



Tempio Pausania: fostering relational and restorative communities

Federica Maggio

PhD student
Università degli Studi di Sassari
f.maggio1@phd.uniss.it



Lucrezia Perrella

PhD, psychologist
Università degli Studi di Sassari
lperrella@uniss.it



Giovanni Maria Natale

PhD student
Università degli Studi di Sassari
g.natale@phd.uniss.it



Ernesto Lodi

PhD, researcher, national scientific
qualification for full professor
Università degli Studi di Sassari
elodi@uniss.it



Gian Luigi Lepri

PhD, psychologist
Università degli Studi di Sassari
gianluigi.lepri@me.com



Maria Luisa Scarpa

psychologist
Università degli Studi di Sassari
mlscarpa@icloud.com

Patrizia Patrizi

full professor
Università degli Studi di Sassari
patrizi@uniss.it



Abstract

Aim: This paper describes the long-term process of building a restorative city in Tempio Pausania, led by the Restorative Justice Practices Team from the University of Sassari in Sardinia, Italy. The study aims to demonstrate the impact of embedding the restorative paradigm within the cultural and social context of small cities in Northern Sardinia, spanning initial prison conflict resolution to ongoing community and school interventions.

Methodology: The initiative relies on the Co.Re. model, developed by the research team in alignment with international restorative justice literature and best practices. The primary operational tool utilized throughout the project's workshops is the circle, applied as an instrument to foster relational capacity and community cohesion.

The manuscript was submitted in English. Received: 12 January 2026. Revised: 28 March 2026. Accepted: 26 May 2026.



Findings: Over years of continuous implementation, the project successfully expanded restorative practices from prison settings into broader community activities and schools, proving the viability and sustained applicability of the restorative paradigm in small urban contexts.

Value: The paper offers a field-tested, long-term case study and practical blueprint (the Co.Re. model) for scaling restorative practices from specific institutional settings to an entire municipality.

Keywords: restorative city, restorative approach, restorative justice, Tempio Pausania

A Brief Context of the City

Tempio Pausania is an Italian Municipality in northeastern Sardinia, one of the two main islands of the country. The city lies in a mountainous area in the Gallura area and numbers slightly more than 12,000 citizens, mostly Sardinians by birth.

The first challenge that led to the introduction of a restorative approach in the area and the subsequent development of the first Italian restorative city was the conversion of the prison in the District of Nuchis into a high security facility that saw the influx of a number of prisoners convicted on organized crime charges. This event provoked a sense of fear and mistrust among the local population.

The development of the restorative city was led since 2012 by the Restorative Justice Practices Team from the University of Sassari, another small city in Sardinia, 70 km away from Tempio Pausania. In 2017 the team decided to embed the restorative approach not only in the small Municipality of Tempio Pausania, but to extend it to other small cities nearby. Starting from the idea of restorative justice as a way of life, a set of behavioural guidelines for daily life, and a relational approach on which community life is based (Maggio et al., 2025), the Sassari team lies the foundation of all its work in raising awareness on the restorative approach, in order to build more cohesive, relational and peace-oriented communities.

The Local Interpretation of the ‘Restorative City’

Restorative justice is an approach that considers every kind of harm, including crime, as a fracture in the relationships inside a community, as a violation of people and obligations (Chapman, 2012; Patrizi, 2024), rather than a mere

violation of law as it is understood in the traditional criminal law system. This perspective allows not only victim and offender to take part in the restorative practice, but also the community and every person that either directly or indirectly suffered the consequences of the harm.

The focus is the restoration of the social bonds within the harmed community. Restorative justice gives back a voice to the affected individuals, first of all the victim, that in the Italian criminal process does not have an active role and is only relevant as a witness (Kettrey & Reynolds, 2024). Restorative justice empowers those who have been affected by the harm (Aertsen et al., 2011), giving them the tools to actively take part in the restoration process and the chance to openly express their needs (Chapman, 2012; EFRJ, 2018). It goes beyond simply dealing with a specific conflict, also enhancing democratic processes (Read & Straker, 2019) and «providing a general social mechanism for the reinforcement of standards of appropriate behaviour» (Wachtel & McCold, 2001).

Restorative justice is a paradigm, not a specific programme (Lodi et al., 2022) that, as clearly stated by the ample literature on the matter, must not be considered as an alternative or a substitute of the traditional criminal system, but as complementary to it (Bartoli, 2022; Braithwaite, 2016; Donini, 2020; Marder, 2020; Patrizi, 2024; van Steden & Slump, 2024; Zehr, 2005). Restorative justice should be understood as a different approach to harm and conflict that puts at the centre the parts involved, their needs and accountability for the harm done, not in the sense of establishing a sanction but as a dialogue.

As stated by article 48 of the Cartabia Reform (legislative decree 150/2022), the organic legislation that introduced restorative justice in the Italian criminal justice system, the consent to the programme expressed by participants must be personal, free, mindful, informed and written. The Team in Sassari strongly supports the importance of informing citizens on what restorative justice and the restorative approach mean, highlighting that otherwise their right to access to justice will never be fully accomplished and supported. Starting from this premise, the Restorative Justice Practices Team developed over the years a wide range of awareness raising activities in the North of Sardinia, always involving local communities in different events and local courses, as it will be explained later in this contribution.

As indicated by established literature (Mannozi, 2019; Vasilescu, 2023), there is no precise definition of a restorative city and this was the case also in Tempio Pausania, therefore the project took the lead from the specific needs of the local community and was tailored on them, through a bottom-up approach. The idea of starting from a needs assessment is deeply coherent with the Team's view of restorative justice as a way of life and as a tool that should be offered to those

who need it and not imposed by the local authorities. As a consequence of that, every restorative city is both similar and profoundly different from the others in terms of structure, practices, challenges and aims.

Regarding the core values of the framework that ground this restorative city, the theoretical and conceptual basis in Tempio Pausania is the Co.Re. (Community of Restorative Relationships) model (Lepri et al., 2019; Patrizi, 2024), a relational approach based on three areas that interact and integrate among each other producing a restorative behaviour. On the whole, the Co.Re. model is the result of the encounter between restorative justice and positive psychology (Patrizi, 2024), but also deeply influenced by the Relational Window by Wachtel and McCold (2001) as adapted by Chapman (2012).

The first version of the Co.Re. model was built on three levels; later, the structure evolved in a circular and interactive model, where three areas come together for the creation of the restorative practices. The first area is about cultural change, agency and capabilities and aims to create a space of dialogue and listening that promotes a cultural change based on the idea of connecting people, institutions and groups and encouraging active participation and exchange of ideas among practitioners (Maggio et al., 2025). This area focuses on restoring a sense of community and on preventing harm and conflict building harmony among parts.

The second area of the Co.Re. model is the ecology of responsibility, understood as that range of obligations that arise from social relationships when harm occurs. The model introduces the idea of a «circular reciprocity between inclusion and well-being [that introduces] a pro-active way [...] to contrast deviance, criminality and relational distress» [author's translation] (Patrizi, 2024). These first two areas are strictly connected with some activities developed in Tempio Pausania, including those focused on raising awareness on restorative justice in schools. These activities have produced positive outcomes, resulting in an increase of the sense of community and of the accountability in cases of harm (Maggio et al., 2025).

The last area of the model focuses on individual and group promotion of well-being and social cohesion, through the development of emotional and social soft skills. This area takes its foundation from some values and concepts typical of positive psychology, such as optimism, resilience, courage, hope and self-efficacy. In this regard, the activities run in the prison in Nuchis are the best example in promoting self-efficacy and sense of community among prisoners.

In conclusion, the most important element of the Co.Re. model and of the authors' conception of a restorative city is community, that is indeed one of the protagonists of restorative justice. In this sense, Tempio Pausania restorative city is grounded on the use of the restorative approach as a cultural approach,

meaning a guideline for any aspect of the community life and not only when crime or harm occur (Maggio et al., 2025). The Team strongly advocates for the restorative approach as a way of life, based on the transformative conception of restorative justice developed by the UNODC (2006). The emphasis is mainly on relationship restoration and community participation, promoting democratic participation of citizens to their community life, giving voice to those who are frequently marginalised, such as prisoners (Aertsen et al., 2011; Bartoli, 2023; Diddi, 2023). Conflict is reinterpreted as an opportunity for change and improvement, for dialogue and transformation (Van Cleynenbreugel, 2019).

History of Formation and Stages of Development

The development of the restorative city can be dated back to 2012, when the prison Paolo Pittalis in Nuchis, a small town 5 km apart from Tempio Pausania, was transformed in a high security facility, hosting people convicted for organised crime mainly hailing from the southern part of Italy. This event marked the beginning of a social conflict between the citizens of the area and the prison community, due on the one side to a widespread fear of incoming mafia influence, and on the other to the discontent of the prisoners for being transferred far from their hometowns and feeling rejected by the local community.

One of the first restorative actions led by the prisoners was using the income from the sale of a book written by some of them for the renovation of a playground in Nuchis. The response of the citizens was very hostile and defensive though: they put in the park some papers with red hands printed saying that they would not let their children play in a park restored by bloody money and hands. Even if the prisoners had used some profits that didn't have any connection with their past criminal activities, the resentful labelling was still very present.

The director of the prison, Carla Ciavarella (Ciavarella & Madeddu, 2024), acknowledged the conflict and reached out for the support of the Restorative Justice Practices Team in Sassari, who had already been working on raising awareness on restorative justice. A fruitful collaboration between the University of Sassari, the prison in Nuchis, the Municipality in Tempio Pausania and some local NGOs therefore ensued: the common goal was restoring the relationship between the community inside the prison and the one outside through a series of meetings.

A couple of years later, in November 2014 around 130 people coming not only from Tempio Pausania but also from neighbouring municipalities took part in a 'restorative lunch': students, teachers, lawyers, judges, mayors, local

authorities and prisoners, that for the first time in many years of imprisonment had the opportunity to exit the prison and share a meal not only with fellow inmates. The lunch focused on the values and principles of restorative justice: each table was labelled with one of them and the participants were asked to sit in the one that they embraced most. This lunch was also an extremely powerful way to fight prejudice against prisoners: everyone wore casual clothes and prisoners were not clearly identifiable, in order to build a real sense of community, non discrimination and equality. Later, some citizens declared that this event managed to make them see the prisoners in a different perspective, going beyond their crime and acknowledging their humanity. Following the success of the 2014 restorative lunch, further initiatives along the same lines were planned for 2015, such as the ‘restorative aperitivo’. However, unfortunately this time the State Department of Penitentiary Administration did not allow prisoners to join.

Another milestone in the development of Tempio Pausania restorative city was the first City Council held inside the prison in Nuchis in December 2015. The aim was to strengthen even more the community bonds, underlying that also the community of the inmates is part of the Municipality and should be part of the decisions. A wide audience of citizens and prisoners gathered in the prison theatre, listening to the City Council members that held their meeting on the stage. On this occasion was also nominated an authority that takes care of prisoners’ rights (Garante delle persone private della libertà personale), in whose founding document for the first time restorative justice was clearly mentioned in the premises.

In 2016 the Team organised the flash mob ‘Legami’ (bonds) in Tempio Pausania. High school students and citizens walked around the city giving small paper envelopes to anyone they met: each of them contained a word connected to the restorative approach, that was randomly gifted to citizens as an instrument of reflection. In 2017 a theatre company from Rome (Compagnia Stabile Assai) involved some prisoners from Nuchis in a theatre play in honour of Paolo Borsellino, an Italian magistrate killed by mafia in 1992: this play was performed both in the city theatre and inside the prison. This initiative was particularly powerful because it brought together practitioners, academics, citizens and people convicted for mafia crimes to reflect together and pay tribute to such an important figure in Italian history (Turco, 2024).

From 2017 the area of expertise of the Restorative Justice Practices Team focused on community activities in schools in Sassari, Sennori and Tempio Pausania, as well as in the prison in Nuchis. These activities are part of a wider project based on a psychological counselling service supported by 9 municipalities in North Sardinia.

Regarding the projects still running now, the Restorative Practices Team currently coordinates 2 projects at school in Sassari and Tempio Pausania and the one in prison in Nuchis, that will be discussed in depth in the following paragraphs.

Institutional Embedding and policy framework

The structure of Tempio Pausania restorative city is quite flexible: all the projects are led by the Restorative Justice Practices Team from the University of Sassari, that could be considered the coordinating body. The strength of the Team, however, is the informal network built over the years with local institutions and authorities, thanks to the wide and long process of community activities described above.

One of the main successes of the Restorative Justice Practices Team is the long-lasting and fruitful cooperation with the city council in the Municipality of Tempio Pausania. Through a decade-long effort in raising awareness and spreading knowledge on the restorative approach, the Team finally managed to convince the local authorities of its benefits. This led to a protocol signed by the University of Sassari, nine Municipalities in Sardinia led by the one of Tempio Pausania and the prison in Nuchis, setting the roots for a collaboration between these three institutions.

This protocol also contained a funding of around €100,000 from 2024 to 2026. Unfortunately, over the previous years funding was not always available, and this led to many difficulties for the work of the local practitioners. However, the support of the local institutions is a perfect example of the embedding of the restorative approach on a local level, as well as its inclusion in the statute of the prison ‘Garante’ authority as mentioned before.

Restorative cities are characterised by different structures, depending on the specific local context, but the support of the local institutions, in terms of a possible multi-agency cooperation between practitioners, local institutions, scholars, NGOs and citizens, makes a difference in their development (EFRJ, 2023). Because of this, it is now evident that the restorative paradigm is not merely a response to harm and conflict but a way of life (Maggio et al., 2025).

Another very relevant cooperation is the one with a school in Sassari: the project ‘Scuola bene comune’ (‘School as a common good’) has been founded by Fondazione di Sardegna, a local non-profit organisation that supports cultural, scientific and socio-economical development of Sardinia. This is a recognition of the relevance that the restorative approach has obtained at a local level alongside many other cultural and social activities implemented in schools. This

is proof of the embedding of the restorative approach in everyday life and not only in the criminal system, in accordance with the transformative conception of restorative justice mentioned above (UNODC, 2006).

The second current area of competence is prison. As mentioned, the project of the restorative city started here, thanks to a valuable cooperation with the prison administration. During the following years, some rules from the State Department of the Prison Administration prevented some meetings between prisoners and outside community. Nowadays, the prison administration in Nuchis recognises the benefits of restorative justice, supporting meetings and embedding them in the range of activities offered to prisoners.

Main Areas of Restorative Practice

The Restorative Justice Practices Team began his journey in Tempio Pausania restorative city starting from the idea that it is necessary to inform people about their right to access restorative justice programmes in order to make them capable to take an informed choice regarding whether to participate in it or not. The restorative approach, according to the Team, should be deeply embedded in every aspect of the daily life, laying the foundations of some behavioural guidelines to build restorative and relational communities.

Starting from these premises, the work of the Team was at first focused on community conflict management, emerging from the social conflict arisen from the transformation of the prison in Nuchis in a high security facility. Therefore, the first activities focused on restoring relations inside the local community, building trust, fighting prejudice and fear. The Team organised meetings between prisoners and community as a restorative response to the sense of mistrust towards the new inmates, as well as some public informal gatherings and more institutional moments.

Around 2017 the focus started to be more specifically directed to prison and school. The underlying idea being that every aspect of daily life can be ground for conflict and that the restorative approach is a powerful tool to rethink relationships inside a community. The restorative approach is a cultural model that should permeate every context of life. Schools are a particularly fertile environment for the emergence of social and interpersonal conflicts, due to the dense network of interactions encompassed in them.

The first project, called ‘Tutti a iscol@ - scuole aperte’ (‘Everyone at school – open schools’) involved an elementary school in Sennori, a small town near Sassari, in order to address the issue of school absenteeism. The project started

with a restorative conference for parents and other citizens. Due to the difficult socio-economical conditions of the target group, the activities focused on the use of the restorative approach as a tool to spread the values of respect, tolerance, non discrimination, respect of law, also increasing the students' well-being and fostering optimism and hope. Restorative practices, particularly the circle, were used to deal with daily conflicts in the school environment, training young students as peer mediators. The project lasted for one year.

In 2018 a group of nine Municipalities in the North of Sardinia supported the creation of a restorative service of psychological counselling in order to provide a meaningful and clear answer to social vulnerabilities, fostering social justice and a relational culture in the area. The first step was building a network between the Team from Sassari and local practitioners and professionals, such as social services, aiming to an assessment of the needs of the local population. After that, the awareness-raising phase began, promoting values of social justice, peace, dialogue and solidarity, to strengthen the restorative culture among local actors and institutions such as schools, municipalities and prisons.

In November 2018 the Team started a course in two high schools in Tempio Pausania, focusing on conflict management and building a relational and restorative school. The project, called 'A scuola di giustizia riparativa: apprendistà facilitatorà' ('Learning restorative justice: apprentice facilitators'), trains young students on the use of the restorative approach for conflicts at school, promoting restorative justice values and principles, like tolerance, non discrimination, dialogue, respect, accountability, in order to foster well-being at school. The course will soon start its seventh edition.

The course is organised in two years: the first one usually starts reflecting, first individually, then in small groups and later in a bigger circle, on the concepts of justice, conflict, harm and restoration. The idea is to foster critical thinking on conceptual frameworks and preconceived notions and to later rethink them in a restorative way, promoting the change of lenses Zehr (1990) discusses. Following this, students learn about the development of Tempio Pausania restorative city, in order to promote awareness on the history of their native towns. They experiment the use of the circle, as every meeting is organised in that form, discussing issues related to their school life. During the second year of the course, trainers provide a deeper understanding of the restorative paradigm, organising role plays and, since 2024, reflecting on the disciplinary code of the school. This latter action is an example of the use of the restorative approach to promote active citizenship and democratic participation of the students to the well-being of their community. Students are invited to choose specific rules in the disciplinary code and rethink them in a restorative sense: the purpose is to make suggestions to the school council of teachers and promote the creation of a restorative school.

From 2023 to 2025 the project also included an activity called ‘photovoice’: students were asked to take pictures inside school responding to some questions on restorative justice, using photography and art to express their vision of the restorative approach. The results were shown in two expositions open to all citizens and one of them also during a national conference.

As mentioned before, in the last few years the activities of the Restorative Justice Practices Team started to be widened beyond the limit of the Municipality of Tempio Pausania. In particular the project ‘Discriminazioni, modelli di genere e bullismo: percorsi laboratoriali di giustizia riparativa nelle scuole’ (‘Discrimination, gender models, bullying: restorative justice workshops at school’) which from 2021 to 2024 must be highlighted. Focusing on bullying and discrimination, the activities of the project involved students and teachers from elementary, middle and high schools in Sassari Municipality. The target group was trained on the restorative approach as a range of values that can build a more inclusive, relational and welcoming school community.

In 2024 the Team started an ongoing collaboration with an elementary and middle school in the city center of Sassari, a quite disadvantaged and multicultural area of the city. Building on previous initiatives, the project aims at fostering relational, inclusive and non-discriminatory communities, using the restorative approach as a response to social vulnerabilities and exclusion, sometimes sharpened by the COVID-19 pandemic. The principal tool used is the circle, which was already used by teachers for introductory circles in the morning or to discuss conflicts emerged in the class. One of the principal activities at the elementary school is reflecting on emotions drawing personal experiences of happiness, fear, anger and sadness at school, later shared in the circle, where every child can describe his drawing to the group and the other can give suggestions or ideas on how to deal with that emotion in a restorative way. Anger is particularly significant topic and children always highlight the importance of expressing openly their needs when they feel harmed and using dialogue to build mutual understanding with their offender. Regarding middle school students, the course takes inspiration from the one in Tempio Pausania, adapted and tailored to the younger age of the students.

All the school projects also involve circles with teachers and parents: a restorative community can be built only if all the actors work together and share common values and goals. Teachers and parents are also trained on the restorative paradigm and encouraged to work in small groups to reflect on cognitive schemes and cultural assumption that permeate our life, seeing them in a new perspective through the restorative lenses. Teachers frequently shared episodes of conflicts or harm they experienced at work asking for feedback and suggestions, and the trainers facilitated a circle on such topics.

Regarding the activities in the prison in Nuchis, the Team organises some circles with prisoners: in the past years they were trained on the restorative approach, in order to later reflect on incarceration and harm in a restorative way. Some themes that frequently emerge are the harm done not only to their primary victims but also to the prisoners' own families, especially to their children. Prisoners deeply feel the urge to share their change of mindset with younger generation, highlighting the importance of school and education to make meaningful life choices. On some occasions, prisoners were allowed to meet high school students. This is a powerful example of restoring the harm done to their communities and advocating for the use of the restorative approach in cases of severe crimes, such as mafia.

Target Groups and Access

In the schools, the target groups are students ranging from 6 to 19 years old. Trainers hold monthly sessions of around two hours in each class and also for teachers and parents, for five months. In the elementary and middle school in Sassari, participants come from a vast range of different cultures: diversity is used by trainers as an opportunity for dialogue and mutual learning, also sharing 'restorative snacks' with food from different cultures in the afternoon. The use of food to bring people together and learn about each other's culture is deeply grounded in the restorative values and has been introduced last year for the first time in the project.

In the prison in Nuchis, the activities are designed for prisoners convicted for organised crime, coming together for two hours monthly over the year. The group varied over the years and currently involves around 25 people.

Professional Quality and Standards

The Restorative Justice Practices Team is composed by six psychologists and a jurist that build, direct and run all the activities, with the support of the University and the Municipality of Tempio Pausania. The Team is also supported by some external professionals, including a social worker and an educator.

Some of the members are academics, some are officially recognised by the Italian law as expert facilitators in restorative justice, and others took post-graduate courses on the topic and are soon to be recognised as expert facilitators by the State. The variety of academic and non-academic backgrounds is the core

strength of the group as it provides the team with a plethora of different perspectives, from psychological to legal to a socio-cultural point of view on the restorative approach. The Team also allows young university students to join the activities as part of their curricular internship, under constant supervision of the experienced professionals.

Results, Impacts, and Evaluation

In terms of results, during the six years of the course in the high schools in Tempio Pausania over 650 students were trained, with an exponential increase over the last two years, which reached around 200 students each. Through some surveys carried out before and at the end of the course, the Team was able to measure the impact of this training on the participants, compared to a control group, in terms of a significant increase of psychosocial resources (e.g., sense of community at school, school satisfaction, subjective well-being, restorative attitude). These results, that will be shared in detail in a forthcoming publication of the Team, prove that the training is effective and it is reaching its purpose of building a restorative and cohesive community in the school.

The project in the high schools of Tempio Pausania also received external recognition from both the national and international restorative justice community. The students won the first prize in an art contest organised by the European Forum for Restorative Justice in 2020 for their work of art entitled ‘La Dea del Tempo’ (‘The Goddess of Time’) and in 2018 the project at school was recognised by AIP (Italian Association of Psychology) as a significant educational activity with a social impact. In addition, the ‘photovoice’ activity was displayed during the XXIII National Conference of the SIO (Italian Society for Career Guidance) and also in a temporary exposition at the local theatre in Tempio Pausania.

Regarding the activities in the prison in Nuchis, as the literature review by this team (Perrella et al., 2024) widely describes, the restorative approach has had an impact on a variety of aspects, such as prisoners’ behaviour, and their social, emotional and interpersonal skills. The number of prisoners involved in the project increased over the years. On some occasions the Team conducted a survey to collect the opinions of the participants of the course. When asked about how this experience changed their perception of cultural affiliation with the mafia, some of them said that they felt distance from that world now, also talking about it as a ‘previous life’. A particularly significant answer stated that the workshop helped participants to understand the power of ideas and the

importance of spreading new values and principles to contrast the mafia culture. These are powerful examples of the use of the restorative approach for de-radicalisation of prisoners (Maggio et al., 2025).

Regarding the wider community activities, until now more than 40 community circles have been organised, with 1300 participants including more than 200 students. The flashmob involved around 150 citizens.

Challenges, Limitations, and Setbacks

One of the main limitations in building a restorative city is undoubtedly the funding. The Team from Sassari was always supported by the local administration in Tempio Pausania, but the funding was nevertheless discontinuous. For this reason, the trainers frequently worked for free, driven by passion and deeply inspired by restorative justice. The small funding also prevents the Team from hiring new professionals: this would allow to deliver the workshops to a larger audience of students and prisons. Due to the small number of trainers, in fact, in the schools not every class could be involved in the projects.

When promoting a new way of building relationships, changing the lenses from a punitive approach to a restorative one, another relevant challenge is the scepticism of the audience. In Italy, restorative justice is frequently misconceived as a soft way of dealing with crime, an instrument of forgiveness, only applicable to the criminal justice system. For this reason, as profoundly explained above, the first activities of the Team always involve training and raising awareness, fighting the misconceptions around the restorative paradigm. Change requires time and resilience.

Overall, another challenge is always involving adults in the activities. Trainers highlighted a huge involvement of students in the courses, while on the other hand a lot of difficulties bringing together teachers and parents. Lack of time, long hours of work and misconceptions can be easily a cause for the low turnout. In order to face this challenge, the Team decided to tailor the activity with parents in the school in Sassari rethinking it as a joint activity between children and parents, also including some snack times. This change increased participation of parents and supported the inclusion and integration of the different cultures.

If on the one hand the support of the local authorities and institution is an excellent result, on the other fostering them takes time and commitment. A restorative city is a sustainable project when these social and community bonds are always enhanced and improved. For this reason, the small number of professionals is

also a challenge when trying to build new local connections, finding new advocates for the project and building new activities.

Lessons Learned and Transferability

The first step when building a restorative city is the needs assessment. Every project must be tailored on the specific needs of the local community, especially when a bottom-up path is taken. While there is no general structure for a restorative city, some common elements can be identified (Mannozi, 2019; Read & Straker, 2019). The first lesson to be learned is to use a restorative approach from the beginning, listening and dialoguing with communities.

Once the needs have been assessed, the presence of professionals that are not only well trained but most importantly committed advocates of the restorative approach is fundamental. It is almost idealistic to think that every step of the journey will go smoothly, starting from the lack of funding to the scepticism of the local authorities and citizens. A wide group of professionals with different backgrounds but common values really makes a difference.

Finally, building relationships of trust and support with local institutions is crucial, always remaining independent from them.

References

- Aertsen, I., Bolívar, D., De Mesmaecker, V. & Lauwers, N. (2011). Restorative justice and the active victim: Exploring the concept of empowerment. *Temida: Journal of Victimization, Human Rights and Gender*, 14(1), 5–19. <https://doi.org/10.2298/TEM1101005A>
- Bartoli, R. (2022, November 29). *Una breve introduzione alla giustizia riparativa nell'ambito della giustizia punitiva*. Sistema Penale. <https://sistemapenale.it/it/articolo/bartoli-introduzione-giustizia-riparativa-giustizia-punitiva>.
- Bartoli, R. (2023, July 28). *Una giustizia senza violenza, né Stato, né diritto: Ancora sul paradigma giuridico della giustizia riparativa*. Sistema Penale. <https://www.sistemapenale.it/it/articolo/bartoli-una-giustizia-senza-violenza-ne-stato-ne-diritto>.
- Braithwaite, J. (2016). *Restorative justice and responsive regulation: The question of evidence* (RegNet Research Paper No. 2016/51). SSRN. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2839086>
- Chapman, T. (2012). Facilitating restorative conferences in Northern Ireland. In Zinsstag, E. & Vanfraechem, I. (Eds.). *Conferencing and restorative justice: International practices and perspectives*. Oxford University Press.

- Ciavarella, C. & Madeddu, M. (2024). Clima e legami sociali in un carcere di alta sicurezza. In Patrizi, P. (Ed.). *La giustizia riparativa: Psicologia e diritto per il benessere di persone e comunità* (2nd ed., pp. 227–241). Carocci.
- Diddi, A. (2023). Effetti sull'esecuzione penale e penitenziaria della restorative justice. *Processo Penale e Giustizia*. Fascicolo straordinario Accertamento penale e giustizia riparativa, 101–109.
- Donini, M. (2020, October 29). *Pena agita e pena subita. Il modello del delitto riparato*. *Questione Giustizia*. <https://www.questionegiustizia.it/articolo/pena-agita-e-pena-subita-il-modello-del-delitto-riparato>.
- European Forum for Restorative Justice (2018). *Connecting people to restore just relations: Practice guide on values and standards for restorative justice practices*. <https://www.euforumrj.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/efrj-values-and-standards-manual-to-print-24pp.pdf>.
- European Forum for Restorative Justice (2023). *A journey around restorative cities in the world: A travel guide*. <https://www.euforumrj.org/sites/default/files/2023-12/DIGITAL%20%E2%80%93%20EFRJ%20Travel%20Guide%20%E2%80%93%20FINAL%20VERSION%20201123.pdf>.
- Kettrey, H. H. & Reynolds, N. S. (2024). Is restorative justice appropriate for sexual assault and domestic violence? A systematic review and meta-analysis of the 'empirical vacuum'. *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, 22(1), 229–247. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11292-024-09651-8>
- Lepri, G. L., Lodi, E. & Patrizi, P. (2019). Tempio Pausania: Social conflict resolution in a community setting. *The International Journal of Restorative Justice*, 2(2), 314–319. <https://doi.org/10.5553/IJRJ/258908912019002002011>
- Lodi, E., Perrella, L., Lepri, G. L., Scarpa, M. L. & Patrizi, P. (2022). Use of restorative justice and restorative practices at school: A systematic literature review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(1), 96. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19010096>.
- Maggio, F., Perrella, L., Lepri, G. L., Lodi, E., Scarpa, M. L. & Patrizi, P. (2025). Oltre un decennio di costruzione di una restorative city. *Pandemos*, 3, 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.13125/pan-6789>
- Mannozi, G. (2019). The emergence of the idea of a 'restorative city' and its link to restorative justice. *The International Journal of Restorative Justice*, 2(2), 288–292. <https://doi.org/10.5553/IJRJ/258908912019002002006>
- Marder, I. D. (2020). The new international restorative justice framework: Reviewing three years of progress and efforts to promote access to services and cultural change. *The International Journal of Restorative Justice*, 3(3), 395–418. <https://doi.org/10.5553/IJRJ.000048>
- Patrizi, P. (Ed.). (2024). *Giustizia riparativa. Psicologia e diritto per il benessere di persone e comunità* (2nd ed.). Carocci.
- Perrella, L., Lodi, E., Lepri, G. L. & Patrizi, P. (2024). Use of restorative justice and restorative practices in prison: A systematic literature review. *Rassegna Italiana di Criminologia*, 18(1), 69–82. <https://doi.org/10.7347/RIC-012024-p69>

- Read, T. & Straker, C. (2019). Brighton and Hove: Developing a culture of doing ‘with’ as prevention rather than cure. *The International Journal of Restorative Justice*, 2(2), 293–297. <https://doi.org/10.5553/IJRJ/258908912019002002007>
- Turco, A. (2024). Drammaturgie penitenziarie e comunità solidali. In Patrizi, P. (Ed.), *La giustizia riparativa: Psicologia e diritto per il benessere di persone e comunità* (2nd ed., pp. 205–226). Carocci.
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2006). *Handbook on restorative justice programmes*. United Nations.
- Van Cleynenbreugel, L. (2019). Leuven: Creating support and skills for handling conflicts in a restorative way. *The International Journal of Restorative Justice*, 2(2), 303–308. <https://doi.org/10.5553/ijrj/258908912019002002009>
- Van Steden, R. & Slump, G. J. (2024). The ambiguous practice of restorative justice: Observations on conflict mediation in a police context. *The International Journal of Restorative Justice*, 7(3), 436–456. <https://doi.org/10.5553/TIJRJ.000194>
- Vasilescu, C. (2023). Building a restorative city: What aims and processes? *The International Journal of Restorative Justice*, 6(1), 119–126. <https://doi.org/10.5553/TIJRJ.000153>
- Wachtel, T. & McCold, P. (2001). Restorative justice in everyday life: Beyond the formal ritual. In Strang, H. & Braithwaite, J. (Eds.), *Restorative justice and civil society* (pp. 114–129). Cambridge University Press.
- Zehr, H. (1990). *Changing lenses: A new focus for crime and justice*. Herald Press.
- Zehr, H. (2005). *Changing lenses: A new focus for crime and justice* (3rd ed.). Herald Press.

How to cite this article

Maggio, F., Perrella, L., Natale, G. M., Lodi, E., Lepri, G. L., Scarpa, M. L., & Patrizi, P. (2026). Tempio Pausania: fostering relational and restorative communities. *Belügyi Szemle*, 74(9), 2535–2551. <https://doi.org/10.38146/bsz-ajia.2026.v74.i9.pp2535-2551>

Statements

Conflict of interest

No conflicts of interest have been declared.

Funding

No financial support was received for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Ethics statement

The data will be made available upon request.

Open access information

This is an open access article published under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution–NonCommercial–NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0). The article may be freely shared and republished in any medium or format, in its unchanged form and for non-commercial purposes, provided that the original author(s) and the source are appropriately credited and a link to the licence is included. The distribution of modified or adapted versions and commercial use are not permitted under this licence.

Corresponding author

The corresponding author of this article is Federica Maggio, who can be contacted at f.maggio1@phd.uniss.it.