



VSE Leaders Meeting – report on workshops 19 November 2014, Brussels

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1. WORKSHOP ON TRAINING

1.1 Workshop Participants

Jo Kearney, VSE Executive Board Member - Victim Support England & Wales (UK)
Carmen Rasquete, VSE Project Coordinator – APAV (Portugal)
Steen Knudsen - Offerrådgivningen (Denmark)
Petra Klein - Weisser Ring Germany
Gähtlin Leppänen – Ohvriabi (Estonia)
Miren Špek - Croatian Victim and Witness Support Service
Danijela Ivanović - Independent Sector for Victim and Witness Support, Ministry of Justice Croatia
Elisa Corbari - Associazione LIBRA Onlus (Italy)
Joan Deane – AdVIC (Ireland)
Michał Wasylko - Subvenia Victima (Poland)

1.2 Themes/Ideas advanced by everyone at the beginning of the workshop

Domestic violence
Sexual violence
Communication skills
Stress and trauma
Gather training materials to share between members
Training for police forces following changes from the directive
Training for professionals
Volunteer training
How police forces engagement in training on victims needs
War crimes witness
Non-verbal communication
Mediation
Supervision of volunteers
Cooperation with judicial academy on directive and specialised crimes
Problem to engage judges, keep independence

1.3 Training for professionals: brainstorming

Need for structured training to judges, should be part of the curricula. How can we do this?
Can VSE advocate for this? At this stage just informal events have happened. Victims' needs are seen as emotional needs.

In Croatia only psychologists or social workers can work with children. Learning in University goes in one direction and in practice then is different. More work on volunteers training is to be done.

Need on how to manage stress as a volunteer.

Ideas

Judges

Multidisciplinary groups of professionals in training: objective to know each other, prosecutor, police, judges and social workers. Example of Poland.

Try to get the Supreme Court recommendation for training needs of judges.

Involve judges, magistrates, prosecutors, police in the development of training contents.

Change the curricula even in academia to include victims needs.
VSE make judicial education with judges, probably more attractive to them
At the highest level VSE may advocate high court, etc. with the directive coming in, we can help on how that is going to look like. Put best practices in.

Police

Academy for training with funding from the Government to offer training to different part of professions, so expect the police and other professionals to come because they are offering special training. Ongoing training not mandatory. With high profile speakers to engage interest.

1.4 Volunteer training: brainstorming

England & Wales have an e-learning model, they take it on before they go to the classroom. It helps because people know exactly what to expect.

Volunteer training should be accredited.

Engaging victims themselves with organisation might be a plus and make a difference.

Especially for example in cases of homicide, it would be helpful to have a victim involved in the training.

Germany does not have such specialised training, for example as in homicide, but volunteers give the support always when needed.

Ideas

VSE develop something general that can be customised:

- Training guidelines
- Newsletter just focused on training with contacts
- Asking members to share materials and examples
- Show infovictims, abc justice and manuals available on the website, secjus
- International training for volunteers, general and then go to members to do more specific. Even have an e-learning module.
- European meeting of volunteers, exchange programmes

1.5 Infosharing

1.5.1 Ireland (report from AdVIC)

In Ireland, our Garda Siochana (police) have begun to implement Victim Service Offices. They began with a pilot scheme in two counties and will now roll out the service to 28 Divisions within the force. Each Victim Service Office will be staffed by a Garda (police officer) and a clerical staff member. It is envisaged that the personnel will be trained in communications skills. They will be trained in listening skills, non-verbal communication skills and mediations skills. It is felt that empathy will form a significant part of any training programme. AdVIC has been invited to make presentations to An Garda Siochana on a number of occasions.

AdVIC and Victims Rights Alliance are working to raise awareness in the legal profession and judiciary about the importance of training and engagement with victim groups. We are speaking at various legal conferences in Ireland and stressing the need for training in the skills necessary to be able to embrace the changes that are coming. We are in contact with our Garda Siochana, legal professionals and judiciary at the highest level and if the interest

being shown translates into practice, then we are hopeful that the Directive will be implemented. We will continue to work towards driving this forward. As it was said at the meeting in November by VSE, hearts and minds will need to be opened up to victims' rights and if the agencies of the criminal justice system engage with victims groups, it can only be beneficial.

1.5.2 Croatia (report from CVWSS)

The Croatian Victim and Witness Support Service (CVWSS) performs trainings for volunteers and education for police officers and members of judicial bodies, sometimes alone and sometime in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice. CVWSS published this year a new manual for volunteers receiving training/education. The new manual is an update of older versions including updated legislation on CP and CPC (especially the rights of the witness and rights of the victims). The second part of the manual is training in psychology and the third part is about rights and obligations of the volunteers. Unfortunately, the manual is only available in Croatian.

Recruitment:

Victim and Witness Support Service Croatia recruits new volunteers approximately every 6 months. Volunteers are carefully selected and educated and are mostly law, psychology and social work students who wish to acquire experience for their future professional work. After the call for new volunteers is published, applicants are invited to a structured interview with call center coordinators who, based on the interview, estimate if the applicant would be a good helpline volunteer.

As for the formal requirements for becoming a 116 006 helpline volunteer, a person can apply if he/she is at least 18 years old, does not have a criminal record and can contribute to the achievement of the organisation's goals with his/her professional, scientific or social engagement.

Basic training:

After the selection of new volunteers, a basic training for new volunteers is organised. The training is conceived in 2 parts:

- Three-day lectures and workshops with different subjects from relevant fields (law, psychology and social work),
- Individual work with volunteer mentors in the call centre (working through a structured training checklist, introduction to the databases, etc.)

After the basic training is completed, volunteer receives a first call under supervision of volunteer coordinator. After listening to the recording of the volunteer's first call, the volunteer coordinator fills out an evaluation form and estimates whether the volunteer is ready to receive calls independently or he/she needs more individual education. VWSS Croatia seeks to provide volunteers regular educations once a month on different victim support related subjects to improve the quality of volunteer work.

After 1 year of volunteer work on 116 006 helpline, volunteers receive a certificate of volunteering, a certificate of competence acquired through volunteering and a job recommendation letter.

1.5.3 Croatia (report from Ministry of Justice - Independent Sector for Victim and Witness Support)

Croatian practice in training for volunteers and victim support employees is organized in different ways:

Training for Volunteers:

- Volunteers go through the procedure of selection and basic training that lasts for 3 days and covers the topics of: legal, practical and psychological aspects of witnessing, role play
- Trainings are organized and provided/ held by employees of Independent Sector for Victim and Witness support (Ministry of Justice) and employees of Victim support Departments at the courts where volunteers are going to volunteer
- before the volunteers start with volunteering we provide group assessment held by the employees of Ministry
- We also provide from 2014 specialized trainings in domestic violence, sexual violence, stress - trauma and communication skills topics (trainers are also employees of Ministry)
- In cooperation with local NGO's and Volunteers centers Support departments at the courts provide additional trainings for volunteers and for themselves
- Ministry of Justice, Independent Sector is also providing supervision for volunteers

Trainings for support staff at the Support Departments at the courts:

- All of them have been trained for 5 day by different professionals when they started working- Trainings were financed by UNDP and covered topics: legal, practical and psychological aspects of witnessing, stress and trauma, role play, volunteers management
- They periodically participate at the trainings organized by Legal Academy, according to the provided topics
- Ministry of Justice, Independent Sector for Victim and Witness support closely cooperate with Ministry of Interior so support staff can participate at different training organized through the projects
- Support staff also by themselves as lecturers provide training for other professionals in cooperation with different NGO's and local police offices
- In cooperation with Police academy support staff participate in the provision of trainings for police officers on the topic of victim and witness support
- they regularly attend round tables, conferences and meetings with other organizations and NGO's
- Ministry of Justice is providing supervision for support staff, held by international expert, financed by one EU project and in cooperation with Ministry of Interior

1.5.4 Italy (report from Associazione LIBRA Onlus)

LIBRA is now involved in VIS EU project, and through this project has organized a large training session: *VIS Network – Victim Supporting: a network to support and aid crime victims (VIS)*.

It is being developed since April 2013 and its main goal is (as stated in the project name itself) to provide victims with a network that is capable of supporting victims of crime (any kind), in particular those greatly exposed to victimization (such as women, elders, children, disabled). Among other activities, this European project intends to reach its aims through trainings addressed to all those working in fields dealing with victims.

“VIS Formative Training” held twice at LIBRA. This course concerned both the victimological and criminological subject addressed to all operators working in these fields such as lawyers, social workers, healthcare operators, etc... This course aims at giving a better comprehension on all the aspects concerning victims. It is intended to explain how broad and multifaceted this subject is, thus helping as many victims as possible because lack of social awareness usually prevents many victims to seeking help. This training was held by lawyers, criminologists, victimologists, M.E., psychologists, and other operators. The average users of this 48 hours training were lawyers and social workers, 60 users in total each time. At this training also participated many healthcare operators from the three different Hospitals in the Province of Mantova – Italy.

LIBRA organized these trainings with the possibility, for different professionals – such as social workers, lawyers, psychologists, healthcare operators- to access at formative credits useful for their job. These trainings were very useful also for the possibility to create a large cooperation within local network (third sector associations, private and public agencies, institutions, etc..).

However was so difficult to involve police forces in this training.

After this course many victims of crime and specially women victims of domestic violence were advised to go to Mantova CSV (Centro di Supporto alle Vittime di Reato –Victims Support Centre).

Before “VIS Formative Training”, our Association organized a specific training for healthcare operators, within “Out of Violence” project, financed with the support of Equal Opportunity National Ministry.

In order to providing victims with a swift support is essential that operators such as doctors, nurses and other healthcare operators, are competent in subjects concerning victimization, such as how to deal with victims and how to recognize the signs of violence. This training revolved in particular around victims of domestic violence (especially women) or victims who suffered abuses in general (vulnerable groups of victims).

A total of 100 people attended this 30 hours course held by lawyers, criminologists, M.E. (medical examiners) and psychologists. This group was composed by healthcare operators of Carlo Poma Hospital, which includes hospitals of the cities of Mantova, Asola and Pieve di Coriano (Province of Mantova).

This training included also recommendations about exactly when they are obliged to report a crime or to what facility or service, victims should be forwarded in order to receive proper help (which of course depends on their specific issue).

The same training was organized also in Perugia (in the middle of Italy) in collaboration with the Hospital of Perugia. Also this training was direct to healthcare operators and the matters were the same.

LIBRA also collaborated with FDE Institute of Criminology of Mantova, (<http://www.istitutofde.it/index.php/en/criminology-institute/crinve--school-of-criminology.html>) for the scientific issues related to the management of the Victims Support Centre and the organization of the training sessions.

During VSE training workshop many representatives propose an international cooperation for training, both of volunteer and for operators. This training could be very useful in order to exchange best practices about training at EU level.

Referring to EU directive establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, training is a specific requirement for all professionals working with victims of crime.

1.5.5 Poland (report from Subvenia Victima)

Subvenia Victima supported the implementation of 11 training courses for approximately 1000 participants conducted in Poland between September and November 2013. These were

training courses for judges, prosecutors, probation officers, police officers, social workers and NGO representatives, aimed at raising qualifications of these professionals and improving the quality of services provided to victims of crime, with an emphasis on measures and methods of prevention of secondary victimisation in compliance with an act on state compensation for victims of certain crimes.

The training programme included:

- Crime Victim Support Network.
- State compensation for victims of certain crimes
- Analysis of needs and possibilities of victims of crime (with reference to Article 22 of the Directive).
- Analysis of inter-institutional activities for victims of crime- description of systemic solutions aimed at minimizing the risk of secondary victimization.

The training courses were tailored to the needs of judges, prosecutors, probation officers, police officers, social workers and NGO workers and were aimed at increasing the qualifications of these professionals and the quality of support provided to victims of crime, in particular concerning the measures and methods of prevention of secondary victimization and in accordance with the Act on state compensation for victims of certain crimes. The training courses were conducted within the project "The Strengthening and Development of the Crime Victim Support Network in Poland", financed by the programme "Criminal Justice 2007-2013", managed by the Directorate General for Justice. The general aim of the project, to the realization of which the training courses contributed, was to facilitate access to the justice system through enabling victims to contact not only the professionals representing the justice system, but also representatives of external bodies, whose statutory role is to provide support to victims. The final result of the project was facilitation of access to the justice system and enhancement of the image of the justice system.

The aim mentioned above was achieved by providing training (in 11 groups) to:

- 440 judges,
- 220 prosecutors,
- 110 probation officers,
- 110 police officers,
- 110 social workers,
- 110 NGO workers.

Each group comprised 40 judges, 20 prosecutors, 10 probation officers, 10 police officers, 10 social workers and 10 NGO workers from the area of a given appellate court.

The first day of training consisted of courses on legal issues, which were conducted by a judge with experience in cases concerning compensation.

The second and third day of training consisted of psychological workshops which were conducted by 2 trainers.

The psychological workshops focused on:

- Definition of the term "crisis" and description of a person in crisis, especially a child, taking in consideration the affective, cognitive and behavioural functioning of the person.
- Explanation of the term "trauma" – what it is and how to assess the functioning of a person who has been affected by a traumatic incident - crime, based on Triage Assessment Form (TAF).

- Presentation and description of the six-step model of crisis intervention: defining the problem; ensuring the person's safety; providing support; examining alternatives; making a plan; obtaining commitment.
- The role of support services and their cooperation with the justice system based on the six-step model of crisis intervention.

1.5.6 Projects materials available

SecJus (Estonia, Portugal, Scotland)

The European Directive 2012/29/EU establishes minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime and contains within it a requirement for "officials likely to come into contact with victims" to receive specialist training to increase their awareness of the needs of victims and to enable them to deal with victims in an impartial, respectful and professional manner

The website – www.secjus.com – contains the framework to create a training session together with suggested training materials which will allow each individual discipline within the criminal justice sector to raise awareness and sensitise them to the needs of victims of crime.

Infovictims

Following the success of project Infovictims, APAV is currently managing its sequel, project Infovictims II - co-financed by the European Commission under Criminal Justice Programme – Directorate-General for Justice - that shall improve the existing tool and extend and adapt them to new countries. Scotland, Poland, Germany, Portugal and Austria are the countries that form this partnership. After a first meeting to establish the necessary steps to undertake, a second partners' meeting is already scheduled for the beginning of December, where results of the first improvements and adaptations of the Infovictims website will be presented and discussed.

Please see website: <http://www.infovictims.com/com/index.html>

abc justice

On the 24th of September, APAV launched the website www.abcjustica.pt, the main outcome of the Project ABC Justice - co-financed by the Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF), United States Embassy. This new and innovative resource aims to inform youngsters aged between 12 and 17 about the functioning of the Portuguese criminal justice system and the rights of victims of crime. Several themes are covered using a simple approach, with uncomplicated and child-friendly language. The rights of victims of crime within the context of the criminal justice system and the ways and resources to get them are explained. Youngsters are also provided with an overview of the different phases of the criminal proceedings as well as with the role of the most relevant figures that work or participate in the criminal justice system.

Young visitors will also be allowed to have some fun while learning! They are presented with videos where young students, in the role of actors, explain the core themes of the website. A quiz for young people to put their knowledge at test is also available.

For now the website is available in Portuguese, but soon we will present an English version so that other foreign youngsters can jump on board for a trip into the world of the criminal justice system.

CABVIS (2011-2012)

Training manual developed under the CABVIS project:

http://victimsupporteurope.eu/activeapp/wp-content/files_mf/1382968310TrainingManual.pdf

2. WORKSHOP ON CROSS-BORDER COLLABORATION

2.1 Workshop Participants

Sabrina Bellucci, VSE Executive Board Member – INAVEM (France)
Tiina Rantanen, VSE Executive Board Member - Rikosuhripaivystys Suomessa (Finland)
Barbara Unterlerchner – Weisser Ring Austria
Petra Vitousova - Bily Kruh Bezpeci (Czech Republic)
Marketa Vitousova - Bily Kruh Bezpeci (Czech Republic)
Leena-Kaisa Åberg - Rikosuhripaivystys Suomessa (Finland)
László Fügedi - Fehér Gyűrű (Hungary)
Ákos Harmath - Fehér Gyűrű (Hungary)
Eva Larsson – Brottsofferjourernas Riksförbund (Sweden)
Lisa Kennedy – ITAS (Ireland)
José Miguel Ayllón Camacho - ANVDV (Spain)

2.2 Result of discussion

The Directive provides a big challenge because there are many rights included but little collected information on how the rights will work in practice. Probably this will mean that victim services will have to do a lot of research in individual cases on how the system works in the other countries.

We talked about the practical assistance of immediate need that victims have and learned of the very good system in Ireland where the Irish organization helps tourists when they are a victim of theft, e.g. stolen passports. Their assistance can include helping to get a travel document, organize accommodation, meals etc.

When we are talking about the long term needs of the victims and the actual criminal process there are many issues to take care of, such as:

- Interpretation and translations. Which documents will be translated? It can take a very long time to get the translations for example of court decisions so that the victim living in another country will have to wait for the official information for a very long time.
- Providing information to the victim or the relatives of the victim of the case in the country where the crime happened. We noticed that it is really difficult to get information of the case if you do not have the case number or a printed hearing paper.
- Paying for the travel costs to come to court proceedings. Victim? Lawyer?
- Support during the court hearings.
- Is there the possibility of video hearings?

-Compensations can be on a very different level in EU countries. Or the deadline for getting compensation.

-Does the police refer also cross border victims to victim services?

It is very important for the victim services to communicate and network with each other. It is a big challenge if there is no member of VSE in the home country of the victim.

Main conclusions:

1. There is a need for a list of standards of the rights of cross-border victims – based on the Directive - which we can use in our case work and in advocating our own governments.
2. Member organization should have basic information on their webpages in their own language and at least in English of the services for cross-border victims.
3. We need clear information on who to contact in our sister VSE organisations in cross-border cases: names, email addresses.

3. WORKSHOP ON ACCREDITATION

3.1 Workshop participants

Victor Jammers, VSE Executive Board Member – Slachtofferhulp Nederland (NL)

Annie Mulvaney – AdVIC (Ireland)

Tomasz Piechowiak - Subvenia Victima (Poland)

Marzena Piechowiak - Subvenia Victima (Poland)

Olga Brażkowska - Subvenia Victima (Poland)

Greenika Perezjuk – Ohvriabi (Estonia)

Hélène Heinrichs, VSE Administrative Officer (VSE office Brussels, Belgium)

Levent Altan, VSE Executive Director (VSE office Brussels, Belgium)

3.2 Result of discussion

Example of how an accreditation system can work:

- 1) Define standards
- 2) "Self-assessment phase" for organisations wishing to be accredited
- 3) "Control phase" of self-assessment to check if standards are really complied with by these organisations

To define standards, 2 aspects should be considered:

- Standards from the point of view of the victim to make sure that services have a certain quality level
- Standards from the point of view of the donors to make sure that funds are spent adequately

Standards from the point of view of the victim:

Standards in relation to volunteers/ paid staff: should be differentiated as the requirements are different.

For volunteers, there should be a difference made between those who are in direct contact with (vulnerable) victims and those who are not.

Participants agree that more training should be provided to volunteers.
The problem of having standards which are too high so that no volunteers can be found is mentioned.

Standards from the point of view of the donors:

The importance of having good governance systems in place is mentioned:

- List of services provided, quantified in number and type of victims helped
- Definition of services provided
- Processes of achieving services
- Reporting on services

When organisations receive funding and report to the donors (activity and financial reports), they already comply to “standards” defined by the donors.