

Restorative Justice Activities in Albania in the context of the RJ Strategy for Change 2019

Prepared by the Albanian Foundation for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation of Disputes (AFCR)

1. *Training for mediators in Restorative Justice for Juveniles – February, July 2019*

A 5-day training program for 25 mediators was held on 20-21 February and 10-12 July 2019. It was organized in cooperation by AFCR, Terre des hommes, National Chamber of Mediators and CSSP - Center for Integrative Mediation, Germany. The Code of Criminal Justice for Children (CCJC), which entered into force in 2018, provides that all professionals working with juveniles should be specialized in providing services for this target group, therefore, the training aimed at building the capacities of existing mediators in the area of restorative justice and mediation with juvenile victims and offenders. The training was focused on case studies and on the role of the mediators/facilitators in juvenile cases. The list of the trained mediators was submitted at the Ministry of Justice of Albania.

2. *Coalition building and awareness raising activities – January-May 2019*

The activities were organized as part of “Civil society in action to build restorative approaches and practices for children and youth in conflict or contact with the law”, implemented by Terre des hommes in partnership with AFCR, with EU funding. The coalition building activities were organized in six main districts of Albania, targeting local stakeholders involved in the administration of juvenile justice, and aiming at increasing their knowledge in the restorative practices for juveniles and the respective provisions in the CCJC. These activities were complemented by nine awareness raising activities at high school level, introducing teachers, students and parents on the restorative approaches for juveniles in contact with the law. Around 500 participants attended these activities.

3. *Training program for civil society representatives on RJ and mediation – June 2019*

As part of the program on “Civil society in action to build restorative approaches and practices for children and youth in conflict or contact with the law”, a two-day program on RJ and mediation was held on 20-21 June 2019, organized by Terre des hommes in partnership with AFCR. The training was attended by 20 representatives of civil society organizations, working in the area of human rights, child protection and juvenile justice, in order to build their capacities in the restorative approaches for juvenile offenders and victims.

4. *Capacity building for probation officers in restorative justice and mediation for juveniles in contact with the law – October-November 2019*

The program was jointly coordinated by General Directorate of Probation Service and UNICEF-Albania country office, with funding from the Norwegian Government, and the involvement of two RJ experts. It focused on two elements: (a) development of a manual on RJ and mediation and preparation of guidelines on the supervision of the implementation of the restorative justice measure; and (b) delivery of training program for probation officers on RJ and mediation for juveniles.

- a) A manual on RJ and Mediation, designed to be used by probation officers, contains information on the RJ approaches, its philosophy, the role of the parties and community; the legal framework for the RJ, and information on the cooperation procedure between the probation service and the mediation service.
- b) A two-day training program on RJ and mediation was attended by 75 probation officers, arranged into three groups of 25 participants/group. As the Code of Criminal Justice for Children, provides for the supervisory role of the probation officers in the implementation of the measure of restorative justice and mediation, the training focused on building their capacities on diversion to restorative justice programs for juveniles and their role in supervising the implementation of such

measure. Case studies were used to illustrate the procedure to be followed in the cooperation between the probation service and the mediation service.

During the training, the participants were also introduced with the findings of the Mapping of Criminal Justice in the lens of Restorative Justice in CEE - Albania country report.

5. *Develop modules on RJ for justice professionals and deliver a two-day training for School of Magistrates students – June, October 2019*

The development of modules on RJ is part of the capacity building program for justice professionals in the area of RJ, considering their important role in the implementation of the diversion measure of juvenile offenders to restorative justice programs, provided for in the CCJC. The modules were prepared in cooperation by the School of Magistrates (SC), Terre des hommes and AFCR, and were followed by two days of training for 60 School of Magistrate students.

The modules will be part of the SC curricula and their accreditation is in process.

6. *Supporting 10 CSOs to develop & implement small scale projects on restorative practices & programmes towards prevention of imprisonment – August, October 2019*

6.1. *Granting scheme*

As part of a small-scale granting scheme by Terre des hommes in partnership by AFCR, 10 CSOs working with children/youth in contact with the law were awarded grants to implement projects focused on promotion and implementation of restorative approaches for children and juveniles in contact with the law. The implementation process is in progress and is extended in 2020 as well.

6.2. *Study visit for CSOs in Netherland and Belgium to gain experience in the implementation of RJ programs for juveniles – October 2019*

10 representatives of the sub-grantee CSOs attended a 4-day study visit in the area of RJ. The visit was organized by Terre des hommes Albania and Hungary and AFCR, in cooperation with the European Forum for Restorative Justice. The CSOs representatives benefited from the established experience of their counterparts in Netherlands and Belgium.

7. *Talk on Mediation and RJ delivered during the CSOs Open Day, October 2019*

An open day was held on October 25, 2019 in Tirana, where CSOs working in the area of access to justice and monitoring of justice presented their main outcomes from the projects they have been implementing as part of a larger program in the justice area, implemented by Save the Children and Center for Legal Integrated Practices and Services, with EU funding.

As part of the fair, which was open to wide public, particularly youth, a talk on mediation and RJ was delivered to a large audience, aiming at increasing the public awareness on the use of alternative dispute resolution, particularly the use of RJ approaches for juveniles in contact with the law.

8. *Restorative Justice Week in Albania – as part of the RJ Week in Europe – 17-24 November 2019*

During the RJ week, AFCR experts, in cooperation with lecturers of the Faculty of Law and Faculty of Social Sciences (University of Tirana) and Aleksandër Moisiu University in Durrës, organized activities with the participation of students of these universities on 21, 22 and 23 November 2019. Students were introduced to the concept of restorative justice as alternative forms of dealing with the aftermath of an offence. Firstly, a brief introduction on the European Forum for Restorative Justice and AFCR was made to the students. The discussion was focused on the goals and values of RJ in creating positive relations among all parties affected by a criminal offence, the restoration of the damages caused by the offence, the rehabilitation and reintegration of the juveniles in society and in increasing their responsibility, as well as the needs of the victims.

A short video on the 10-th International Conference of EFRJ on “Expanding the restorative imagination – restorative justice between realities and visions in Europe and Beyond”, held in Tirana in 2018, where AFCR was the hosting organization, was shown to the participants. Students expressed their interest in knowing more about the EFRJ, RJ, the role of the facilitator and mediator in restorative programs.