Project Evaluation of the EU-funded Project Building Bridges:
An Integrated Sustainability Approach
This report has been produced within the framework of the project Building Bridges: Restorative dialogues with victims and offenders (JUST/2013/JPEN/AG/4479), and funded with the financial support of the Criminal Justice Programmes of the European Union. These contents are the sole responsibility of the Building Bridges project institutions and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission. It has been produced by staff of the Building Bridges project partner MAKAM Research GmbH in Austria.

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# Contents

Executive Summary........................................................................................................................................... 1  
Background....................................................................................................................................................... 2  
Goals and Objectives........................................................................................................................................ 4  
External Involvement...................................................................................................................................... 13  
Capacity Building........................................................................................................................................... 19  
Planning for Sustainability.............................................................................................................................. 21  
Strengths, Weaknesses and Future Potential................................................................................................. 27
Executive Summary

Building Bridges aimed at enhancing the role of victims in the restorative justice process and broadly promoting the principles of restorative justice across Europe through the adaptation, development and piloting of prison- and community-based victim-offender programmes across a range of European national contexts.

The Building Bridges project seeks to develop a transferable system of best practice for increasing victim involvement in restorative justice programmes, namely the pre-existing programme ‘Sycamore Tree Programme’ run by Prison Fellowship International (PFI) and its global affiliates. The partners on the project incorporate so-called ‘practitioner’ organisations from 7 different European countries – The Netherlands, Germany, Czech Republic, Hungary, Spain, Italy, and Portugal affiliated PFI, with varying degrees of experience, expertise and organisational capacity, as well as the University of Hull in the UK and MAKAM Research in Austria. The project was funded by the European Commission’s DG Justice programme, under the funding priority ‘Victim Support’.

This evaluation explores how the project has been managed and implemented from the perspective of engineering long-term impacts on the priority area ‘Victim Support’. The evaluation takes the assumption that a project is a means to an end: it is a tool to achieve something else. Too often, the success of a project is measured on the basis of the ‘End of Project Status’. With a focus on the ability to sustain longer term impacts, however, this measure of success is inadequate. Rather, this evaluation takes the perspective that a successful project can be best indicated by its ‘Beginning of Sustainability Status’. From this viewpoint, the evaluation team, from the project partner MAKAM Research, have worked together with the other partners to

reflect on how project activities can lead to longer term impacts – to define what a Beginning of Sustainability Status should look like, and have analysed the project partners journey towards this benchmark.

The evaluation found that the project has made progress towards achieving a number of long-term goals, and has been very successful in many ways in building the capacity of the organisations – and individuals – involved, raising the profile of victim-offender dialogues in implementing countries, and putting in place the foundations for long-term impacts both for the organisations participating, and for the academic, policy-making and decision-making environment. Whilst the project has helped partners to work well together with other organisations pursuing the same goals and objectives, it has highlighted the difficulties that partners faced in working together with victim-support organisations who may have other interests and biases against the growth and development of restorative practices, and victim-offender dialogues.

Partners have, however, learnt from these difficulties, and become increasingly aware of the importance of establishing relationships with victim-support organisations. Some partners have started developing new approaches to harness the potential of cooperation with victim organisations, to build on the successes of the project.
An evaluation of the Building Bridges project looks at how the project meets the immediate contractual objectives, how it meets the broader goals and objectives of the partners, and how it contributes to the European policy area under which it was funded.

Crime can be understood as violating behaviour which necessitates a social response and not only a legal one (Zehr, Toews 2010). Victims suffer from a number of effects in the aftermath of a crime, physical, psychological, financial, and social effects (Morrison et al 2012, Herman 2010). They are therefore increasingly vulnerable, i.e. to mental illness, traumatization, or lower productivity than the general population. Psychological effects of crimes are common, but can be tackled using mediation or methods of restorative justice (Johnstone 2010). This involves not only issuing a legal sentence to the offender, but also setting a positive action for the victim. This enhances the victim’s role from formerly being a witness in a court process, often being traumatized a second time, to a process-oriented understanding and healing process, of how crimes affect the lives of victims.

Lately there have been more and more initiatives, policies and projects, like the Building Bridges Project, in restorative justice in which victims are given a role and a voice, explaining the effects of the crime and sharing victimization, thus contributing to restoration and healing, which is part of psychological health and wellbeing and changing value systems of offenders who are confronted with the real life effects of their crimes (Herman 2010, Choi, Grenn, Kapp 2010).

A methodology known as the Sycamore Tree Project (STP), which has been well established in North and South America, New Zealand and Australia, and across the African continent, as well as in some European countries, has shown positive effects in victim support. In the original STP methodology unrelated victims and offenders are brought together in prisons in a 5 to 8-week intensive programme dealing with crime effects. Victims get the possibility to confront offenders and to be paid back for the harm caused. Through the mix of unrelated offenders and victims in this restorative mediation programme, offenders also gain a chance of changing their perspective about their crime, its effect in the lives of victims and a chance to work on values (like respect, empathy and accountability) and behaviour change. However, this programme has only been piloted in some European countries with offenders and victims, but there has never been a coordinated effort to spread this methodology across Europe and in different settings in prisons and in the community.

The Building Bridges project explored the possibilities of transfer for STP to those European countries without such programmes and further adaptation of the programme in multi-cultural settings inside and outside prisons. In doing so, the project sought to develop a transferable system of best practice for increasing victim involvement in restorative justice programmes. The partners on the project incorporate so-called ‘practitioner’ organisations from 7 different European countries – The Netherlands, Germany, Czech Republic, Hungary, Spain, Italy, and Portugal affiliated PFI, with varying degrees of experience, expertise and organisational capacity, as well as the University of Hull in the UK and MAKAM Research in Austria. The project was funded by the European
Commission’s DG Justice programme, under the funding priority ‘Victim Support’.

The project centred around the implementation of 14 different victim-offender dialogue programmes in different settings inside and outside of prisons. These programmes underwent comprehensive evaluation in order to be able to contribute to an evidence base for enabling and hindering factors of victim support on a European-wide basis.

The main outputs and deliverables of Building Bridges were

- A desk research report on victim support in Europe using restorative dialogues with victims and offenders.
- 14 pilot restorative dialogues “Building Bridges” with unrelated victims and offenders in prisons and communities in 7 countries
- A Building Bridges Guidebook for facilitators in 8 languages (mediators, social workers, psychologists, etc.)
- A Training Conference for facilitators in Italy with 70-100 participants
- A scientific evaluation of “Building Bridges” restorative dialogues
- A book publication (publishable manuscript) focusing on the role of the victim in restorative justice and restorative dialogues across Europe

The project also has broader goals and objectives which are important to consider in examining what the project is trying to achieve. Amongst these broader objectives are those envisaged by the partners of the consortium, which underpin the long-term rationale for participating in the project, motivation for achieving a successful outcome, and incentive to create a sustainable result. As Talbot (2015) argues, “project sustainability requires commitment and resources to implement results after the funding. Aligning project goals with partner- or external organisations’ own goals, rather than seeing project goals as independent objectives, is instrumental in securing these resources, encouraging project actors to approach planning and implementation with a view to sustainability, seeing pro-sustainability practices such as needs analysis and stakeholder involvement as opportunities rather than bureaucratic hurdles.” (Talbot, 2015: pp19-20)

Also, however, there are the policy objectives, set by the European Commission, and under which the project has been financed; projects financed under the call 2013/JPEN/AG priority area VICTIMS-SUPPORT should focus on:

Improving or establishing the provision of support (both general and specialist support) to victims in terms of emotional support, advice and information on criminal proceedings and practical assistance and advice to assist victims in their recovery, and mechanisms to improve the referral of victims to victim support services.

This evaluation explores how the project has been managed and implemented from the perspective of engineering long-term impacts for the organisations involved, and on the policy area ‘Victim Support’. The evaluation takes the assumption that a project is a means to an end; it is a tool to achieve something else. Too often, the success of a project is measured on the basis of the ‘End of Project Status’. With a focus on the ability to sustain longer term impacts, however, this measure of success is inadequate. Rather, this evaluation takes the perspective that a successful project can be best indicated by its ‘Beginning of Sustainability Status’.

From this viewpoint, the evaluation team, from the project partner MAKAM Research, have worked together with the other partners to reflect on how project activities can lead to longer term impacts – to define what a Beginning of Sustainability Status should look like, and have analysed the project partners journey towards this benchmark, taking into account the contractual deliverables, the organisational objectives, and the policy contribution.
Goals and Objectives

The project Building Bridges set itself an ambitious range of goals and targets – both immediate, and long term.

Output Delivery
The core project outputs were achieved within the financial and time constraints of the project.

- A high-quality desk research report, produced in collaboration between MAKAM Research in Austria and the University of Hull in the UK was published on the project website very early in the project, and provided the partners with a solid understanding of victim centred mediation and the nature of existing Sycamore Tree Projects across the partner countries in Europe, including the strengths and weaknesses of the programmes, and their modes of implementation, with a focus on victim work. This research proved critical in the development of the draft Building Bridges guidebook, which sought to present and contextualise best practice examples from across Europe within a ‘how to’ model for programme implementers to follow.

- Central to the project was the implementation itself of 14 pilot sites, based on the combined best practice and broader understanding of victim work and the agreed principles set forth in the guidebook. Whilst not every country achieved the planned 2 pilot sites – the partner in Germany was faced with institutional constraints – all 14 sites were realised, with the Hungarian partner running an extra site to compensate. This was important not only to compensate for the missing site, which was proposed in the project application, but to compensate for the important research data that would otherwise have been lost.

The following tables shows a breakdown of the implemented sites, including their start and completion dates, and the number of victims and offenders participating. The data is courtesy of the research team at the University of Hull.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Facility type</th>
<th>Start date</th>
<th>Completion date</th>
<th>Victims</th>
<th>Offenders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Czech</td>
<td>Ruzynie</td>
<td>Prison</td>
<td>02 Oct 2015</td>
<td>02 Nov 2015</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vinarice</td>
<td>Prison</td>
<td>22 Aug 2015</td>
<td>25 Sep 2015</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Seehaus</td>
<td>Prison</td>
<td>21 Apr 2015</td>
<td>07 May 2015</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>Balasagawati</td>
<td>Prison</td>
<td>20 Oct 2015</td>
<td>11 Nov 2015</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baracska</td>
<td>Prison</td>
<td>04 Jul 2015</td>
<td>30 Jul 2015</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marianosztra</td>
<td>Prison</td>
<td>07 Jul 2015</td>
<td>21 Jul 2015</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Frosinone</td>
<td>Prison</td>
<td>29 May 2015</td>
<td>18 Jul 2015</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Milan Opera</td>
<td>Prison</td>
<td>19 Jun 2015</td>
<td>31 Jul 2015</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>Ontmoeting</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>16 Apr 2015</td>
<td>11 Jun 2015</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td></td>
<td>De Schie</td>
<td>Prison</td>
<td>11 Mar 2015</td>
<td>29 Apr 2015</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>ISCP</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>26 Jun 2015</td>
<td>31 Jul 2015</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Linho</td>
<td>Prison</td>
<td>11 Sep 2015</td>
<td>27 Oct 2015</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Navalcarnero</td>
<td>Prison</td>
<td>07 Oct 2015</td>
<td>26 Oct 2015</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Navalcarnero</td>
<td>Prison</td>
<td>22 May 2015</td>
<td>30 Jun 2015</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• This research proved critical in the development of the draft Building Bridges guidebook, which sought to present and contextualise best practice examples from across Europe within a ‘how to’ model for programme implementers to follow.

• The implementation of the pilot sites was subject to a scientific evaluation, the results of which formed the foundation of a book publication.

The research was conducted differently to how it had been originally planned and budgeted. However, owing to the creativity and flexibility of the project consortium, a reallocation of resources enabled all originally planned research to be conducted, whilst leaving time and budget to conduct additional in-depth case studies of a smaller sample of implemented sites.

This was seen as hugely beneficial to the project, as it would produce data that didn’t only demonstrate the impact of the programmes, and explain the strengths and weaknesses of programme implementation, but it also helped the scientific team to better understand the social and institutional context in which some of the pilot sites were implemented. This included in-depth qualitative interviews with a range of stakeholders, from the victims and offenders, through to the facilitators, programme managers, prison administrations, and officials at respective ministries of justice.

• The book publication was delayed for a number of practical reasons, owing largely to oversight at the project application stage. The book, which was originally planned to be written in stages throughout the project, became less viable as its reliance on the final research became more and more evident. The project consortium, however, managed to reallocate resources effectively, producing the final manuscript by the end of the project, based on the results both of the large-scale impact analysis, and the in-depth qualitative social-ecological exploration. A publisher was identified during the second half of the project – the internal publishing house of a well-respected London-based think-tank, with significant experience producing and widely disseminating publications in the field of social justice, restorative justice, and victimology.

• The final training conference brought together over 80 stakeholders from various European countries – although it was very much weighted towards local, Italian, delegates. The conference included training workshops, including for facilitators and programme managers.
Management Issues
The project has delivered everything it was mandated to deliver, and has opened a number of doors for project partners to further pursue their work in this area, building on the foundations of the project. This in itself is testament to the effective management of the project by the coordinator, but also to the efforts of the other individuals from across the international consortium.

This was, however, never a foregone conclusion. The project faced some difficulties towards the interim stage, leaving some deliverables missing or delayed. A major change in personnel, including the loss of the chief project orchestrator and bid writer at month 10 was felt throughout the project.

At the interim stage of the project (February 2015) there were some concerns that the project was not on track for a number of reasons. Project partners reported at that stage problems concerning victim involvement, training of programme facilitators, the management of the project, and the sustainability planning. Some of the concerns included:

- We should have done one more victim’s event
- We need victims for the 2nd pilot
- In some countries no victims have been found
- We are missing the guidebook
- Facilitators training needs to continue for one more afternoon
- In some countries no training has been given or planned
- The project timeline is delayed
- The part about the valorisation plan is not yet done

The interim report indicated areas of the project which the partners collectively felt needed to be addressed, ranked in order of importance on the basis of survey data. These areas, most notably the training of facilitators and the sourcing of victim participations for the programme were explicitly highlighted by the project coordinator as critical, and project partners sought to develop strategies for addressing these issues.

On completion of the project the relative success of these two activities was reviewed. Project partners were slightly less optimistic about the projects ability to recruit victims, whilst the training of facilitators was perceived to have been achieved to a greater extent since earlier reporting.

The project coordinator addressed the issue of facilitator training by investing additional, previously unbudgeted resources, to conduct a joint training for facilitators in Spain and Portugal. Organised between the coordinator and the Portuguese and Spanish partners, the training took place at a convenient central location and gave local facilitators more confidence to embark on the implementation of their Building Bridges programmes.

The project team discussed at length the ways of sharing expertise on recruiting victims, and the coordinator facilitated in-depth discussions to encourage best-practice sharing, but, unlike the training of facilitators, over which the project team had a good level of control, the recruitment of victims was a more systemic problem, rooted in the institutional landscape of the different countries. Learning how to engage victims in the restorative justice process was one of the primary objectives of this project. Any difficulties experienced during the recruitment of victim participants should not be seen as a failure within the project, but as an important part of the learning process which results from such a project. The problems associated with recruiting victim participants are
documented in the social-ecological evaluation of the individual programmes (Johnstone and Brennan, 2016).

Other issues such as delays in the project timeline, concerns about the completion of the guidebook were resolved in due course through appropriate reallocation of resources, notably by Gevangenenzorg Nederland and the University of Hull. The coordinator effectively steered the project back on course with sound leadership, and partners followed his lead on this.

The chart below outlines how the project partners reported the success of the other broader project goals, identified at the beginning of the project as a part of this evaluation process. Since this process looks at the way in which the project worked to establish the foundations for a longer-term impact – the Beginning of Sustainability Status – this data only shows the extent to which project partners feel they have moved towards these longer-term goals.

A chart showing the reported achievement of the broader Building Bridges project goals and objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
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<th>20.00</th>
<th>40.00</th>
<th>60.00</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learn and improve as individuals and organisations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop a clearer understanding of restorative justice processes</td>
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<td>Raise awareness of restorative justice and the goals of the Building Bridges project</td>
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<td>Set the groundwork for more - and better - sycamore tree programmes</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase the number and quality of restorative justice programmes in Europe / internationally</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Research and plan how to bring more victims into Sycamore Tree programmes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set the groundwork for more - and better - restorative justice programmes generally</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Implement the new programmes during the Building Bridges project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide evidence of the successes and failure of victim-centred restorative justice in practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase the number of victims participating in Restorative Justice programmes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scientifically evaluate the programmes involved in the Building Bridges project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify ways of promoting victims’ interests and involvement in RJ programmes</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mainstream restorative justice discourse in academic, policy and decision-making fields</td>
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<tr>
<td>Break down the barriers between victim- and offender-support organisations</td>
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</table>

In line with the perceived difficulties described above, goals such as breaking down the barriers between victim organisations and offender organisations, or identifying ways of promoting victims’ interests and involvement in restorative justice programmes, or increasing the number of victims participating in restorative justice programmes, have seen relatively less success than others, however they have seen some success relative to the baseline of the project – that is, partners report that the project has made a positive contribution towards achieving these goals, just not as much as in those other areas in which (most) partners already had a degree of experience and, perhaps, some internal control over.
Goals such as learning and improving, better understanding restorative justice processes and raising awareness of restorative justice have, on the other hand, seen greater levels of success within the project. It is encouraging to note that the goal of researching and planning how to involve more victims in victim-offender mediation programmes has also been relatively successful.

In identifying the difficulties faced in the recruitment of victims, and in obtaining the support of victim organisations, partners can build on their experiences and successes in other parts of the project to further enhance their work with victims. This is particularly the case for partners in the Czech Republic, Spain, and Portugal, who started the project with little or no institutional capacity for victim-offender mediation, but who have completed the project stronger and with greater capacity to set up further programmes in the future, which will continue to help address the priorities of the project.

The evaluation of some of the other goals is outlined further below.

**Learn and develop as individuals and organisations**

Partners reported having learned – and deepened their knowledge on issues relating to restorative justice in theory and practice, and how this relates to the victim-offender sessions that are run.

_Earlier I participated in STP's but Building Bridges gave me the opportunity to see the whole process, the obstacles and the good parts from preparation until after care of the participants._

**My personal goal is to learn from the project work and to find ways for (unrelated) victims and offenders to meet each other and experience the healing that could happen.**

Being involved in a multi-lateral, transnational project – and working within the framework of a European funding programme – has, for many partners, been a new experience. For those developing the project proposal, one of the core elements to consider was how to improve cross-organisational and cross-cultural working, and how to enhance the skills for collaboration and project management across a range of organisations involved in victim-offender work. For many of the partners involved, this learning process has had an effect on their overall management and coordination skills.

_I learnt how a project was born and its development how to tackle the huge works in it and manage resources and lead human resources._

_It was great to participate in the consortium, I learnt a lot about EU projects, about other countries' work in this field._

Partners commented frequently on how they will be able to use these new skills and competences when implementing future programmes and initiatives within their organisations, or as part of future international collaborative efforts.

_Although I have lived abroad for some years, I still learned a lot about intercultural project work. I hope to make use of this in the future, and would love to work on restorative justice Europe-wide._

_For the future this is very good standard level for cooperating together Europe-wide but also in my country as well._

The chart below illustrates how partners felt they best developed through the project, and how this has developed between the interim evaluation and the final evaluation reports.

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1 This is looked at here as a goal of the project, but is explored in a more detailed fashion in the chapter “Capacity Building”.
The chart illustrates quite clearly how partners on the project benefited from their participation in the project in terms of personal and organisational learning and development, and that these benefits were sustained and improved throughout the project. It is encouraging that the level of learning and development perceived did increase, on average, between the interim and final evaluations.

Likely explanations for this change in reporting between the interim and final evaluation stages are that, whilst the first year of the project was quite uncertain, and involved a large degree of coordinator-driven preparatory work, the second year of the project was far more defined by partners' direct involvement in organising programmes on the ground, facilitating and implementing research activities.
Enhancing the profile of restorative justice practices

Central to the long-term impacts of the Building Bridges Project is the view of enhancing the profile and image of restorative justice practices in Europe.

A realistic measure of progress towards this objective can be the way in which the project has an impact on the profile of restorative justice in the countries involved in the project.

This was one of the most notable results of the project, and a significant success factor for many of the partners involved. Across the partnership it was reported that prisons and senior officials became more aware of restorative justice practices.

In the prisons many directors got to know the project and were impressed by the results and the stories of the encounter between victims and offenders.

The undersecretary for justice has become one of the supporter of restorative justice.

Approach to involving victims of crime and better understanding their needs

All of the (practitioner) partner organisations hoped to use the project as a means of helping them to find better solutions to working with victims in their restorative justice programmes, which were previously very offender-centred.

This, again, marks one of the big successes of the Building Bridges project, as it enabled those organisations and individuals who were experienced in running programmes with offenders, to reflect on best practice for working with victims. For many partners this was an eye-opening experience which they felt they could build on to strengthen the impact that their programmes have on victims of crime.

Through our work before and during the implementation of the pilots many stakeholders (prison directors, prison staff, leadership of Prison Administration, social services, probation officers and psychologists of the institutes) realized the real power in this restorative practice and they saw the results we had.

In the justice department I have the idea that people are more aware of the different types of restoration that can take place through different principles (even bringing together unrelated v’s and o’s).

The project partners also found that external organisations were developing an interest in the work being conducted.

Through the Rome conference we gained attention from social services and other organizations, asking for interviews or meeting where to share our experiences.

One of our partners, Restorative Justice Nederland, is very much in favour of BB and helps to share RJ and BB in our network.

Better understanding the needs of victims was felt to be an important way to move towards a more equal victim-offender process. Partners reported that they had enhanced their understanding through the project, and that
The victims’ interests grow if the interest of the organisations and projects is genuine and this through BB happens.

As I said it changed. I was thinking a lot about this: maybe the change has happened because we had different victims last year? Or maybe because I saw the work of recruiting, interviewing, helping them, support them, etc? I saw people on the victims’ side just as normal people who were interested to find healing in this programme.

I sometimes find it difficult to work in an organisation that only has prisoners as an official target group, it gives me the feeling that we use victims to reach out to offenders and see the change happening in the offenders. Through BB it is not just me who wants to have the needs of the victims as a focus and really offer them the help they need (even if they decide not to participate).

It was clear from the project experience, however, that reaching out to and encouraging victims of crime to participate in work with offenders was very difficult. It may have been that this was made even more difficult by the fact that the partner organisations involved are predominantly seen as working to support offenders – which, of course, is why this project was so useful for them in learning how to better deal with both target groups.

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As I said it changed. I was thinking a lot about this: maybe the change has happened because we had different victims last year? Or maybe because I saw the work of recruiting, interviewing, helping them, support them, etc? I saw people on the victims’ side just as normal people who were interested to find healing in this programme.

I sometimes find it difficult to work in an organisation that only has prisoners as an official target group, it gives me the feeling that we use victims to reach out to offenders and see the change happening in the offenders. Through BB it is not just me who wants to have the needs of the victims as a focus and really offer them the help they need (even if they decide not to participate).

It was clear from the project experience, however, that reaching out to and encouraging victims of crime to participate in work with offenders was very difficult. It may have been that this was made even more difficult by the fact that the partner organisations involved are predominantly seen as working to support offenders – which, of course, is why this project was so useful for them in learning how to better deal with both target groups.

Breaking down barriers to victim organisations

The partners concluded very early on that for victims to participate in and benefit from restorative justice processes, programmes would benefit from support from victim support organisations. As the evaluation outlines, above, this was the project objective that was met with the lowest perception of success.

The victim support organisations are observing us. This process requires time and even more professionality. Anyhow we gained credibility and the success of the project is undeniable.

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Provide evidence of the successes and failure of victim-centred restorative justice in practice

The project was ambitious in its objective to evidence the successes and failures of the implemented programmes. The original plan of the project was to demonstrate the impact – whether positive or negative – of the programmes, but given the short length of programmes, the number of participants involved in each individual programme, and the well-documented difficulties in conducting impact analyses in a criminal justice context (measuring recidivism, measuring longer term impacts after the initial evaluation, etc), the value of such an analysis was, on reflection, questionable.

The original analyses were conducted nonetheless, to provide some indication into the short-term effects of the programmes. More meaningful data on the successes and failures of implementing the programmes was elicited through in-depth case study research in a sample of 3 countries (PT, IT, NL) selected on the basis of their existing experience and institutional capacity for implementing victim-offender mediation programmes (PT had no experience and IT had some experience, whilst NL had a strong background in implementing similar programmes). This research allowed the project to look into the perspectives of a range of stakeholders, from victims on the ground, through to decision makers and officials at a ministerial level, to explore the factors and conditions necessary, in different contexts, to implement successful programmes – and to learn about what prevents such programmes from being implemented successfully.

Mainstream restorative justice discourse in academic, policy and decision-making fields

The production of a book, published and disseminated by a well-respected non-profit publishing house, will enable the results of the Building Bridges project to make a respected contribution to the existing body of knowledge, in a way that is targeted towards the academic, policy making and decision making environment. The long-term impact of this cannot be known, but the forthcoming publication of the manuscript, which was created within the project, certainly indicates a strong potential for continued dissemination and for a sustainable impact in these respective fields.

The publication of the manuscript by a well-respected publishing house, highly active in the field of restorative justice, indicates a strong potential for the continued dissemination and sustainable impact of the project across academic, policy making and decision making environment.
External Involvement

To leave sustainable impacts, a project requires three circles of engagement: project actors, partner organisations, and external stakeholder representatives.

Previous research by Talbot (2015) found that sustainability requires understanding of the needs of those required to facilitate sustainability, whether it be the partner organisation or an external body. Understanding these needs, and involving those relevant parties (internal or external) outside of the immediate project team during project development may help to create projects with sustainability potential by seeding ownership outside of the project team. Project teams should avoid retaining complete ownership of projects, but rather facilitating them within the organisation, involving other on an operative basis, bridging project and non-project activities, with a strong view to providing strategic added-value.

The evaluation team led exercises with the project partners to reflect on the engagement of people across all three circles. This was a useful exercise in helping to see how potentially important stakeholders were involved in the project across the different countries of the consortium, and to identify ways to strengthen their involvement. By sharing successes across the consortium, those partners who had done well to engage stakeholders from within their organisations and from the external project environment offered best practice and inspiration to other partners. This sharing of ideas helped partners to set standards for themselves in terms of how they wanted to engage external actors, and provided them ideas on how to do so.

Encouragingly, the vast majority of those individuals identified were distinct from those directly involved in the immediate project, meaning that partners have thought about how to reach out from the partnership construction to other individuals in the operational or ‘day-to-day’ organisation. Some partners claimed to have directly involved volunteers and professionals in the organisation:

“I composed a team of me and other colleagues who work in the family care and prisoners care for brainstorming and developing a vision on how we want to work with victims and what we think is needed for that”.

Support is needed to maintain or promote the project results in the future, although others vaguely outlined who would need to be involved, indicating that flexibility is being embraced, and that stakeholder-stewards will emerge organically throughout the course of the second half of the project.

It is not possible to say fully now, as the stakeholders and their effectiveness are being tested in the process of developing the BB project. Generally I can say that it will be several trained facilitators plus those who were victims of crimes.

Internal Non-Direct Project Staff

At the interim stage of the project, there was a notable involvement of people outside the immediate project team. Some practitioner partners had clearly identified those individuals within the organisation whose

“The communication workers informed our PR volunteers to mention BB when speaking to audiences (churches, schools), we published BB advertisements in 2 newspapers and 1 magazine.”
Head of the care department, for brainstorming and plans for making BB known and work, internally and externally
Volunteer coordinator, finding suitable (co)-facilitators to be trained to work on BB

There was also evidence of increasing the circle of input within the organisation:

To accept into the PFCZ team also individuals that are non-believers interested in this project who can have a good input thanks to their previous experiences and studies in the field of help to victims

Sent regular information on the BB project in CZ and from other countries to all volunteers and supporters in order to gain new interested people and also small financial support

Participate and develop seminars, workshops and circles of people, interested in RJ

Efforts were being made to bring organisational staff and volunteers into some form of dialogue with project actors.

Inform the prisoners and family care team during a regular meeting on BB and current developments

Have meetings with our communication worker on spreading the BB word [with the result that] he informed our PR volunteers to mention BB when speaking to audiences (churches, schools), we published BB advertisements in 2 newspapers and 1 magazine

Through individual and small group communication we gained new volunteers for the project

One element of trying to involve others within the organisation includes communication and dissemination within the internal organisation, although the extent to which this is necessary depends on the size of the partner organisation.

Have meetings with [internal stakeholders] and keep them updated on the development and needs for the future to create a special group of volunteers interested in this project to settle regular meetings and trainings

Email to all 560 volunteers of PFN to inform about BB and ask them to find victims for the victim event and BB

The involvement of other organisational staff was quite promising at the interim period, but the interim evaluation report recommended that such activities were more systematic. Specifically, the report recommended there should be a greater sharing of practice between partners on their approaches to this, perhaps through reports or presentations. The result of this is illustrate in the charts on the next page.
The pie chart showing the involvement of non-direct project staff in partner organisations at the final evaluation stage illustrates the proportion of survey respondents (total 14) who reported that their organisation was involving either no additional staff, up to 5 additional staff, between 5 and 10 additional staff, and more than 10 additional staff. The bar chart shows how this compares to the results of the interim evaluation. There has been no pattern in how this has developed between the two evaluation stages. At the interim stage there was more of a bell curve, with more respondents reporting between 1 and 10 non-direct project staff being involved, and fewer respondents reporting either none or more than 10. In the final evaluation stage, the number of respondents reporting more than 10 and fewer than 5 was higher than those reporting either none or between 5 and 10.

There is no clear explanation for this, although it does show that there is a consistently higher number of project partners involving between 1 and 5 non-direct project staff in the project. It is likely that this may quite simply bear a positive relationship with the number of staff actually employed or otherwise involved in the organisation. Many of the practitioner partner organisations are small, volunteer led organisations. Each organisation had a maximum of 2 people directly involved in the management of the project. To be consistently involving a further 1-5 staff (or volunteers) is encouraging from a sustainability perspective as it seeding ownership outside of the project team.

The kinds of activities that non-direct project staff have been involved with during the first half and second half of the project are outlined in the following table. The table shows how many references were made to different types of activity in each evaluation. The data given in the interim evaluation stage was significantly weaker than that at the final evaluation stage, due to a lower response rate for this question. This reduces the comparative value of the interim and final evaluation stages. The data for the final evaluation stage, however, is quite encouraging as it shows that quite some work has gone into a number of important activities, which has not been funded through the project, but which has relied on the resources and ownership of the organisations themselves.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities of non-direct project staff in the organisation</th>
<th>No. of references (Year 1)*</th>
<th>No. of references (Year 2)**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project accounting and finances</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative activities</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting coordination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing to project development</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training facilitators</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with victims / victim organisations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with prison administrations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organising meetings</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissemination and PR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training for employees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking for donors and funds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing a book</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning an impact case study</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organising events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking / Seeking new partnerships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involving policy decision makers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuation of BB programmes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Partners were questioned what non-direct project staff were contributing to the project
**Partners were questioned what non-direct project were doing to ensure a long-term impact in the project
**External Staff and Stakeholders**  
There were similar patterns in the identification of external stakeholders to that of internal stakeholders. When asked, at the interim stage, about the involvement of external stakeholders in implementing the project, partners identified both organisations with whom they already had a strong relationship, and organisations with whom they had previously little or no cooperation.

At the interim stage, partners indicated how they were trying to involve external actors, and included some of the following methods:

- **BB promotion, fundraising, dissemination** – information activities
- **By formal agreements/protocols with various entities in social sector, municipalities, churches, prisons, associations of support victims**
- **Participated in a symposium on RJ development in youth facilities and informed the audience on BB, handed out brochures**

Approach 3 victim organisations for a meeting about BB and how to possibly cooperate; 1 positive response, meeting is planned; 1 reluctant response, nothing achieved yet (and the contact person is quitting his job, so have to start this all over again)

Organization of an international conference in the city of Cascais on Restorative Justice during 2015

The interim evaluation report recommended that partners should fully identify the external stakeholders whose support will be required for the continuation of project-developed activities, and that partners would need to seek to involve these organisations to the largest possible extent.

At both the interim and final evaluation stages, the partners reported the same level of involvement of external stakeholders as they did the internal non-direct project staff.

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**Involvement of external stakeholders in partner organisations at the final evaluation stage**

**Comparison of reported external stakeholder involvement between interim and final evaluation stages**
The kinds of activities that non-direct project staff have been involved with during the first half and second half of the project are outlined in the following table. Partners were asked, at both the interim and final evaluation stages, to describe the kinds of activities that external stakeholders were involved in during the project. The table shows how many references were made to different types of activity in each evaluation. As with the data on internal non-direct project staff, the data given in the interim evaluation stage was significantly weaker than that at the final evaluation stage, and the comparative value of the interim and final evaluation data is questionable. The data for the final evaluation stage is again, however, quite encouraging in that it shows that external organisations were taking an interest in the project and in contributing to the achievement of its goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities of non-direct project staff in the organisation</th>
<th>No. of references (Year 1)</th>
<th>No. of references (Year 2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informing or referring victims to the programme</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informing or referring offenders to the programme</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing to the project development</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissemination and information sharing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating opportunities for running the programme</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy activities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing support for victims and / or their families</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What was perhaps most distinctive about the way in which external actors were encouraged to take ownership of the project was the growth in the number of formal associated partners in the project. At the application stage the project enjoyed the formal support of 5 associated partners. By the end of the project, there were no fewer than 23 external organisations who had pledged their formal support for the project as associated project partners.
Capacity Building

Projects leave an indirect impact in the way that they influence the learning and development of those involved, and help shape the capacity of the organisations participating.

The Building Bridges project left benefits on the individuals and organisations involved in a number of different ways. What people and organisations learn through projects such as Building Bridges can be useful in helping them improve their work in the areas that the project was addressing. Some specific issues concerning learning and development were discussed above in relation to the goals and objectives of the project, but there are other important ways in which the project has left a positive mark on the individuals and organisations involved, which are important when looking at how the project leaves a sustainable impact. The impacts most relevant to the work and objectives of the project are illustrated in the graph below.
The greatest positive impacts that the project has had – which might affect the capacity to continue the work started within the project – include the capacity for the organisations generally, and the capacity for international cooperation and participation in future projects specifically, and the profile of the organisation. Respondents reported that areas such as an increased knowledge of victim needs and exchanging practices and experiences with other partners were particularly beneficial.

Partners were also asked how they could build on the experiences of the project in the future. There is some degree of optimism amongst the partners on the impact that the project has left for them. In both the Czech Republic and Portugal, two countries where the partners previously had very little institutional capacity or standing with the justice system, have come out of the project engaging in serious planning and negotiating with senior decision makers, who now take them seriously. In the Netherlands, where offender work was already quite established, the next strategic step is identified as building on the strengths of the project, and what was learnt, to establish better relationships with victim organisations.

We keep planning BB programmes. For 2016 two, again one inside and one outside of prison. We chose finding victims and working on good relationships with victim support organisations as a target for 2016. And I have tried my best to give victims a place in ‘our’ official PR, and yes, we will get a separate part of our PF website especially for victims and offenders and RJ/BB!
Planning for Sustainability

In evaluating the process leading up to a Beginning of Sustainability Status, the evaluation team have helped partners to define what that status should look like, and have compiled a coherent sustainability plan that accurately reflects the current status and realistic goals of the partners.

Sustainability is concerned with the long-term use and value of the project outputs. There are various ways of describing this. A project may be sustainable – i.e. the valorisation of its results may occur - “when it continues to deliver benefits to the project beneficiaries and/or other constituencies for an extended period after [...] financial assistance has been terminated”, and where “new ways of working and improved outcomes become the norm.” It may include the sustained use of facilities and infrastructure, continuation of established services or of approaches piloted through existing services, utilisation by staff or beneficiaries of newly-acquired skills, the adoption of ideas at a policy level, the development and continuation of partnerships and collaborations either for continued service delivery or for the sake of capacity building, sustained behavioural change, or the integration of new information or perspectives into the accepted body of knowledge of a particular field.

In this project there are two aspects of sustainability that need to be considered. Firstly, there is sustainability of the practical results for facilitators and other practitioners in the field of Restorative Justice. Secondly there is the valorisation of the scientific results for making a contribution to the body of knowledge.

A critical element of this project – closely monitored through the internal evaluation – has been the way in which the project pursues pro-sustainability activities, i.e. those activities taking place during the implementation of the project, which have an impact on the sustainability, or valorisation, of the outputs. Some of the key activities conducted in the project with a view to sustainability have included:

- Working towards broader organisational goals and objectives, not only the concrete project goals
- Ensuring that external actors – non-project funded staff within partner and external organisations
- Building skills and capacity throughout the project

Taking a step towards designing a valorisation strategy forces us to ask the question of what it is exactly that we hope to achieve through these activities.

The project partners have devised a strategy for maximising the sustainability impacts across a range of products and activities from the Building Bridges project – including the concrete products and tools developed within the project, the non-concrete outputs achieved within the project, and the by-products realised as a result of the project.
Sustainability of Project Products and Outcomes

The partners were asked (1) how the various products could most directly benefit as many people as possible after the end of the project, (2) what they can do to achieve this, and (3) the practical tasks and challenges involved. This involved both the concrete products and tools and the non-concrete project outputs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>How can this product have the greatest benefit?</th>
<th>What can we do to achieve this?</th>
<th>Practical tasks and challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BB Guidebook</td>
<td>It will enable as many victims and offenders as possible to benefit from in restorative practices.</td>
<td>Give intermediaries the know-how to deliver restorative practices.</td>
<td>Add case studies, images etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Raise the awareness of restorative practices.</td>
<td>Make the guidebook useful to anyone who wants to use building bridges.</td>
<td>Incorporate some training input in the guidebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The BB should be of a quality that makes it attractive to the intermediaries.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Make intermediaries want to use the guidebook.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Get the guidebook in the hands of the right people.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Find “champions” of the guidebook.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Limit the “trip ups” in the guidebook—the possible breaks in the chain.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Add case studies, images etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half-day training with local facilitators – training materials</td>
<td>With good training outline and material many people can be trained.</td>
<td>Collect all the training material that is used thus far by the separate partners (the training material other than the guidebook and the protocol was not a deliverable) and make one training folder with guidelines.</td>
<td>Make a model protocol, PowerPoint, description of activities and tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Make known to a broader European audience what our experiences are</td>
<td>Appoint a person out of the project team that can be exempted for sustaining new countries/organisations in setting up the training and the BB programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implemented pilot programmes</td>
<td>Make all the lessons we learned available to new partners.</td>
<td>Adapt the guidebook with all the lessons we learned through the pilot programmes.</td>
<td>Adaptation of the guidebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Make known to a broader European audience what our experiences are</td>
<td>Write articles, post items on relevant news websites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desk Research Report</td>
<td>It can give workers in the criminal justice field the conviction that these programmes are built on research and that it takes place in the broader field of RJ.</td>
<td>Send it to relevant people</td>
<td>Make a good summary on the BB website with links in the summary to the actual reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilot evaluations</td>
<td>It can convince decision makers that these programmes should continue and be spread throughout the country and Europe.</td>
<td>At least all the PF’s that participated should continue to facilitate BB in the future and help other org’s and countries to be exited and start BB as well</td>
<td>Decisions by PF’s to continue. Keep writing about the programme and generate money for ‘starting’ countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation instruments</td>
<td>When BB programmes in the future will use the same evaluation scales, after some years a broader evaluation can take place.</td>
<td>Encourage all the partners to keep using these instruments. Have the scientific partners think through new measuring scales that focus more on the RJ outcomes of these programmes.</td>
<td>Collecting and processing the data and making the outcome available. Making new measurements and evaluation tools for even more relevant outcomes – what exactly do we want to know and measure?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book publication</td>
<td>It can be read all over the world! Make it digitally available for spreading through the BB website.</td>
<td>Find a good publisher, making it available in web text. Write a good summary and publish it on the BB website.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sustainability of Project By-Products

The project by-products are results that occur as a result of the project having taken place. They may not be the direct goals of the project, but benefits that create an added value to the whole project. The partners were asked (1) how various non-concrete outputs could be delivered could most directly benefit as many people as possible after the end of the project, (2) what they can do to achieve this, and (3) the practical tasks and challenges involved.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How much will the BB project give you improved access to victims?</th>
<th>How can this improved access to victims benefit you in the future?</th>
<th>How will you try to maintain these benefits?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We have good stories to tell and experiences to share, especially by victims who participated. The evaluation will contribute to this.</td>
<td>Gives credibility for our actions and plans, hopefully it will open doors to victim support organisations.</td>
<td>Publishing interviews with BB victims. Organise a broad support group and try to get victim support groups join. Ask victims to find new victims.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How much will the BB project give better cooperation and networking with other stakeholders?</th>
<th>How can this better cooperation and networking with other stakeholders benefit you in the future?</th>
<th>How will you try to maintain these benefits?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By finding Associated Partners we broadened our network already, and it can give access to more new stakeholders.</td>
<td>More access to prisons and other facilities. Mutual lobbying for more RJ activities for victims and offenders. Finding new funds to support us. Gives openings for other projects of our organisation.</td>
<td>Maintain relationships with our current AP’s. Organise network events / symposia / etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How much will the BB project help you learn and develop new skills?</th>
<th>How can this learning and these new skills benefit you in the future?</th>
<th>How will you try to maintain these benefits?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better English language skills. More understanding of transnational cooperation. Work more project minded (budgeting, reporting, planning in a wider context than running local projects).</td>
<td>Invest it in my current and future work. Help my organisation when similar work needs to be done. Maybe work more European than Netherlands focused.</td>
<td>Build upon my experiences, Try to find international projects, be available for my organisation and perhaps even other PF’s for giving support in any way.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How much will the BB project help your organisation to develop new skills and capacity?</th>
<th>How can new skills and capacity benefit your organisation in the future?</th>
<th>How will you try to maintain these benefits?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience European project management. Through organising dissemination activities together, other colleagues have learned from BB. Through BB the victim support that we ourselves give when victims join BB is developed. RJ / care for victims has become more in the picture of our organisation and our colleagues.</td>
<td>Our network in the criminal justice field will know that we develop in the right direction. Our RJ programmes will for sure develop broader and deeper, and we can share our experiences and wisdom in this on (inter)national symposia or partnerships. Maybe closer collaboration between European PF’s will develop.</td>
<td>A training for me and my two colleagues is scheduled on victim support and trauma care. Keep developing BB programmes and continue to find partners and stakeholders. I am appointed for developing victim policy within our organisation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sustainability Already Underway

Beyond the planning of sustainability throughout the project, certain important developments were made in the closing stage of the project.

A PhD Experimental Psychologist wrote to the project team proposing further research:

I have developed a research instrument designed to test (statistically) whether, and how much, BB or STP helps victims of crime overcome the trauma of victimisation. It is now ready to be pilot tested. I can be tested in any country.

The results of the project are also having a longer term impact in Germany, both in terms of developing new programmes, and in terms of using the results of Building Bridges to deliver victim support training to external organisations:

This year we plan further Building Bridges Projects for example one project in the city of Mannheim in April. What is more we plan more victim supports in other cities. From time to time we receive invitations from other organisations who asked us to do training for them in victim support.

Significant developments have occurred in Italy, where the programme director reports that the authorities were so impressed with the results of the project that they are currently negotiating programme expansion into new prisons across Italy.

The director of [a prison in Italy] who has received great inspiration from the conference, wants to build in a section of the prison with 600 inmates one experience where the sentence becomes a project with us, the inmate and also the educators. We have already spoken to some university professors who are willing to cooperate. We should run the BB project for all the inmates.

Meanwhile, we should start a new project in April in [this prison] and other three prisons have asked for.

Similarly, in Hungary, the planning of future Building Bridges programmes is in progress:

Here in Hungary we started the fourth BB in Balassagyarmat prison with 5 inmates and 5 victims [and] the prison administration suggested BB to realize in each prisons in Hungary.

The Italian partner also discusses a personal impact of the project, which is leading one victim to champion the programme by publicising her experience and recruiting further victims:

A victim of the BB Project wrote her story: before and after the project, she publishes the book at her own expense and gives us the royalty to pursue new projects. This victim herself has already found six new victims.

The Hungarian partner also talks of broader dissemination opportunities, with the support of a major television broadcaster:

RTL television (Hungary’s biggest private tv channel) shoot a video documentary from each session [of the fourth BB in Balassagyarmat prison – see above].

Some of the indirect results of the project are bearing fruit in organisations outside of the immediate partnership, including in Australia, where the Building Bridges victim risk assessment documentation has been received with interest:

The victim risk assessment we are using in our intakes with victims, it is of use. Actually, PF Australia is using it now as well. An STP facilitator read about it on the website and is corresponding with me now about it.
Others are more cautious in their approach, recognising the potential of the Building Bridges results, but awaiting the final publication of the book (the manuscript for which was developed within the project), which may secure the added credibility for the programmes:

(We will continue with new Building Bridges programmes) if we receive the permission again. I trust so. I trust that BB will work very well in future. First we need to have the conclusion of all results from the project on paper, then we will start conversation with Prison administration for next BB.

Partners can certainly also look to how the project results are being maintained in other countries, to demonstrate the credibility of the programme. The fact that the Hungarian prison administration is looking to introduce Building Bridges in all prisons, and that one of these programmes is subject to a professional television documentary, may help present the programme as a 'no-nonsense' intervention that has proven to have been taken seriously.

The potential medium-term impact of the Building Bridges project is already starting to show, and it is expected that further impacts will continue to be felt, if partners and external stakeholders work effectively within their local context, to raise the profile of the Building Bridges results, and to pursue their own agendas within their local context.
Strengths, Weaknesses and Future Potential

The Building Bridges project benefited from a strong partnership, with very strong long-term objectives, and has built on these strengths, turning the project into a springboard for continued success.

The project partners achieved the objectives they set out to deliver, and did so to a very high standard. The project benefited from a strong coordinator, who, together with the partners, dealt effectively with the various challenges that were faced throughout the course of project implementation. Maintaining a strong view on the long-term impacts of the project meant that, sometimes, the original plans needed to be revised and amended, but the project partners were both flexible and professional in their approach to this, enabling the whole consortium to deliver on their contractual obligations to the funding body, whilst ensuring that opportunities to enhance the value and long-term impact of the project were harnessed and integrated into the delivery and finalisation of the project results.

The project partners set themselves goals and objectives beyond those of the immediate project, ensuring that the project remained, at all times, a tool to achieve something else, and not only an end in itself.

Those objectives cannot be fulfilled by one project alone, but the Building Bridges project has contributed to the project partners’ progress towards these longer-term goals. Most notably, the project – which has, for many project partners, been their very first experience of collaborating internationally on a collective project, has facilitated the learning and development of individual project actors, and the capacity building of the partner organisations, in a way that largely reflects the underpinning policy goals associated with the call under which this project was funded.

Improving or establishing the provision of support to victims in terms of emotional support, advice and information on criminal proceedings

The project has clearly set in place the foundations for the provision of general support for victims. The implementation of the pilot sites, using (and later, informing) the structured processes outlined in the Building Bridges guidebook, has given volunteers and professionals working in the offender-support sector very useful experience in working with victims, has helped them to better understand the needs of victims, both emotionally and practically.

Practical assistance and advice to assist victims in their recovery

One of the core goals of restorative practices such as those explored through the Building Bridges project, is the assisting of victims in their recovery. Whilst this is not necessarily a new phenomenon, the knowledge and best practice that was developed through the project has highlighted some of the important processes involved, and the ways in which these can be incorporated into a process which has been traditionally offender-focused. Providing training for restorative justice facilitators on assisting and advising victims participating in restorative justice
programmes, signals a move in the right direction. That the facilitator training can be sustained, and the Building Bridges guidebook widely disseminated, indicates that these processes can continue to inform restorative justice programmes in the future, and encourage best practice in assisting victims long after the project has finished.

**Mechanisms to improve the referral of victims to victim support services**

This focus of the project has been the most difficult, yet the most revealing, in terms of understanding the barriers to effective victim participation in restorative practices. The project partners learnt a great deal about the difficulties associated with working in collaboration with victim-support organisations, and discovered how their approaches to working with such organisations may need to change. This is a very positive outcome of the project, despite being the project’s greatest weakness, and project partners can now move forward with a better understanding of the needs and perspectives of victim-support organisations, and develop new, context-specific approaches and strategies for maximising their engagement. The Building Bridges guidebook includes, amongst its annexes, a process for managing a stakeholder analysis in the context of a Building Bridges programme. More systematic stakeholder management will be essential for Building Bridges project partners – and others wishing to implement similar programmes elsewhere.

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The Building Bridges project has achieved a strong **Beginning of Sustainability Status**, with the enthusiasm, institutional commitment, and practical plans to move forward.

Sustainability was a core component of the management of the Building Bridges project. Positive factors such as focusing on how the project contributes to long-term goals and successes have ensured that the project remains relevant and interesting for all parties involved, and was never just an end in itself. Partners were able to involve external actors more and more as the project progressed, and secured the commitment and enthusiasm of key decision makers, including prison administrations and ministries of justice.

Partners have reflected well on where they are now, and the long-term value of the outputs delivered through the project. Practical plans for moving forward are in place. If partners can maintain the momentum, and rise to the challenge of building further bridges between the offender-support sector and the victim-support sector, with the same level of enthusiasm and commitment that they demonstrated throughout the course of the project, then the value of the project will continue to be realised long into the future. One example, which shows a particularly positive approach to building on what the project has learnt, has been the appointment of one of the project team as Head of Victim Policy in their organisation; these kinds of structural organisational changes in response to the results of the project are testament to the project as a change agent.

As the research becomes widely disseminated through the publication of the book, the impact that the project has on academic, policy and decision making environments will become clearer. The fact, however, that this process is already underway, shows the potential of these project results, and that they are on the path towards having some long-term impact on the sector.
Building Bridges: Restorative dialogues with victims and offenders

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