

BOOK REVIEW

Raúl Calvo Soler, *Justicia juvenil y prácticas restaurativas, trazos para el diseño de programas y para su implementación [Juvenile justice and restorative practices: lines for drawing and implementing programmes]*. Barcelona: Ned ediciones, 2018, 207 pp., ISBN: 978-84-16737-33-8 (hbk).

Practitioners and other experts such as researchers sometimes find it difficult to discern if their actions are being consistent with restorative justice or, on the contrary, if they move away from the ideal of restorative justice. Raúl Calvo Soler shows us in this book what a youth restorative justice programme should look like, as well as when requirements are not met. He also brings to the fore a series of future challenges for the success of restorative justice and, consequently, restorative spaces in youth restorative justice.

The author, who is a professor at the University of Girona, has written several books on mediation and youth restorative justice and coordinates various projects in this specific field, and the starting point for him in this book is the difficulty of the legal system to react and 'correct' young people in conflict with the law (12).

In this way, he begins by making a distinction between the traditional or retributive justice system and restorative responses to crime and ends the first part of the book with a comprehensive risk analysis of when a restorative practice is implemented with a retributive mentality. This, of course, is very welcome as it is necessary to draw a distinction between what we think to be restorative and, in fact, what is not. So the author, in line with what Howard Zehr said, provides us with a compass so as not to lose the restorative essence in our practices. He elaborates on the indicators of when the system is not being restorative (29): if the response has no interaction with the victim, if the answer is automated, if the participation of the young person is enough in itself (regardless of his or her willingness to take responsibility to make things right), if there is no follow-up to evaluate the impact of the intervention (if indeed it made a difference) and if youth justice professionals tend to blame the young person for restorative experiments that went wrong (instead of acknowledging the limitations of the type of restorative justice intervention used in that particular case).

This concludes the first part of the book by naming and specifying the risks of not being as restorative as we think. This will surely serve all practitioners and those related to the juvenile justice system inasmuch as the author provides tools to calibrate the different actions and restorative practices.

The second and third parts of the book focus on the necessary conditions for the design of restorative strategies and what happens when they do not occur (in which case, he names them 'management strategies'). In the second part, more specifically, the author makes a brief exposition of the principles of youth restorative justice and of the main actors, namely, victim, perpetrator and community, analysing in a very coherent way each one's role or place: the victim needs to be repaired but not re-victimised and be autonomous; the offender needs to learn

and recompose but also not be stigmatised and not reoffend; and the community needs to be repaired, learn, recompose and be part of the process (41).

This inclusion of the community in restorative actions is essential for anyone who comes to restorative justice for the first time, especially in countries such as Argentina or Spain, where the most well-known methodology is the victim-offender meeting or criminal mediation, both of which tend to leave the community out. It is also interesting to see how the role of the community for the author is not only as an indirect victim of crime but also as an important and responsible part in the process of helping the offender not to reoffend. Hence, one of the sections of this second part speaks about the community as victim and offender (74).

This second section concludes with a summary table on the conditions for the restorative action. Here, the author does a detailed analysis of each of the parties or agents in restorative justice programmes and pinpoints what is necessary in each case to achieve a good restorative action. This will be useful for many people who want to design and implement restorative justice programmes, since it gives us tools, requirements and very useful conditions for its good implementation. According to the author, the conditions for the victim are emotional intelligence (meaning the human capacity to feel, understand, control and modify the emotional states of oneself and others), legitimacy (or the feeling of being respected), commitment and participation; for the offender, recognition (that a wrong has been caused), responsibility (for repairing the harms caused) and reparation (of these very harms); and for the community, acceptance that the community has an interest in the result, as well as an assumption that the community is a party in the conflict (87).

In the third part of the book, Raúl Calvo Soler introduces and analyses those situations in which the application of a restorative intervention may be problematic given the inability to develop a restorative strategy due to the lack of conditions related to some of or all the parties or agents, victim, offender and community (89).

Drawing on the conditions presented in the second part, he exhaustively analyses the cases in which the parties do not fulfil such conditions and names these as 'situations of immaturity'. As a means of helping the reader to detect when the conditions are not in place, he elaborates a mapping for the 'detection of immaturity' and what to do thereof (e.g. if the young person has addictions, restorative interventions must be coupled with other sorts of interventions, such as therapeutic ones) (107).

In the fourth part of the book, the author begins with an important statement for all those who approach the book without knowledge of restorative justice: 'when I think of a programme of justice and restorative practices, I am not referring to a programme that begins and ends with criminal mediation Not all programmes are reduced to criminal mediation, nor all criminal mediations abide to a restorative discourse' (133). Such a statement is important to avoid conceptual mistakes, particularly for those who have just landed in the restorative justice field. Indeed, already from the outset, it gives us a clear idea of the scope and possibilities of restorative justice and its programmes, challenging, thus, the idea,

notably present in Latin American countries and in Spain, that limits restorative justice to criminal mediation. And he delves further into the differences by stating that the idea of an encounter with the victim is not always necessary. This is really important in a book on restorative justice, because although a face-to-face meeting should be favoured whenever it is possible, as the author says, the aims of offender learning and accountability can be achieved beyond the interaction with the victim (134).

The author then turns (188) to the potential of creating learning communities through and around restorative interventions, highlighting, thus, the importance of restorative justice as a community-based justice mechanism. According to him, as regards the role of the community in youth restorative justice, the community should be seen not only as a victim but also as responsible for promoting learning and responsibility in the juveniles so that they can change and decide to turn away from crime. Taking participation as one of restorative justice's foundational principles, the author, in this part of the book, analyses and assesses the need and importance of community participation and the role of the community as an active agent in promoting this change, through what has been called the 'learning community'.

The book concludes with an analysis of twenty challenges for the success of restorative 'spaces' (199). The author illustrates the risks that we are faced with when seeking a definitive implementation of restorative justice. In this chapter, the author talks, among other things, about the fact that restorative justice is not a transient trend, nor a way of masking retributive actions, something that the author had also talked about in the first part of the book when he explained that sometimes we believe that we are being restorative, but all we are doing, in fact, is following the retributive vision. This is a pressing risk for most countries, which legislators should take into account. As the author very neatly puts it, restorative justice is not a way of perfecting the retributive justice and we should all be cognisant of that (200). What Raúl Calvo Soler does in this final section of the book is to describe and explain in detail what are the challenges and risks that we face in order to successfully develop restorative justice programmes.

Its reading gives voice to many professionals and practitioners of restorative justice who have been vindicating for a long time what needs we have to improve our daily work and, above all, to avoid perverting the benefits of restorative justice.

Definitely, the novelty of the book is that it is a reading that helps both those who are already engaged in the practice of restorative justice and the newcomer and will surely serve all those who are interested in developing and implementing

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programmes of restorative juvenile justice, since the book provides a guide to assess what to do and what not to do and how to overcome the inconveniences.

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