# *The Lab's Quarterly*
## *Il Trimestrale del Laboratorio*

Gli articoli della rivista sono sottoposti a un doppio processo di *peer-review*.
Le informazioni per i collaboratori sono disponibili sul sito della rivista.

# Laboratorio di Ricerca Sociale
# Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche
# Università di Pisa

"The Lab's Quarterly" è una rivista che risponde alla necessità degli studiosi del Laboratorio di Ricerca sociale dell'Università di Pisa di contribuire all'indagine teorica ed empirica e di divulgarne i risultati presso la comunità scientifica e il più vasto pubblico degli interessati.

I campi di studio riguardano le riflessioni epistemologiche sullo statuto conoscitivo delle scienze sociali, le procedure logiche comuni a ogni forma di sapere e quelle specifiche del sapere scientifico, le tecniche di rilevazione e di analisi dei dati, l'indagine sulle condizioni di genesi e di utilizzo della conoscenza e le teorie sociologiche sulle formazioni sociali contemporanee, approfondendo la riproduzione materiale e simbolica del mondo della vita: lo studio degli individui, dei gruppi sociali, delle tradizioni culturali, dei processi economici e politici.

Un contributo significativo è offerto dagli studenti del Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche dell'Università di Pisa e di altri atenei, le cui tesi di laurea e di dottorato costituiscono un materiale prezioso che restituiamo alla conoscenza.

Il direttore
Massimo Ampola

# The Lab's Quarterly
## Il Trimestrale del Laboratorio

2015 / n. 3 / luglio-settembre

**Laboratorio di Ricerca Sociale**
**Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche**
**Università di Pisa**

TRAINING AND CHANGE: SOME CONSIDERATIONS ON THE "VICTIM SUPPORTING PROJECT.
A Network to Support and Aid Crime Victims[1]

di *Gerardo Pastore*

Indice

1. Training activities for practitioners working with victims: the experiences promoted in the provinces of Livorno and Pisa within the framework of the *VIS NETWORK PROJECT*

The VIS Network Project, animated by the intention of impacting social policies through the construction of knowledge and the exchange of common practices, has focused its strategic action on the creation of specific training programmes devoted to those who have worked with crime victims until now and those who are willing to take this task on from now. With the purpose of expanding their notion of "action", their knowledge and capacity not only to create networks, but also to consolidate them, the VIS Network Project developed training modules that departed from the traditional pattern of sharing victim support work experiences and selected an approach that does not consist in a mere uncritical transmission of notions, but, after clarifying the theoretical framework of reference, leaves larger spaces to the narration and discussion of the experience of each actor. These would then be taken as the starting point for the development and production of new knowledge. So, it was precisely the exchanges and discussion of good practices in the field of crime victim support that set out a process of continuous updating, professional and personal exchange, which made both formal and informal networks more powerful. A total of 6 courses, of 55 hours each, was organized in Livorno and Pisa by the University of Pisa and in Mantua by the High School of Criminological Science "FDE", involving a total of 276 practitioners and experts (157 in Mantua, 77 in Livorno, and 42 in Pisa).

This paper will focus on the training activities conducted in the provinces of Livorno and Pisa, which were attended by representatives of the local networks, practitioners from public institutions, police forces, healthcare services, social workers' associations, professionals and volunteers. In detail, for the Livorno area, the practitioners who took part in the training process were from the Province of Livorno, Regione Toscana (Regional Government of Tuscany), Az. USL 6 di Livorno (local healthcare organization), Provincia di Livorno Development (a body delivering local development services), the Questura (the local police force) of Livorno, the Prefecture of Livorno, Carabinieri Comando Provinciale di Livorno (another Italian police force), Guardia di Finanza Comando Provinciale di Livorno (tax/finance police), the Equal Opportunity department of the Province of Livorno, U.S.R. Toscana – Ufficio XII Ambito Territoriale della Provincia di Livorno (local school governance body), Municipalities of Livorno, Piombino, Cecina, Rosignano, Castagneto; Società Volontaria di Soccorso – Pubblica Assistenza di Livorno

(first aid volunteering association), AUSER Volontariato Territoriale di Livorno (volunteering association for elderly support), AIDO Sezione Provinciale di Livorno (local office of organ donation association), Osservatorio Italiano di Vittimologia (Italian observatory on victimology), Fondazione Caritas Livorno ONLUS (charitable foundation), ARCI BASSA Val di Cecina (recreational and cultural association), ARCI Gay Livorno "il Faro" (recreational and cultural association for LGBT rights), Associazione Ippogrifo (local association for social and cultural promotion), Associazione Randi (association supporting immigrant women), CeSDI Centro Services Donne Immigrate Associazione di Volontariato e Solidarietà ONLUS (volunteering association and provider of services for immigrant women), Associazione P24 Lega Italiana per la Lotta Violenza l'Aids – Sede di Livorno (association for fight against AIDS), Ufficio Esecuzione Penale Esterna del Ministero di Giustizia di Livorno (local office for criminal law enforcement of the Ministry of Justice), Associazione Cure Palliative di Livorno onlus (local palliative care association). For the Pisa area, the following actors took part in the training activities delivered: Province of Pisa, Regione Toscana, Municipalities of Pisa and San Giuliano Terme, Unione dei Comuni della Valdera (united municipalities of the Valdera area), ASL 5 Pisa (local healthcare organization), Azienda Ospedaliero-Universitaria di Pisa (university hospital), the local providers of healthcare services called "Società della Salute" (SDS) for the Pisa, Valdera, Valdarno Inferiore, and Alta Val di Cecina areas; CESDI – Centro Antidiscriminatorio di Pisa (centre for fight against discrimination), Associazione DIM – Donne in Movimento (services for immigrant women), Associazione Casa della Donna Pisa (women's rights defence association), AIED sezione di Pisa (family counselling provider), Associazione Oltretutto (association for social promotion).

The training project developed with the partners enhanced action-oriented skills to favour the creation of a strategic and creative thought. In addition to that, special attention was paid to the development of relational skills, and specifically the promotion of self-awareness; the management of feelings and emotions; the development of a listening sensitivity; the protection of information to leverage the lessons learned during the training activities in the classroom; the construction of networks of relationships to develop social relations and a social capital as an asset for the community, as well as to fulfil complex needs that could not be adequately fulfilled with single actions; the discussion, identification and definition of good practices; sharing and exchanges through the construction and implementation of a community of practices to offer effective and consistent answers. As regards the conduction of meetings and the

organization of the days, the training programme included, for each edition, 48 hours of lesson and 7 hours of workshop. In detail, the three training modules favoured an in-depth theoretical-practical analysis of the following scopes:

- Module 1 – Network orientation and coordination in the processes of social integration and support to the victims; activation and maintenance of victim support networks by using the specific methodology of the social network analysis; definition of the theoretical and regulatory framework; networks, network work and work with the networks; construction of communities of practices and identification of best practices; network approach to criminology/victimology; stereotypes and labelling. This lasted for 16 hours for each edition of the course.

- Module 2 – European provisions on victimology; aggressiveness and crimes against fragile victims; analysis of the main crimes; victimological theories and definition of fields of action; counselling for fragile victims. This module lasted for 24 hours for each edition of the course.

- Module 3 - Harmonization and building on the experiences of the individuals involved in the training path to add value to the whole training process. At this stage of the work, which consists of 15 hours, change has been considered as the core of the training process, and the analysis and management of training processes have been particularly focused on building action models aimed at preventing crime and taking care of/support crime victims. The scheduled workshop allowed participants to explore various themes from different analysis perspectives.


2. SHARING AND IDENTIFYING GOOD PRACTICES FOR THE PRACTITIONERS
   OF VICTIM SUPPORT CENTRES

When discussing guidelines and good practices to support crime victims, training should be considered as a tool to empower, enhance and extend the subjective, organizational and institutional opportunities of more conscious and incisive actions. In line with this background, the VIS project mainly intends training as the sharing of common practices between people who work in favour of crime victims or who are, anyhow, willing to take care of them – with the purpose of expanding operating horizons and knowledge, and enhancing virtuous synergies between the different actors in the field.

The training activities carried out in the various communities of the provinces of Livorno and Pisa focused on the competencies and experiences of participants with the purpose of highlighting the relationships and interconnections detected after a first overview, with the aim of

fighting against any form of reductionism and activating a constructive critical thought. On the other hand, training takes place starting from facts that represent the *forma hominis,* the original shape.

The essential aspects of this operating approach have been the propensity of the present action system to change and self-motivation to cooperate to make action strategies and good practices a wealth for the community – everything oriented towards the construction of a common way of thinking that could be translated into a shared practical operating methodology. More specifically, this approach promoted exchanges with some institutional and non-institutional actors who work in the field of crime victim support in the provinces of Livorno and Pisa, which, during training, led to the identification of some problems that can be summarised as follows:

- poor knowledge of institutional protocols;

- overlapping between protocols, often generating confusion and uncertainty on the practical side;

- most protocols have an excessively generic target of victims and their work is more oriented towards fighting against crime rather than supporting and protecting the victims;

- the role of schools in the network is not always sufficiently highlighted;

- the accessibility of the services is often limited by the victim's willingness to report the crime;

- lack of reciprocity of information, which may cause secondary victimization;

- poor synchronization between top and bottom levels, decision-makers and practitioners, formal and informal networks, which cause further decision-making shortfalls;

- excessively egocentric networks, with the consequent difficulty of delegating and distributing services, as well as managing the variety of problems of end-users;

- absence of a consistent and standardized risk assessment procedure;

- lack of a constant support to the victim;

- lack of a culture of ensuring the safety of the victim;

- problems in finding practitioners and need to create constantly available helplines;

- excessively long decision-making and management processes;

- lack of clarity regarding the solutions for the abuser (importance of being aware of where they go and what they do);

- on the whole, there are shortfalls at different training, information and communication levels.

Starting from this description of the present situation, we focused on the possible improvement actions required for the entire crime victim support process.

The first requirement identified was the need to reduce bureaucracy and red tape, and factually simplify the process to eliminate all the useless redundancies that often cause a double victimization or even drive the victim to give up support. To reduce process cycle times means to adopt shared action standards, prefer parallel, rather than serial, actions; modify the sequence of activities in view of optimizing people's movements, reduce interruptions, synchronize the times of the different activities and prevent idle time or pointless waiting. Another essential requirement identified was a serious scientific supervision of the cases and actions implemented by the multidisciplinary team – a rather common practice today where a professional, usually with expertise in the same field of action, interacts with the people who deal with a specific case to offer new learning opportunities and an "extension of the resources and skills of the individuals" (Mazza 2013: 15-16).

The kind of training we would like to define as a good practice is not to be considered as a means to achieve an outcome, so that once the result has been obtained the training has completed its function (Fadda 2002). Rather, it is intended as a continuously evolving process to consider and analyse new needs, new situations, but also to make the local formal or informal networks ever more functional within the framework of a periodic revision of cases. This would lead to the development and refinement of a common language originating from active listening: to listen in order to learn, understand, interpret, define, operate. It is precisely by setting this "listening" mode on that we can learn, understand, recognise, and initiate a virtuous cycle of cooperative actions where we can work together to contain the risk of being self-referential.

3. REGULATORY INSIGHT: TRAINING IN THE 2012/29/EU DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL OF 25 OCTOBER 2012

As regards training, and particularly the need for permanent training, apart from the traditional request for tools and methodologies, practitioners are increasingly asking for specific spaces and places where they can reflect on practices, actions, the problems associated with the services they deliver and even calibrate the meaning of their mandate within the global framework of their social, political and legal work. The changing demands and the questions arising on past certainties open new perspectives for practitioners, as they are required to open up

to the communities where they operate and cooperate with other professionals in view of providing shared responses.

As regards the centrality of training in the victim support process, a constant reference to the European legislation is recommended, and specifically to the provisions of the 2012/29/UE Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012, which established minimum requirements concerning the rights, support and protection of crime victims, superseding framework decision 2001/220/GAI. To this purpose, we provide the table below with some key extracts from the mentioned Directive regarding training:

| Preliminary consideration (61) | Any officials involved in criminal proceedings who are likely to come into personal contact with victims should be able to access and receive appropriate initial and ongoing training, to a level appropriate to their contact with victims, so that they are able to identify victims and their needs and deal with them in a respectful, sensitive, professional and non-discriminatory manner. Persons who are likely to be involved in the individual assessment to identify victims' specific protection needs and to determine their need for special protection measures should receive specific training on how to carry out such an assessment. Member States should ensure such training for police services and court staff. Equally, training should be promoted for lawyers, prosecutors and judges and for practitioners who provide victim support or restorative justice services. This requirement should include training on the specific support services to which victims should be referred or specialist training where their work focuses on victims with specific needs and specific psychological training, as appropriate. Where relevant, such training should be gender sensitive. Member States' actions on training should be complemented by guidelines, recommendations and exchange of best practices in accordance with the Budapest roadmap |
|---|---|
| Preliminary consideration (62) | Member States should encourage and work closely with civil society organisations, including recognised and active non-governmental organisations working with victims of crime, in particular in policymaking initiatives, information and awareness-raising campaigns, research and education programmes and in training, as well as in monitoring and evaluating the impact of measures to support and protect victims of crime. For victims of crime to receive the proper degree of assistance, support and protection, public services should work in a coordinated manner and should be involved at all administrative levels — at Union level, and at |

| | national, regional and local level. Victims should be assisted in finding and addressing the competent authorities in order to avoid repeat referrals. Member States should consider developing 'sole points of access' or 'one-stop shops', that address victims' multiple needs when involved in criminal proceedings, including the need to receive information, assistance, support, protection and compensation. |
|---|---|
| Preliminary consideration (63) | […] Practitioners who are likely to receive complaints from victims with regard to criminal offences should be appropriately trained to facilitate reporting of crimes, and measures should be put in place to enable third-party reporting, including by civil society organisations. It should be possible to make use of communication technology, such as e-mail, video recordings or online electronic forms for making complaints. |
| Chapter 5 Other provisions Article 25 Training of practitioners | 1.    Member States shall ensure that officials likely to come into contact with victims, such as police officers and court staff, receive both general and specialist training to a level appropriate to their contact with victims to increase their awareness of the needs of victims and to enable them to deal with victims in an impartial, respectful and professional manner. 2.    Without prejudice to judicial independence and differences in the organisation of the judiciary across the Union, Member States shall request that those responsible for the training of judges and prosecutors involved in criminal proceedings make available both general and specialist training to increase the awareness of judges and prosecutors of the needs of victims. 3.    With due respect for the independence of the legal profession, Member States shall recommend that those responsible for the training of lawyers make available both general and specialist training to increase the awareness of lawyers of the needs of victims. 4.    Through their public services or by funding victim support organisations, Member States shall encourage initiatives enabling those providing victim support and restorative justice services to receive adequate training to a level appropriate to their contact with victims and observe professional standards to ensure such services are provided in an impartial, respectful and professional manner. 5.    In accordance with the duties involved, and the nature and level of contact the practitioner has with victims, training shall aim to enable the practitioner to recognise victims and to treat them in a respectful, professional and non-discriminatory manner. |

4. KNOWLEDGE, TRAINING AND NETWORKS TO ACHIEVE SOCIAL PROXIMITY

 The idea of creating, reinforcing and developing networks to implement virtuous procedures and to support crime victims, in particular "weak victims", has always been the core idea of the "VIctim Supporting Project: a NETWORK to support and aid crime victims". While the territory represents the administrative unit for the supply of services based on the co-programming and co-planning between public institutions and non-profit sector, as under law 328/00, the network is the collection of players and bonds through which the exchange of information and resources takes place and it makes the social policies for the citizens effective and proactive (Galavotti, Pastore 2014).

Within any local community, there are plenty of networks with different organizational structures and purposes which describe various social phenomena and provide numerous social scenarios. Highlighting the value of networks means considering them as a conceptual, operational and strategic place to better understand the current dynamics of exclusion and uncertainty afflicting broader and broader parts of the population. It may thus be possible to intervene more efficiently and to re-adjust said dynamics through practices which are consistent with the results (Salvini 2012). The different local communities are often full of "protocols" between those bodies that work to achieve integration between the institutions and that plan social policies. According to the principle of horizontal subsidiarity, they involve both the public administration and the non-profit sector by detecting specific needs and sharing general goals. Protocols are "declarations of intent", they do not always have a deadline like projects and they can be produced in very high quantities by promoters who generally involve the same players. They are collections of rules which regulate a system (fixing institutional wills) and practically formalize the relationships within an informal network. They can be considered as very important "photographs" of those institutional networks which have expressed the political will to act; they highlight a specific social phenomenon and suggest general actions to fight victimisation through the creation of new networks which can involve the players of local communities. The formalization of a protocol is very often seen as an ending but it should actually represent a starting point to promote a mobile and fluent network which encourages the creation of new relationships. Protocols should therefore give the possibility to other members to participate in them. They should contain new proposals and predict new scenarios. Such documents, which can be modified according to the changing

needs of the community, should become a tool to convey shared, proactive and non-standardized "meanings".

The analysis of protocols, a procedure which the operators working on that system do not often know in depth, provides an important insight into local realities However, the intent of such protocols is very frequently neglected and they become a sort of "historical documents" because the underlying networks are not renewed, good practices are not shared and the information and resources about those institutional bonds are not spread. Protocols are often comparable to empty picture frames whose function becomes totally meaningless. That meaning must be recovered through a continuous and evolving process in which all citizens actively participate and become players. Talking about victimization does not only mean operationally taking functional and active "care" of the others; it also means making decision to plan aid policies for weak victims which can practically include both institutional and managerial aspects. Participation must be the core element during resources management planning and this can be achieved only if the network is active and if its knots, the players, become part of a continuous and evaluative evolution. Detecting efficient and appropriate structural, managerial and operational resources is necessary to meet the victims' needs and to contextualize them according to the local community and its criminological dynamics (level and type). It is possible to strengthen and enhance such resources by sharing them within the network and taking on responsibilities together, which means avoiding contradictions, small-scale policies and solving the difficulties related to the survival of the non-profit sector. It means promoting real and active governance in order not to abandon weak victims. Such results can be achieved if we are able to accomplish what we operationally define as "the axiom of proximity", that is to say, the ability of institutions, operators and players of the aid system to be close to the victims and to be immediately recognizable within the community. This spirit has always characterized the VIS Network project and, according to it, the work within the network offers the opportunity to implement new intervention strategies which, acting as a whole system, enable us to renew the relationships between the players who are directly or indirectly involved in victim support.

On the basis of this introduction, it is clear that the network, regardless of its single parts, is the necessary step to understand the victims and their difficulties, to help them achieve independence and forge new relationships with the community. The network can therefore be considered as a diagnostic tool to explore and assess the situation of a person, as a resource, but also as an operational area which can be at the receiving end

of interventions, but can also be the place where social actions take place (Ferrario 1996: 26).

The network protocols promoted by the Vis Network project offer an innovative operational perspective which no longer focuses on the "aid relationship", but on the "aid network" (Salvini 2012) and which constantly requires new decisions about the actions to be undertaken; about the network structure (for example by promoting an increase in size, in the number of relationships, in the geographical range, and in heterogeneity, and by strengthening or weakening the connections...); about the processes inside the network (for example by favouring the symmetry and reciprocity of the relationships, by increasing the communication level within specific relationships); about the actual and potential functions performed (by strengthening support dynamics, developing new aid relationships, continuously renovating information sources and resources); about the composition of the network (by deciding if new members can participate in the network or if the old ones have to be excluded from it; by changing the organization of the bonds, especially if they are considered to be counterproductive for the users) (Salvini 2012: 93; Hill 2002: 248). It is therefore to be hoped that our professionals show proneness to multidisciplinary learning, to reflection, to open-mindedness and to the processing of new knowhow in the framework of a close reciprocity between theory and practice (Nappi 2001). From this idea, comes the general and concrete concept of "networking". This experience requires different construction phases and continuous care aimed at developing and consolidating it. From to a technical and methodological point of view, this means implementing a process divided into cyclical phases and steps, such as:

   - detection of operational areas and concrete purposes;
   - active sharing of the mission, the vision and the strategic purposes;
   - careful governance of the support to the victims not to waste human and economic resources;
   - constant networking to find and involve new potential "knots";
   - assessment of internal benefits in order to expand the operational areas and to develop a well-structured system of practices;
   - exchange of resources;
   - collaborative networking and recognition of the others;
   - regulated interactions;
   - adequate communication;
   - functional division of the work among the members of the network;
   - self-reflection about the quality of the processes generated within the network's dynamics;

- caring for and adaptating the network over time.

In order to achieve the aforesaid results and to make the network's logic work, there are clearly various practical needs to be met and concerted effort is required to continuously assess and test the relationships between institutions, public services and the social private sector. It is necessary to test if they work in synergy and show their common commitment to overcoming the barriers between formal and informal, between a technical and a human social perspective on the services offered to people in need. Moreover, it is important to check the methods and ways through which every single problematic situation is tackled and if the cooperation between all professionals of the same organization and, if necessary, with other institutions contributes to the improvement of the entire process.

As far as the operational issues are concerned, taking care of the network's organization, which concerns both the coordination of the relationships between the players and the services offered, is of utmost importance. Within the network, single services cannot be seen as independent units separate from the whole system. It must be considered as "a part or a knot of the network and its connections, in which the results that one has had serve as raw material or advice for the others; all these partial results are brought together and they contribute to the general success (Toniolo Piva 2005). If this working method is applied seriously (so that the players working in the victims support system become strategic knots of the network), it is possible to fully succeed in changing the organizational structure and the ways to perform interventions in line with that idea (confirmed by the scientific literature) according to which the network is the preferential "tool" to socially forge proximity relationships with the victims, to be at their side, to guide, support and protect them. In this way, victims avoid being trapped in forms of relational isolation and the social capital useful to implement the support network is developed. As far as the network mechanism is concerned, we need to keep in mind that "weaving" a network should "first of all aim at forging bridge relationships, but also at detecting further hubs[12] whose task will then be to connect other areas of the network in order to make it stronger and to decrease its centralised character, that is to say the dependence of its "structural power" on the actions of one person or of a few people (Salvini 2012: 78).

However, we also must be careful not to rhetorically and uncritically celebrate networks, because such an attitude would lead to increased bureaucratization and to a meaningless formalisation of "top-down" agreements, thus causing disorientation and relational gaps instead of

social proximity. As we explained before, sharing, participation in the planning and careful assessment, together with a bottom-up perspective are the key elements to provide authentic value and efficacy to protocols so that they can fully perform their proactive function of organizing networks.

REFERENCES

Bauman Z. (1999), *In search of politics*, Cambridge, Polity Press.
Galavotti C., Pastore G. (2014), *From Theory to Practice: Networks and Support to Crime Victims*, in "From theory to good practices: Pathways for the Establishment of a Victim Supporte Centre, Mantova, FDE Istitute Press.
Fadda R. (2002), *Sentieri della formazione. La formatività umana tra azione ed evento*, Roma, Armando Editore.
Ferrario F. (1996), *Il lavoro di rete nel servizio sociale. Gli operatori tra solidarietà e istituzioni*, Roma, NIS.
Hill M., *Network Assesments and Diagrams: A Flexible Friend for Social Work Practice and Education*, in "Journal of Social Work", 2/2002.
Mazza R. (2013), *Pensare e lavorare in gruppo. La supervisione nelle relazioni di aiuto*, Potenza, Erreci.
Morin E. (2012), *La via. Per l'avvenire dell'umanità*, Milano, Raffaello Cortina.
Nappi A. (2001), *Questioni di storia, teoria e pratica del Servizio Sociale in Italia*, Napoli, Liguori.
Nivoli A., Nivoli L. F. (2001), *Differenti percezioni della vittima*, in *Vittimologia e Psichiatria*, a cura di Nivoli G. C., Lorettu L., Milia P., Nivoli A. M. A., Nivoli L.F., Milano, Edi Ermes.
Pastore G. (2015), *Formazione e mutamento: il progetto VIS Network in Toscana per una costruzione della prossimità sociale*, in "Crimen et Delictum. International Journal of Criminological and Investigative Sciences",Vol. IX, March, 2015.
Salvini A. (2007), *Analisi delle reti sociali. Teorie, metodi. applicazioni*, Milano, FrancoAngeli,.
Salvini A. (2012), *Connettere. L'analisi di rete nel servizio sociale*, Pisa, ETS.
Vezzadini S. (2012), *Per una sociologia della vittima*, Milano, FrancoAngeli.
Zilianti A., Rovai B., *Assistenti sociali professionisti. Metodologia del lavoro sociale*, Carocci, Roma, 2007.