTERNATIVE will have an important contribution in the debate on how to find viable ways of living together. Through active participation, citizens are challenged to think about conflicts in a constructive manner, help build democratic societies and contribute towards social justice.

We learned the following important lessons:

- Diversity is an opportunity, not a threat, and it should be a reason to engage in communication.
- Personal communications and stories are important to bring people together, understand difference and humanise conflict.
- Dealing with low level everyday conflicts prevents escalation and increases a sense of security and tolerance.
- Silence and expressions of resistance are welcomed and important, and are not obstacles for restorative justice to take place.
- Restorative justice may not solve structural inequalities, discrimination and racism in intercultural societies: additional interventions are needed.
- Restorative justice practitioners are experts in dealing with conflicts but community workers are often closer to those conflicts: collaboration is needed.
- The neutrality of the restorative justice practitioner is not to be interpreted as indifference: he/she must still be aware about social issues behind the conflict.
- Empowerment of people by education and dialogue can be successful in increasing perceptions and realities of security and justice.
- Education is crucial: conflicts can be prevented by teaching people to use non-violent communication techniques.
- Research helps to enter the field, build trust and create alliances with local partner organisations.

1.3. Practitioners

Restorative justice practitioners, but also people working in community building, will be able to use the innovative methods we have developed in ALTERNATIVE, based on restorative justice principles: training and workshops on restorative justice, the women's café, restorative learning groups and community conferences. The manuals explain these

methods and refer to (dis)advantages and points of attention when implementing such practices. In order to be able to apply restorative justice in intercultural communities, a step-by-step approach is needed:

- Build trust: attend events and activities and spend enough time in the communities.
- Be clear and transparent: avoid false expectations about restorative justice and about your competences.
- Create local partnerships: make allies with the closest to the conflict (not necessarily with those being restorative justice-minded); well-established organisations will help and give credibility to your new initiative.
- Make an agreement with your partner organisations to define common goals, divide tasks and responsibilities, and plan a timeline.
- Establish a local group of support: involve community members in the design and implementation of your intervention.
- Gather information: organise regular meetings with the local support group to plan and discuss the initiative.
- Keep track of this information: a diary is helpful.
- Understand and asses the complexity of the local situation and how it affects the conflict.
- Raise awareness about restorative justice: keep in mind that this is often an unfamiliar process and it needs to be normalised for people to use it.
- Identify a concrete topic of discussion, or conflict, that relates to all parties: be ready to integrate new topics and situations during the communication and intervention phases.
- Explore different restorative interventions: identify if the conflict should be tackled at the individual or broader societal level.
- Choose a restorative intervention matching the specific conflict situation encountered in the community: keep in mind the necessary flexibility in the methodology.
- Prepare all parties with sufficient, accurate and transparent information about the restorative intervention.
- Be prepared to read non-verbal signs and deal with different levels of verbal competences in communicating.

- Involve others in these practices, if possible: involving others as observers is helpful to raise awareness on restorative justice and encourage further trust and collaboration.
- Accept that dialogue among conflicting parties is a goal by itself and accept if parties do not want to or disagree with the restorative intervention.
- Be ready for unexpected changes: flexibility and creativity are useful.
- Ask for feedback and support from supervisors and, if possible, work in pairs.
- Keep track of your experiences and practices: write a report including a brief summary of the conflict and the restorative justice process, and a simple assessment of parties' satisfaction.
- Follow-up: after a few months, check how the conflict evolved and make a follow-up report.

1.4. Researchers

ALTERNATIVE has offered top-quality research, using filming as a participatory approach, extending action research to the criminological field, broadening theoretical research on various concepts and developing an innovative comparative methodology. The reports, books and articles produced by the project are of added value to researchers working on security, justice, criminology, restorative justice and related fields. A challenge for the future is to further link the project's results to the field of peace studies.

The successful implementation, evaluation and sustainability of restorative justice in intercultural settings is possible thanks to the cooperation between actors such as restorative justice practitioners, community workers, policy-makers and researchers. For researchers, it will be important to:

- Build trust, be clear and transparent, and provide information: in order to be able to enter the field, trust needs to be built with community members.
- Create local partnerships, and gather and keep track of information: make allies with well-established organisations and community members that can give credibility to your research project.
- Understand and assess, and explore different restorative justice interventions: together with practitioners you need to understand the complexity of the local situation in order to map the existing conflicts and possible restorative justice interventions.

- Be involved in restorative justice interventions and be ready for unexpected changes: act as an observer and be aware that communities are not static.
- Keep track of experiences and organise a closing event to feed back the results to the local community.
- Reflect and contribute to future research: continue the cyclical process between action and theory within action research.

1.5. Policy makers

Policy makers both on the European and on the local level can benefit from the project outcomes in their efforts for creating safe and tolerant societies. The manuals and policy briefs serve the goal of facilitating decision-making in this respect.

To further the use of restorative justice approaches to intercultural settings, we encourage government authorities and EU policy makers to:

- Set-up mechanisms to identify low level conflicts in intercultural settings.
- Support cooperation between restorative facilitators and local civil society.
- Develop policies to support restorative justice principles and values.
- Introduce restorative approaches to conflicts in different fields.
- Support the restorative justice field by providing the needed resources, including funding and training for practitioners.
- Develop community work and educational work providing trainings in non-violent communication.
- Integrate restorative justice approaches in the inclusion process of immigrants.
- Allocate the restorative justice interventions to professional experts in the field.
- Be an example of active participation, involving practitioner's knowledge in policy making.
- Set standards for monitoring, evaluating and further researching restorative justice processes.

Municipalities can undertake the following:

- Assess the needs of the community and the possible tensions between its members.
- Be open to collaborate with the other stakeholders for a common project together and show an example of participation.

- Be ready to engage in honest dialogue which can also bring different views and criticism about your own work.
- Support open, transparent, long-term and sustainable communication.
- Offer a neutral and safe space for restorative justice encounters to take place.
- Keep in mind that mayors and other decision makers within the city are also citizens.

2. Dissemination

Dissemination has been important since the beginning: the project set out to disseminate results to the different target groups throughout the four years of its existence as well as beyond. The European Form for Restorative Justice as coordinator of the dissemination activities has built a contact base and sent out Newsflashes, amongst many other actions.

2.1. Website

The website was made operational since the start of the project (www.alternativeproject.eu) and is the central place for communication on the project to the outside world. It links through to other pages, such as the partners' websites or to the blog for interviews and opinion pieces. The link page includes other projects, organisations and useful tools. Whenever the partners attended a conference, a workshop or event, or when they organised something, this information was also posted on the website.

2.2. Social media

The idea of the blog (https://projectalternative.wordpress.com/) is to create output in a less scholastic language, to attain a larger audience and to use creative and interactive ways to get the target groups' attention. A Twitter and Facebook account have been created and information was regularly shared through these. The ALTERNATIVE Film Online Platform (http://alternativefilms.euforumrj.org/) has been launched and has garnered attention from all over the world. During the project's final conference a short film was made by the Foresee research group (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uXKWrq0aksY).

2.3. Films

The filmmaking process took place during the four years of the project. The partners created a film to present their organisation and did participatory filming in their action research sites parallel to their research. Some partners edited several short films, which were used for dissemination before the end of the main filming process. The films were shot in the

various sites and the final film was recorded in Leuven through interviewing all partners (April 2015).

The output of the filming process consists of a general/introductory film, four local movies, teasers, eight interviews, extra materials and an online platform (http://alternativefilms.euforumrj.org/) where all the outputs are presented. The manual, also available on the platform, can contextualise the film and provide more textual information to the images. Simultaneously, the film illustrates the manual and provides a multimedia approach to possible trainings or workshops. This presentation of the films enables the use of these materials for training, workshops, conferences as well as for raising awareness on the project.

2.4. Academic publications

Articles have been published throughout the project and the references are available on the project's website. In order to reach a broader, mostly academic, audience other than the ones that find their way to our public website we set up two books that go beyond the usual reporting style. Firstly, the 'theory book' starts from the theoretical concepts as they were developed during the first year of the project and built upon with reflections and findings from practice fields, also outside the ALTERNATIVE research sites (Aertsen & Pali 2016). Secondly, the 'action research book' focuses on the action research sites, the filming and the comparative research. We opted to develop a book focusing on action research, which aims at portraying the action that was undertaken in the four sites and the lessons learnt, on the ground but also on the method of action research itself. When we were developing the action research methodology, we found that action research is on the one hand still not that often used within the criminological field and, on the other hand, it is often not documented in a detailed manner. Therefore, we thought it to be important to give a more detailed account of how the action research was set up in various intercultural settings in order to be of added value to the criminological and methodological literature more generally (Vanfraechem & Aertsen 2016).

2.5. Policy briefs

To make sure that project outputs are influencing policy making and research, three policy briefs were made. One is intended to policy makers in the fields of security, justice, migration, communities, intercultural issues. The other is addressed to researchers and focuses more on the research related recommendations of the project. The third one is a

summary of the manual for practitioners (http://www.alternativeproject.eu/news/alternative-in-a-nutshell/).

2.6. Summaries of research reports

An Executive Summary booklet (available on the platform and on the website) gives an overview of the content and main findings of all published research reports.

2.7. Manuals

The Manual "Restorative Justice Responses to Conflicts in Intercultural Settings: Practice guidelines" (Biffi & Chapman, 2015) includes the following main chapters and is available on the Online platform and website:

1. Introduction to conflicts in intercultural settings: context, cases and key concepts
2. Handling conflicts in intercultural settings
3. Practice guidelines for applying restorative justice approaches in intercultural settings
4. Lessons learnt
5. A way forward
6. Resource kit

Furthermore, a booklet was written in German, focusing on the method of restorative circles (Kremmel & Pelikan 2015) and a Manual is available in Serbian as well (Ćopić & Nikolić-Ristanović 2016), both available on the Online platform.

2.8. Seminars, workshops and conferences

Regional workshops

The project organised regional workshops throughout Europe to, on the one hand, present preliminary results of ALTERNATIVE in different regions in order to disseminate these results. On the other hand, we wanted to get input of researchers, practitioners, end-users and policy makers on how they see these results can be used in their daily work. Workshops were held in Serbia, Hungary, Northern Ireland and Norway in order to attract participants from different parts of Europe.

Summer School

The ALTERNATIVE Summer School, organised by the European Forum for Restorative Justice and IRKS, took place in Vienna, Austria (29 July-2 August 2013). The topic,

according to the main subject of the ALTERNATIVE project, was restorative justice in intercultural settings with a title reflecting on the approach from practice: "Restorative Justice in intercultural settings: business as usual?" More than 30 restorative justice practitioners, trainers and researchers participated in the Summer School from 12 different countries (Austria, Belgium, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Spain, China, United Kingdom).

Workshops at EFRJ conference

The European Forum for Restorative Justice held its 8th International Conference on Restorative Justice in Belfast, Northern Ireland (11-14 June 2014). This event, which brought together 300 people from around the world, was hosted by Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster and focused on the three broad themes of desistance, social justice and peacebuilding. The aim was to broaden the scope of restorative justice and try to look 'beyond' its application to the criminal justice system. This is in line with the direction we take in the ALTERNATIVE project concerning broadening the scope of restorative justice with its application in conflicts in intercultural settings. The theme of social justice represented the main topics and questions of the ALTERNATIVE project, posing the central question: 'How can restorative justice contribute to social justice, especially in an increasingly intercultural society?'

At the 9th EFRJ international conference in Leiden (23-25 June 2016), the ALTERNATIVE team will be present to give an update on the final findings of the project and stimulate the debate with researchers and practitioners in the restorative justice field.

Workshops at ESC and other conferences

Since the European Society of Criminology brings together criminology researchers from around the EU, its annual conferences were considered as an important tool to disseminate the project's results beyond the restorative justice field. The EFRJ furthermore identified conferences relevant for the project and shared an overview with partners for a coordinated and balanced representation of project partners at various events.

Final conference

The final conference of the project entitled "Justice and Security in Intercultural Europe: Exploring Alternatives" took place in Leuven, Belgium (16-18 November 2015). The conference was an opportunity to present the project and the research in full to interested

parties. This event created the possibility of bringing professionals from different fields and parts of Europe together and to reflect on what has resulted from the project, as well as to introduce new topics on (restorative) justice, conflict resolution and other themes the project has touched upon. The conference did get media coverage in Belgium which shows that the project does have a message to bring, especially in the challenging time in Europe, being confronted with refugees on the one hand and terrorism on the other hand.

EFRJ Newsletter

The EFRJ Newsletter is one of the Forum's instruments to act as a platform for communication and participation for those working on or interested in restorative justice. Issue 2 of volume 14 (September 2013) was a special issue dedicated to the ALTERNATIVE project. Ivo Aertsen wrote the editorial; Brunilda Pali wrote a piece on "Alternative thinking/theorizing"; Christa Pelikan and Inge Vanfraechem wrote together on the method of action research in "Alternative research approaches: let's get into action"; the action research sites reported on their activities; and Edit Törzs wrote on "ALTERNATIVE dissemination".

3. Exploitation of results

For the near future, the project's website, blog and film online platform will be continued. On the website, all project's public reports, references to and summaries of academic publications and other outcomes remain available. Partner European Forum for Restorative Justice will ensure the maintenance of the website until 2018, after which the documents will be stored on their own website (www.euforumrj.org).

As mentioned above, two book publications are in preparation, for which the manuscripts are sent to the publisher (Routledge) at the end of June 2016. Furthermore, all partners commit to integrate, and to build on, their ALTERNATIVE findings in future publications and research applications. A few examples of the latter are: a project in Belgium on building societal support for restorative justice through innovative participatory methods (KU Leuven, started February 2016); a Horizon 2020 application under the Work Programme 2016-2017 "*Secure societies – Protecting freedom and security of Europe and its citizens*" and relating to the Call "*Fight against crime and terrorism*", more specifically to the topic "*SEC-06-FCT-2016 - Developing a comprehensive approach to violent radicalisation in the EU from early understanding to improving protection*" (KU Leuven coordinator, August 2016); a research application 'Handling Reindeer Herding Conflicts in the Northern Sami

Areas' to the Norwegian Agriculture Agency´s Research and Development Foundation for Reindeer herding (NOVA, February 2016).

Another way of using the project's findings is to integrate them in university teaching, as is done in: Bachelor and Master classes of Restorative Justice and Victimology in the Criminology curriculum at KU Leuven; a course for Russian and Norwegian Social Work students, University of Tromsø; lectures within the Regional Master Programme in Peace Studies, University of Basel; Module of Restorative Society with the Master in Restorative Practices, Ulster University.

Several partners of ALTERNATIVE integrated the results into current PhD projects and will do so in the future. Furthermore, the idea is being discussed amongst several partners to set up a common, European PhD programme on Restorative Justice approaches. For this aim, the framework of ERASMUS+ is being explored.