

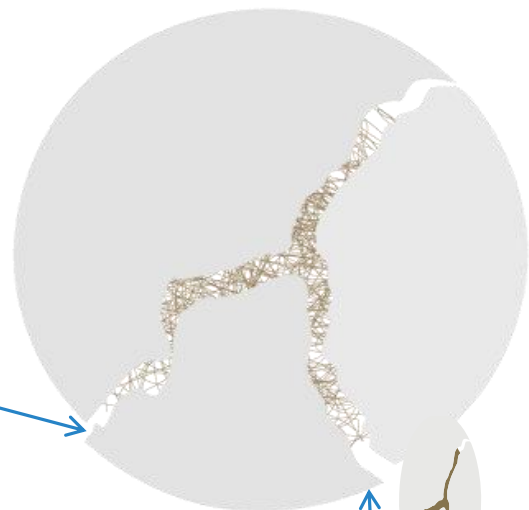


# INTERMEDIARY BODIES IN «CONTATTO» AND «THE UNNAMED» PRESENTATION TO THE EUROPEAN FORUM FOR RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

# ConTatto and the Unnamed: project story



Como,  
2017



Lecco,  
2012

Innominatevie  
ascoltare, schiodare, riparare

ascoltare il dolore    schiodare il rancore    riparare i legami

## Close, but different territories:

Como city and Lomazzo-Fino Mornasco district and Lecco province

## Common areas and activities:

Schools

Restorative Oriented Groups - ROGs

Intermediary bodies

Restorative corners

## Common promoters:

Association COMUNITA' IL GABBIANO and Centre for Social Volunteering

**Different funders:** Cariplo Foundation - third sector self-funding

**Different premises:** welfare system - criminal justice

## ConTatto and the Unnamed

- ❖ Feelings of fear, uncertainty, loneliness and suffering, polarization  
*need to create meeting and listening spaces of these fears, uncertainties and sufferings allowing for a dialogue between differences, understanding of each other's feelings, problems and points of view and healing of wounds*
- ❖ Social conflicts deeply rooted in the local contexts to which traditional justice tools do not offer adequate solutions together with citizens' extensive use of juridical tools  
*offer spaces and opportunities for: reading local contexts through different lens to understand social fractures and to recompose them by acting on the reasons behind them; promoting an understanding of community's responsibilities behind harms and in restoring them; empowering victims of harm and favouring responsibility of offenders and their social inclusion*
- ❖ Justice understood as a punitive action and delegated to legal authorities: in a context of increasing fear and social insecurity, criminal justice often leaves offenders and victims alone and a community struggling with the feelings of fear, indifference, revenge and dynamics of inclusion/exclusion of offenders  
*offer a space for dialogue to the community to debate on criminal justice and its solutions to crime; promote restorative values and principles in day-by-day relations and actions*

## The Unnamed

- ❖ Justice understood as a punitive action and delegated to legal authorities  
*offer a space for dialogue to the community to debate on criminal justice and its solutions to crime and on the restorative approach to criminal justice and to social relations; promote restorative values and principles in day-by-day relations and actions*
- ❖ Feelings of fear, uncertainty, loneliness and suffering, polarization  
*need to create meeting and listening spaces of these fears, uncertainties and sufferings allowing for a dialogue between differences, understanding of each other's feelings, problems and points of view and healing of wounds*
- ❖ Existence of a certain level of understanding of the need for a different way of understanding and doing justice in nowadays communities  
*need to catalyse citizens' interest in looking for alternative solutions to punitive justice and to use that energy for developing restorative communities*
- ❖ Conflicts to which traditional justice tools do not offer adequate solutions together with citizens' extensive use of juridical tools  
*offer spaces and opportunities for: reading local contexts through different lens to understand social fractures and to recompose them by acting on the reasons behind them*

- ❖ Lay the basis for the **creation of restorative communities**
- ❖ Create **spaces of meeting and dialogue** between citizens **on social conflicts** in their context – spaces where the various narratives on the social fractures/tensions regarding that specific context are shared, where participants read them together without taking one side or another, without replacing one another and creating continuous bridges and connections and where participants can take care of community wounds, fractures and suffering activating a sense of collective responsibility
- ❖ Create spaces where the **community learns to** use its resources, competences and capacities to **recompose social fractures**, to **empower victims** and to ensure **responsibility and inclusion of offenders**
- ❖ Develop a **group of «antennas»** that can **intercept social tensions/conflict**, work for their management and prevention in the future and spread the restorative approach in the community
- ❖ Create **informal and volunteer community groups** whose vision of living together is based on the **justice of relations** and that joins forces to put it into practice

- ❖ Lay the basis for the **creation of restorative communities**
- ❖ Create an **informal and volunteer community group** whose vision of living together is based on the **justice of relations** and that joins forces to put it into practice
- ❖ Develop a **group of “antennas”** that seizes opportunities and works for **restorative community development** and **spreads the restorative approach** in the community
- ❖ Create **spaces where the community learns to** use its resources, competences and capacities to **tighten/recompose bonds**, to **empower victims** and to ensure **responsibility and inclusion of offenders**
- ❖ Create **spaces of meeting and dialogue** between citizens on **social conflicts** in their context – spaces where the various narratives on the social fractures/tensions regarding that specific context are shared, where participants read them together without taking one side or another, without replacing one another and creating continuous bridges and connections and where participants can take care of community wounds, fractures and suffering activating a sense of collective responsibility

## ConTatto

- ❖ Group of people at **neighbourhood level** with the aim to:
  - ❖ **Read the suffering** connected to harm or crimes and social fractures in their community to understand their reasons, question their own positioning and debate on and deliver **solutions for recomposing** them together with those that created the fractures and those that endure their consequences
  - ❖ **Listen to citizens' needs** to redirect them to the community networks and to **intercept social tensions/conflicts and hidden suffering**; debate on them, design and implement solutions to deal with them at community level
  - ❖ **Look after social relations** and **design community initiatives** to reduce social isolation and polarization
  - ❖ **Mobilise resources** (network) to implement the initiatives designed by the group
  - ❖ **Spread restorative** principles and values
- ❖ Volunteer group; citizens participate as citizens; local view

## The Unnamed

- ❖ Group of people at **provincial level** with the aim to:
  - ❖ Seize the opportunities for **restorative community development**
  - ❖ **Spread restorative** principles and values in the community
  - ❖ **Mobilise resources** (networks, staff, money) to deliver the initiatives designed
  - ❖ **Connect related initiatives** implemented in the province
  - ❖ **Read the suffering** (current, past or hidden) connected to harm or crimes to understand their reasons, question their own positioning, debate on solutions for **recomposing them** together with those that created the fractures and those that endure their consequences
  - ❖ **Look after social relations** within their community and design community initiatives to reduce social isolation and polarization
  - ❖ **Intercept social tensions/conflicts and hidden suffering**, debate on them and design solutions to deal with them at community level
- ❖ Volunteer group; citizens participate both as representatives of their organisations and citizens; strategic view

## Which restorative values are they based on?

### ConTatto and The Unnamed

- ❖ Community as a context for justice
- ❖ Mutual responsibility
- ❖ Mutual trust
- ❖ Inclusion and participation
- ❖ Recognizing the other as an equal and worthy interlocutor; seeing the others as humans with complexities and contradictions
- ❖ Truth through dialogue
- ❖ Respect of the differences
- ❖ Respect for human dignity
- ❖ Empathy
- ❖ Solidarity
- ❖ Accountability

## ConTatto

- ❖ Continuous group made of 10-15 people; higher number of participants in specific moments; meetings every 2 weeks
- ❖ The organisation and coordination of the group are ensured by a team of ConTatto project; however, since last year one member of the group has been involved in the project team
- ❖ Organisation and coordination activities: perform an analysis of the intervention context (initial phase); identify and engage stakeholders in the intermediary (in particular in the initial phase); prepare meetings of the intermediary body both from a logistic and contents point of view; identify financial opportunities to sustain the activities of the group; define priorities and initiatives (together with the members of the group)
- ❖ The coordination team of the project is made of social workers who act in the intervention context

## The Unnamed

- ❖ Group of people representing CSOs, institutions, interested citizens; overall 100 participants in the last 8 years (55% - CSOs, 25% - institutions; 20% - citizens); 60 meetings of the group in the last 8 years
- ❖ Management board made of 5 people (4 representatives of the most relevant organisations and 1 independent expert): coordinates the work of the restorative justice group; ensures the delivery of all activities defined by the group; relate with all stakeholders involved in the group to enhance relations, to bridge organisations and to integrate and coordinate initiatives on restorative justice proposed by participating organisations
- ❖ Participating organisations fund/co-fund the implemented activities through staff, economic resources or donations in kind; participating organisations promote projects to implement the activities defined by the group

## ConTatto

## ❖ Functions:

- ❖ *Intercept social tensions/conflicts and social problems; read them together in the intermediary body to identify ways of dealing with them in a restorative way: e.g. conflict related to events organised by the parish; conflict related to the Facebook group of the neighbourhood; initiatives related to youth social deviance;*
- ❖ *Identify solutions to reduce/prevent social isolation and marginalisation and create bridges between citizens: e.g. initiatives of support to a community member that has lost her son in a car accident; initiatives defined to support people at risk of social exclusion during the COVID-19 lockdown*
- ❖ *Participate in the delivery of restorative practices (e.g. 7 restorative oriented groups involving 5 members of restorative groups)*
- ❖ *Spread the restorative approach in the intervention context: e.g. creation of a restorative green corner dedicated to the boy killed in the car accident; creation of the “I fight in a good manner” spot in the neighbourhood kindergarten*

## The Unnamed

## ❖ Functions:

- ❖ *Identify opportunities for restorative community development*
- ❖ *Spread the restorative approach in the intervention context: e.g. awareness raising initiatives on restorative justice targeted to citizens, schools and other public institutions, third sector organisations (e.g. 467 students involved in 63 training path supported/delivered by participating organisations; 35 volunteers engaged, including also participants of the organisations involved in the group)*
- ❖ *Develop restorative practices to deal with crimes and participate in their delivery (e.g. 27 members participating in the 20 meetings organised within the 2 ROGs; )*
- ❖ *Identify solutions to create bridges between citizens, and prevent/reduce social tensions/conflicts: e.g. restorative corners in bars*
- ❖ *Intercept social tensions/conflicts and social problems; read them together in the intermediary body to identify ways of dealing with them in a restorative way: e.g. RestoCovid circles*



## The Unnamed: RestoCovid circles

- ❖ Functions:
  - ❖ *RestoCovid circles* – circles that aim to share the experience of the COVID-19 period, to listen each other's suffering, to share and understand the "truth" of different community members (people that got sick; people that lost the loved ones due to the COVID-19; workers in the care and necessary services sectors; citizens who experienced isolation due COVID restrictions) and recompose social fractures emerging between citizens
  - ❖ 5 circles including 9 meetings and involving 70 participants

## ConTatto

- ❖ Knowledge on restorative justice and in particular on its values and principles, its benefits and challenges to its application at community level, length of restorative processes, and on restorative practices
- ❖ Acquiring new lens to interpret crimes/conflicts/tensions characterising the intervention context:
  - ❖ *Awareness of conflicts as meeting and relation opportunities*
  - ❖ *Awareness of the role of community in social conflicts and in recomposing social fractures*
  - ❖ *Awareness of the relevance of looking at social tensions/conflicts from various angles (the community one, the offender one and the victim one) and create spaces for sharing, recognising, understanding and bridging them*
  - ❖ *Awareness of the difficulties and effort of the confrontations for all parties involved directly or indirectly*
  - ❖ *Awareness of the need to understand motivations of all people composing the society and not only of those that ask for support/need to be supported*
  - ❖ *Awareness of the need to define and implement conflict management solutions together with (and not for) offenders and victims*

## The Unnamed

- ❖ Knowledge on restorative justice
- ❖ Awareness on how to use restorative justice in their contexts of intervention
- ❖ Acquiring new to lens interpret crimes/conflicts/tensions
- ❖ Territorial recognition
- ❖ Strengthening collaboration and creating new relations;
- ❖ Develop new projects/initiatives

- ❖ Awareness of their role as community members in managing and preventing social conflicts and tensions in their community; awareness of small gestures that can make a difference in social relations in the intervention context
- ❖ Enlarge their view on social relations in the intervention context and higher awareness of the dynamics of social conflicts in the respective context
- ❖ Recognition of social phenomena (e.g. youth deviance) characterising the intervention context
- ❖ Changes in participants' behaviours in managing conflicts/tensions - restorative values and principles as a way of living
- ❖ Reduction in the social conflicts/tensions dealt with in a restorative way
- ❖ Stronger community bounds
- ❖ Definition of new initiatives to deal with deeply rooted social problems (e.g. prevention of youth deviance through the adoption of a restorative approach in sport associations acting in the intervention context)

## ConTatto and The Unnamed

### Social mechanisms:

- ❖ Reputation and social legitimacy of the proponent, coordination team and trainers
- ❖ Bandwagon
- ❖ Sense of belonging to the community and mutual responsibility
- ❖ Repeated interactions; continuous relations
- ❖ Learning by doing; self-efficacy
- ❖ Performance feedback

### Design elements

- ❖ Heterogeneity of the participants in the group
- ❖ Good knowledge of the community context of both participants in the group and coordination team
- ❖ Capacity to work in team of both participants in the group and coordination team
- ❖ Good knowledge of restorative justice, community building and participatory processes of the coordination team
- ❖ Stability of the team involved in the coordination of the group
- ❖ Clear framing of intermediary bodies
- ❖ Inclusivity, openness and transparency of processes put in place
- ❖ Participatory governance
- ❖ Respect of participants and value of their competences and capacities
- ❖ Adequate resources

## ConTatto and The Unnamed

### Context characteristics

- ❖ Existence of social conflicts deemed urgent and relevant versus territories without conflicts
- ❖ Social capital
- ❖ Political positioning
- ❖ Previous experiences of participatory processes

**Which factors ensure success?**