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This is the second of a two part series based on the recent victim support project designed by the IPT, the first of which appeared in December 1999 as Vol 1 No 4.

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We report on the findings of a year long project to find out whether it is possible to create an environment in which the national Victim Empowerment Project objectives can be achieved

The Victim Empowerment Programme (VEP) pilot study began in early 1999. It was funded by the European Union Foundation for Human Rights and undertaken by the IPT in two provinces, KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape. The VEP forms part of the National Crime Prevention Strategy and the South African Police Service is only one of 6 agencies responsible for improving victim support services, with the Department of Welfare being the lead agency.

Building NGO Partnerships for Effective Victim Empowerment in the Eastern Cape..... 6

A case study from PCRD, the Eastern Cape partners involved in this pilot project, detailing one successful implementation strategy

The challenges of both fighting crime and dealing with the damage and trauma to victims of crime demands a holistic and strategic approach. What we endeavoured to achieve in this project was to create a broader awareness of the problems and foster an environment in which co operation would flourish.

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We discuss the provincial forums as a means of implementing the victim empowerment programme

One of the principle objectives of this programme was to "contribute to the creation of an enabling environment for victims of crime in order to ensure an increased access to justice, law and information." The victim interviews and surveys show that partnerships, and a multi agency approach, go some way toward achieving this.

National VEP Status Report...8

A brief overview of the newly released National Status report

We hope that this issue will continue to spark debate and interest around the VEP and also inspire individuals and organisations to form partnerships and network rather than focus only on resource shortages as an impediment to meeting the needs of victims.

Implementing the VEP in Police Stations Background to the Project

The purpose of this pilot project was to test whether a series of planned interventions would result in an improvement in the service offered to victims by the South African Police Service, thereby contributing to an environment in which victims have an increased access to justice. These interventions were developed in response to the oft repeated complaint that a lack of resources were the key hindrance to delivering an effective service.

The project involved the implementation of five key strategies

- training of SAPS members in victim support skills
- facilitation between external victim support service providers and the SAPS as well as facilitation within the station to improve management / member relations
- networking with a broad range of interested parties to ensure co ordination and increased impact through partnerships
- material development such as a referral directory, posters for the community service centre, pocket cards for members and any other relevant means of increasing information available to members
- lobbying at area and provincial levels to ensure adequate support for the station initiatives.

This project was supported by a strong research component which utilised both baseline data and post intervention data in order to evaluate the impact in the six stations. Numerous methods of data collection were utilised, including focus groups, interviews with victims of crime, CPF and SAPS members, surveys and questionnaires as well as workshops and onsite observation.

A key rationale of the VEP is that an effective service depends on a co ordinated response from both government departments and external service providers. One outcome of the intervention around

networking was the commitment of numerous service providers to the project, including Advice Desk for Abused Women, Childline, FAMSA, KZN Programme for Survivors of Violence, Life Line, NICRO and the Open Door Crisis Centre.

At the end of this first year we believe that an improved service to victims is possible under the current circumstances. Lack of resources are not an excuse for poor service.

Evaluation Results

The results of a year-long evaluation of an IPT strategy designed to implement the Victim Empowerment Programme in six stations of the South African Police Service appears to challenge an idea held by many SAPS members that success in improving victim support depends on station resources. Altogether, the strategic interventions at four SAPS stations in Durban, and two in the Eastern Cape, have resulted in improvements ranging from modest to substantial. In fact, the station with the least resources, located in the most disadvantaged area of the study, rated second in terms of progress in implementing the programme.

Substantial evidence from monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the training and facilitation programme by two different NGOs, the IPT and the PCRD, shows that partnerships are crucial to improved support for victims. Improvements were recorded where there were partnerships between the stations *and* NGOs, community stakeholders, the community police fora, government departments and others. This idea of partnerships includes integrating the VEP with other strategies aimed at improving service delivery and public safety. Although strategic partnerships and networking led to improvements in facilities for victims and the public at five out of six stations, none of the strategic interventions that had the most impact were based on increasing resources.

Those stations that made the most progress in the study were distinguished by a winning formula that included identifying change agents within the stations to champion the improvements, integrating victim support with other existing programmes like the Service Delivery Improvement Programme, being part of localised multi-agency approaches,

conducting proper needs assessments and then delivering on those needs.

A dividend of the comparative aspect of the research came from observing a practice developed in the Eastern Cape which involved a partnership with an NGO that trained volunteers in trauma support and maintained an office for them within the station. The NGO also provided materials, maintained records, and ensured around-the-clock service. This offered a range of benefits including more professional care, increased efficiency, a means of evaluating and monitoring victim care through a central agency, freeing station members for police activities, and strengthening SAPS/community relations.

Six Practices with a big impact

Six of the best practices in the intervention were identified in the study along with eight lessons learnt about how to improve victim services in SAPS stations. Significantly, none of the six practices depend on targeting station resources but instead required attention to developing various forms of partnerships. This usually resulted in an increase in resources and sometimes proved capable of pushing the VEP forward even where general management problems were being experienced. These best practices included:

1. Change Agents to oversee implementation

The use of 'Change Agents' within the stations proved to be an effective strategy for implementing the VEP that also helped facilitate station 'ownership' of the process, provide a means for monitoring the intervention and a contact person who assisted in the programme. This was a critical factor in overcoming the need for increased management support in the two stations that rated highest in terms of outcomes. In one station where there was little management support and where change agents were not utilised, progress was poor.

2. Networking Forums

Networking forums were facilitated by the IPT and the PCRD to bring change agents together with external service providers who had agreed to provide support to victims referred from the six

stations. This not only resulted in improved relations and referrals but manifested in an upgrading of facilities at two of the stations. One very important factor in improved victim care at the two stations that rated highly in terms of progress was the measurable improvement in their relationship with outside service providers.

3. Systematising referrals

The publication of directories and posters that were placed in every Community Service Centre, and which listed service provider contact details, helped to systematize referrals and resulted in an increase in referrals, better treatment of victims and more professional confidence in handling victims. This was evident even in stations where the system of change agents was not sustainable.

4. Good workshop material delivered through experiential learning methods

Evidence based on workshop monitoring, interviews and station observations demonstrated that training workshops, including the workbook and the experiential methods utilised were highly effective. It was sufficient to result in significant improvement in victim care by at least 75% of the members who attended workshops. Where 50% or more of the members at a station received training the improvements were widely recognised by the public, victims and CPF members. This means that the delivery of the same training to more members drawn from one station would make a measurable difference.

5. Initial briefing of SAPS Management

Establishing contact and providing a briefing to SAPS at national, provincial and area level prior to approaching the stations helped build commitment to the project and integrated it with the service delivery improvement programme. The IPT and PCRD worked directly with appropriate SAPS officials at all levels of government.

6. Workshop Feedback from Change Agents

A workshop half way through the project in which change agents were given the opportunity to

evaluate and record the progress of the programme was very successful in terms of feedback. Ideally, these feedback workshops should take place at three intervals during the process, the beginning, middle and end. Evaluation and monitoring of this kind should be considered crucial to implementing any programme as it allows for changes and adjustments during the intervention and provides an opportunity to fine-tune subsequent interventions.

Eight Lessons Learnt about Strategic Interventions to Implement the VEP

The results also point to eight lessons that could enhance the progress that SAPS can make in implementing the VEP at the station level and therefore help build a better capacity for victim support. These include:

1. Whole Station Training

Whole station training should be emphasised even at the cost of reducing the number of target stations. All the evidence indicates problems and disappointments wherever fewer than 50% of the members were trained. "Injection training" should be avoided but, should funding shortages dictate otherwise, training should be allocated on a basis of half the members from any station.

2. Do not forget the follow-up workshop

VEP training should take place in two workshops rather than one. A one-day workshop followed by a review a month later would improve member understanding, encourage the application of the material learnt and provide a monitoring function.

3. Literacy and Language Issues must be addressed for full effectiveness

Low education levels among police member remains a service delivery issue as reported by victims, the public, and the station managers. SAPS must address this in terms of adult basic education for existing members, higher entrance requirements for new members and, as a last resort, the removal of members who are not competent to perform their duties. Competency should also

include a good understanding of the geography of the area in which they work as this was an issue for frequent public complaint.

Our research also showed that, in order to maximise the benefit of training, it is important for it to be offered in English, Zulu or Xhosa so that all members are able understand the content.

4. Stress Management Workshops for Members

Both pre-intervention and post-intervention data point to the need to include stress management workshops for police members as victims of trauma. High stress levels can be attributed to a complex variety of factors like the crime environment, poor facilities, human resource shortages, and heavy workloads. Stress results in problems with morale, which in turn "knocks off" on victims. Some acknowledgement of the "police as victims" would have a positive impact on their levels of tolerance and empathy.

5. Encourage and support station management but be prepared to deal with weak managers

The efforts to improve victim support blossomed where there was strong and enthusiastic management. The IPT offered workshops on Participative Management Strategies when it was evident that this would be an important component of implementing the VEP. The evaluation suggested that increased teamwork and cooperative behaviour on the VEP would result if this workshop were offered early in the intervention.

SAPS could consider a review of the human resource management structure. The present centralised structure means that it is slow to react to members who fail to perform to acceptable standards, and some devolution of powers within SAPS to station commissioners could have a positive impact on the quality of policing being delivered.

It is unrealistic to expect competent well managed stations to deliver a good service to victims unless it resources them with well-paid top quality leadership, monitors performance and links this to promotions. Given the high crime rates and the low police to population ratios, there is a clear need for higher wages, more quality personnel and more

resources. Otherwise an environment is created in which stress is high and morale is low, a bad combination for offering an empathetic, professional and efficient service to victims.

6. Support the Community Police Fora and Network with the Community

Evidence from five out of six of the stations make it clear that the Community Police Fora can be a significant resource for improving victim facilities. In one case, the CPF was non-functional at the beginning of the programme and flourishing at the end of it. It then raised funds for the station to revamp its Community Service Centre. Elsewhere effective CPFs have helped to provide vehicles, facilities, business partnerships, neighbourhood watches, public safety information, shelters for children, and volunteers.

Victims benefit from this kind of cooperation and therefore joint workshops in group problem solving between CPFs and station management are recommended for the purpose of building cooperation. SAPS and all stakeholders interested in improved police service should also advocate and lobby for funding and support to the Community Police Fora by bodies such as the Civilian Secretariat which has a responsibility to provide funding, research and support.

7. Target the Community As Well

Members of management in all six stations along with many CPF members that were interviewed thought that the community was not being properly targeted in the VEP. Victim support training for the CPF in one community resulted in residents volunteering to assist the police in victim care. The use of printed material, radio, television programmes and other means should be utilised to inform the public of the problems the police face and of the kinds of assistance communities can offer, and what actions they can take with regard to crimes experienced or observed.

This suggests a more holistic approach to the VEP which could have a direct impact on community-police relations.

8. Work toward professionally run Crisis Care Centres

The situation whereby two stations formed a partnership with an outside service provider, NICRO, to offer victim support services from a facility within the station provides a model for best practices. Training, materials and supervision were provided by the NGO along with volunteers on a 24 hour basis. This had an important effect on all other aspects of developing the VEP.

Wherever the practice of locating an NGO-managed office within the station for immediate victim care and referral could be emulated in some form, service would improve through more professional care, increased efficiency, and a means of evaluating and monitoring victim care through a central agency. It also frees station members for more core policing while strengthening SAPS/community relations. This model should be imported into KwaZulu Natal and the Durban area with the proviso that different conditions obtain here and there is a larger community of service providers. Local NGOs and SAPS should work through the provincial victim empowerment forum to see how this model could be implemented here.

Conclusion

While this project has demonstrated that improved victim care can be brought about despite severe resource shortages, it must be recognised that resources alone do count for victim care (see previous insight@ipt vol.1 No 4). Factors like low pay, resource shortages, dysfunctional environments, and poor station management impact heavily on SAPS morale and in turn affect victim care and treatment of the public. These are problems that must be addressed in terms of:

1. finding ways to compensate police members for difficult and dangerous work;
2. better management of existing resources;
3. facilitating partnerships with CPFs and the business community;
4. addressing state resources to upgrade the

- poorest policing facilities;
5. offering participative management training;
 6. workshops for members and management together in cooperative behaviour, and
 7. devolving sufficient powers to the station commissioner so that this officer can play a strong leadership role and act on the advice and concerns of members.
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Building NGO Partnerships for Effective Victim Support in the Eastern Cape

In 1999 the Port Elizabeth-based PCRD was approached by the IPT to assist in implementing a training and facilitation programme for improving victim support (the VEP) in two SAPS stations in the Eastern Cape. One of the target stations serves a largely Xhosa-speaking township, New Brighton. The other station, Kabega Park, serves a large, mixed-use area that includes farms, resorts and suburban areas. The programme included using the training materials and facilitating processes including networking with other organisations working with the SAPS in providing Victim Empowerment. This was seen as important to avoid unnecessary duplication and to attempt to maximize impact.

At present, there are not many organisations working directly with the SAPS on Victim Empowerment in Port Elizabeth. The one organisation that had already done a substantial amount of work is NICRO. This National NGO has launched a very successful programme of establishing Community Care Centres at police stations. How these Centres work is that community volunteers, trained in trauma counseling skills, are available at the station on a 24 hour basis to assist victims of crime, should they request it. SAPS members are meant to make victims aware of this service and provide them with the contact information.

The two stations in which the PCRD worked also had Community Care Centres, which provided an ideal opportunity for the two organisations to work together to improve the impact of both

programmes. The PCRD invited the NICRO volunteers to participate in the workshops on Victim Empowerment that were being held at the stations, and afforded them the opportunity to meet with the SAPS members in an informal manner as well as to remind the members of the service they offer and why it was important to refer victims to the Centre.

The PCRD also placed the Care Centre phone numbers on the Crisis Cards that were given to each SAPS member at the two stations. NICRO was able to help the PCRD by monitoring the impact of the training and facilitation in the stations.

This partnership between NICRO and PCRD worked very well and the two organisations have decided to continue it. The PCRD at present runs a Community Capacity Building Programme for rural communities in the Eastern Cape, who have limited access to services and resources. The PCRD was approached by the SAPS in Cradock and Middleburg and asked to conduct Victim Empowerment Training, for its members during 1999. During these training sessions it was discovered that the victims of crime in these towns have no access to trauma counseling. The PCRD was requested to assist in rectifying this situation.

We have agreed to work with NICRO, and they will establish Community Care Centres in these towns and provide the initial training and support, while the PCRD will facilitate the initial meetings and then assist in the monitoring of the programme after NICRO has established it. We feel that this type of partnership of community, the police and NGO's is needed if we are to make any inroads into assisting the police reduce crime and that these partnerships also have a meaningful impact on public perceptions of the police service.

*Michael Bendle, Director
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Provincial Victim Empowerment Programme Forums

One of the strategies adopted in an attempt to ensure implementation of the VEP at a provincial level has been the establishment of provincial

forums. These forums are responsible for the co ordination of the service activities of government departments and various non government and welfare organisations who, in one way or another, provide service to victims of violence and crime.

In KwaZulu-Natal such a provincial forum was established in 1998 and is comprised of a combination of government department representatives, non government and welfare based organisations. The KwaZulu-Natal provincial forum recently re structured itself in an attempt to to deal with issues which have inhibited its effectiveness. Of the various issues that have confronted the provincial forum, three are of particular concern and worthy of comment,

1. The lack of senior departmental representation at the forum.
2. The perception that VEP is an “add on” rather than an integral part of departmental service delivery
3. The limited membership of the forum which lacks sufficient presence of direct victim service organisations.

Many of the departments represented on the forum have mandated only junior staff, or those with only regional responsibilities, to attend meetings which averts agile decision making and reporting at forum meetings. Attempts to influence departmental strategy on victim related issues are often frustrated by representatives’s limited knowledge of their departmental policy on the issue. They are also unable to make, or adequately influence, decision making within their own departments. Since the VEP is a government initiative, entrenched within the National Crime Prevention Strategy, government departments, like health, justice safety and security are policy bound under the NCPS to attend, participate and support provincial forums. It was expected that representatives would at least hold sufficiently senior positions so as to enable them to exert influence within their departments and implement decisions

All departments were expected to fully integrate issues of improved victim support into both their budgets and their daily activities, an expectation

that has had limited success. They were further expected to achieve targets outlined in the National Victim Empowerment Programme. However, with the exception of certain departments little can be reported on the achievement these targets and less on the expansion and co ordination of victim support efforts in the province. Departments usually justify their lack of progress by highlighting inadequate finance and arrested finance delivery. However, the real problem would appear to be the perception that victim support is a “project” assigned to an individual rather than an integral strategy which is everyone’s responsibility. This problem is compounded when the individual mandated is given very little time or managerial support around participation on the VEP forum. The KZN Forum members intend to address this problem by approaching government department heads for written commitment to the vision of expanding the victim empowerment effort in this province.

These issues are particularly troublesome, considering that victims of violence and crime almost always have to confront one or more government departments after victimisation.

A third concern of the provincial forum is the poor representation of direct victim service providers, organisations which provide the core victim support work within the province. Their activities usually include the provision of shelters, counselling and trauma debriefing services. These vital services are often beyond the means of the provincial departments and so the formation of partnerships becomes a key factor in meeting victims needs. Since a key focus of the National Victim Empowerment Programme is on the co ordination of existing services both within and outside government departments, the identification and persuasion of such service providers to participate in the forum is of paramount importance. Their experiences and the extent and intensity of their work, shared from a platform designed to highlight and address the plight of victims can help realise victim support efforts within departments.

Making Provincial Forums Work

KwaZulu-Natal is a large province with enormous geographic and socio economic diversity. Any victim support effort will have to take cognisance

of these diverse demographics. To meet this challenge existing victim service organisations and government departments must look to ways of replicating provincial structures at local \ area levels and through the provincial forum, begin a process of mapping and identifying organisations who provide direct victim support services. This should include smaller victim support initiatives, where individuals provide some sort of victim service through community based organisations such as religious, women's and youth clubs who's members provide volunteer counselling services at police station crisis centres.

Another possibility might be to co-opt faith based organisations who already undertake a huge amount of welfare work, which often includes victim support initiatives. Even if they have no current victim service programmes, these religious bodies should be approached and persuaded to participate in the forum, as they may be able to undertake such initiatives. These structures may be invaluable in making available their sometimes numerous centres of worship for the extension of victim support services. The financial and other resources of religious organisations are also worthy of contemplation.

Much has to be done to expand current victim support services in KwaZulu-Natal. There are a number of other direct service provider organisations in this province whose details are noticeably absent on the provincial forum membership list and a key task for the present forum is to identify these organisations and persuade their participation in one form or another.

National VEP Status Report

The National VEP have produced a status report detailing the achievement of the programme since its inception in 1996. This report can be accessed through <http://www.welfare.gov.za>

The report acknowledges that there have been delays in the implementation process, at present only three out of nine provincial VEP project managers have commenced working (Gauteng, Free State and KwaZulu-Natal). The others, while planning to fast-track their programmes, are only getting them underway this month. An additional concern is that there is no National VEP Programme Manager. According to the status report, "The contract post was advertised; interviews were conducted, and re-conducted. Top management has not yet made a decision on the appointment".

On the plus side, ninety-seven projects are underway of which 63 are provincial projects which involve setting up one-stop service centres for victims. An evaluation and monitoring process is underway to assess the effectiveness of these centres. SAPS and Welfare each have 13 National projects apiece leaving two or three projects for each of the other agencies.

Two outcomes mentioned are the launch, in June 2000, of a Domestic Violence Resource Directory which includes protocols and services on domestic violence and the award to the Advice Desk for Abused Women to train social workers in domestic violence starting in May 2000



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