**FOREWORD**

For the past six years the Restitution Foundation has been involved in the facilitation of a community-led restitution initiative in the Western Cape town of Worcester. As is the case with all South African communities, the country’s colonial and apartheid past negatively affected the psychological and socio-economic wellbeing of the majority of Worcester residents. Sustainable peace in Worcester is only possible if the town develops and implements strategies for reparation that actively address the psychological and socio-economic harm of our troubled past.

The Restitution Foundation used the narrative of the racially motivated 1996 Worcester bombing in which four people died and about seventy people were injured as a metaphor to highlight the psychological impact the policies of colonialism and apartheid had on the lives of all those who call Worcester home. While serving his jail sentence, one of the perpetrators of the bombing, Stefaans Coetzee had a change of heart and underwent a transformation process. He indicated that he would like to meet with the survivors of the bombing to offer an apology for his actions and to explain what motivated him to commit the crime.

Only one of the survivors of the bombing was interested to meet Stefaans Coetzee. This meeting took place in November 2009 at the Kgosi Mampuru Correctional Facility in Pretoria. In this meeting Stefaans Coetzee was able to convince Olga Macingwane that his remorse was sincere whereupon she decided to forgive him. When Macingwane informed the other survivors of the outcome of her meeting with Coetzee, a large number of the survivors indicated that they were now also ready to meet with Coetzee.

For more than two years the Restitution Foundation unsuccessfully lobbied the Department of Correctional Services to transfer Coetzee to a correctional facility in Worcester to enable the survivors to meet with him. When it was clear that such a transfer was not to happen, the Restitution Foundation in partnership with the Worcester community arranged for 60 bomb survivors to travel by train to Pretoria in order to meet with Coetzee. This Victim Offender Dialogue (VOD) between Coetzee and the survivors of the bombing took place on the 31st of January 2013. Themes closely associated with the psychological trauma of colonialism and apartheid such as remorse, apology, atonement, transformation, restitution, peace and forgiveness formed an integral part of the VOD process.

The VOD experience highlighted that neither the survivors of the bombing nor the officials of the Department of Correctional Services nor the residents of Worcester fully appreciated the complexity associated with the meanings of the different VOD themes. It is against this background that the Restitution Foundation decided to compile a VOD toolkit which could serve as a resource to broaden the understanding of themes closely identified with VOD processes.

Over a very long period of time many academics have written much on each of the themes. To some of us just the thought of reading these books is quite overwhelming. Ordinary people just want somebody who has some knowledge about the different themes to share their knowledge in a very accessible way with them. And this is exactly what the Restitution Foundation has tried to achieve with the development of this VOD toolkit. We identified experts on each of the different themes and asked them to explain in no more than 500 words their understanding of the different themes. We also provided the various authors with indicators of who the target audience would be (c.f. addendum at the end of the toolkit).

The VOD toolkit is still a work in progress and we believe that it will further evolve in time to come. It is our sincere hope that it would become a handy tool to support not only the survivors and perpetrators of the 1996 Worcester bombing, but also staff members of the DCS and ordinary citizens of Worcester on their various journeys to consider reconciliation.

Dr Deon Snyman, Restitution Foundation

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