



# **European Communities of Restoration (ECOR)**

## **A Manual for Implementation and Best Practice**

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# Introduction

This Manual has been elaborated in the framework of ECOR - a transnational project on European level, co-funded by the Criminal Justice Programme of the European Union. Over a two-year period (2014-2016) seven institutions from Germany, Bulgaria, Latvia, Hungary, Austria and the United Kingdom have cooperated to launch and pilot a number of ECOR sites in prisons and aftercare facilities across Europe, supported by a rigorous process of scientific monitoring and evaluation.

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The ECOR project focuses on the exchange and development of good practices, the promotion of alternatives to conventional detention and the development of post-release integration programmes. Against the backdrop of prison overcrowding, social disengagement, reoffending and recidivism, ECOR seeks to adapt a methodology in which context-tailored residential and semi-residential programmes help prisoners and ex-prisoners learn to take responsibility for

themselves and their communities, strengthening their chances of a future free of crime.

Based on the principles of APAC, a revolutionary concept of prison governance involving an increase in prisoner responsibility and community involvement, the ECOR model is an adaptation of this methodology within a European social, cultural and legal context.

By bringing together practitioners, academics and policy makers, and by

demonstrating the adaptability and effectiveness of the methodology in Europe, the ECOR project sought to broaden the range of alternatives to conventional imprisonment and aftercare at a European level.

This manual is intended for prison officials and support staff, as well as other law-enforcement professionals, volunteers, and other interested organisations and agencies. The manual

consists of information about the ECOR model, its philosophy, history, applicability, and effectiveness. It describes the possibilities and perspectives, which ECOR can bring to promote changes at in individual and community-wide level. It contains guidelines for those who are interested in applying the model in creating new communities of restoration.

# Part 1 – From APAC to ECOR

The original APAC methodology, run on the basis of strong Christian values, successfully empowers inmates to take responsibility for solving their personal and communal problems. Careful programming ensures that the four-phased incremental change process is successful in restoring the inmate to his family and community. Lower recidivism rates, lower levels of prison incidents and savings to the tax payer are clear benchmarks of APACs effectiveness.

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## 1.1 History of APAC

In 1972, in the city of São José dos Campos/SP, something entirely new, unusual and revolutionary began in the prison system. A group of Christian volunteers, under the leadership of the lawyer Mr. Mário Ottoboni, went on to attend the Humaitá's prison, located in the city centre, to evangelize and give moral support to prisoners. Everything was empirical and aimed solely to solve the problem in the city, whose population was shocked with

constant escapes, riots and violence verified in that prison. The group had no parameters or role models, neither experience with the world of drugs and prisons. Even though, patiently, barriers that arose along the way were solved.

In 1974, that team, which was the Pastoral Prison, concluded that only a legal organized entity would be able to face the difficulties and vicissitudes that permeated the daily life of the prison, able to destroy and end

*The most important fact that is happening today in the world, in prison matters, is the movement of APACs in Brazil.*

*- Ronald Nikkel, President Emeritus of Prison Fellowship International*

any initiative. On that occasion, with the support of the judge of Penal Execution, Dr Silvio Marques Neto, was established APAC - Association of Protection and Assistance to Convicts, a legal non-profit entity with the objective to assist the justice in Criminal Enforcement. Therefore, APAC has a method of human valorisation, so, of evangelization, to offer the convicts conditions for recovering themselves, and with the purpose of protect society, help the victims and promote restorative justice.

In 1983, attending the request of the judge of the Court of Criminal Enforcement and the Judicial Police of São José dos Campos, APAC with community help, without expenses to the Government, reformed the prison Humaitá providing it with bunk beds, lecture hall, auditorium, cafeteria, place for craft work, dental office, two small chapels, one inside the prison, and another for 80 people in the semi-open regime, with pharmacy, presidential office, bazaar and administrative secretariat equipped with computers, desks, etc.

The judge and the prosecutor, when they visited the prison, were enthusiastic about the transformation in the establishment. They called then the Chief of Police, the Commander of the Military Police and the President of APAC, for a meeting aimed to decide to reopen the prison, disabled for not meeting safety conditions to house prisoners. Dr Nilo Cardoso Perpetual clarified and made the request, but the answer of those two authorities was negative. The judge then addressed to the President of APAC, consulting him about the possibility of this entity to manage the prison without the help of the Civil and Military Police, and the response was positive. Indeed, after contacting the Court of Justice, the judge created the competent resolution authorizing APAC to begin its work, initially with 35 convicts and gradually other prisoners were being transferred.

In May, 1984, the new experience had its beginning, and in 1994, after much effort, the Governor of the State of São Paulo, Luiz Antônio Fleury Filho, by the Decree 38486 of March 24, 1994, allowed the use

in favour of Association of Protection and Assistance to Convicts – APAC/São José dos Campos, property originally intended to be the Public Jail (Prison Humaitá).

The experience obtained absolute success without riots, acts of nonconformity, or homicides, so common before. The APAC reached the maximum capacity of 100 inmates in the closed regime and more also in the semi-open and open regimes.

## 1.2 Expansion and Impact of the Method

Achieving recidivism rates of less than 10%, no riots, violence or suicides, a significant reduction in escape attempts, and a cost per person of less than a third of conventional imprisonment enabled the APAC method to grow and expand across Brazil and internationally.

Today there are approximately 150 institutionally and legally mandated APAC sites throughout Brazil, of which approximately 50 include Social Reintegration Centres of up to 200 participants, that are managed without the help of police or prison officers, hosting an average of 3000 participants, in five states of Brazil. Dozens of

APAC are at different stages of implementation.

In other Latin American countries, including Bolivia, Chile, Colombia and Costa Rica, the APAC method is wholly or partially applied within the ‘mainstream’ penal system. In a number of European countries, including Norway, Germany, Bulgaria, Hungary and Latvia, penal systems have adopted some elements of the APAC methodology, applied through various programmes, including InnerChange Freedom and Seehaus.

In 1986, APAC joined PFI - Prison Fellowship International, a UN advisory body for penal affairs. Since then the method

has been disseminated across more than 120 countries through international conferences and seminars. The original APAC sites in Brazil have enjoyed hosting numerous international representatives and formal delegations, who come to study the APAC method, to understand how it work, and to identify practices that they can take back to their own countries. In 1990, APAC of São José dos Campos hosted the Latin American Conference with representatives from 21 countries to experience and study the

method. A year later, a US report was published, stating that the APAC method could be successfully applied anywhere in the world.

Rather than focusing on causes of criminality, the APAC method facilitates individual and cultural transformation with the goal of establishing a commitment to pro-social values and behaviours. It concentrates on the strengths of a positive group culture. This in turn motivates and leads the offender to address the healing of underlying drivers of their criminal behaviour.<sup>1</sup>

*APAC prisons and APAC-based prisons are not static. They change with the experiences of the leaders, volunteers, and prisoners. They adapt to changing circumstances in their legal and political systems*

*- Workman, 2001a:1-2*

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<sup>1</sup> The descriptions of the APAC model were written by The Emeritus President of APACs, Mr. Mário Ottoboni and The Executive Director of Brazilian Fraternity of Assistance to Convicts – Brazilian Fraternity of Assistance to

Convicts (FBAC), Mr. Valdeci Ferreira. 1– FBAC, Rua Bonfim, nº 28 – Centro, CEP 35.680-348 – Itaúna/Minas Gerais, fbac@fbac.com.br / +55 37 3242 4225, Website: [www.fbac.org.br](http://www.fbac.org.br)



## 1.3 Applied Methodology

The APAC methodology centres around the lived experience of the participant. Everything in the APAC methodology starts from the perspective of the participant's experience, because he or she is the one person who knows the problem and who has lived through those experiences that have led them to crime and imprisonment. The APAC method takes the view that more can be achieved by harnessing the experience of the participant themselves, than can be achieved by imposing the external worldview of volunteers or other experts<sup>2</sup>, at least once the participant has come to understand their own suffering and those factors that led him to break the law.

The APAC methodology has twelve core elements (see table 1 and their original description in Appendix 1). Existing APAC-based programmes in different jurisdictions and cultural contexts have demonstrated that these core elements are flexible and adaptable.

The methodology “works through a process of spiritual transformation, integrating therapeutic and cultural approaches that are consistent with the development of Christian values. It is based on the premise that God loves everyone, and that all people need to be reconciled with themselves, with others, with creation and with God” (Workman, 2001b:3). Whilst the core ethos is a Christian love and care for all people, APAC programmes in principle do not restrict participation on the basis of denomination or faith. Furthermore, although participants are exposed to Christian principles and teaching, the programme is not for proselytising.

Thus, the Christian ethos, which prompts the leadership, staff, and volunteers of APAC-based rehabilitative programmes, aims to provide prisoners with humane, encouraging, and hopeful conditions of incarceration. These are consequently expected to deliver

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<sup>2</sup> This approach is similar to that in psycho-therapeutic, coaching and other

person-centred practices, and the merits of this approach are well appreciated.

practical programme elements to improve prisoners' educational and vocational skills, help them return to their families and communities, and find accommodation, employment, and continued support on release.

**Table 1.1 Core elements of the APAC methodology (adapted from Workman, 2001c:5-10)**

EVIDENCE OF CORE ELEMENT	ACHIEVEMENTS OF CORE ELEMENT
<b>Human valorisation and unconditional love</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inmates and their families have dignity and self-respect. Prisoners display a high degree of self-worth which is rooted in their discovery of their own human condition and dignity through understanding God's love for them.</li> <li>Unconditional love and acceptance characterise the programme. A defining characteristic of the APAC based prison (ABP) is that everybody experiences and embraces the value of unconditional love in changing lives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inmates are treated with respect by the staff, managers and leaders.</li> <li>Inmates are known by names instead of other identifiers.</li> <li>Inmates are at peace with themselves and others.</li> <li>Inmates demonstrate hope and are motivated to become productive, contributing citizens.</li> <li>Staff, volunteers and families model unconditional love for one another.</li> <li>Tangible demonstrations of unconditional love permeate the programme.</li> <li>The inmates' families are treated with love and respect.</li> <li>People are valued; programmes are a means to an end not an end in themselves.</li> </ul>
<b>Reintegration and restoration</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ABPs are restorative justice at work. This approach seeks to reconcile the prisoner to the family, community, victim, and God.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The primary focus is on restoring and reintegrating inmates.</li> <li>ABPs have a strong commitment to building self-worth and dignity; inmates hold "important" positions in the prison structure.</li> <li>Mutual respect and accountability characterise ABPs.</li> </ul>
<b>Organisational Culture</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Empowering leadership. This is grounded in the belief that prisoners have the capacity and need to take responsibility for themselves and others.</li> <li>The prison officers, managers, and staff (the leadership) are committed to the ABP concept.</li> <li>The facility is relatively small and locally sited or has a close relationship with the local community.</li> <li>Allocation of space is consistent with APAC-based values and is evident in the administration's use of limited space.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inmates are involved in decision-making demonstrating an emphasis on trust and responsibility.</li> <li>Inmates and staff view themselves to be on the same side.</li> <li>Leaders are compassionate.</li> <li>Leaders exhibit complementary and essential inter-personal skills.</li> <li>ABPs provide a safe, nurturing environment. The emotional and physical conditions provide a peaceful, violence and drug free environment.</li> <li>Inmates' families are encouraged to participate.</li> <li>Living space is designed to provide an area for prayer and meditation, healing, and rooms for study and education.</li> <li>Physical characteristics of the facility are not the determining factor in the programme's success.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The prison is values based with policies, procedures, and operational decisions rooted in a clear set of values and beliefs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The manageable size and separation make it easier to establish a 'community' within the facility.</li> </ul>
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### ***Sentence Management***

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inmate selection is based on capacity for change, not criminal record. Selection of inmates is an important aspect of the programme seeking to identify the individual's commitment and capacity for change.</li> <li>Clear expectations and roles. Inmates are aware of what is expected and the programme's requirements for progression.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The criminal profile of ABP inmates will be similar to those in other units.</li> <li>Inmates will be selected on their capacity and commitment to change but provision can be made to accommodate those who initially are not considered likely to change.</li> <li>Clear criteria exist for progression through the programme.</li> <li>Future hope is instilled early together with early planning and preparation for release.</li> </ul>
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### ***Programme Management***

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inmates are empowered through a system of rewards and accountability.</li> <li>The leaders of APAC believe that people, not programmes, change people. Programmes are simply a means to an end.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inmates are responsible and accountable to each other. Inmates are involved in each other's lives, supporting and holding each other accountable for choices they make in establishing the ethos within the prison.</li> <li>The programme persists through adversity and change</li> </ul>
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### ***Work and Education***

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ABPs make adequate provision for the appropriate education of inmates.</li> <li>Inmates in the initial stage of their sentence engage in labour therapy. Labour therapy is artistic and creative activity, designed to help the inmates to discover their own human dignity. It is seen as an un-pressured time for reflection on vital issues of life and recuperation without the competitive pressures of industrial production.</li> <li>ABP leaders believe that, in order to restore inmates to their families and communities, they need to develop competency in life skills. Development of competency and mastery in work is essential. Productive work becomes a priority in the sentence's latter stages.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inmates are educated through the routine and process of everyday living and assisted to meet their educational needs through a process of facilitated discovery.</li> <li>Inmates are provided with knowledge-based education which results in an outworking of skills.</li> <li>Labour therapy is available to inmates in the initial stage of the sentence.</li> <li>Productive work is valued.</li> <li>Everyone has an important position.</li> <li>Skills and responsibility are developed incrementally in order to maximise success and minimise failure. Failure is not fatal; mistakes are used as learning/teaching experiences.</li> <li>Personal and corporate discipline is valued.</li> </ul>
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### ***Evangelisation – Meeting Practical Needs***

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ABPs demonstrate their Christian ethos through meeting the practical needs of inmates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The basic human needs of inmates are met, including medical assistance; psychological assistance; educational needs; the dignity of productive work; spiritual needs; legal assistance</li> </ul>
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### ***Mentoring***

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ABPs provide a positive Christian role model to give social and spiritual guidance to inmates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentors provide spiritual and social guidance for inmates, living and demonstrating Christian values.</li> <li>• Mentors encourage the development of positive relationships between the inmate and their family.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Volunteer Support</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All eligible prisoners are assigned volunteer mentors. They depend on the community, on volunteers, and on inmate families for support.</li> <li>• A strong sense of 'family' exists between the staff, volunteers, inmates, prison officers, and families.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteers are integral to the programme and many are professionals, with significant inter-personal skills.</li> <li>• The ABP facility is ideally located in the community where most of the staff, volunteers, and prisoners' families live.</li> <li>• ABPs work hard to build a 'community' within the prison.</li> <li>• Staff, volunteers, prison officers, and inmates work together.</li> <li>• Relationship with the local community is viewed as essential.</li> <li>• Volunteers play an essential role in day-to-day operations.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Family Reintegration</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ABPs aim to restore prisoners to families</li> <li>• ABPs are relationship-driven prisons.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families will be a factor in participant selection.</li> <li>• Family involvement is important for acceptance and advancement. Families are intentionally integrated into the programme. Inmates maintain the facility as a home and place where children would be safe to visit.</li> <li>• Prisoners take responsibility for their actions.</li> <li>• Inmates think and act in the best interests of others.</li> <li>• The security system emphasises trust and mutual accountability.</li> <li>• Serving others is a high priority among the staff and inmates.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Community Reintegration and Restoration</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ABPs aim to restore prisoners to the community.</li> <li>• ABPs are community-based programmes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteers play a critical role in community restoration.</li> <li>• Inmates are required to work or attend educational classes in the community during phase 2 of the programmes.</li> <li>• Emphasis is on long-term relationships rather than events.</li> <li>• Prisoners and administration demonstrate a caring commitment to one another.</li> <li>• Building 'community' is an important priority.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Spiritual Transformation</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The core programmes maintain a spiritual emphasis and exhibit a day-to-day dependence on God.</li> <li>• ABPs have a Christ-centred spiritual emphasis although this is not intended for proselytising.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Christian living is consistently modelled through the actions of the staff and volunteers.</li> <li>• Establishment of a community based on Christian values is a priority.</li> <li>• Inmates are at peace.</li> <li>• The leadership and volunteers are Christians.</li> <li>• Spiritual and emotional growth are essential components of the day-to-day operation.</li> <li>• Deliverance through Christ workshop – thematic presentations and family links; an annual three-day event</li> </ul>

## 1.4 History of APAC in Europe - Before ECOR

Communities of Restoration are natural reflections of the APAC methodology in Europe.

Between 2002-03, three Communities of Restoration came into existence, each catering to a different group of prisoners, at different stages of their sentences.

In Baden-Württemberg, near Stuttgart in Germany, a Community of Restoration called 'Seehaus', managed by Prison Fellowship Germany, was opened as an alternative to prison for young offenders with less than two years remaining on their sentences. Prison Fellowship Bulgaria launched its first Community of Restoration, known locally as an 'Adaptation Environment', in Sofia prison. This programme opened its doors to first-time offenders with less than five years remaining on their sentence. In Latvia, at roughly the same time, a Community of Restoration, called 'Myriam', was launched in a women's prison near Riga, and working primarily with repeat offenders (i.e. those women who

had been in prison at least once previously).

Between 2003-08 these three Communities of Restoration matured and adapted, demonstrating sound practices and results that helped to encourage growth and expansion within their individual countries. An interest in the APAC methodology, with a view to its adaptation and implementation in Europe, was expressed by organisations in Norway, Scotland, Spain, Portugal, Poland and the Czech Republic.

Each European Community of Restoration works towards the transformation of the offender into a productive member of his family and his community, by adapting the APAC model against the contextual backdrop of unique local and national circumstances.

Comparing the original APAC methodology with these adapted methods shows how certain elements are dropped during the adaptation process. Many elements of the Brazilian model (for example legal support and

healthcare provision) seem hardly applicable in the majority of European countries. The national adaptation of the APAC principles within individual Communities of Restoration in Europe, are influenced in a major way by the individual features and characteristics of the respective penal systems and their relative dependence on, or autonomy from, political and governmental oversight, social and religious traditions, the capacity of the organisations involved in the programme and the leadership skills, expertise and preferences of those spearheading the initiation and development of a programme.

Despite the variation in the way the APAC methodology has been adapted in Communities of Restoration across different countries, there are some common features. The programme adopts a holistic and organic approach to rehabilitation. It aims to empower offenders to take responsibility for solving their personal and communal problems. The programme's ultimate goal is to transform prisoners into productive members of their families and communities.

## **1.5 The contribution of the ECOR Project to the development of Communities of Restoration.**

Although APAC-based programmes had been initiated in a number European countries between 2003-09, the model is not well known. The ECOR project, having been launched and implemented in a handful of European countries, has begun to exert an additional influence on the continued development of

those communities, introducing new innovations and achieving recognition of the model and acknowledgement of the way in which it influences the prisoner, the prison and the local community.

The ECOR project started with a phase of in-depth research and

analysis of the existing practice and experience in Europe. The project team developed a training module for partner institutions, volunteers, and other stakeholders. The elements of APAC were modified to better suit the needs, the context and the conditions of European prisons. The culmination of this work was the development and piloting of six new Community

of Restoration models and a rigorous, university-led evaluation of the programme and the elements influencing the transformation of prisoners.

The contribution of the project towards European penal practices and to the post-release support programmes, as well as the wider reaction to these innovations, remains to be seen.

## Chapter Summary

- The APAC methodology started as a movement of public figures and volunteers in response to concrete needs in society, related to the ever growing criminality against the background of ineffectiveness of the penal institution.
- The application and the fast development of APAC in Brazil became possible, thanks to the support of judges, politicians, and law-enforcement professionals, who realized the inability of the system to solve by itself problems like over-population of the prisons, reduction of recidivism, and reduction of violence/deaths inside the prisons.
- The achievements of the methodology led to its natural dissemination in countries of Latin America, USA, and finally Europe.
- The implementation of APAC methodology on three continents demonstrates its high adaptability and applicability in different legal environments, culture, and level of economic development of the society where the methodology is applied.

# Part 2 – ECOR: description of the model

The ECOR programmes are an unusual phenomenon in Europe, especially post-Soviet Bloc countries. They are designed to create small communities of prisoners who live separately from other inmates, provide educational and vocational skills classes, restore participants' concepts of self-worth, and support them as they prepare to re-enter the community after release – Margaret Wilson and Caroline Lanskey (ECOR Piloting Report: 2015)

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## 1.6 Types of ECOR

The ECOR model is applicable in two main contexts.

As an integrated feature of the penal system. The model is applicable in different types of prisons and regimes. At present, the model is applied in six prisons across four countries: Brandenburg and Luckau-Duben prisons in Germany, Vratza prison in Bulgaria, Ilguciems women prison in Latvia, and Tiszaalöki Maximum Security Prison Emleklap and Pálhalmai Mélykút prison in Hungary.

As an external feature of the penal system in two different modalities:

1) ECOR has been successfully applied as an alternative to imprisonment in the form of a residential community, providing an open form of detention. In Leonberg, Germany, such a model has been used for young offenders with effective sentences

2) As a residential social service in the community, aimed to assist



former prisoners. Model in this context is applied in the Municipality of Riga, Latvia

The context is essential for the programme and its application. Describing ECOR we shall use examples of different contexts. At the outset it is important to underline its applicability at every stage - from arrest of the offender until their release, and even afterwards When “prison”

is mentioned repeatedly under different regimes in the continuum, it means, that the respective ECOR site is applying parts of the programme at different stages of the sentence<sup>3</sup> It should be noted, that there are no data from the existing ECORs on prisoners assigned to the programme through a court decision, even in cases when it is applied as alternative to prison.

## 1.7 Outreach / scope of the programme

### Target group

ECOR is open to any participants, regardless of their faith or worldview. The model does not have - and does not formulate restrictions concerning participation of different types and groups of offenders. As applied in different countries and contexts, the managers of the ECOR programmes could opt for the participation of offenders without restrictions, except when:

(a) This does not contradict the regulations of the respective penitentiary institution, for instance, male or female prisons; security regimes which restrict participation of some categories of offenders, or restricts access of external experts; regimes limiting the intensity or types of activities in such a programme.

(b) The selection of the target group is related to the mission of the organisation implementing the project or the expertise of the teams doing the project. For

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<sup>3</sup> Such an example is PF Bulgaria ECOR, where the candidates are offered an external programme in order to prepare for joining the main ECOR

programme. The work with them is carried out in the different security regimes.

instance, ECOR for offenders with substance (or other) addictions, ECOR for young offenders, or ECOR for prisoners on post-release programmes.

(c) In some cases, the therapeutic approach and the convictions of the staff and external experts lead to restrictions on the participation of sex offenders, based on the understanding that this particular category of offenders requires special treatment that may not necessarily be available within the scope of an ECOR programme.

Similarly, some programme teams may exclude work with individuals with drug and alcohol addictions. ECOR programmes have, however, been tested in the framework of drug and alcohol addiction programmes, and involved expert staff and volunteers with experience working with this target group. This demonstrates that it is possible for ECOR programmes to deal with special-needs target groups, if this falls within the skills and abilities of the staff involved. It would be necessary to develop special modules or guidelines with an ECOR

programme for working with special-needs target groups.

### **Duration**

The average duration of an ECOR programme is 12 to 18 months. It is expected that the minimum stay is 6 months, while the maximum could go as high as 28 months.

The reason for the longer stay is to allow participants of the communities to be released directly from an ECOR programme back into the community. They cannot be returned to the previous terms of imprisonment, unless due to infractions of the regime in the community, they have been expelled.

Thus the model belongs among the long term programmes of influence and in this sense raises some challenges. Changes in criminal justice systems and in the prison systems generate a tendency towards shorter effective prison sentences, which leads to the including of offenders with longer sentences and more serious types of crime.

The positive effect of this tendency is, that in some cases there are offenders who could be placed in these communities

directly upon induction, provided there are no other limitations that come into play.

## 1.8 Who can apply the model?

ECOR is used by non-profit organisations in partnership with prisons, ministries of justice, municipalities, and civic groups. Its history until now does not point to any restrictions on who could apply the model. As the origins of the model are strongly linked to Christian values and to the notion of unconditional love, this to a certain degree pre-determines the circle of organisations interested in applying the model. More so, as the demonstration of unconditional love and confidence are considered as subjective factors with a strong impact on the transformation of offenders. Those factors are present in all the elements of the programme. The appearance of the different communities varies from civic to religious. This is to say, that when the elements of the model and its values are followed, it does not impose an obligatory profile and appearance on the organisation, which is applying it. An important

element for each organisation, institution, church or civic group, which undertakes steps towards implementation of the ECOR model, is to take into account, that traditionally ECOR involves few paid staff and a larger group of volunteers from the local community. It's not a standard partnership between two organisations, but rather a partnership between the penitentiary institution and the local community, represented by the respective organisation.

The latter are of great significance in the programme and its impact on the offenders. The volunteers are a key element for building up the self-esteem, the restoration of dignity, and value. They are a model, demonstrating that one could be loved and appreciated without seeking reciprocity. They are an example what it means to put positive, pro-social and pro-community values into practice.

**Table 2.1. Basic data on ECOR sites by organisations / countries**

<b>Country, Organisation and Name of ECOR Programme</b>	<b>Target Group</b>	<b>Programme Duration</b>	<b>Maximum Capacity</b>	<b>Institution</b>
Bulgaria NGO PF Bulgaria, ECOR "Adaptation Environment"	Re-offenders (Male)	9-30 months before release	18	Vratza Prison (Mixed Security)
Germany NGO ECOR Seehaus, "Juvenile prison in free form"	Young offenders (Male, 14-23)	6-28 months before release	15 7	Seehaus Leonberg Seehaus Stomatal
Germany NGO Blue Cross Germany	Offenders with drug / alcohol dependencies (Male)	Approximately 17 months	15	Brandenburg Prison
			13	Luckau-Duben Prison
„Integration for Society“, Ratniekie Latvia	Released Prisoners	Up to 12 months after release	25	Independent site near Riga
Latvia NGO PF Latvia COR Miriam,	Women	Up to 3 years before release	16	Ilguciems Prison
Hungary NGO PF Hungary COR "APAC"	Male	No proscribed duration	15	Tiszaölki Maximum Security Prison, Emleklap
	Women	No proscribed duration	12	Pálhalmai Mélykút Prison

## 1.9 Essential Elements for ECOR model

Applying the methodology in the European context requires the elimination of two of the elements of APAC (described in part 1) considered inapplicable by the project team, due to different criminal justice dispositions and management of penal institutions: (a) legal assistance and (b) healthcare. In many, if not all, European countries, these are provided for, to some extent, by the state, and there is less need for the involvement of the external organisations, applying the ECOR model. This is not to suggest that an ECOR programme cannot seek to provide services within this framework – it is important to look at programme priorities based on local context.

In ECOR each of the other elements are critically important, as each of them contribute to the restoration of the prisoner into society. At the same time, as could be observed in the history of APAC in Europe, the adaptation and application of the methodology could start through several, but not all, elements which may continue to develop

until programmes are able to offer a full scope of services. It is important to keep in mind that the risk of recidivism is higher for programme participants who have not gone through the entire cycle, or have engaged with all the elements of the programme.

### **Community participation**

The participation and acceptance of the local community is very important, in order to introduce the method in the prisons and to gather support of society in favour of the restoration and reintegration of prisoners after release.

### **Participants Helping**

#### **Participants and Positive Peer Culture**

The participants themselves have a lot of knowledge, skills, gifts and expertise, even though they have used this often in a negative way. It is important to show them, how to use these in a positive way and to give them as much responsibility as possible. The main focus in a Positive Peer Culture is that the participants help themselves, are there for each other and take on

responsibility for the whole group and create a community of caring for each other.

### **Work & Education**

Work and education are very important elements within the process. However, work and education alone are not enough for prisoners to break the cycle of offending. The value system needs to change and the participant needs to gain self-esteem, discover himself and recognise his gifts, skills and self-worth.

The goal is that the participants can find employment after being released – or ideally already during the last part of their sentence, if this is possible within the prison system. In many countries the prison system provides work and education. Then this does not have to be provided by ECOR. However, education is seen more widely than conveying knowledge, but it is also about learning and practicing life skills.

When considering the scope of work and education, ECOR programme managers may wish to refer to the Council of Europe Recommendations R(89)12 on education in prison. These can

be found through the website of the European Prison Education Association (EPEA):

[www.epea.org](http://www.epea.org).

### **Spirituality**

ECOR is based on Christian values. It offers the participants an experience of spirituality and gives them access to different Christian programmes on a voluntary basis. ECOR gives them an experience of love and being loved and accepted, without imposing doctrine and dogma, and is open to any participants, independent from their faith or worldview.

### **Human valorisation and Facilitating self-worth**

It is the basis of the methodology to put human beings first. All work is aligned to help the participants enhance their positive self-image and to recognise their self-worth. They can experience their own positive value and can acknowledge that they have gifts and skills which they can use for themselves and for the community. The living conditions should be acceptable and the participants have to be treated well and given respect.

*Within the education curricula are woven individual and group therapy sessions supervised by psychologists and/or social workers. The aim is to restore offenders' capacity to contribute positively to society, reunite them to their families (where possible), improve their employability, and reduce recidivism – Margaret Wilson and Caroline Lanskey*

### **Family**

The family is one of the pillars for the prisoner's recovery. The family needs to be integrated in all stages of the programme.

When the family engages and participates in the methodology and in the socialisation process, the process is much more successful. The family is also an important source of support for participants after serving their sentence. Therefore, they should be included in the re-integration process and planning meetings.

### **Volunteers and Volunteer Training**

Volunteers have a very special role for the participants. They bring in the outside community in the prison. They are respected by the prisoners in a special way because they are not part of the system and they do not get paid for their work. Participants accept, therefore, that volunteers are there because of the participants and because the participants are important to them. The volunteers are a bridge to the community and relationships can also be maintained after release.

Volunteers - and especially those acting as mentors or 'godparents' - can be important as trusted

persons who give friendship, stability and the experience of a lasting caring relationship. The volunteers need to receive good training.

### **Merit**

For having his merit determined, thereby, making the progression of the regimes definite, recuperando's prison life is well-observed. Thus it's very important the creation of a Technical Classification Committee composed of professionals associated with the methodology, to classify recuperandos accordingly to their need of receiving individualized treatment, and also, to recommend, when possible and appropriate, the exams in order to progress to the next regime, and even to verify the cessation of danger, toxicological dependency and mental illness.

### **Social Reintegration and Aftercare**

The original APAC model established provision for so-called 'social reintegration centres'. These may be external to the main prison itself, albeit within the grounds of the institution. The original APAC programme has three such

annexes for closed, semi-open and open regimes. Also for ECOR, if possible, there should be a process where the participants receive more and more freedom in order to be integrated into the community step-by-step.

Aftercare is an important aspect and helps individuals to deal with problems and challenges they face after release. Aftercare can be done by volunteer mentors or ‘godparents’ and/or professional social workers.

#### **Restorative Justice/Victim Awareness**

The participants should learn to take on responsibility for their lives, but also for their past

actions. Victim Awareness programmes, e.g. the Sycamore Tree Project or programmes styled on the ‘Building Bridges’ model<sup>4</sup> can be an integral part of the ECOR process, and can help participants to develop victim empathy and to prepare themselves to take steps towards the restoration of harm towards victims and the community. It may be possible for a victim-offender-reconciliation meeting to be offered, if this were possible and appropriate within the context. Community service as a symbolic restitution towards the community could also be an important step towards restoration.

## **1.10 ECOR Programming**

Some current ECOR sites run 24-hour programmes and follow the APAC model of restoration, which, to use the metaphor of Dr Ottoboni, resembles the restoration of a broken vase. The bigger the number of broken pieces, the more complex is the work of restoration, especially if some of the broken pieces are

missing. To this end, different therapeutic approaches may be used, directed towards the needs of the individual offender - taking responsibility for one's actions, and of consequences thereof, restoration of relations with the community and society, which includes preservation or restoration of family

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<sup>4</sup> See [www.restorative-justice.eu/bb](http://www.restorative-justice.eu/bb)



relationships, and the creation of new social ties.

The goal of the methodology is to restore the vase - that is the personality of the offender - to the highest possible degree or “killing the criminal, saving the person” (Mario Ottoboni).

The prerequisite for an ECOR programme is that the participants form a “community of restoration”, live in a community setting in a separate unit (or separate facility), distinct from the general prison population.

The life in the Community is based on an ethical code followed by all, which secures a safe environment, and provides the conditions for restoration of the personality of the offender. This demands the creation of decent living conditions, as well as the care for the physical, psychological, and spiritual health of the individual. A Community of Restoration is a community built on the principle

of participants caring for one another.

Human values are embedded in the centre of the ECOR model. One of the vivid expressions of this is the way of treating and addressing offenders’ participation in the programme. The people on ECOR programmes are called “members of the community of restoration: people actively participating in their own restorative process”<sup>5</sup> All work is aligned to help the participants develop positive self-image and to see their self-worth. Based on Christian values, the model offers the participants an experience of love and being loved and accepted, without the imposition of doctrine and dogma. The model sees the offender as a human being who has received little or no love in his past, which now manifests itself in his or her current criminal behaviour.

The programme encompasses all the elements of the model, and could be viewed as three basic modalities:

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<sup>5</sup> The people on original APAC programmes are called ‘recuperandos: people in the process of recuperating’.

(a) approaches and activities aimed totally towards the needs of the offenders, namely restoring their spiritual and physical personality, oriented towards life free of crime.

Among such activities we could mention different types of training, including vocational training, individual and group consultations, group therapy, sports, art therapy, work, strengthening of family ties, and preparation for life in freedom.

(b) activities and approaches oriented to building up and keeping up healthy and normal relations with others, and building up and keeping up of a positive culture of community. This could include a system of delegating responsibilities according to the level of achievements of each member of the community, mutual training and help of the participants in the programme, joint celebration of holidays, rituals, and other events, participation in councils, commissions and other bodies governing the community, discussion on acceptable or

unacceptable types of behaviour, just and equal treatment and attitude towards all members of the community.

(c) approaches and activities aimed at reconciliation and restoration of the relations of the offender with his community, assuming responsibility for past action. Here we include all activities aimed at creating victim empathy and preparation for re-entry into society.

Programmes of the individual Communities of Restoration differ widely. Each one bears the imprint of the local culture, traditions, expertise of the organisation running the project, the local justice environment, and peculiarities of the institution where the project takes place.

This multitude of applications in the framework of a single model demonstrates high adaptability of the ECOR project, and thus the ample opportunities it offers to any national or local penitentiary system, institution, or community

**Table 2.2 Data on activities in different ECOR sites**

Country, Organisation and Name of ECOR Programme	Percentage ratio of ECOR programme and activities (%)															
	Individual consulting	Group counselling / therapy	mentoring	Work	Arts / art therapy	sports	family counselling	Spiritual care/ circle of the faith based activities	vocational training	Community living	participation in campaigns of local community	Leisure time activities / personal time	Victim, offender conferencing	Education (reading/writing)	Education (theology)	Activities with the general prison population
PF Bulgaria	3	6	0	13	6	5	4	3	13	20	5	20	0	0	2	0
Seehaus, Germany	2	7	1	4	1	5	2	2	19	25	2	16	1	12	1	0
Blue Cross Germany	8	15	12	13	1	0	5	1	5	20	3	8	2	7	0	0
Ratniekie Latvia	7	8	0	19	1	1	1	18	21	9	1	13	1	0	0	0
Miriame, Latvia	7	8	0	19	1	1	7	8	0	19	1	1	7	8	0	19
PF Hungary	5	5	5	18	4	2	5	12	6	6	2	7	5	6	7	5
PF Bulgaria	3	6	0	13	6	5	4	3	13	20	5	20	0	0	2	0
Seehaus, Germany	2	7	1	4	1	5	2	2	19	25	2	16	1	12	1	0

Data shown above are taken from daily timetables in the individual communities. In some cases, up to 38% of the activities of the communities are connected with the life of the general prison population - for instance, the Communities

of Restoration managed by Blue Cross, PF Hungary, and Mirijam. In other cases, as the Community of Restoration managed by PF Bulgaria, the members of the community do not mix up with the general prison population at all.

The Community of Restoration Seehaus in Germany, and the Community managed by NGO “Integration for Society” (Ratnieki) in Latvia have all their activities outside of prisons, so they are totally independent from the penitentiary systems in terms of their daily life and activities. In spite of a certain level of independence of the communities in the context of daily programme of the prison and the penitentiary system in general, the table above demonstrates the focus and the

intensity of the activities in which their members participate. The programme of the Community of Restoration Seehaus presented above, illustrates the activities and the intensity for the members of the community during their entire stay.

How these activities are broken down over the course of the day will, again, be dependent on local programming needs. The following table presents an example of how such programming may be achieved.

**Table 2.2 Basic data on ECOR sites by organisations / countries**

<b>Monday - Friday</b>		<b>Saturday</b>		<b>Sunday</b>	
<b>5:40</b>	Wake-up	<b>7:30</b>	Wake-up	<b>8:00</b>	Wake-up
<b>5:45</b>	Jogging	<b>7:45</b>	Time of quietness	<b>8:15</b>	Music / smoke break
<b>6:35</b>	Time of quietness	<b>8:00</b>	Breakfast	<b>8:30</b>	Preparing for breakfast
<b>6:50</b>	Breakfast	<b>8:30</b>	Music / smoke break	<b>8:45</b>	Breakfast
<b>7:15</b>	House duties	<b>8:45</b>	House duties	<b>10:00</b>	Church service / ethics
<b>8:00</b>	Music / smoke break	<b>10:00</b>	Community service	<b>12:45</b>	Lunch
<b>8:15</b>	School / Education	<b>12:45</b>	Lunch	<b>13:45</b>	Leisure time activities
<b>12:45</b>	Lunch	<b>13:45</b>	Music / smoke break		Sports
<b>13:45</b>	Music / smoke break	<b>14:00</b>	Community service		Family visits
<b>14:00</b>	Work duties / School	<b>16:00</b>	Sports		
<b>17:45</b>	Dinner	<b>18:00</b>	Dinner and leisure time		
<b>19:15</b>	Music / smoke break	<b>23:45</b>	Bedtime	<b>22:00</b>	Bedtime
<b>20:00</b>	Evening programme*	<b>24:00</b>	Lights out	<b>22:15</b>	Lights out
<b>22:00</b>	Bedtime	Evening Programme includes: homework, reading, family activities, playing games, sports, youth group, music lessons etc.			
<b>22:15</b>	Lights out				

The programme of the Community of Restoration presented in *Table 2.2* illustrates the activities in which participants in the programme engage in during their stay. As was seen from the data in *Table 2.1*, however, there is no proscribed approach to setting up such a programme – as long as it sufficiently covers the elements of the ECOR model.

Regardless of the chosen approach, the goal remains restoration of the individual through development of skills and potential. The programme should address those areas of the individual's life which increase the propensity to criminal behaviour.

## 1.11 Staff and Management

### Staff and Volunteers

When speaking of ECOR staff, we refer to several key professionals who coordinate the interaction between the programme, the volunteers, and the prison administration or partners from the local communities.

The majority of people working with ECOR participants are volunteers. Again, this varies from programme to programme – for example, the Latvian after care model and the Seehaus facility in Germany have more staff than other programmes, as a result of being relatively autonomous facilities, independent of the infrastructure

and governance of any particular prison.

Volunteers are well trained specialists drawn from a range of different areas: psychologists, social workers, university teachers, religious workers, artists, public figures, etc. All of them cover specific parts of the programme and contribute to the realisation of the model. Their responsibilities are not lesser than those of professional staff. Their input to the success and results of the work - that is the transformation of the offender - is essential. They are a model, demonstrating that one could be loved and appreciated without seeking reciprocity. They are an

example what it means to put positive, pro-social and pro-community values into practice.

The selection and the training of the volunteers is done by the organisations - carriers of the “know-how”. Prisons usually authorise access after checking the data of the external visitors, according to their rules, regulations and legal framework. The participation of the prison administration in the training of volunteers is in the form of orientation session on behaviour in prison and the rules concerning the external experts and their relations with the prisoners. More about the training of volunteers, partners, and third parties in the implementation of the ECOR, could be seen in the ECOR training, which offers details on the themes and intensity in the training of specialists and volunteers. The inter-relations between the volunteers and the organising institutions are

regulated according to the experience of the organisation itself, as well as the local legislation<sup>6</sup>.

## **Management**

The management of ECOR sites is dependent on a number of factors, connected with the context, the level of integration of the activities of the model in the particular penitentiary unit, the national legislation, economic indicators. Because of the numerous variations in the national systems, and the lack of enough data, we have to skip this analysis, important by itself, and focus only on the instruments for managing and regulating the relationship between the prisons, members of different communities, organising institutions and their staff, as well as external partners.

Moreover, the management of ECOR is not static. It changes constantly in search of the best possible application of the model, and at the same time, in

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<sup>6</sup> PF Bulgaria, for example, has developed several basic documents connected with the work of the volunteers. An Ethics Code of the volunteer has been drawn up, contract on voluntary labour, declaration on confidentiality, and use of photographic

material. The organisation informs constantly the prison authorities about the beginning and the end of the respective volunteer and it's on the basis of this, that the passes for work inside the prison are being issued.

response to the changes taking place in the circumstances in which the model is being implemented.

The general and minimal requirement for the application of the ECOR model and its development is a memorandum of understanding and follow up of the framework of the model and its methodology, creation of certain conditions for its application in different contexts. Without these fundamental steps, no forward movement will be possible.<sup>7</sup>

In the context of prison, either in the framework of the memorandum, or as separate guidelines, the following could be elaborated:

(a) positioning of the model in a certain security regime, or its application in the framework of different security regimes.

(b) conditions of imprisonment in the ECOR units, including certain level of autonomy, participation in other activities in the prison, mixing up with the general prison population, or

total separation, from the rest, daily timetable and its specific features.

(c) Categories of participants in the programme.

(d) Participation of prison personnel in the life of the community, from simple checks on possible infractions of the rules and regulations in the prison, security, observations on the changes in the behaviour and personality of the inmates participating in the programme, and monitoring changes in the legal status of prisoners, through to the way in which prisoners participate in those areas of the regime that fall under their responsibility.

(e) Regulations and guidelines for the access of external specialists, specific requirements for working with sentenced offenders, and other particular requirements concerning the security of the institution.

(f) Impact of the programme and changes in the sentencing of the

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<sup>7</sup> The title is just indicative, it's different in the individual ECOR communities. But such an act defines the general framework, the obligations of each side,

the roles and functions, access to information, areas of activities and responsibilities.

offender - reducing the sentence and early release.

(g) Activities related to the security of the activities of the programme and work with the inmates.

In the context of prison, the attention of the management is focused on the integration of the model into the prison system and its application at every stage of the sentence. This process passes through regulating the relationship between the prison staff-external specialists-programme users, and finally the local community.<sup>8</sup>

When the model is applied in the community, whether as alternative to imprisonment or as residential service for former prisoners, there are several other management concerns to address. In addition to the formal agreement between the organising or implementing institution, the Ministry of Justice, and the local municipality, and/or social service, additional agreement

should be reached with the local community on whose territory the project is taking place. That is a serious challenge, and its potential negative effects cannot be easily solved via negotiations and signing of a document, stating the sides will accept and follow certain framework. This could best be done through daily contacts and efforts of the leader of the local community and the management team of the project on overcoming the negative attitudes and prejudices, while at the same time trying to attract new like-minded people from the local community in the activities of ECOR, applied in this context.

This challenge, of course, also exists also in the prison context<sup>9</sup>, but here it has a special meaning and influence over the existence of the entire ECOR programme, as the bearer of the model has two main partners - the state as carrier of the function of execution of sentences in Europe, and the local

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<sup>8</sup> As illustration of the content of such a document, you could see in the annexes “Principles of cooperation of PF Bulgaria and Vratza prison on the implementation of the programme Restorative Community “Adaptation

Environment”, including the latest changes done in February 2015.

<sup>9</sup> This is where the scepticism of the prison staff and lack of confidence of the users of the programme shows



community, which raises formal representatives through the local power structures and civil society.

Local and regional authorities exercise a great deal of informal power and influence. This can be beneficial for the ECOR programme, although could undermine the programme completely if negative attitudes and prejudices are prevalent<sup>10</sup>.

Apart from the framework described in the basic understanding and accompanying guidelines, whenever they exist, usually a coordinating body or

council is set up. Figure 2.1, below, is an example of such a joint governing body on the example of Bulgaria.

“The Coordination council <sup>11</sup> and its functions are directly connected with the organisation of work on the Community of Restoration, the coordination of the different segments of the programme, coordination of the work of the experts of the programme and external experts, including hiring of external experts from other partner organisations.

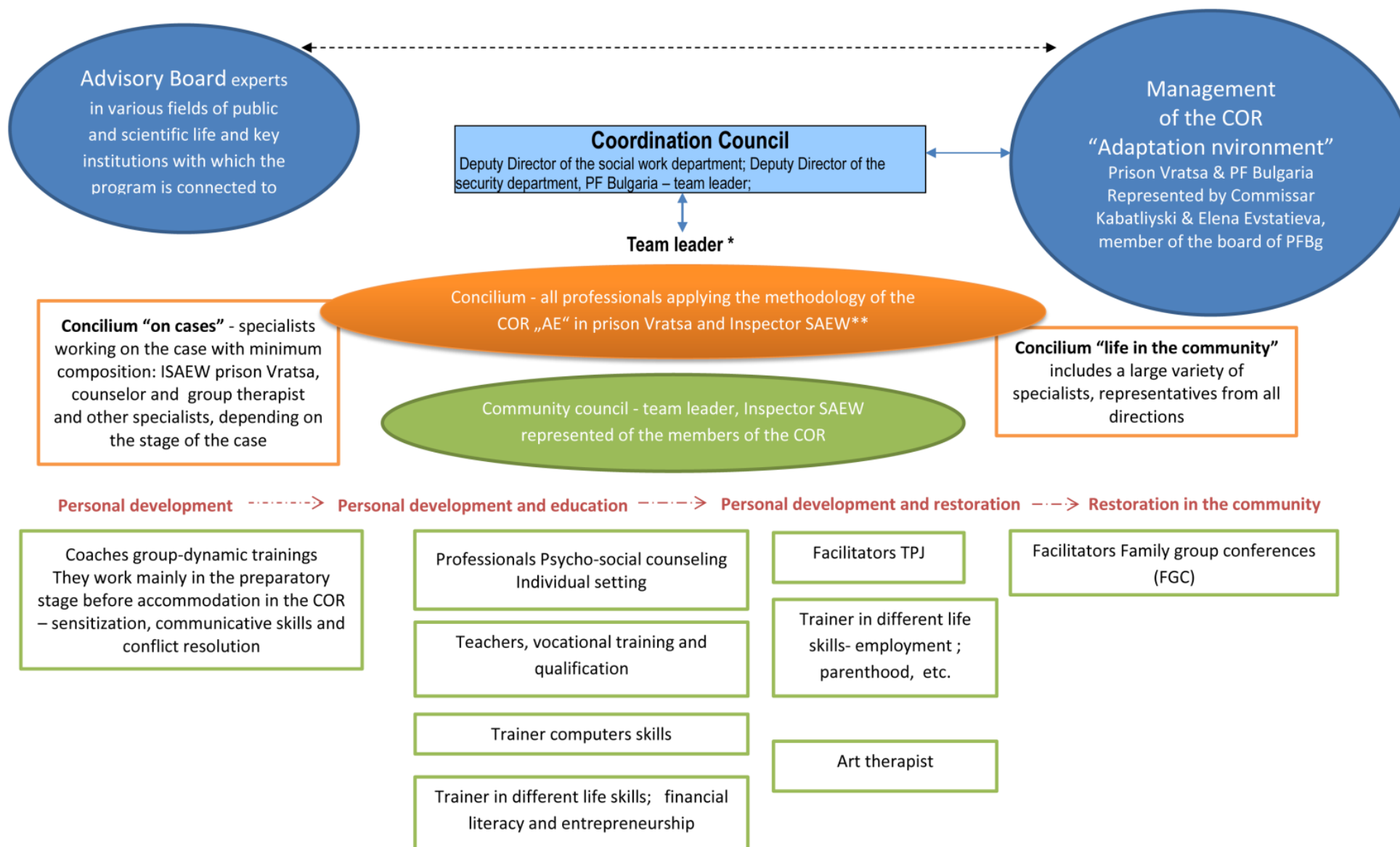
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<sup>10</sup> We have examples almost daily on how criminal events in the local communities, generating great public interest, quickly make resurface all the negative attitudes to the offenders, to the people working with them, trying to restore their relations with the community. The achieved

understandings may be vulnerable to the changing public attitudes. Sometimes it may lead to public pressure reflecting negatively upon the ECOR programme

<sup>11</sup> We shall use here the title of the coordinating organ of the Community of Restoration of PF Bulgaria.

Figure 2.1 – Coordination Council (example from the Bulgarian model)



“The Coordination council” and its functions are directly connected with the organisation of work on the Community of Restoration, the coordination of the different segments of the programme, coordination of the work of the experts of the programme and external experts, including hiring of external experts from other partner organisations.

The tasks of the Coordination council are as follows:

- (a) Planning
- (b) Exchange of information on achieved results and problem solving;
- (c) Keeping a good level of cooperation among all sides involved in the programme;

Coordination council meetings are held regularly on a 2-monthly basis.

Signing a basic agreement with all members of a Coordination Council helps to clearly state the mission, philosophy, principles, and standards of the programme, and on the other hand, clearly defines the roles, limits and responsibilities, with the understanding, that all this is not static, but could be modified and optimised on the basis of the practice, offers a sustainable platform for the implementation of the ECOR programme and its constant improvement.

## Chapter Summary

- ECOR could be described as a human valorisation model. By extracting these psycho-social foundations of the APAC methodology, ECOR offers a suitable model for a maximum number of European countries – one that is adaptable to local institutional and socio-political conditions, and applicable to in prison system or out of it – as an alternative of imprisonment or aftercare programme;
- Goal remains restoration of the personality through development of skills and the nurturing of potential.
- The implementation of the model is impossible and/or unstable without securing the support and good partnership relations with the Ministry of Justice, the prison administration, the local community, and individual professionals and volunteers.
- Considerable part of the success of the model is due exactly to the participation of the volunteers and their specific motivation and attitude towards the inmates. They contribute a real life dimension and example to the members of the communities of restoration of the philosophy of ECOR, based on respecting human dignity and care for the human being, led by love and trust, that each offender has the potential to be rehabilitated.
- The development of these relations involves two stages of integration: integration of the models in the institutions and/or the communities, as system of rules and guidelines, and integration of the values and the philosophy of the model in the system of “beliefs”, as well as dispositions for treatment of the offenders in the institutions and communities.

# Part 3 – Understanding the Approach

## 3.1 Rehabilitation

In their report of the ECOR Piloting, Lanskey and Wilson point to one of the challenges faced by rehabilitation programmes – that is the fact that they are not a single intervention, but a series of ‘micromechanisms of change’

*The ECOR model is first of all a long-term program, which in some cases goes through different stages and regimes of application, before becoming an organic entity of the 10 elements, thus creating a phenomenological environment, which demands, that not only the elements, but also that entity, should be subjects of research.*

*As Maruna observes, not all prison and rehabilitation programmes lend themselves easily. “.....Every intervention or program [sic] actually consists of thousands of different micromechanisms of change (e.g., confrontation, learning to trust, and self re-evaluation). [...] By gradually accumulating knowledge about these micromechanisms of change (and hence opening the black box), researchers may be able to develop a more theory-driven agenda on effective programming (Pawson & Tilley, 1997). Unfortunately, this sort of science of rehabilitation is a very long way off” (Maruna, 2001:112).<sup>1</sup>*

In order to deal with this challenge, we shall describe the ECOR approach through three points of support: the original APAC methodology, the research of Wilson and Lanskey, and the collected empirical data over the years and the pilot stages of the new ECOR sites. Firstly, it is necessary to identify what we mean by the term ‘rehabilitation’.

In the Oxford Dictionary of Current English, third edition, we find the following:

*“Restore (someone who has been ill or in prison) to normal life by training and therapy”.*

The Concise Encyclopaedia of Psychology, first U.S. edition of 1987, points to the following definition:

*“Rehabilitation accepts that the person who needs to undergo the program, has in the past been able to function adequately... means a return to the previous status or capabilities for functioning”.*

During the last several decades it became a norm to define as rehabilitation all programs aimed at re-integration and restoration of offenders. This is, however, not always a precise description. If we proceed from the point that the prison and the associated isolation, cause harm to the person, and create specific problems, it is true that during the serving of the sentence, and after release, some care and support in the sense of rehabilitation should be provided to the prisoner. However, if we look through the lenses of a transformation of the person, which leads to restoration and normal life free of crime, we discover that what is needed is not simply restoring those capabilities which the individual had before prison, but rather the

creation of new skills, attitudes, life values – the absence of which led to offending behaviour in the first instance.

The most obvious example is that of those prisoners who had never learned to read and write. In joining literacy courses in the prison, they acquire new skills, which will contribute to their subsequent rehabilitation.

Another extreme example are prisoners who spent their childhoods in care – often in different institutions or foster families. One of the positive aspects of their participation in any rehabilitation program that includes group therapy and/or some kind of support group, is that it seeks to generate the idea, understanding, and feeling of being in a family, or serves to reconstruct the negative vision of family, through inclusion of one “positive family experience”, shared in the group.<sup>12</sup> These two extreme examples permit us to state that in-prison rehabilitation programs, as well

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<sup>12</sup> In his classification of the therapeutic factors coming into play in the process of one therapeutic group (1), Irwin Yalom defines is “family re-enactment” or “corrective recapitulation of the primary family group”. This

phenomenon could be observed in the ECOR sites as well. This is valid for all types of groups when their life is comparatively long - meeting groups, AA, mutual assistance groups, etc. The variety is large.

as those in the post-imprisonment period, concern only a subsection of the participants in the programmes, while for many they represent not rehabilitation, but simply ‘habilitation’, that is, creating

totally new skills needed for life in a community.

When Dr Mario Ottoboni, the author of the original APAC methodology, speaks of rehabilitation, he describes 6 major areas of influence:

- Health – since most convicts are ill
- Education – for living in society including civility, good customs and religious guidance, professional training and instruction, as intrinsic requirements;
- Reading & writing – reducing the seventy - present rate of illiterate and semi – illiterate inmates in our prisons; if possible, including other courses to enhance the convict’s education;
- Professional training – through courses or scholarships, according to the aptitudes of interested party;
- Human valuation – attending to moral and self-image recovery through classes, debates and tasks in harmony with the goal; if necessary, to correct in a brotherly manner and praise when praise is due;
- Religion – revealing to the convict its importance in the life of a human being; he must have the experience of God, learning to love and be loved. “To love is learning by loving

Understanding the holistic character of the process of rehabilitation is important for both APAC and ECOR. The offenders are persons burdened with numerous problems. Usually, their criminal behaviour is a string of signs, symptoms of one or numerous dysfunctions of the personality and its history.

During their stay in prison the problems grow even more complicated. The longer the prison term, the more complex are the consequences, so overcoming them will demand more steps and efforts.

Reviewing the six zones of the rehabilitation process, as they are designed by Dr Mario Ottoboni,

takes the APAC methodology and the ECOR model as a kind of “re-enactment” of the development of the individual from childhood through to the formed, integrated personality, accompanied by “treatment” of injuries suffered by the offender, as well as those injuries that he has caused to others. One way or the other, the rehabilitation process in the ECOR model needs high intensity, long

duration, the involvement of a sufficient number of representatives of the local community, and the members of the Community of Restoration.

There is no doubt, in its philosophy, its holistic acceptance of the individual, and the interventions undertaken, that ECOR has therapeutic effect on the participants.

## 3.2 Therapeutic Process

In the description of the ECOR model we could just describe it as a rehabilitation programme and in terms of its application in the rehabilitation process. This, however, will deprive us of a deeper understanding and possibilities of realising “what works”, not simply as sum of a number of rehabilitation steps, but rather as a holistic model, a system of values and practices, which when applied harmoniously lead to such a transformation of personality of the offender, which makes it

possible to live a life free of crime.

In many prisons many activities in the daily routine of the participants in an ECOR community could be identified as separate, short-term programmes<sup>13</sup>, accessible to many categories of prisoners. However, the participation of offenders in a number of programmes, does not have the same impact, as being part of a Community of Restoration. Many of the rehabilitation programs realised in the general

programs for people with dependencies, etc.

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<sup>13</sup> For instance, vocational training, literacy courses, social skills programs, conflict resolution and anger management, different types of



prison population could be found in a Community of Restoration, but with different effect.

On the one hand, there is nothing unique or original in the very activities and modules of the ECOR program. Experts from the fields of criminology, penitentiary psychology, social work, and other related areas, are well versed in those practices and their strong and weak points. On the other hand the creation of a Community of Restoration with its positive culture and its code of ethics, the overall involvement in the life of the community, the continuous participation in programmes and activities aimed at personal growth - the same well-known practices carry an added value, leading to change.

When we define the ECOR approach as therapeutic, it may create expectations for a kind of “healing”, however we have in mind exactly the change<sup>14</sup> or transformation of attitudes,

values, and integrity of the personality, leading to a life free of crime. We differentiate here from the purist understanding of the notion of “rehabilitation”, which strives to restore previously existing particularities, characteristics, skills, and even physical capabilities, the therapy goes beyond all this and looks for change in the status.

In this line of thought we could distinguish between several factors, which contribute to the therapeutic influence of the model on the members of a Community of Restoration, even if they are to a large extent intertwined and difficult to define:

### **The environment as**

**therapeutic factor** - one of the preliminary and basic requirements for introducing the ECOR model, irrespective of the context in which it is being implemented, is the creation of a special section/unit, where to assign the participants in the

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<sup>14</sup> Just to compare - one of the goals of the psychotherapy is change in the personality in order to allow facing the challenges and the difficulties in a manner “healthy” for the psychic and physical condition, thus securing the well-being of the personality, while

preserving its health, and the heals of others. Reduction of the suffering of the personality, caused by its dysfunction and by its inability to manage its daily life.

programme. The conditions should offer the possibility for a certain level of autonomy in facilitating daily tasks and activities, as well as respect of some personal space. At the same time, the unit should offer opportunities for development of communal life.

The more “detached” and independent such a unit is in relation to the institutional life and daily routine of the prison, the stronger the therapeutic significance of the environment and the community are going to be.

**Life in the Community** - extremely important factor in achieving the goals of the personality change. Skills for maintaining healthy and positive human relationships are firmly embedded with a view of teaching how the care for the other passes through the realisation of how our own actions, steps, and decisions, reflect on others. Outside of the formal training and group therapy sessions, there were discussions, time for reflections on the day, or simply discussing what had happened .

Life in the community is built on several main principles, totally

contradictory to the subculture of the prison population, namely:

- 1) democratic governing and decision-making, discussion of all the issues/events/happenings of importance to the community or to an individual member.
- 2) Transparency and wide sharing of information among all the members of the community, and of the executive team, in order to minimise and possibilities for manipulations.
- 3) Highest possible occupation of time with creative and fulfilling activities, contributing to the development of the individual and the community as a whole.
- 4) No tolerance to aggressive, rude behavior, offending human dignity.
- 5) Unequivocal rules and regulations, strictly observed by all - staff, volunteers, members.

So, we could safely state, that the ECOR model without having been conceptualised as a therapeutic model by its creators, has become one, thanks to the harmonious and safe environment, as well as the clearly defined framework and conditions .

### **The positive personality**

**model** - is the third very important factor of change.

People involved in an ECOR

programme - volunteers, staff, representatives of the local communities, or even members with longer history of participation in the community – act as role models for (other) members of the community. In the description above of the main elements of ECOR, we stressed the key role of volunteers in contributing to the change in the personalities of the offenders . That members appreciate that their personality is of importance to others, strengthens their own identity, development of positive attitudes and relationships with authorities, their ability for emotional inter-relation, and their capacity to sustain open human relations on an equal footing. For some of them, the intensive interaction with the volunteers is a revelation of a totally different “new” world and new worldview. Entering the Community of Restoration for many of them is a revelation, that until now their worldview and their own role in it is a distorted image, a reflection in a “distorted mirror”. This makes it possible for them to realise the initially

wrong cognitive position of the personality and with this the possibilities for correction. Of course, this is a hard and long process, full of resistance, tests, and hardships, challenging the personalities of the staff and volunteers, as well as the strength of the relationship. The confidence that is being built, and the delegation of responsibilities, serves to integrate all of this, in such a way, that community members grow into a more mature personality with positive attitude to the others, and to the world .

So, if the environment and the community form the framework and the arena for starting the process of change, the relationships in the community, and the relations between the volunteers and the participants in the programme are the instruments to deliver the change.

Unless we delineate those three therapeutic factors in the ECOR model, we could hardly delineate the therapeutic approach itself.

### 3.3 Model of Change

The ECOR model of the personality change could be viewed through the three basic modalities, described in chapter 2, already:

**Needs of the offenders** - depending on each individual case, one, or more, or all of the 6 zones, described by Dr Mario Ottoboni, could be covered. Usually, work on the zones brings additional development of the capacity and the potential of personality for dealing with the daily challenges of life, and thus to reduction of the risk factors, especially those connected with the probability of finding a job, future active participation in the rehabilitation activities within the Community of Restoration and outside of it, as well as compensating for some of the personality peculiarities, connected with certain dysfunctions of individual participants. Indicators for change here are, for instance, results in a study or training process, change in basic attitudes towards psychotropic substances, reduction of the resistance to integration in the rehabilitation

activities, and the life in the community.

**Relations with others** - Interaction with others develops in a community, individual, and group setting. In the context of a community with an ethical code, based on care for each other, initially it all seems external and formal to the newcomers. The ethical norms are gradually appropriated by the participant, and following them without infractions becomes one of the behavioural indicators (albeit not always reliable) of change, successful adaptation to community life, and readiness for a future, even more active integration.

Outside of context of the community life, it is the interpersonal relations which assist the personality change, and create supportive environment for the invested individual efforts, and are the principal tool for its transformation. Done by pairs of mentor-mentee, or volunteers/experts-participants, they create opportunity for constant interaction with a role model, and this relationship becomes a factor of change.

The interpersonal relations, realised in a group setting, irrespective of the focus of the group task, offers an opportunity for re-enactment of the original family group, and realisation of the subsequent life experience in building the relations with others as an adult and testing reality, and it means abandoning many illusions about oneself. We mentioned already, what is the contribution to the development of personality in the case of prisoners who have grown up in dysfunctional families, or without families at all. Another meaningful input in the development of relationships in a group context<sup>15</sup> towards personality change, is improved sensitivity of the participants, their emotional intelligence as a whole<sup>16</sup> and capability for interpersonal resolving of problems. The indicators of change here are the reduction of the number of conflicts and

infractions of the rules of the community, increase in the possibilities for influencing undesirable behaviour of an individual participant, increased motivation for taking part in the daily tasks and programs of the Community of Restoration, increased personal contribution of the individual participants, increase in the number of proposals for improvements in the life of the community, self-help initiatives.

### **Reconciliation and restoration of the offender's relationships**

with his community, assuming responsibility for past action – strengthening family ties, deepening the understanding of the suffering caused to others through criminal behaviour, assuming responsibility for past action “here and now”, and future responsible behaviour. All the activities in this modality provide opportunities for the following: 1) on a personal level - integrating

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<sup>15</sup> It could be group work aimed at acquiring new social skills, overcoming aggressive behavior, increased understanding of the effect of criminal behavior on the life of others, group therapy, etc..

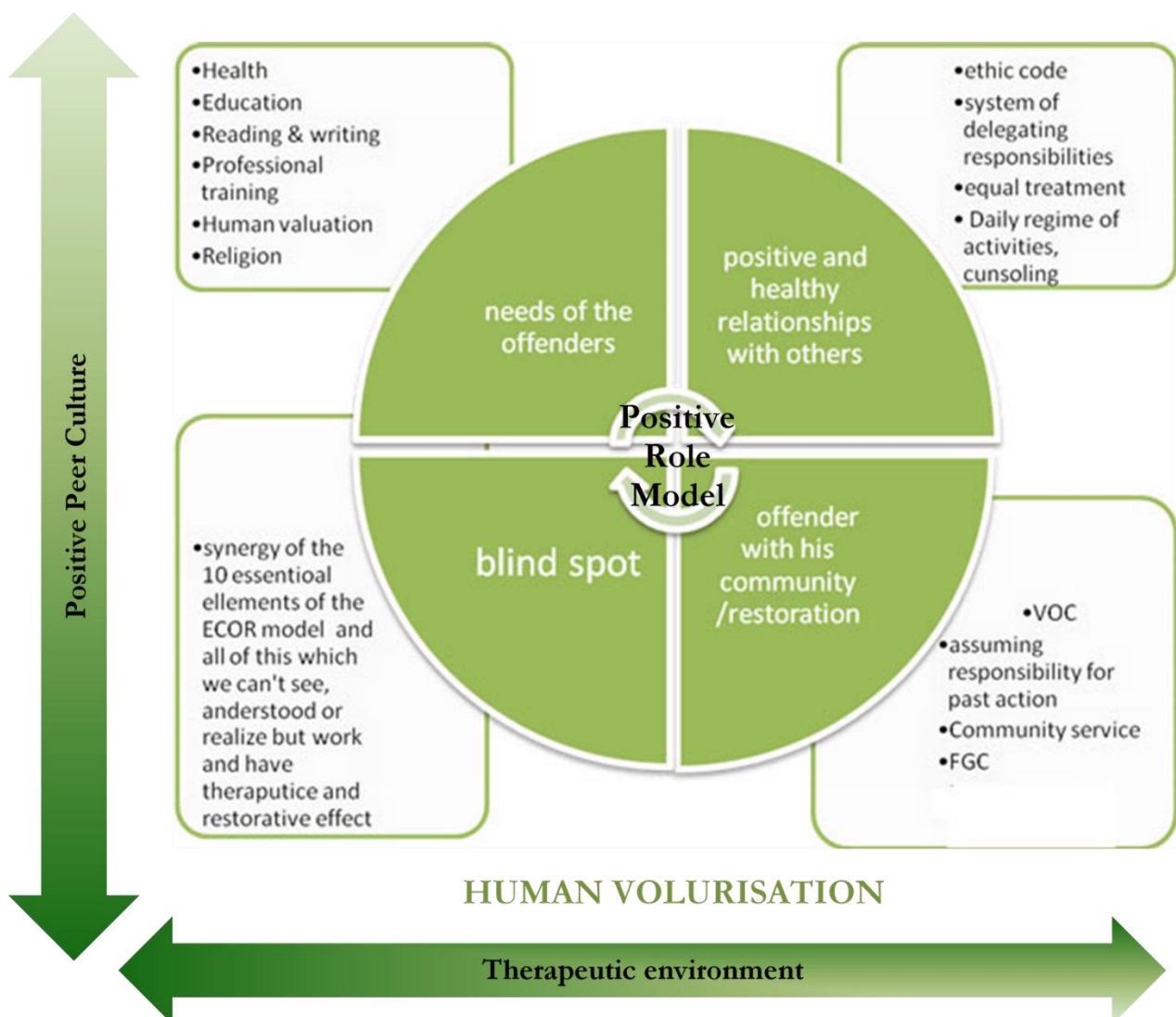
<sup>16</sup> The factors contributing to the change in personality in a group setting are the following according to Irvin Yalom:

Instillation of hope; Universality; Imparting information; altruism; The corrective recapitulation of the primary family group; development of socializing techniques; Imitative behaviour; Group cohesiveness; Catharsis; Existential factors. Well described in The theory and Practice in the Group psychotherapy

the personality changes through concrete actions/testing the realities outside the protected group which is the community, including potential changes in the attitudes and understanding in the family or the community of the offender, 2) secure the support of the prisoner's family and community for a sustainable

change, and minimize the risk of regression. The indicator of change here is the frequency of contacts with the family and a circle of friends, restoration plan and its implementation, the status of a contract, drawn at a Family Group Consultation meeting or VOC, finding a job even before leaving ECOR, etc.

Figure 3.1 ECOR model of change



In each of the three modalities the ECOR sites plan a range of activities to be included in the daily programme and regime, which are causing and promoting the personality transformation.

In the figure shown above we have included a “blind spot”, where we collect all that remains “invisible” for the participants, the professionals, and the volunteers, but leads to change. There we have put the added value of the synergy of the 10 basic elements of the ECOR model, which is not measurable, but has tremendous significance for personality change.

ECOR model of change is very close to the model of therapeutic community<sup>17</sup>. At the same time, the level of resemblance of an ECOR with a therapeutic community will depend on how isolated and independent the ECOR is from the general prison population and the prison subculture<sup>18</sup>. That fact benefits those who work to implement ECOR, as the research done in therapeutic communities, their achievements and their failures<sup>19</sup>, could facilitate the future establishing and development of ECOR.

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<sup>17</sup> According to Kooyman, among the main tools for behavioural and personality change are the confrontation and the positive influence of the group; the social skills learned through social interaction and therapeutic influence in all the activities taking place in the community. The key concepts are: 1) Self-help - each participant could change by taking responsibility for his own behaviour. We are not guilty for our past, but we are responsible for our restoration; 2) Active participation in the program is obligatory condition for personal growth; 3) Care for others - helping others, I'm helping myself; 4) Act in an

“as if” style - each participant needs to act as the person he want to become, and so he learns to act differently. This way the participants exercise behaviours, sometimes not even understanding fully the meaning.

<sup>18</sup> It's easy to compare the description of ECOR presented in Chapter 2 with a brief and rather general description of a Therapeutic Community.

<sup>19</sup> Mostly because of economic/budgetary concerns, as these are among the most expensive programs in the prisons with rather limited outreach in terms of numbers of participants.

### 3.4 What works and form whom in ECOR?

The data shown in Wilson and Lansky's research demonstrate that it is not easy to pinpoint "what works" and "for whom it works". To understand this would require constant observation and evaluation of the programmes done inside prisons, as well as, to follow the life of offenders in the period after release in the course of several years. Taking into consideration a multitude of factors in this observation exercise is the way to measure which element of a given programme has been important in contributing to the change/or no change was observed, and whether such a change was sustainable or only situational and short-lived.

However, there is some evidence of the potential contribution of particular prison programmes. As the ECOR model aims to influence the whole person, it contains many of the actions, goals, and specific accents in the above-mentioned programmes.

Table 2.2 (see Part 2) presented data on activities in different ECOR sites. Comparing these

with the conclusions of Wilson and Lansky on the existing practices, we probably will be better in answering the question "What works?" – see Table 3.1, below.

There are activities which impact several dimensions connected with transformation of personality of the offenders, although we are describing just those for which there is some evidence in the experience gained by implementing different programmes in prisons.

In Table 2.2, we could see that in some ECOR sites, some types of programme are predominant, while others are lacking. In the ECOR sites run by PF Hungary, for instance, the whole programme of the Community of Restoration is based on spiritual care/faith-based activities, including mentoring, education (theology), and family counselling. The activities are mostly connected with abandoning the life of crime, repairing the damage done to the victims of crime, and affecting post-release behaviour.



**Table 3.1: ECOR activities and some effects to the personality**

<b>Activities in the ECOR sites</b>	<b>Contribution of particular prison programmes</b>
Individual Consulting	improving bonding and empathy
Group counselling / therapy	improving bonding and empathy
Mentoring	desistance from crime
Work	desistance from crime
Arts / Art therapy	Recovery of self-image
Sports	Recovery of self-image
Family counselling/ FGC	affect post-release behaviour
Spiritual care/ circle of the faith based activities	desistance from crime
Vocational training	stable employment
Community living	Recovery of self-image
Participation in campaigns of local community	Recovery of self-image
leisure time activities / personal time	Recovery of self-image
Victim, offender conferencing	helping repair the damage done to victims of crime
education (reading/writing)	stable employment
education (theology)	desistance from crime
Activities with the general prison population	There aren't positive effects

A further example is that of Blue Cross in Germany, where the Community of Restoration is targeted at offenders, whose criminal history is directly connected with the use of psychotropic substances. The whole programme is directed at overcoming drug and alcohol dependency and encouraging abstinence in the future, and thus avoiding future crimes through

socio-educational level development of their personality, development of social skills, and addiction treatment.

We could safely subsume, that overcoming the basic reason for their criminal behaviour will lead to transformation in their future behaviour, and thus reduce the risk of recidivism.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Drawing on what they have learned offenders can change their behaviour and habits as they encounter and practice positive experiences to

counteract their negative histories (Bottoms, 2014; Maruna, 2001; Ward & Maruna, 2010).

On top of the activities described and the results achieved in the sense of transformation of the personality of the offender, as well as the effectiveness of the rehabilitation of the ECOR model, Professor Losel proposes the following description of the impact of the model through

examples from international practice. His proposals during, given during the final conference of the ECOR project, which took place in Stuttgart in February 2016, cover all the basic elements of APAC methodology and make remarks, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

## Chapter Summary

- In ECOR the person is accepted in his wholeness and this determines the principal focus of the approach - at the centre is the person and his relations with others and the community, including the proper community of the offender.
- The process of rehabilitation of the offender in ECOR begins with meeting his needs, no matter whether they are connected with his current crime, or past criminal behaviour.
- ECOR as APAC is defined and applied, as a model for restoration of the offender. The comprehensive examination of values, program activities, ways of organizing life in the community, represent practically a therapeutic effect and approach.
- The ECOR model of change is applicable in different contexts, and in different levels of security when organized inside prison.
- The more the ECOR site is connected with the functioning of the penitentiary institutions, the less would be the intensity of the impact, and of the level of change.
- The synergy of the basic elements of ECOR and of all that is "invisible" for those involved, and for the researchers, should not be underestimated or excluded from the application of the model.
- At this stage the notion of the impact and the change occurring as a result of participation in an ECOR community is based on a rather short period of research. The answers to the question "what works" are mainly results of the 10-year history of COR in Europe, observations and research outside Europe, and data from on-going research, based on meta-analysis.
- The model of change should continue to be the subject of descriptions and research, so that additional information may be gleaned on the impact of individual elements and factors provoking the change.

# Part 4 – ECOR and modern tendencies in penal practice

With a view of describing in a precise and correct way what an ECOR site is, as an adaptation of the APAC methodology in the European penal, social, cultural and ‘scientific’ context, we shall proceed from three basic perspectives: current challenges in the treatment of the offenders; restorative practices, and; alternatives to imprisonment.

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## 1.12 Punishment and Justice - some systemic problems that may be resolved when ECOR is applied.

In their report of the ECOR Piloting, Lanskey and Wilson point to one of the challenges faced by rehabilitation programmes – that is the fact that they are not a single intervention, but a series of ‘micromechanisms of change’ Tendencies, that could be observed over the last few decades demonstrate, that:

1) Understanding of justice and the meaning of punishment

began to acquire new content, and in this sense it is a dynamic concept.

2) In spite of the constant search for ways to influence offenders, and to reduce the levels of recidivism, there is not a great deal of best practice in the “conventional/”traditional” prisons. Their effectiveness remains invisible, the level of recidivism is stagnant, the prison population is growing.

3) In response to the “appearance” in the justice domain of new types of crime, contemporary penology applies ever more differentiated sanctions/punishments, while searching for just and effective solutions, striving for achievement in both political and economic areas at individual and public levels.

4) The highest achievement in this search, is the effort - and the sustainable tendency - to make the prison more humane. This is, to some extent, reflected in the existing and applied Transnational and European

standards and requirements, regulation and documents for the implementation of humane treatment of convicted and respect for their human rights.

5) On the other hand, unlike the abolitionist call for “a world without prisons”, which includes a tendency to apply greater measures outside of prisons - called alternatives to prison.

As reduced budgets squeeze the provision of programmes for prisoners it becomes more important to find programmes/treatments that 'work'

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*“The increasing use of imprisonment tends to remove punishment from public awareness leading to a major reduction in empathetic response to offenders (Cunneen et al., 2013; Garland, 1991). Simultaneously the punitive aims of incarceration have strengthened as the rehabilitative goals have decreased (Cunneen et al., 2013).*

*Despite the economic constraints of the last decade, more people are being locked up. Risk aversion, risk assessment, and ‘just deserts’ (von Hirsch & Maher, 2004) dictate penal policy and prison services must accommodate those sent into their care. The economical paradox means that expensive carceral warehousing is increasing as cheaper, arguably more effective, community sanctions reduce (Cunneen, 2013). Within this context rehabilitating prisoners becomes more cost-driven and inclined to make ‘one size fit all’ (Raynor, 2004)”.*<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Piloting Report, Margaret Wilson and Caroline Lanskey, University of Cambridge, November 2015

### **How does the ECOR model fares among those systemic challenges?**

In spite of the fact that data from Europe are based predominantly on non-official observations by experts and volunteers working on applying APAC methodology, over the last 10 years, and on the recent - and very short-term - observations of the research team of Wilson and Lanskey<sup>22</sup> of the University of Cambridge, they demonstrate the following:

(1) Organisations employing ECOR have a high level of economic independence from the national prison system. These organisations apply the programmes without interruption, in spite of limited funding, or even during periods when no funding was available.<sup>23</sup>

(2) Rehabilitation and restoration of the offender is the primary task of ECOR, leading to the

implementation of various activities and attracting a high number of specialists and volunteers to work with the members of the communities of restoration, thus securing an intensive and long-term work on individual cases.

(3) ECOR is a long-term programme, which encompasses the individual needs of offenders, their families, and the local communities, irrespective of where it is being implemented - in prison or outside. As we saw in Table 2.1, where some data are presented for the individual communities, the average stay of the prisoner within an ECOR programme is between 9 to 28 months.

(4) ECOR sites correspond to the requirements determined by international standards and by European rules and guidelines, concerning respect for human rights<sup>24</sup>, humane attitude and

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<sup>22</sup> Two years' work on the project with observations on the elaboration of the strategies on the implementation of the methodology, collection of data on the history of APAC in Europe, and only 5 months of piloting the final adaptation and creation of an ECOR model.

<sup>23</sup> In Bulgaria the adaptation of APAC took place in stages over the years, with partial funding from Open Society in

2003, and two co-funding from the MATRA CAP program of the embassy of the Netherlands in Sofia, in 2006 and 2009 accordingly. The total duration of the above-mentioned funding was of 36 months in total for the period 2003. The program functioned without interruptions over the whole period.

<sup>24</sup> If we return to the basic elements of APAC methodology, one could see how

exclusion of torture of any kind. ECOR sites provide living conditions that are healthy and worthy of human beings, and an environment conducive to resocialisation and education, thus securing an opportunity for realisation of the hopes and potential of each offender<sup>25</sup>.

(4) Low levels of recidivism compared to the rest of the prison population. The level of recidivism, observed by the teams applying APAC methodology in Europe before ECOR project is shown in Table 4.1.

On the basis of the quoted research, and the history of APAC expansion around the world, including Europe, we could suppose, that the discrepancy in the desired effectiveness of rehabilitation of prisoners as seen by the legislature, and by society, will generate an ever stronger reaction in the community in the search of “what works” in the context “prison”. This will lead to greater participation of the local communities in the search of effective solutions, while the Legislator will turn to the search of alternatives to prison.

***Table 4.1: ECOR activities and some effects to the personality***

Data from the Seehaus since its inception show that between 2003 and 2013, 60% of young people completed the programme and 99% of those young men secured employment or a trade apprenticeship. Recidivism for this group has been around 25% three years after release. This rate is substantially lower than the recidivism rate for young people sentenced to custody in Baden-Württemberg but is likely to be influenced by the selection effects of recruitment onto the programme, a pre-requisite of which is to demonstrate a willingness to change.

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close they are to these recommendations. There is no contradiction, to the contrary, they are in harmony, and do not require any efforts of the team doing ECOR to do some sort of synchronization.

<sup>25</sup> International Pact on Civic and Political rights, Article 10, point 1, the

Article 10, point 3, first sentence. General commentary 21, para. 4, ECHR, Kudla v. Poland, Appl. No. 30210/96, Judgement from October 2000, para 94. Basic principles for treatment of offenders, Article 2. European Rules of Imprisonment, Rules 77-82.

From 2003 to 2005, participants in the program Adaptation Environment in Sofia prison, with first time sentencing, with data observable until 2009. For those who went through all stages of the program, the level of recidivism is under 5%. From 2006 to 2011, participants in the program Adaptation Environments in the prison of Vratza, for offenders with multiple sentences, with data observable through 2012 - level of recidivism under 10%.<sup>26</sup>

According to data of the IFS (Latvia) between 1999 and 2015 in the aftercare program “Ratnieki” participated 580 ex-prisoners. 83% of them successfully completed the program and have been employed. 17% were dismissed for violations. Among those who completed the programme, fewer than 20% returned to prison again during the following 16 years.

Programme Mirijam in the women prison in Riga. There is no system of observation of recidivism, but as Mirijam is applied in the only women prison in the country, the prison administration has determined, that the level of recidivism is considerably lower for those who have attended the program, than among the general prison population. No concrete data have been presented, but the very fact that the community exists for many years speaks of result in the reduction of recidivism area.

## 1.13 ECOR and Restorative Practices

During the course of the 1970s, something important happened within the criminal justice domain concerning punitive measures as alternatives to the deprivation of freedom – these were the first examples of the application of Restorative Justice , and were the first steps towards	the elaboration of the APAC methodology. Starting from North America the concept and the philosophy of this new understanding of justice spread quickly and created precedents in Australia and New Zealand, despite frequent public opposition. In Europe
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<sup>26</sup> The data presented here are collected only by the executive team of the ECOR Model. In no way are they based on data of the Ministry of Justice or another national directorate or agency. It is especially difficult to assess the impact and measure the levels of recidivism after the introduction of new regional approach to serving custodial sentences in Bulgaria (2008-2009).



Restorative Justice has its supporters, who made their contribution to the development of this new view of the criminal justice world and its gradual application in almost all the areas of the law, and with the understanding of treatment of offenders with a view of their rehabilitation, transformation, and care for the needs of victims of crime, and of the community as a whole.

Restorative Justice focuses on the harmful effect of offenders' actions and actively involves victims, offenders and communities in the process of reparation and rehabilitation. People do not necessarily mean the same thing when they speak of restorative justice or describe particular programmes or interventions as restorative. For instance, some experts take the position that we could speak of Restorative Justice and practices only when there is a meeting, direct restitution, and eventual reconciliation (without this being the ultimate goal) between the offender and the victim. Others consider as Restorative Justice Practice any care for anyone affected by the criminal behaviour, whether direct participants in the

conflict/broken relationship, or suffered or caused damages to the other side. The continuum of practices and definitions is rather large for us to try to dwell on it. For the purposes of the current description we shall just touch on the main issues, which are of interest to Restorative Justice, the key principles for development of values, which guide Restorative Justice in implementing its understanding of justice, and how all this relates to the ECOR model. These are presented in Table 4.2.

Practically speaking, what is really important for applying Restorative Justice is the possibility of a “meeting”, even an indirect one between the real participants in the broken relationship. Restorative Justice offers treatment to all concerned, and this is where its value lies, both for the individual/subjective understanding of justice, as well as for the societal/communal understanding of justice.

Those applying the ECOR model are not immune to the discussion on whether Communities of Restoration are pure expression of Restorative Justice, or rather a practical application of Restorative Justice, based on the principles of Restorative Justice,

without defining it strictly as  
totally stemming from it.

**Table 4.2: Restorative Justice in ECOR**

<i>Main issues of RJ</i>	<i>Basic values of RJ</i>	<i>Basic principles in applying RJ for achieving a systemic reform<sup>27</sup></i>
Who was hurt/ Who suffered damages?	Each person is valuable.	Justice requires that we work to heal victims, offenders and communities injured by crime
What does this person need?	Each person needs to be respected, heard and understood. Each person deserves to be treated justly.	
Who should be involved in order to satisfy his/her needs?	Each person is capable of change and correction/treatment if his/her needs are met.  Justice requires correction and treatment of persons and of the relations among them.	Victims, offenders and communities should have the opportunity for active involvement in the justice process as early and as fully as they wish
What is the best way to repair the damages in the case and to meet the needs of the sides?	People create justice together	Government should maintain a just order; the community should build a just peace

<sup>27</sup> Restoring Justice. An introduction to Restorative Justice pg. 43

Table 4.3 outlines the perspectives of those managing existing ECOR sites on the extent to which ECOR reflects Restorative Justice or Restorative Practices. It shows that there are nuances in the understanding of how much, and in what ways, the ECOR model resembles the philosophy of Restorative Justice.

**Table 4.1: ECOR activities and some effects to the personality**

**Tobias Merckle, leader of the Seehaus at Leonberg in Germany:** *“ECOR sites are not automatically Restorative Justice sites. In Seehaus we implement Restorative Justice on different levels (e.g. victim empathy programme, Sycamore Tree Project/ Victim-Offender Dialogues, community service as restoration towards the community, restorative dialogues between participants when problems arise, ....). Personally I would suggest to every ECOR programme to implement Restorative Justice principles.”*

**Jessica Bruere manager of the ECOR sites of Blue Cross:** *“During processing their crime, we talk about the victims and we are trying to generate an empathy with the offender and to bring out an awareness of the consequences experienced by the victim and its environment.”*

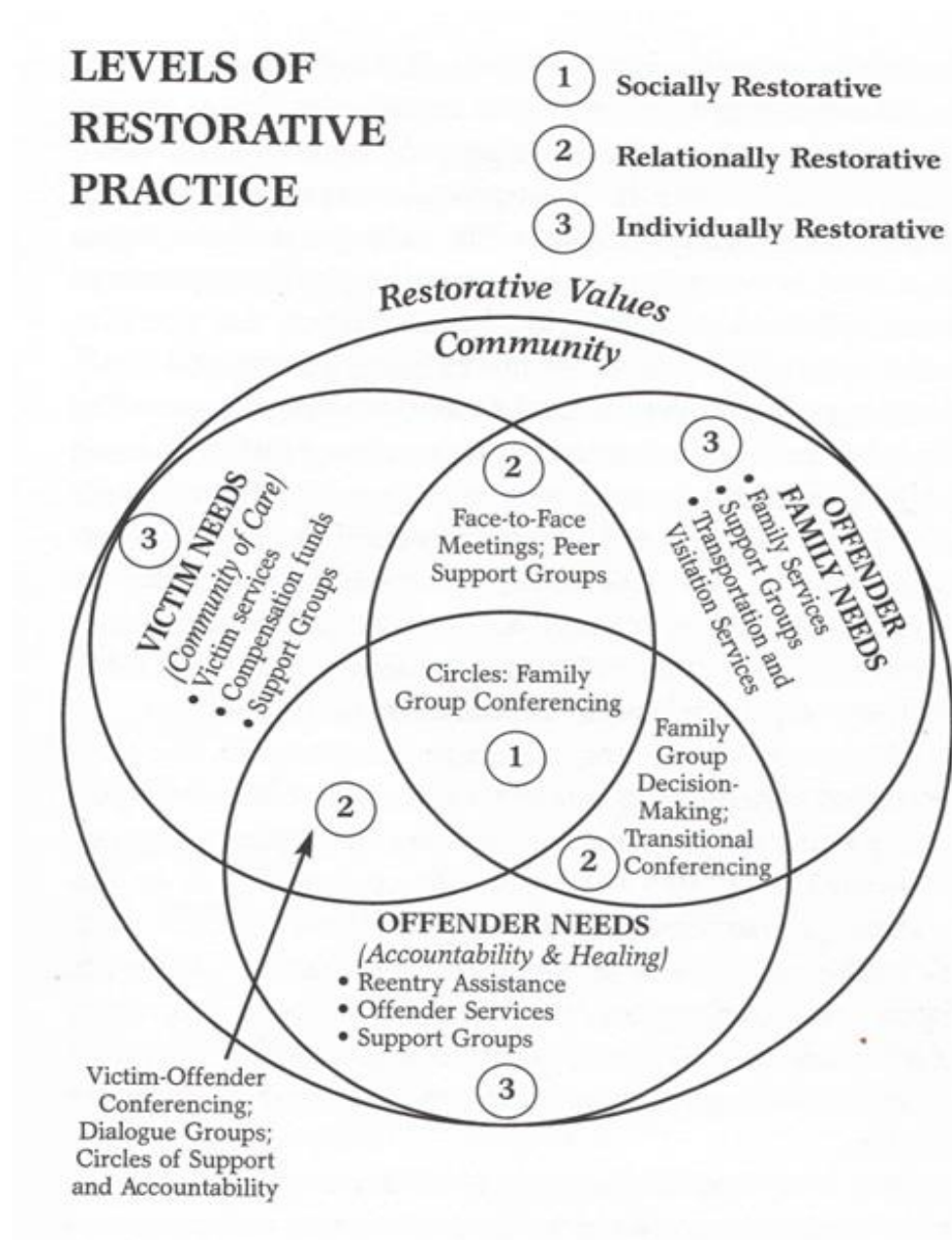
**Yuri Kapustin, leader of the ECOR site Ratniecki, Latvia:** *“The “Integration for Society” NGO applies RJ elements in their activities. Apart from working with ex-prisoners at “Ratnieki”, our branch – “Centre for Victims Support” trains and certifies negotiators or intermediaries between a criminal and a victim”.*

**Elena Evstatieva, Leader of the ECOR Adaptation Environment, applied in Vratza Prison, Bulgaria.** *“The ECOR model is a practice of the Restorative Justice in the prison, as it responds to the needs of a part of those affected by crime, namely the perpetrators of crime and their families. ECOR assists the offenders in the sense of not being victimized in the prison, as well as to be “treated”, and to assume responsibility, both for past and for future actions.”*

If we use as illustration a figure on the existing practices of Restorative Justice and the levels of their impact from the book of Barb Toews “RJ for people in prison”, we could see, that all the ECOR sites could be considered as Restorative Justice practices,

but only in the sense of level of impact, which they have on particular aspects, and also to what extent and how they meet the needs of those affected by crime, and the community at large.

Figure 4.1: Levels of implementation of restorative practices.



Indeed, the ECOR Model could be defined as indicator of a Restorative Justice, currently focused on the needs of the offenders and their families, but with potential to expand its restorative function upon the victims of crime and the

community at large. Of course with the caveat, that it would not be always possible to approach in a restorative manner the issues of restitution, or broken relationships, or at least not at any price.

## 1.14 ECOR as an Alternative to Detention

The search for an alternative to the sanction “prison term” is a continuation of the search for answers to the question “what works and for whom”, an issue that attracts increasing attention in penology, and penitentiary theory and practice. One of the challenges of this lively discussion is the unified understanding, explanation, and definition of “alternative sanction”. It's an extremely complicated process, given the different legal cultures, practices, and traditions, and also the different tempos of introduction and development. This complicates the formation of the common European framework. Therefore, when we define the ECOR model as alternative to traditional detention we need to take into account three

perspectives: (1) the one of the Legislator and the legal framework, which harmonizes the national legislation in the EU countries; (2) the perspective of the offender and his understanding of a less harsh intrusion into his life and rights, and; (3) the perspective of those who apply the ECOR model

### **Definition of alternative sanctions of deprivation of freedom**

In the Framework decision of the Council - 2008/947/PVR, of 27th November 2008, concerning the implementation of the principle of mutual recognition of court decisions, and decisions on probation, with a view of oversight of probationary measures and

alternative sanctions, the latter are defined as “sanction, other than a custodial sentence, a measure involving deprivation of liberty or a financial penalty, imposing an obligation or instruction”. This leads directly to a wide overlapping of the term “community sanctions and measures”, and the term “sanctions without deprivation of freedom”. The community sanctions and measures envisage to keep the offender in the community and impose some restrictions on freedom through conditions and/or obligations, but not deprivation of freedom. This definition includes measures, taken before or instead of a decision for imposing a punitive sanction, as well as the ways of execution of the punishment” deprivation of freedom outside of prison. Alternative sanctions in this sense have been introduced in all the member states of the European Union. The experience, however, point of

view of the necessary conditions for their application, the responsibilities of the offenders, and the area of application is different, depending on the country.<sup>28</sup>

If we review the national legislation of the countries where ECOR is being applied, we shall see, that only in Germany is ECOR possible as an alternative to the traditional deprivation of freedom. In Latvia there is the possibility of community service without imprisonment, but with electronic monitoring - this alternative to detention is stipulated in the law<sup>29</sup>, as well as in the section on juvenile delinquency<sup>30</sup>. In the other countries where the ECOR model is applied, we see just a good description in order to distinguish the specificity of the model from the traditional typical treatment of sentenced prisoners in the respective national system. Even if from the point of view of practitioners, the second approach is good

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<sup>28</sup> „Punishment in Freedom: Possible alternatives to prison in the European Union” Christine M. Grebesch, Sven - U. Burkhart, Research paper

<sup>29</sup> The state of Brandenburg is the first state in Germany, where since 2013, the placement of prisoners in group homes,

in Brandenburg Penal Law - BbgJVollzG §23 “Wohngruppe enforcement”, section (4). §23, section (4) Suitable prisoners are to be accommodated in group homes.

enough, the lack of unified definition of alternative sanctions to the deprivation of freedom may lead to confusion and misunderstanding when describing the ECOR model<sup>31</sup>. In spite of this, those who apply the model, describe it as alternative to traditional detention.

If we follow the review of Grebesch and Burkhardt of the European decisions and framework, we shall see that in the understanding and analysis of the “alternative measures” in different countries, they classify the measures in respect to the stage at which they are applied in relation to the sanction “custodial sentence”.

As such, we shall be able to distinguish “entry” and “exit” measures, and measure entering into force during the serving of the sentence of the offender:

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<sup>31</sup> Outside of its application to former prisoners, as support to their process of re-integration in the post-penitentiary period.

<sup>32</sup> In English – day fine A fine based on the daily income of the person to be sanctioned. This legal figure is not applied everywhere.

The “**entry**” measures are imposed before the sentenced offender has been sent to prison to serve his term - probation or fines<sup>32</sup>. Conditional “deprivation of liberty”, as imposed by a judgment/court decision

The “**exit**” measures are used after liberation. A typical example is the conditional release before the term imposed by the court.<sup>33</sup> Again, the decisions for their application is taken by the court.

The **alternatives entering into force during the serving of the sentence**, are more difficult to be distinguished and defined as such. As Grebesch and Burkhardt<sup>34</sup> note, they may include “transfer to another location outside the prison, for example placement at a psychiatric hospital, or some kind of therapeutic centre, or serving the sentence in a special regime inside the penitentiary system,

<sup>33</sup> The measure could be modifying only with another court decision stating the conditional release and specifying whether it will be accompanied by a probation measure.

<sup>34</sup> It's another excerpt from “Punishment in Freedom”, Christine M. Grebesch, Sven -, U. Burkhardt, Research paper

like open type prison hostel, therapeutic centre, etc.” In this case the alternative of the punishment is not a sanction to freedom, but rather transfer to an institution of closed type, which is not prison per se. Then practically, the transfer from one type of prison to another type of prison is an alternative, in as much as this may represent less of an intrusion in the private life and the rights of the respective person. Moreover, in some national legislation this is a right, that any prisoner could earn after a fixed minimum of the sentence has been served, even if it's not automatic.<sup>35</sup>

In Bulgaria for instance (just same legislations exist in Latvia) such transfers apply to all the prisoners, with the exception of those with a sentence “for life without parole”. In the Law on execution of sentences it is defined as “earning the right to a change in regime and/or the accompanying transfer to a prison hostel of closed or open type”. Thus the transfer from a highly controlled and restrictive

environment gradually, along with the reduction of time to serve under their sentence, could move to a regime with less intrusion and possibilities for taking part in of different types inside the prison, or outside it. This represents possibilities for planning the serving of the sentence “deprivation of freedom” and the related rehabilitation measures - the gradual move from “very strict” to “strict” regime to a more general and lighter regime, which determines the level of isolation of the prisoner and his access to rehabilitation activities inside and outside prison

It should be stressed as well, that unlike the “entry” and the “exit” alternative sanctions, the decisions on the “in prison” alternative sanctions are made by the prison administration.

According to the very brief description of the alternative sanctions, depending on the stage they are applied relative to the sanction “custodial sentence”, one could see, that the ECOR model could be structured in such a way that it

prisoner, and the progress made in his rehabilitation.

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<sup>35</sup> The prison administration may decline the application of this right in connection with the behaviour of the



accommodates both alternatives applied inside the prison, as well as, an “exit” sanction. This is the case of the ECOR site realised by the NGO Integration for Society in Latvia. According to data made available by its leader Yuri Kapustin, the ECOR site accommodates not only released prisoners, but also those who are on conditional release, placed on probation by court decision.

In as much as the Legislator describes the concrete forms of alternative sanctions, entering into force during the serving of the custodial sentence, it is only ECOR Seehaus that could be directly defined as punishment in freedom sanction, described as “prison in free form” in the legislation on juvenile delinquency of the German province of Baden-Württemberg. The ECOR sites in Hungary and Bulgaria fall into the category “alternative to traditional

detention”, and are considered as such by the staff, and by the prisoners, in the sense of lesser intrusion in their private life, and securing better access to the local community, to outside visitors, and rehabilitation measures, in comparison with the general prison population in the same category in terms of regime and type of prison. From legal point of view, however, in the view of both legislations, they are not considered alternatives sanctions<sup>36</sup> per se. There is a potential for applying them as punishment in freedom sanction<sup>37</sup>, if the legislator would create such a legal possibility.

The ECOR developed by Blue Cross, Germany, falls under the above definition, however in the German legislation the therapy of dependencies could be calculated as part of the custodial sentence, and in this sense is different type of prison term<sup>38</sup>.

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<sup>36</sup> The legal foundation of their creation and the partnership relations between prison and NGO's is the need for specialized rehabilitation programs in the prisons, including with participation of NGO's and the community.

<sup>37</sup> Actually, in the Bulgarian laws there is no definition of the sanction punishment in freedom. We could consider as such only the suspended

sentences, the probation, and the conditional release. All other practices are existing and applied informally without being integrated into the national legislation, in spite of the fact, that there are recommendations of the European Union in that matter.

<sup>38</sup> Every day of treatment is counted as serving a custodial sentence, butt only up to two thirds of the sentence.

This could be taken into account when considering to drop the case, or in replacement of a custodial sentence of two years, or another sentence with two years to serve. In this sense, even if the ECOR Brandenburg and Baden-Württemberg, are not alternatives in the sense of punishment in freedom, but could be applied and developed as such, if the legislation decides to create such a possibility.

We could observe how the national legislation influences the development of alternative sanctions “punishment in freedom”, including also the potential for development of the ECOR model as alternative sanction. In spite of the fact that by its origin it is closely connected to the vision of changing the prison into space of transformation of the person, its adaptation to the European context opens a multitude of perspectives for its application at different stages of the custodial sentence or as punishment in

freedom sanction, which is especially suitable for young offenders, for those on conditional release<sup>39</sup> on probation, or for offenders undergoing dependency therapy.

It should be stressed, that we focused above mostly on the punishment in freedom sanctions, which replace the custodial sentence/or contain a form of custodial sentence, but are considered alternative because of a delay in entering into force of the sentence, its partial suspending, and alternative form of custodial sentence in the sense of restrictions of personal freedom, level of intrusion, and access to outside experts, community, and rehabilitation measures, defined by us as alternative to traditional detention, or different type of a custodial sentence.

There are, however, measures, dispositions, and sanctions, whose execution leads to a decision to drop the case, or to

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<sup>39</sup> In some countries having a house and family, education, and possibilities to find a job, are taken into account when considering proposal for conditional release, as well as, when preparing an evaluation of the risk of recidivism. In this sense ECOR is rather suitable for

prisoners, whose risk estimate increases because of those indicators. Placing them in a Community of Restoration may be considered as a factor reducing the risk until the time of securing possibilities for autonomous functioning of the person.

replace the effective sentence, due to the implementation of the court's dispositions<sup>40</sup>, in most of the cases those are the Restorative Justice practices, described in the preceding part of the current chapter.

In as much as ECOR applies Restorative Justice practices, this proves its applicability at the different stages of serving a custodial sentence, including as

its alternative. This leads to rethinking of the custodial sentence and the participation of its traditional agents in its execution - offender - court-penitentiary institution. The community is now involved as an interested party in the process of rehabilitation and transformation of the convicts, and thus challenges the persons, the institution, and the communities to change also.

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<sup>40</sup> For instance, “Article 46a of the Penal Code of Germany considers the mediation “victim-offender” as an out of court procedure, which serves as reason for lighter sentence. The court may even drop the case and let the offender free, if it's less than one year or up to 360 days

of pecuniary fine.” Data from “Punishment in Freedom: possibilities for alternatives to prison in the European Union” , Grebesch and Burkhart

## Chapter Summary

- The ECOR model could be defined as the most-positive way in fighting crime - not just locking up and serving the sentence but creation of conditions for change and for meeting the needs of the offender, thus reducing the number of those affected by crime in the future.
- Even if for the time being the impact on the levels of recidivism is evaluated mostly by the people applying the model, the data from the research on piloting the model, as well as the comparison with meta-analysis from other projects, being implemented at this time, indicate that ECOR is a model, which brings the level of recidivism down to the level of between 10 to 25 %.
- ECOR sites are built in such a way, that they respond not only to the needs of the offender, but also in a way to the penitentiary system, in areas like reducing overpopulation in the prisons, humanizing further the prisons in Europe, and the efforts to better observe the rights of the convicts.
- The ECOR model intertwines naturally with two of the trendy topics in modern penology, namely rethinking the entire philosophy of justice, reflected in the ever faster expansion of Restorative Justice Practices in Europe, and looking for possibilities to have the imposed sentences to be served in the community and under certain supervision, thus responding to both needs of society - security and justice. Balance, which is extremely difficult to achieve.

# Part 5 – Practical issues in applying the ECOR model

On reading this manual – and indeed on deciding to set up and run an ECOR-site – it is critical to be consciously aware of context and local conditions.

This manual provides a set of core theoretical and methodological principles for running an ECOR-site, but these principles require well-planned and systematic adaptation to local context.

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## 1.15 Importance of Context

On reading this manual – and indeed on deciding to set up and run an ECOR-site – it is critical to be consciously aware of context and local conditions.

This manual provides a set of core theoretical and methodological principles for running an ECOR-site, but these principles require well-planned and systematic adaptation to local context. ECOR sites can vary in their approach, and this strongly reflects the local conditions relating to:

**Regime and security** affect the independence of the ECOR site and thus influences several other aspects of the ECOR model, such as the profile of the participants in the programme, their legal status at the time of applying for joining the program, the level of isolation of the ECOR site from the rest of the prison population and from the daily timetable of the institution, the ease of access of external experts/volunteers, and the intensity of the programme. Thus the higher the security

regime and the legal status of the convict connected to it, the more the institution will determine the application of the programme.

**Stage of detention** – whether it takes place in prison, in after-care or in transition. The experience of the APAC methodology, especially in Brazil, demonstrates, that it is applicable at any type of regime, prison type, and also at any period of serving the sentence. This becomes possible through careful separation of programme activities according to the possibilities permitted for their application by the respective level of security. In regimes of high security with limited possibilities for mixing up the inmates and doing group tasks, the participants in APAC, on top of living in separate quarters, could work, have a group or individual training, at given time slots, and have activities in the area of personal growth and self-worth, spiritual or religious activities.

In less restrictive regimes of serving the sentence, there are changes in the **intensity and the territory** where the activities take place, the intensity of

participation of external experts, and family of the inmates, and the intensity of local community participation. The standard visits for semi-open, and open type prisons grow into prolonged visits and “free” visits. On the other hand, there are increased possibilities for work within the ECOR programme with lower levels of intrusion on the part of the prison administration. Moving the members of the community to special units of ECOR, where open or semi-open types of regime offers possibilities for inmates to take care of themselves and their daily needs, and helps them to contribute to the community life in the unit. If we consider the methodology in the European context, we could say that the responsibilities of the institution are gradually transferred to the participants themselves.

**Faith engagement and secular politics** – affecting the ‘religious’ input. This characteristic of the context depends largely on the legislation in each individual country, and how the institution interprets and accepts this element of the model. Generally, the religious needs of prisoners

are taken care of as part of their inalienable rights. The institution secures a religious personality and supervises the activities, in as much as they depend on the willingness of the prisoner, and the obligation to provide religious care to all the prisoners, who so desire. In this sense, in the context of prison, and even outside it, the role of the spiritual element is well described. If its presence in the model is kept within the framework of willingness of the offenders and the provisions of the law, it is viewed in harmony with the context of the prison, especially when those who implement the model do not interpret the whole individual and community transformation only through this element.

### **Some basic contextual issues**

The ECOR model piloted in the European context offers several examples of units operating in different security regimes. One could clearly see the inter-dependency, and the possibilities

offered by the respective type of regime.

Table 5.1 presents some of the issues that have been found to be relevant for existing ECOR programmes.

It is important to note, for the sake of those who would be applying the model, and those interested in its growth and development, that the application in different contexts results in different indicators, such as the different numbers of external specialists. The more detached the ECOR site is from the prison or other institution, the bigger the number of volunteers and experts will be needed to cover all the aspects of the programme as it is piloted here applying all the activities, aimed at the transformation of the personality and its restoration in the Community. If the government or the local authorities are not supporting in some way this model<sup>41</sup>, the respective organisation should plan carefully and to secure state

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<sup>41</sup> In Germany, for instance, assigning a young prisoner to Seehouse as alternative to prison, means securing the funds for the execution of his

sentence there. In Latvia, the ECOR site of Integration for Society is getting some support from the municipality of Riga.

or public support for the development of ECOR.

On the other hand, whether ECOR is being developed in a closed type or open type prison, a sizeable part of the efforts of the executive team realising the project will be turned towards training, dissemination, and integration of the values of the model, into the values of the host-institution, so that the life of the Community of Restoration life and activities do not confront in any way with the life of the institution.

### **Examining the religious or secular perspective of the model**

An ECOR site on the openly faith-based end of the continuum will revolve heavily around an individual's relationship to faith, as long as this medium is used to highlight the importance of love, respect, dignity, self-worth and forgiveness, which are corner stones to the success of ECOR-based sites.

An ECOR site on the transparently secular end of the continuum will revolve heavily around the individual's relationship with other people in

their environment such as peer groups, families and perhaps even victims, as well as with institutional entities such as education, employment or volunteer work. Again, the focus on love, respect, dignity, self-worth and forgiveness must be central to any programme, and these can be equally framed in secular terms.

Few ECOR sites will find themselves at either of these extremes, but at varying locations along this continuum. Whilst other conditions, such as social norms and acceptance, offender types, the potential to involve victims in restorative justice approaches, and simple practical restraints are also key in defining how an ECOR site will be set up and run, the three factors outlined above will be behind the most significant variations in the identity of ECOR sites. Programme managers are encouraged to select, in conjunction and cooperation with key decision makers, those aspects of the ECOR principles which will work in their operating context.



**Table 5.1: Contextual issues affecting the application of ECOR programmes**

<b>Type of Programme</b>	<b>Offering Work Activities</b>	<b>Regime and Security Issues</b>	<b>Access to external experts and volunteers</b>
Work with prisoners sentenced to closed regime in a high security prison (PF Hungary in Tiszaöki - Maximum Security Prison Emleklap and Pálhalmi Mélykút prison; Blue Cross in Brandenburg prison and Luckau-Duben prison; PF Latvia ECOR Mirijam in Ilguciems prison in Riga)	Work in the prison with mixing up with the rest of the prison population – 20-40% of the time	Institutional rhythm and security procedures. Takes from 10% to 19% of the time of the program. It includes obligatory controls, outside time, meals fixed time, and other institutional tasks, carried out by the prison staff in the treatment of offenders.	Fixed in time slots, totally dependent on the regime of the prison. Another particularity in case of high security prisons is that the time needed for the visit and work with the offenders increases because of the more complex access procedures to the ECOR site
Work with prisoners in an open regime (ECOR “Adaptation Environment”, Bulgaria)	Takes place outside the prison without mixing up with the rest of the prison population. The time is determined according to the assigned tasks.	Institutional regime and procedures - takes from 30 minutes to 1 hour per day.	Volunteer access is made easier in terms of controls - personal belongings, documents, etc.
Work in the community (Seehaus, Germany)	It depends on the tasks and timetable of the Community.	The institutional regime here is replaced by the regime and timetable of the Community.	Here we could speak of access to the site of representatives of the prison in the form of supervision and control on the overall performance, behaviour, and legal status of offenders.
Aftercare (Integration for Society, Latvia)	In the same manner as in the case of Seehaus, there is a certain level of independence from the prison system. As to the access of experts and volunteers, it is replaced with securing the access of government and local offices, connected with the monitoring on the services offered by the Community to former prisoners, including some on conditional release.		

## 1.16 Cooperation between NGOs and Criminal Justice Authorities

### Setting the Foundations

After deciding in what context the ECOR model would be applied, the next important step is building up partnership relations with the official representatives of the government and public bodies, with a view of joint efforts in developing the model - secure its authorisation (and legitimisation), general support and, where necessary, financial backing. This may turn out not to be an easy process, and may require re-evaluating your initial concept of the ECOR programme you want to develop. It should be taken into account that the prison officials, probation service officers, and representatives of the local communities, know very well the context and the needs of prisoners, former prisoners, and their families, as well as the needs of reforms in the systems they represent, so that they may better respond to public interest and concerns. At the same time, they themselves will have doubts, connected to installing a new model for treatment of the prisoners and of former prisoners. On top of this

there will be institutional resistance, sometimes concerning the qualifications and skills of the external specialists for working with the target group. We need to react to all this respectfully and with readiness to listen to the experts and to the official representatives of the institutions with which we want to work for developing the model

### Approaching and Involving Key Decision Makers

The key thing to bear in mind is that you need an alliance between the key stakeholders – most critically the organisation implementing the ECOR site, and senior representatives of the prison administration – but other stakeholders such as ministerial officials, those responsible for education and skills in the prison, those responsible for religious support, those working in collaboration with probation services or others should play an active role within an ECOR committee.

ECOR developers need to create the conditions of trust, partnership and cooperation

between all stakeholders.

Partners should get to know one another, and progress should be made through joint meetings, joint design and development. A formal partnership agreement could be entered into outlining roles and responsibilities, fixing the sense of formal cooperation and obligation to one another.

Presenting ECOR to stakeholders is pivotal to its successful implementation. ECOR implementers should have extensive material available – both programmatic, such as this guidebook and the ECOR documentary, and evidence-based, including research and evaluation from reliable published sources in reputable places. Materials should where possible be made available in the local language<sup>42</sup>. Presenting ECOR to key decision makers as a proven and professional solution to offender rehabilitation and restoration will

help to provide the programme with credibility.

### **Promoting Institutional Ownership**

A starting point will be to understand and appreciate the values and objectives of decision makers. Bear in mind that ECOR has to fit into the existing system, and not the other way around. The virtuous objectives of the ECOR programme may not always align with political and institutional priorities, which in the public sector are often shaped by short-term budget-allocation mechanisms rather than long-term strategic goals. Thinking and planning in the public sector is widely influenced by the economic and political context. To create the foundations for an effective ECOR programme you should have a clear understanding of this context and of the bottom-line objectives of decision makers, and adapt your *realistic* vision for the programme

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<sup>42</sup> This manual is available in 5 languages. In addition to this, the research of Wilson & Lansky is available in English and German. There also 5 videos from Germany, Latvia, Hungary, Bulgaria. The literature referenced in the manual is in English, same as the materials and the statements during the final

conference of the project, which took place in February 2016 in Stuttgart. All the products of the project are available online at the site: <http://restorative-justice.eu/ecor/>

accordingly. Negotiations within the ECOR committee will give each stakeholder the opportunity to present their interests and work towards mutually agreeable solutions, but you should bear in mind the realistic prospects and restraints given the context you are working in.

An ECOR programme is designed to address a particular problem, however if your problem-definition is non-congruent with the institution's problem-definition, then it will be increasingly difficult to sell the idea of ECOR. Instead, try to understand how key-decision makers define the problems relating to imprisonment, rehabilitation and reintegration, victim support etc. Explore political manifestos and the relevant policy literature to identify what problems these decision makers are trying to solve, and what is important to them. Then you will need to shape your vision for ECOR as far as possible into this schema, and you will be prepared to demonstrate how ECOR can help them to achieve their goals. In no way we mean to replace the goals of the model, or to redirect its philosophy and its

overall approach towards the transformation of individuals into a life free of crime. We speak here about setting priorities and goals for the management and decision-makers. We speak here of careful analysis of the context, which will reveal what activities in a given system may be repeated by similar activities in the model. This way you could locate the model taking into account the needs of your partners. The analysis of previous experience of the institution in cooperating with NGOs, will guide you in understanding its preliminary readiness to go forward with your organisation in developing ECOR, or if the attitudes are negative then to concentrate on correcting them.

ECOR may be more effective if it can build upon values that are already accepted and built into the institution. For example, the prison may already accept and place a certain degree of value on strong volunteer collaboration and the concept of civil society cooperation or on the value of pastoral work with prisoners or on the role of chaplains. It will be easier to convince decision-makers to run a volunteer-led

programme if the concept of working with volunteers is already somehow present in their mental schema. Varying degrees of separation between church and state will impact the extent to which the role of religion is likely to encourage decision-makers or dissuade them. There needs to be a fundamental acceptance and agreement upon the basic values of the programme at an institutional level, and it is vital to consider these values, and to analyse them in depth.

The more support and input that ECOR has from senior decision makers at an early stage, the more successful and sustainable the programme is likely to be, since their ownership of the programme will be so much greater. Establishing a programme at the initiative of the prison administration, for example, may be more successful than a programme that is 'sold' to the prison administration at a later point. The key question for ECOR implementers is how to

plant the idea of ECOR within the institutional policy-making environment, so that it can grow, flourish and develop its roots within the institution, rather than be imported into the institution at a later stage.<sup>43</sup>

Amongst the decisions that must be made – and perhaps which can be included within a formal partnership agreement - are (i) the objectives of the programme (ii) the scope of the programme, i.e. how the objectives will be achieved, and (iii) the preconditions for the participation of (ex-) offenders in the ECOR programme.

### **Setting Objectives**

The ultimate objective of an ECOR programme is to prepare prisoners and former prisoners for a new life in the community through their participation in the programme. Once there is agreement with the prison administration and other key stakeholders on this objective, then you need to define the sub-

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<sup>43</sup> For instance, the ECOR program "Adaptation Environment" at its earliest and initial application in Sofia prison in 2003 was elaborated by a mixed team of PF Bulgaria and Main Directorate of

prisons (GDIN). Out of this cooperation were born the principles of collaboration on an APAC model, adapted to the Bulgarian environment at the time.

objectives of the individual programme.

Sub-objectives are those programmes or conditions that contribute to the achievement of the overall objective. The following could be an example of the sub-objectives – your

programme may have other objectives according to the values of the prison administration – but as an ECOR implementer you should negotiate with other stakeholders a programme that fulfils everybody's respective vision to the best possible extent.

## 1.17 Designing and Implementing a Programme

### Programme Scope and Elements

The scope of the programme defines the programme elements, and will depend on the objectives that have been agreed upon within the ECOR Committee<sup>44</sup>. For each element, you need to rationalise its connection to one or more of the programme objectives. The elements may include some of the following, taken from the ECOR

programme established by the Hungarian partner on the ECOR project – which is very closely related to domestic and international experience of APAC<sup>45</sup>. Your site may not have all of these elements and may be more distinct from the original APAC programme.

(1) The designation (and possible design or renovation) of separate living quarters (house or

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<sup>44</sup> In the example discussed in Chapter 2 of the Manual, the Consultative Council is established by representatives of the NGO and the prison where ECOR site will be located. The Council may be composed of different people in different contexts, for instance for an ECOR based in the community, representatives of the municipality, and of the probation service may be invited

to join. The variants may be different in view of the peculiarities of each case. What is important is to have official representatives of all partners.

<sup>45</sup> In the annexes to the Manual you could find the weekly program of all the piloted ECOR sites in different contexts, national and legislative peculiarities, and conditions in the prison systems.

apartment, or a designated wing or section the prison). (2) An agenda of activities such as community programmes or values programmes, at a time that does not conflict with other obligations in the prison regime. (3) The involvement of participants in productive work reflecting as best as possible the experience of work within the mainstream labour market. (4) The involvement of participants in the establishment and running of the ECOR site. (5) Time is set aside regularly for family visitation and – if possible –

participation in activities, helping to maintain relationships with family.

### **Preconditions for Participation**

The ECOR Committee will need to agree on who is eligible to participate in an ECOR programme (although final selection will be based upon preliminary assessment and reflection by the ECOR Committee). The preconditions for participation at existing ECOR programmes are outlined in Table 5.2

**Table 5.2: Preconditions for Programme Participation (Existing ECOR programmes)**

<b>ECOR Site / Country</b>	<b>Target Group</b>	<b>Participation Criteria</b>
PF Bulgaria "Adaptation Environment"	Male	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Voluntary</li> <li>2) Remaining portion of the sentence up to 5 years, if in high security or closed type</li> <li>3) Remaining portion of the sentence up to 3 years, if in general or semi-open regime</li> <li>4) Time left till release - max 5 years</li> <li>5) All types of offenders, except sexual offences and drugs dependencies.</li> <li>6) Recidivism risk must be no higher than medium.</li> <li>7) Not working or involved in another training programme.</li> <li>8) Level of schooling - 6 classed from primary school</li> <li>9) Non-Bulgarian nationals may apply; if he has sufficient Bulgarian language and literacy to participate in all programme elements.</li> </ol>
Seehaus, Germany "Juvenile prison in free form"	Young offenders (14-21)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Sexual offenders are not eligible.</li> <li>2) Voluntary application</li> <li>3) Who are not convicted of a serious offence which might present a risk to others in the community</li> <li>4) Sentenced to prison for around two years</li> </ol>
Blue Cross, Germany	Prisoners with drug	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) 1.Prospective participants must volunteer for the programme</li> </ol>

	addictions	2) 2. The person's criminal conviction must be related to drugs/alcohol use 3) The person has completed the Blue Cross foundation course: Addiction
"Integration in Society", Latvia	Ex-prisoners	There is no official referral system. Everyone who needs help and support is eligible
Miriam, Ilguciems prison in Riga, Latvia	Female	Open for women with any type of offending history
PF Hungary, Tiszaöki Maximum Security Prison Emleklap	Male	1) Voluntary participation 2) The men demonstrated a strong engagement for work 3) Education 4) Had close links with the family
PF Hungary, Pálhalmai Mélykút Prison	Female	1) Voluntary application 2) Demonstrated a willingness to change, 3) Who had strong family links and 4) A clear religious orientation.

Table 5.2 shows that some ECOR sites have rather detailed descriptions of the preliminary conditions required by the candidates for joining the Community, in some they are not so detailed. This is an important issue that deserves attention. The clear description of the profile of the acceptable participants offers you the following advantages for your future work:

(1) Transparency and clarity of the whole process for all interested parties: the target group, the partners and your team; (2) clear and well-founded answers to the applications, whether positive or negative, addressing both the candidates

and the partners; (3) minimising the possibilities for influencing the selection of the candidates  
Evaluation indicators - clearly measurable indicators for future evaluation of the individual change, which is the goal of the model; (4) saves time in the selection and in the organisation of the community, as well as in the subsequent entry of the participants.

The detailed description of the profile and the preliminary conditions, the reaching of agreement with you main partners and the verification of their credentials by ECOR Council all secures independence of the team working at the entry side of the programme.



The risk, however, of having a detailed description of the profile limits the circle of potential candidates<sup>46</sup>.

### **Designing and developing the residential site**

The living quarters of the Community of Restoration and how to organise the life there will depend on the context in which it will be realised. The primary condition is to seek maximum isolation from the rest of the prison population and its subculture. The minimum requirements are to secure possibility for communal life, for training and consultative process. It means at least one office for individual work, and one hall for group work. The cells should be up to the Minimal European standards for treatment of offenders. Having individual cell for everyone is not obligatory<sup>47</sup>,

but enough personal space and possibility for privacy and security should be secured. Different settings will be conducive to different conditions.

(1) Implementation of an ECOR programme in high security/closed type facilities: Usually only the minimum conditions described above apply<sup>48</sup>.

(2) Implementation of an ECOR programme in general/semi-open type of regime - on top of the minimal conditions, there could be a small kitchen, special space for family conferences and visits, of course within the limits drawn in the national legislation<sup>49</sup>.

(3) Implementation of an ECOR programme in low security, open

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<sup>46</sup> The examples of PF Bulgaria and of Seehaus demonstrate it. Of course, there are other factors probably, but the most often given answers are the lacks of suitable candidates. Both communities have vacant places and are not at capacity level planned for the pilot phase.

<sup>47</sup> Actually, it may not be possible in many of the penitentiary systems.

<sup>48</sup> In the pilot model in the framework of this project, three communities, implemented in high security prisons, correspond to those conditions - Blue Cross, PF Hungary, and Mirijam, Latvia.

<sup>49</sup> In the current project there is no COR, organized under that type of regime. PF Bulgaria did it under high security and a general regime as separate stages of preparation for entering the community, with total duration of 4 months.

type of regime<sup>50</sup> - the Community should be housed outside the prison. The kitchen block is obligatory. The members of the Community should be able to organise themselves their lives - from personal and collective hygiene to preparation of food, and responsibilities assigned to them according to their skills and stage in the serving of sentence. The members have the right to possess some limited amount of money, and they can buy things in the available shops. They are still subject to measures of security of the members of the Community, but this is greater control on possession of forbidden goods and substances.<sup>51</sup>

(4) Implementing ECOR programmes outside the prison - in addition to the above, there

could be a room for family visits, small workshops, which could serve for vocational training, or to produce some goods on order from the local community.<sup>52</sup>

In term of organisation of life in the community, everything resembles the Community of Restoration in open type regimes, apart from the check-ups and other controls carried out by prison staff. In the ECOR programme, the control for observing the rules is done by the personnel of the organisation, the volunteers, and the older members. This kind of monitoring is conducted in order to observe the rights of the prisoners, the changes in them, and the lack of infractions of the rules during their stay in the Community.

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<sup>50</sup> A good example of such type of COR is “Adaptation Environment”, implemented in the prison of Vratza, Bulgaria. For those 18 members of the Community there are 3 washing machines, refrigerators and freezers. There will be a computer training room soon. The family meetings take place in rooms for free visits, while the Family Group Conferences are organized in the Visitors Centre, which was built by PF Bulgaria several years ago.

<sup>51</sup> They take place morning and evening, according to the timetable of the rest of the prison population, while the latter according to prison rules or incidentally.

<sup>52</sup> The ECOR sites outside prison - Integration for Society and Seehaus have small woodworking workshops and for work on metal. COR Ratnieki has a small hothouse, the latter small stable for raising animals.

Taking into consideration the modalities of the different ECOR programmes in their different contexts, you need to decide, together with your partners, and in view of your capacity, where you should place the Community itself.

Point of view of securing the resources, placing it in the context of a prison is the least risky approach. There the implementation of the program will be focused on the planned activities, the work with the offenders, and the training of volunteers.

If your ECOR programme is outside prison, you will need a building, financial resource, specialists and volunteers to realise the program. In this sense, unless you have the financial support of the state, the local authorities, or/and other partners, you should be very careful in assessing the sustainability of ECOR outside prison, where all the basic needs of the prisoners are taken care of, and whether the risk is not too high.

Another point connected with the living conditions of the

offenders participating in an ECOR programme, is that they should be as similar as possible to the living conditions of the rest of the prison inmates (if the programme is conducted within the prison), or as similar as possible to the standard of life in the local community (if the programme is located outside the prison). If the conditions are seen as too good, and very different from the general level of the respective context, there is the risk of creating feelings of elitism either within the community, or amongst those outside of it – other prisoners, staff of the institution, and the local community.

On a personal level this may provoke a type of “nostalgia” after release for the well-arranged communal life. On the other hand, at the context level, there could be instances of resistance and sabotage of the ECOR activities. On the other extreme, there might be attempts to turn ECOR into a kind of window dressing of the institution. Both approaches are not positive for the sustainability of the model. The future of the Restorative community should be based on the understanding of the

profound sense and benefits of the personality change of the offender.

### **Recruiting participants**

The requirement of participants may take a number of forms and be achieved over a number of recruitment stages. The ECOR Committee can organise information events for potential participants where the features of the ECOR programme can be presented, along with the requirements and eligibility conditions. Surveys can be issued to potential participants.

The families of potential participants can also be invited to attend information events and can decide voluntarily if they wish to cooperate with the programme. The ECOR Committee can then make their selection according to preliminary assessment of the candidate and reflection on their potential within the program.

The procedure must be transparent, with criteria elaborated beforehand and available to all candidates, thus

ensuring transparency. The selection procedure should contain clearly measurable indicators that clearly indicate an individual's ELIGIBILITY, perhaps using a POINTS SYSTEM. It must not be an arbitrary process, and should contain some form of risk assessment. The data may be collected by the prison administration, by personal data submission of the candidate, and through personal interviews and tests <sup>53</sup> done by external specialists.

Whilst there will be limits on the number of participants who can take part in the full programme, it may be possible for a number of activities to take place on the ECOR site, which may be open to other interested (ex)-offenders, although risk assessment should always be conducted to limit the chance of potentially disruptive participants having a negative influence on the progress of ECOR participants.

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<sup>53</sup> The Bulgarian model contains three levels of the selection procedure

## 1.18 Recruiting Volunteers

Recruitment and selection of volunteers are important steps towards the realisation of ECOR programmes, since volunteers are one of the key elements contributing to the desired change. They are the positive role model to whom the personality of the offender is attached, and through whom the offender appropriates the new model of behaviour, and of life without crime. As your team prepares to launch the ECOR, it would be good to prepare a profile of volunteers, the same way as you prepare a profile of the participant in the community. Of course, one of the criteria for allowing a volunteer into the program, is their professional qualifications, however, without minimizing those, much attention should be paid to volunteer's maturity, and their ability to stand for the ethical code of the community, in spite of the resistance they would meet, both in the community and in the prison. It is particularly important to explore the following:

(1) Their motives for participation, their vision of the

prison and the prisoners.

Sometimes the enthusiasm and the readiness to take part in the project, are generated by romantic visions of the world of prisons, which are detached from reality. Such attitude perturbs the execution of the tasks of the volunteers and leads to problems in the performance of the team, and the relations with the members of the community, and with the partners.

(2) Prejudices and stereotypes - what is important here is the capability of the person to realise, that his/her own prejudices show in the behaviour, and may hurt the other, complicating the relationship. Naturally, we examine as well, the presence of prejudices and stereotypes, directly connected with the work with offenders and their families.

(3) Requirements of the partnering institutions - it would be good if the profile of the volunteers and the external specialists could be worked out jointly with the principal partnering institution. For instance, the penitentiary system

may have requirements for the external experts - no conviction of any type, no relatives serving a sentence in the prison the volunteer wants to serve, etc.

Another important aspect of work with a volunteer team is to do a functional analysis of the roles in the team, including the allocation of roles within the team, determining those which require long-term commitment, and those which do not, and identifying the risk to a programme from the departure of a person who cannot continue with the work in the project.

Considering at least these two factors, you will be able to determine those roles, which should be secured, and reduce the risk of their departure, even a temporary one, diminishing the power of delivery of the content. Other measures may be to determine some minimal number of paid staff positions. As for the volunteers, they could be assigned different roles according to the length of commitment,

type of activities, and professional competencies.

An example of another measure with a view of managing and planning the work of the team, is the entire system of joining, training, core activity, and termination of the relationship with the ECOR programme.

From the written application and submitting personal data, selection procedures, signing of a volunteer agreement or contract, containing a lot of details on the activities, including hours involved, and finally certificate issued to the volunteer, showing training, experiences, and competencies he or she has acquired.

Most well-established volunteer organisations have developed such models for work with volunteers. You should use the one which corresponds best to your organisational culture. If you already have such experience, check how applicable it is in the context of establishing an ECOR programme, and adapt it accordingly.

## 1.19 Ensuring the full participation of participants

### **What does it mean to engage in the programme?**

The entry into the programme could be viewed through its formal and informal parts.

The formal entry - after the candidate has been successfully selected, then assigned a place in the Community, has signed a contract on participation / declaration on observing the code of ethics / declaration on observing the rules and regulations of the community. All this could be accompanied by appointing of mentor, in the person of someone of the older members of the community, with the task to support the faster integration of the newcomer into the community.

The informal part of the entry starts already with a stage of information for the future candidates about the selection process, which becomes practically steps of confidence-building between the ECOR team and the potential participants. Because of this, the whole procedure should be transparent, and already at this stage the values and the code of

conduct, which is to be followed in the Community of

Restoration, could be observed.

In some cases, the introduction of the participants is preceded by preliminary preparations for entry, which is different for every ECOR site. In others, the integration and the confidence-building start only after the entry into the community.

You could choose each of those approaches for introduction and active integration of new participants into the programme. If you are not independent in the selection of participants, i.e. it has been mostly done by the prison administration, it is important to include a stage of preparation of entry, so that you could create contact and build up confidence, before they have entered the community as members. That way, the candidates will have the possibility to make an informed choice, having more information and details about the program, including the values, which are to be followed, and the team that is going to implement them. This

may lead to change of mind, but this should not trouble you, if this is to happen, it is better now rather than later.

Another important aspect to keep in mind is that even if you do nothing in terms of preparation and introduction, the group and the community as a whole will go through this process each and every time there are newcomers, and the Community, and the new member, will test the limits and validate the common values and norms each time. It is helpful to take this into account, especially in situations when members of the program attempt to replace the values of the community.

### **What are minimum standards?**

By accepting to participate in the programme, the participants formally accept to take part in all of its activities. Of course, later on there might be cases of resistance and attempts to refuse certain activities, or to be selective about them. One of the

ECOR sites decided that 30% of non-participation in activities without serious reason should lead to exclusion from the community<sup>54</sup>. You could set up your own standard or use one of the existing models. The one described here, demonstrates a rational mechanism, understandable and accepted by all sides<sup>55</sup>.

### **How can you motivate participants to engage in the programme?**

In the orientation stage we could often feel the need for additional efforts towards motivation of the members of the community. The resistances that occur, both on the part of the community towards the newcomer, or vice-versa, may discourage you from putting in any efforts. Still, it's good to overcome the doubts and carve out the space for a meeting of minds, that is the worldview of the new member and the “communal” views, norms, values. If you fail to pay attention, or worse you neglect the significance of this moment,

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<sup>54</sup> This minimum is determined on the basis of educational standards - absence of 30% in a study process, leads to lack of enough knowledge to appropriate the volume of knowledge needed.

<sup>55</sup> It should not be forgotten, that the members have all their day planned, including personal time and preferred activities, but there should not be overloading of activities.



may lead to departures of members, due to refusal of the member to demonstrate any efforts for integration, or rejection of the participant by the community. If the team does not show sensibility to these developments, they may become the norm in the community, and moreover, this may show a different message from the declared, that each person is important, and deserves equal treatment and respect. On the other hand, the attention and welcoming attitude, the respect for the emotions of each and every one, and striving to be understood, could become a strong factor of motivation, combined with meeting the needs of the individual.

**What happens when participants do not sufficiently engage in the programme?**

It was already mentioned, that non-participation of more than 30% in the planned activities, without real reasons, may lead to exclusion from the program.<sup>56</sup> A member may be excluded as well because of constant breaking of the rules, in spite of active

participation. This may signify, that the person has not integrated into the community and/or because of some traits of personality, needs to have limits imposed through sanctions. It is a sign that the person is not ready to participate in a life in community, where everybody has a significant role to play, and functions autonomously. Obviously, the person in question is not ready to apply. If you observe certain rhythm, frequency, intensity of resistance, and infractions of given rule, it is better to examine, together with the community, the reasons, and the reflection of this rule upon the participants. It is highly probable, that we have programmed or inserted a norm, which is not relevant to the community, or is not understood. It is not a question of retreating from rules and norms, rather it is the readiness to “hear” the members of the programme who know best their needs. Even if we are open and ready to consider a change in the rules, we still may make mistakes, especially when adapting the model to our context.

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<sup>56</sup> At least according to the Rules and Regulations of the ECOR project run by PF Bulgaria.

## 1.20 Checklists for Reflection and Quality Control

### Reflecting on and evaluating practical examples of ECOR implementation

In order to be useful, both to those who are starting now, and to those who are applying the model already, we shall use the list compiled by Maguire et al. (2010) of criteria associated with the successful running of any programme (cited by Losel, 2012:1003)<sup>57</sup>. The data presented in Table 5.3 below are gleaned

from the data collected for the preliminary research done by Wilson. There are zones which are rather sparsely described, or data are lacking, but this does not mean, that they were not covered. For more detailed information, you may turn to the respective organisations involved in the ECOR project. One way or other, the commentaries are written on the basis of available data.

**Table 5.3: Criteria for evaluation and quality control (Existing ECOR programmes)**

<i>List of Criteria</i>	<i>Seehaus (DE)</i>	<i>Blue Cross (DE)</i>	<i>PF Hungary (HU)</i>	<i>Integration for Society (LV)</i>	<i>PF Latvia (LV)</i>	<i>PF Bulgaria (PF)</i>
<b>Clear model of change</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

The model of change, described in the manual is being applied in all ECOR sites, each with its specifics. In some the model may be focused on a concrete need of the offenders, as is the case of Blue Cross - use of drugs and the connection of the dependency with the criminal behaviour, or the case of Integration for Society, where the lack of home and family support may be pointed as a common specific need. So, we have here homogeneous group of participants under a single criterion outside the sentence. Second, this determines the general direction of interventions, striving to achieve change in this common characteristic, viewed as reason for past infractions, and as a risk for future offences. The other ECORs deal with the criminal behaviour in general and work in all the zones of needs.

<sup>57</sup> They are used in the accreditation of rehabilitation programmes in England and Wales

<b>Thorough selection of participants</b>	✓	✓	✓	?	?	✓
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Table 5.2 clearly shows the criteria for admission of candidates in the respective ECOR sites. What is important to do, and to follow in the future, is to strive for maximum coverage of these criteria by objectively measurable indicators. Of course, to the extent possible. The preparatory work, descriptions, measurements at the entrance of the programme, will expand the possibilities for evaluation of the change later on, as well as to assist the definition of the concrete needs of each participant and work to be done with him. An interesting approach in Integration for Society. Latvia, where admission is granted on the basis of the urgency of the needs of the former prisoner, sometimes just after a phone conversation<sup>58</sup>.

It would be good to write the procedure for first contact, as well as the criteria for admission for those in need of help, for instance social conditions of the candidate, recommendation from the social services of the municipality, etc. If such a mechanism exists, but its action is just informal, then it is better to write it down and turn it into a procedure, accepted by the team and the partners.

<b>Targeting a range of dynamic risk factors</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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This criterion refers us again to the entrance of the programme and the procedures taking place at that stage. To have the model of change directed towards real and adequate needs of the offenders, a substantial evaluation of the risk factors influencing their criminal behaviour. One way to do it is described in detail by PF Bulgaria. The evaluation of the risk is done by the external specialist using the same instruments as the prison staff.<sup>59</sup> One of the entrance criteria is average or low risk for recidivism, evaluated by the prison staff, both as a subject, and as zones of risk. This is part of the preliminary documentary work for evaluating the eligibility of the candidate. At the entrance of the selection procedure, the team of PF Bulgaria studies the risk zones, employing the same instrument for measuring them. Besides, a test on thinking skills, and unstructured interview, are also part of the selection procedure. This gives the team a clear picture of future work, enables it to generate the problem map (or "the change map", as the team calls it). This is done both at the individual and community perspective. In the "change map" the team marks the movements in the zones determined as critical, however, new zones may appear as such. A reassessment of the risk is done by the prison staff, while the "change map" becomes instrumental, reflecting all the interventions and changes, if measurable, or just as assumptions of the team, if they are not measurable at this stage.

<b>Effective learning and teaching methods</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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All ECOR sites have developed clear training programmes and use tested training methods. Some correspond fully to the national education system, so the levels and classes earned are fully recognized. The scope of the educational and training programmes differs - some start at literacy all the way to certified vocational training, others work only at certain level. There are cases where all the training is informal. Measuring effectiveness is done on the basis of exams/tests, organised by external training institutions. As to the informal education, the skills gained are evaluated via participation in group or individual tasks, presented before the community and specialists in the zones concerned. Project Mirijam in Latvia is an interesting example, as all their training is done via history of arts and religion, literature, music, theatre, applied arts. They use classical lecture classes, but also

<sup>58</sup> It's important not to forget, that post-penitentiary support demands sometimes actions, similar to the work of crisis centers, so the quick intervention is extremely important, point of view of prevention of new infractions of the law. In this sense there is not much time for evaluation of the case before admission.

<sup>59</sup> Adapted model of the probation service in England, introduced in the Bulgarian penitentiary system in 2006 after 3-year approbation and adapting as a national service.

discussions, readings, amateur theatre plays. The cycle of the educational activities is connected with the standard school year. Each cycle ends with a theatre play before prisoners, artists, church representatives, and the community.

<b>Skill-orientation</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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The ECOR model of change has two major directions - participant's skills and personal growth. They could be viewed as social skills, aimed at creating sound relationships and integration into the community.<sup>60</sup> There are other skills - computer literacy, practical vocational training and certification, opportunities for job search and long-term employment, entrepreneurship. All the ECOR sites strive to develop through life in community social skills in different forms - discussions in the Community Council for solving various problems, thematic discussions or group reflections and sharing, topical issues of everyday life in the community, or discussions about the future.

<b>Adequate sequence and duration</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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The total duration of the program is from 9 to 24 months, the logic behind this is for the programme to give enough time for appropriating and integrating new skills, knowledge, values, and attitudes. All educational activities are done according to the demands of the educational standards, when connected to formal education. The activities are programmed in a way to balance classes, personal time, work, and life in community.

<b>Promotion of offender motivation</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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Relationship with family and friends, adequate money, job satisfaction, health, education, freedom. The zones indicated here are, according to the participants in the programme, the most motivating factors, which shall influence their future behaviour. All piloting sites cover these zones, or at least try to influence them with a view of supporting the personality growth.

<b>Continuity of services</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Ensuring programme integrity</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Ongoing Evaluation</b>	?	?	?	?	?	✓

In ECOR site in the prison of Vratza, the ongoing evaluation is done by the prison administration, which prepares every 6 months a re-evaluation of the risks factors of recidivism. The ECOR specialists take part in this process, keeping up to date the "change map" of each participant.

<sup>60</sup> Assertiveness, Empathy, Listening, Defining a problem, Evaluation of decisions, Negotiations, Expression of reasonable anger, disgust, disappointment, Excuse, Admission of ignorance.

## 1.21 Developing new approaches and strategies for the future

**What do we need to think about regarding changes in society, politics, economics, and how ECOR can continue to develop?**

What should be taken into consideration, as the model is applied is, that the societal, political, and economic processes in the last 20 years were extremely dynamic and future changes will be very difficult to predict. Conditions change abruptly, challenging entire sectors in society. All this will reflect as well on the piloted ECOR model. One of the tendencies in the recent period is the significant increase in the number of foreign citizens in the prisons of Western and Central Europe. This complicates the access to all integrating activities because of language barriers and religious, cultural, and other characteristics. The legislative measures in relation to certain crimes and infractions, for instance imposing short effective custodial sentences, which are shorter than the optimal

necessary minimum of the model, with a view of personality changes. On the other hand, the attention of society turns to other types of crime, while the legislator tries to apply alternative penal sanctions, executed outside prisons. The overpopulation of prisons obliges the prison officials at national level, and for that matter, the prison directors, to impose limits on programmes, including those ECOR sites, which are set in the context of prison. Fast-changing political, economic and societal atmosphere imposes difficult conditions for observation and measurement of impact.

The zones described here, and surely, there may be more, should be at the focus of all interested parties when starting an ECOR programme. The high adaptability of the project demonstrated in this manual is a good foundation for arriving at good decisions, however the need serious analysis and taking into account the quickening changes in all different contexts.

## Chapter Summary

- Starting an ECOR site demands preparatory work and significant joint effort of all partners.
- The external specialists are carriers of expertise and functional quality, which is rather valuable for the future work with the offenders, but it's the internal specialists who know the context, its specificity, legal possibilities and limitations much better. The joint preliminary in depth discussions will minimize future difficulties during the application of the model, higher effectiveness, and opportunities for multiplication.
- No doubt the preparatory work is labour consuming and time consuming process. It is good to plan enough time for this, and in spite of the motivation and eagerness to begin with the application activities, to take all preliminary steps, connected with the interaction and responsibilities, the rules and regulations for the external specialists, and last but not least, creation of necessary living conditions in the special section/unit, according to the respective regime and the context in which the model will be applied.
- Elaboration of clear criteria for evaluation and for quality control will be helpful for all the partners in the development of the model, and its continuous search for improvements. The model attached could serve also as a review of the readiness to start the project.
- The existence of a clear model for follow up and quality control brings certainty, patience, and strengthens confidence among the partners.
- To secure sustainability of the project, it is recommended to prepare a clear profile of the whole team, both internal and external specialists, with a view of defining risk zones, and covering them by respective measures.

# Part 6 – Conclusion

## 6.1 Summary Conclusion

The use of the ECOR model in four countries permitted a number of organisations to test its applicability in different contexts and in different national prison systems in Europe. The results achieved so far have been encouraging for those involved – the partner organisations, the multitude of volunteers involved in its realization, and the prison systems hosting such programmes. Organisations must continue to put future efforts into the ECOR programme’s multiplication, recommending the programme to the national penitentiary services, social services, local authorities, and communities to render support to all interested NGOs and other institutions.

Certainly, the model can be useful and utilized in decision-making in the area of development of alternative sanctions executed in liberty, in the area of adequate and preventive post-penitentiary care for former prisoners at the

highest-risk period immediately after release. In the prisons, the programme helps achieve the mission of punishment, namely the change in personality and the restoration of the convict for life without crime.

Certainly, the introduction of the model is a challenge to the organisations concerned, to the institutions, and to the local communities, because, all things considered, it is a broad, active and equal cooperation for the sake of the comprehensive rehabilitation of prisoners and former prisoners.

In addition to this manual, The ECOR project has produced a line of resources, which could be used in the future, including a methodology for training interested parties, specialists, and volunteers, video documentaries of successful ECOR implementation, and rigorous social research conducted amongst participants during the piloting phase.

<p>You may as well establish personal contact with each one of the consultants at national level and with the members of the international team, who are</p>	<p>available for the future development and dissemination of the model. We are indicating also their special focus as experts and leaders:</p>
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- **Tobias Merckle** - ECOR “Prison in Freedom”, Young offenders, Partnership with government institutions.  
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- **Gabor Roszik and Marton Magyari** - ECOR in prisons. Mobilizing support of government institutions, probation services, churches, NGOs, work with local community.  
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- **Yuri Kapustin** - ECOR in the community - post-penitentiary care, partnerships with municipality, resocialisation and integration in the local community.  
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- **Elena Evstatieva** - ECOR in prisons. Partnership development with prison administration, team-building, volunteers selection and supervision, therapeutic measures.  
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- **Paul Talbot** – Prison education and international projects for the development and delivery of training and resources for prison education and prison educators.  
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## 6.2 Recommendations

We shall conclude the Manual with excerpts from the resolution of the Final Conference of the ECOR project, which took place in Stuttgart, Germany, February 10-12, 2016. The recommendations are accepted by all 60 participants- scientists, political, professional and public figures, who participated in the conference.

*‘Building on the recommendations of the EU and the experiences of the ECOR project, which was made possible through the support of European funding, we make the following recommendations:*

### ***Recommendation 1***

*We encourage NGOs and other players in the criminal justice field to continue to collect best practices and experience in the field of running units in prison as well as alternative ways to run a prison – or an alternative to prison including transition management and aftercare, especially using the APAC methodology or the main elements of it.*

### ***Recommendation 2***

*We encourage prison and criminal justice officials and other related statutory bodies to open up the criminal justice system to charitable NGOs running separate communities in prisons or running penal institutions as well as alternatives to prison, especially for programmes based on the APAC methodology, but also for other similar programmes based on Restorative Justice.*

### ***Recommendation 3***

*We encourage continued development of the positive experience of the APAC methodology in Brazil, worldwide as well as on the experience and findings of the ECOR project and that these and similar models of prison programmes and prison management and feel it would be helpful for this to be encouraged both by institutional statutory funding bodies, for example through targeted operational grants at state, national and European level, and by non-statutory foundations, umbrella organisations and networks operating in these fields”*