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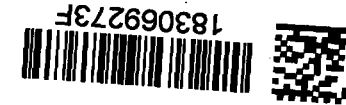
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Evanthe Schurink

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victim

line

help for
crime victims

dial

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Provides:
*information
to victims of crime
*referral of victims to relevant
community resources
*emotional assistance

nicro
nimro

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SUID-AFRIKAANSE NASIONALE INSTITUUT INSAKE MISDAADVOORKOMING EN REHABILITASE VAN OÓRTREDEERS

VICTIMLINE

**THE DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF A
SUPPORT SERVICE FOR CRIME VICTIMS**

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- A record-keeping system for the administration and organization of VICTIMLINE is already in place but could only be used for evaluation purposes if properly organized and supervised. The administration system should be adapted to meet the needs of the researchers.
- VICTIMLINE should have a built-in research component in order to determine which programme elements work best and which elements could be improved. Systematic evaluation and development on a continuous basis is needed to determine which short-term and long-term adjustments should be made to the programme.
- Although victim support services are considered to be affordable because they provide value for money (Maguire & Corbett, 1987) the funding of VICTIMLINE needs to be looked at seriously. As has already been stated, the development of VICTIMLINE was seriously hampered by insufficient funds, especially the efficient marketing of the service.
- The marketing of VICTIMLINE needs to be undertaken in a more professional manner. It is clear that members of the Action Committee lacked the time and expertise to market VICTIMLINE adequately. The prospect of involving volunteers (through the operation of the Marketing Committee within the new structure) in the functioning of VICTIMLINE should improve this situation.
- It is important to note that problems experienced in one component (i.e. funding) of a support service for crime victims and potential victims of crime affect all other elements (i.e. marketing of the service, number of telephone calls, evaluation of service etc.).

In view of the above recommendations the reader will justifiably conclude that VICTIMLINE is underutilized by victims - not because there is no need for this service but because victims are generally unaware of any source of help for their problems. This problem is however not unique to VICTIMLINE but was a common teething problem experienced during the early years of the victim movement in overseas countries (Doerner *et al.*, 1976:482-490). Taking into account the results of the literature study regarding the need of victim support services, as well as the findings of the evaluation of VICTIMLINE, it seems that the obvious thing to do at present is to follow the recommendations of one of the victims who took part in the research and to "Go for it because there is a tremendous need out there".

VICTIMLINE

THE DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF A SUPPORT SERVICE FOR CRIME VICTIMS

Evanthe Schurink

Pretoria

Human Sciences Research Council

1993

This is a publication of the main committee for the Co-operative Research Programme on Affordable Personal Safety.

The main committee does not necessarily agree with the views expressed and the conclusions drawn in this publication.

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**Efforts to promote pro-survivor public and private policies
Resource development for victimization and survivor services**

- The recruitment and screening of a number of volunteers was undertaken in a professional manner. It is important to note that the recruitment of volunteers should always be built on the exact needs of the service. More volunteers of other cultural groups need to be recruited.
- Although some improvements (such as the integration of theory and practice, direct counselling skills and crisis intervention) are necessary, the basis of a training package for volunteers has been developed and a number of volunteers have been successfully trained.
- The examination of volunteers needs to be adapted and simplified to enable volunteers of other cultural groups to qualify.*
- The VICTIMLINE support service could meet the immediate needs of crime victims but the long-term needs of victims should receive serious attention.
- The co-ordinator managed to motivate the volunteers sufficiently by providing opportunities for further development, social interaction and communication. Motivation could be improved and volunteers could be put to better use within the new structure of VICTIMLINE.
- Satisfying the expectations and providing some form of recognition of volunteers are important to counteract a high turnover of volunteers.
- Continuous training and individual supervision are essential to enable volunteers to discuss their cases, raise fears, anxieties or problems encountered by them and to learn from the experiences of others.
- The VICTIMLINE office has been sufficiently equipped to meet the short-term needs of crime victims and potential victims, but the long-term needs of victims need to be addressed seriously.

* Two African ladies who passed the screening successfully and who had the qualities to become counsellors, failed their examination.

Preventive interventions

Supports to strengthen families
Pro-social skill development
Social support
Workplace supports
Community development
Economic development
Pro-social media

Risk reduction and early intervention

Early identification of and intervention with
at-risk children, youth and families
Crime risk management

Crisis and initial intervention

Protection
Physical first aid
Psychological first aid
Emergency services
Crisis intervention

Recovery assistance

Case advocacy, personal support and direct aid
Justice system services
Health care
Psychosocial care
Financial reparation
Assistance with environmental stressors and supports

Collaboration

Case teams
Programme development councils
Policy development coalitions

Advocacy

Efforts to change negative attitudes and
behaviours toward survivors

*This report is dedicated to the memory of Laetitia,
whose commitment to alleviate the hardship of
people in need of care will continue to inspire us
to remain loyal to the cause of crime victims*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank the following people and organizations:

- The HSRC's Co-operative Research Programme: Affordable Personal Safety for financial assistance.
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- Mrs Martie Boesenberg and Mrs Ina Stahmer for editing the report.

EVANTHE SCHURINK

June 1993

- The structure of NICRO is ideally suited to provide a support service to victims of crime. VICTIMLINE should continue to function as part of the Pretoria branch of NICRO.
- Co-operation and trust between VICTIMLINE and the Pretoria branch of NICRO and the NICRO head office is necessary and should be purposefully cultivated.
- The planned fund-raising co-ordination committee (representing the chairpersons of all the fund-raising committees in the Pretoria area) should be established by the Pretoria branch without delay. Such a committee could co-ordinate fund-raising strategies and could ease the fund-raising endeavours of VICTIMLINE considerably.
- A service such as VICTIMLINE should not be regarded purely as a humanitarian response to a person experiencing a life crisis but as a necessary service satisfying the needs of crime victims and campaigning for their rights.
- The evaluation and development of a service such as VICTIMLINE should therefore be based on criteria aimed at satisfying the needs of crime victims (such as capacity of the service, standards of training of volunteers, quality of services, structure and organization, available resources etc.) and campaigning for their rights (i.e. adopting a sufficiently active role in campaigning for victims' rights, reaching out to contact every victim regardless of culture, social status etc.).
- Problems related to victimization could be conceptualized within different stages ranging from pre-victimization through to recovery. A comprehensive victim-service system should contain effective interventions at every stage.* The ideal crime victim support service includes the following interventions:

System supports

Comprehensive planning
Education and training
Research

* Taken from Andrews (1992).

Other developments which are in the pipeline include the following:

- Negotiating the development of a referral system for victims of serious crime with the SA Police. The Development Committee is presently conducting an experiment of this nature together with the Brooklyn police station. The possibility of a paging system which will allow a 24-hour telephone counselling system for VICTIMLINE is currently being investigated.
- The development of satellite VICTIMLINE offices in Mamelodi and Atteridgeville at the planned suboffices of NICRO is presently being examined. This could provide a walk-in service.

It is clear from the above paragraphs that even though the desired result, namely the provision of low-cost quality service to large numbers of crime victims or potential crime victims, has not yet been fully realized, the seed of VICTIMLINE as a support, information and referral service for crime victims has germinated despite the barren ground it was planted in (lack of financial support, lack of expertise in marketing etc.). The present VICTIMLINE service has been streamlined and is now set to provide an affordable and accountable service to all victims and potential victims of crime (except rape victims and child victims for whom excellent services already exist) irrespective of gender, culture or social status.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion the following recommendations regarding VICTIMLINE as a support, information and referral service for crime and potential crime victims are made:

- There is a definite need for a service such as VICTIMLINE for all crime victims and potential victims of crime. The augmentation of VICTIMLINE to national proportions should be investigated.
- A comprehensive attempt to address victimization requires a broad continuum of services including primary prevention, secondary prevention, crisis intervention and recovery services.
- The hours that VICTIMLINE functions should be extended as soon as possible to provide a 24-hour service. Since this involves the use of a paging system the necessary funds must be found.

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ABSTRACT

This report is an attempt to evaluate whether VICTIMLINE - a support service for victims of crimes other than rape and child abuse - which operates in the Pretoria area, had achieved its stated objectives. The researcher has attempted to identify VICTIMLINE's weaknesses and strengths, the problems it experienced and the services it delivered and to present some guidelines for the betterment of the service.

VICTIMLINE was developed in three phases, namely the analysis, development, and implementation and evaluation phases. Each of these phases is evaluated in the report. The researcher found that the service was underutilized, particularly in the initial stages of the implementation of VICTIMLINE. However, this underutilization did not result from there being no need for such a service, but rather from the fact that victims were unaware of this source of help for their problems.

The researcher concludes that even though the envisaged low-cost quality service to large numbers of crime victims has not yet been fully realized, the structural and managerial changes have led to a more streamlined service which is set to provide an affordable and accountable service to all victims of crime. Recommendations relating to the future operation of VICTIMLINE are made, such as the expansion of the service to a national level and changes to the hours in which VICTIMLINE operates.

EKSERP

Hierdie verslag is 'n poging om te bepaal of VICTIMLINE - 'n ondersteuningsdiens vir slagoffers van misdaad buiten verkragting en kindermolestering - wat in die Pretoria-gebied werksaam is, sy verklaarde doelwitte bereik het. Die navorser het probeer om VICTIMLINE se swak en sterk punte, die probleme wat dit gehad en die dienste wat dit gelewer het te identifiseer, asook om riglyne vir die verbetering van die diens te verskaf.

VICTIMLINE is in drie fases ontwikkel, naamlik analise, ontwikkeling, en implementering en evaluering. Elk van die fases word in die verslag beoordeel. Die navorser het bevind dat die diens onderbenut is, veral in die beginstadium van die implementering van VICTIMLINE. Die onderbenutting was egter nie die gevolg van geen behoefte aan so 'n diens nie,

- The Action Committee consisting of a chairperson, the VICTIMLINE co-ordinator, an administrative officer and chairpersons of the service committees.
- The Management Committee, consisting of the VICTIMLINE co-ordinator and the chairpersons of the service committees, who co-ordinates fund-raising, determines a fund-raising strategy, facilitates co-ordination of and feedback from the monthly meetings and activities of service committees and deals with problems regarding the functioning of VICTIMLINE.
- Service committees. The following service committees were identified:
 - The Administrative Committee which will undertake the management of the VICTIMLINE office, the tea club and the record system, develop a satisfactory communication network between the various committees and regularly update available pamphlets and list of resources.
 - The Social Committee whose task it will be to motivate the volunteers and build a team spirit.
 - The Marketing Committee which will be responsible for organizing regular exhibitions and distributing pamphlets and posters to advertise VICTIMLINE as widely as possible, to establish contact with the SA Police, schools and youth and cultural organizations and to establish media communication.
 - The Training Committee which will co-ordinate the training of new volunteers and the continuous training of existing VICTIMLINE volunteers.
 - The Development Committee whose task it will be to develop VICTIMLINE so as to enhance the quality of service provided to crime victims.

The VICTIMLINE co-ordinator who previously spent 50% of his time on the project will now in the new structure, only have to spend about 15% of his time co-ordinating activities. The co-ordinator will provide feedback of the activities of VICTIMLINE on a regular basis to the branch director of NICRO's Pretoria office, administer finances in co-ordination with the NICRO accountant, supervise the physical facilities at the VICTIMLINE office and advise chairpersons of service committees when necessary.

such as VICTIMLINE is essential. The following excerpt echoes the voices of crime victims:

There is nothing more traumatic than being a victim ... Financially I lost all my cash, jewellery, physically I was black and blue and very shaky, emotionally helpless - defiled - worthless ... I would recommend any victim of crime to make use of the services of VICTIMLINE immediately - so that somebody trained can tell the victim that they are still a person of worth and not a thing - not defiled ... I wish you would advertise the phone number more - then maybe people would know more about it.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF VICTIMLINE

The development and evaluation of VICTIMLINE has been a continuous process and will be continued until the desired goals have been reached. The most significant developments of VICTIMLINE are evident in the establishment of an own constitution and the recent changes in the structure of the support service.

VICTIMLINE falls under the administration and management of the Pretoria branch of NICRO. Since January 1992 VICTIMLINE has followed a policy of participatory management.* All volunteers were requested to become involved in a service committee. The present VICTIMLINE structure contains the following:

- The VICTIMLINE Board consisting of a chairperson, founder members, funders (contributing R5 000 and more per year to VICTIMLINE), the director of the Pretoria branch of NICRO, the VICTIMLINE co-ordinator, a member of the NICRO management committee, the chairpersons of the service committees and an accountant from NICRO. In addition any person whose expertise is needed may be co-opted.

* According to Maguire and Corbett (1987:213) this is an ideal situation because: "Such mixing of roles could do much to bring together the *tri-partite* structure, reducing mutual misunderstanding and leading to better knowledge of the part that each section plays."

maar omdat die slagoffers onbewus was van hierdie bron van hulp vir hul probleme.

Die navorser sluit die verslag af met die gevolgtrekking dat alhoewel die beoogde laekoste kwaliteitsdiens aan groot getalle misdadaagoffers nog nie ten volle gerealiseer het nie, die struktuur- en bestuursveranderinge die diens meer gestroomlyn het sodat dit 'n bekostigbare en verantwoordbare diens aan alle misdadaagoffers kan lewer. Daar is ook aanbevelings gemaak ten opsigte van die toekomstige werking van VICTIMLINE, soos die uitbreiding van die diens op nasionale vlak en verandering in die tye wanneer VICTIMLINE diens lewer.

use that crime victims made of the service" and "they did not experience themselves as part of a team working towards providing a better service to victims of crime." It was felt that the new structure of VICTIMLINE and the direct involvement of the volunteers, as well as the extension of the service to a 24-hour service, could help to solve these problems.

- Little comment was made on the funding of VICTIMLINE since the majority of volunteers were ignorant of funding procedures and some openly stated that they did not want to become involved. Volunteers did however express a need for sufficient funds for VICTIMLINE.
- The marketing of VICTIMLINE should be undertaken in a much more aggressive manner (e.g. on TV, on the radio, in the newspapers and in journals). However, a few volunteers stressed the importance of developing an efficient (24-hour) service before marketing it.
- The hours that VICTIMLINE functions should be extended to "provide a 24-hour service". Some volunteers were however not prepared to deliver services after 21:00 from the NICRO offices because of the lack of security. Most were prepared to deliver services on a 24-hour basis by means of a paging service.
- The administration of VICTIMLINE was questioned because of the lack of proper procedures to organize and supervise the number of hours that volunteers worked, and to keep references and statistics in an organized manner. Some volunteers were however of the opinion that the administration of VICTIMLINE was improving and that the new structure should contribute to the further improvement of it.

OUTCOME EVALUATION

The lack of crime victims/potential crime victims who made use of the services of VICTIMLINE again influenced the measures necessary to evaluate the outcome/overall success of the programme, (e.g. victims' perception of the services, their problems with the project and people running the project, the ability of the programme to meet the needs of crime victims etc.).

On the whole volunteers believed in the necessity of delivering a specialized support service to the victims of crime because of (1) the ever-increasing violence and crime in our society; (2) the emotional needs of crime victims; (3) their need for information (regarding the procedures which they must follow), and (4) referral to community resources. Judging by the responses of the few victims who took part in the research, a service

specifically, the establishment of the Training Committee, should improve the situation.

- The turnover of volunteers seemed to be quite high since at least eight volunteers had already resigned in the short time that VICTIMLINE had been operational. This percentage was however only slightly higher than that experienced by crime victim support services in Great Britain (Maguire & Corbett, 1987) and much lower than that of voluntary organizations in general. The reasons for resignation should be followed up by the programme co-ordinator. The resignation of volunteers was described as "unfortunate" but "understandable" since volunteers were not "motivated by enough phone calls, their expectations to deliver a service to the community were not met", "they don't feel part of a team", "VICTIMLINE does not deliver a professional service", "training was insufficient to deal with crime victims", "volunteers had other responsibilities and constraints" and "it is dangerous to be on duty during the evenings". Some of the present members of VICTIMLINE indicated that they were also going to resign (for the above-mentioned reasons).
- The new VICTIMLINE structure which had been operational since January 1993 should "motivate volunteers more since they had become more directly involved in the functioning of VICTIMLINE". The new structure should also increase "personal responsibility", "co-ordination" and a "team spirit". It could also provide a definite framework in which the volunteers can operate.
- The volunteers' ability to meet the short-term and long-term needs of crime victims was experienced as "insufficient" because of "the lack of experience due to the limited number of telephone calls", "inadequate training" and "deficient continuous training". The volunteers were extremely uncertain about the long-term needs of crime victims and expressed reservations about their ability to satisfy them. On the whole volunteers tended to feel uncertain about their ability to provide sufficient support (especially more directive guidance) to crime victims and expressed a need for regular feedback/supervision from the programme co-ordinator, as well as continuous training. The majority of volunteers were of the opinion that the services of VICTIMLINE should be extended to a 24-hour service and that they should include personal counselling, provided that the necessary resources (finances and manpower) and sufficient continuous training were available.
- The role, tasks and use of volunteers were questioned because "volunteers were not utilized to their full capacity" because of the "little

INTRODUCTION

Crime generally has at least two core elements, namely the criminal and the victim. Until the beginning of the 1970s the attention of criminologists and the public was focused on the offender. Offenders were provided with lawyers, medical care, recreational opportunities, schooling, job training and psychological counselling. Victims were, at best, the forgotten characters in the crime saga and, at worst, were victimized twice - first by the offender and then by the criminal justice system (Karmen, 1984).

During the past two decades this situation has changed dramatically as a result of a number of far-reaching contributions by various social movements to the victim's cause. The feminist movement was the most prominent of these movements. Schurink (1992:6-7) writes the following:

It [the feminist movement] took a particular interest in victims of male-versus-female offenses such as rape, wife beating, sexual harassment both in the streets (e.g. women exchanging sex for money) and at work, and incest. In essence feminists hold the view that these concerns are societal and institutional issues rather than personal problems. It is believed that men, and especially those at the helm of the criminal justice system, not only do not assist victimized women but often oppress them.

These movements grew into an international endeavour to support the victims of all crimes (Labuschagne, 1986). In many overseas countries the needs of today's crime victims are met by an extensive network of community programmes. Although the services provided to victims of crime still seem fragmented and are more often than not adjusted to the needs of the criminal justice system (to get more victims to go to court as witnesses so as to facilitate prosecutions and secure more convictions) than to the real needs of victims, great strides have been made in overseas countries toward the acknowledgement of the needs and rights of crime victims.

Victim support (especially for victims of rape) in overseas countries is currently one of the fastest-growing endeavours in the voluntary sector. This phenomenal growth is not only confined to the increase in numbers of support organizations. Support for crime victims has been the spawning ground for an awareness of and lobbying for the rights of victims to other services such as compensation, reparation and mediation, and has also increased interest in and concern for non-crime victims, such as victims of accidents (Walklate, 1989).

In an effort to address the plight of crime victims in the South African context and to bring victim support services in line with developments in overseas countries, the NICRO constitution was changed in 1987 to make provision for the support of crime victims. This constitutional change gave the Pretoria branch of NICRO the opportunity to establish an action committee with the aim of developing a victim support service for all the residents living in the Pretoria area (including Atteridgeville, Mamelodi, Eersterust and Laudium). VICTIMLINE Action Committee, as the committee was known, was established on 21 September 1989 and consisted of representatives from NICRO, the Department of Criminology at the University of South Africa, the Human Sciences Research Council, the South African Police and volunteers from the Pretoria community.

RATIONALE FOR VICTIMLINE

Although the victim support movement in South Africa has gained momentum during the past decades, the services which are provided tend to be fragmented in nature and to be focused on victims of specific crimes such as rape and child (sexual) abuse. In spite of the sharp increase in crime and the escalation of violent crimes in this country very little is done for victims of attempted murder, serious assault, kidnapping, robbery, burglary, arson, vandalism etc.

Despite the tendency for society to ignore the plight of victims other than those of rape and child abuse, research findings show that apart from the economic and physical losses suffered by crime victims, crime victimization causes extensive emotional distress and accounts for almost as much trauma as rape (Fattah, 1989). Victims of these other crimes are thus as vulnerable and as much in need of outreach services as victims of rape and child abuse (Roberts, 1990).

The needs of crime victims however vary and support services are necessary to address their emotional needs (anger, fear, shock, helplessness, depression etc.), their need for recognition and for information, their need to understand and make contact with the legal system and their practical needs (Snyman, 1992:475-477). VICTIMLINE should thus at least be able to provide emotional support, advocacy, information and referral services for victims of crime and their families.

Because of the need for the service to be cost effective it was decided from the outset that VICTIMLINE should not duplicate any specialized services already provided by other organizations such as Rape Crisis and the Department of Health and Welfare Services. Furthermore, because of the crime victims' need for information regarding the availability of relevant

- **The mutual contact and communication between volunteers** took place mostly during telephone conversations and social gatherings and were generally speaking regarded as "satisfactory" but "too selective" (only a few people contacted each other regularly). A monthly newsletter with articles, reviews etc. aimed at providing personal incentives (announcing birthdays, achievements etc.) and necessary information (duty roster, important dates, the functioning of VICTIMLINE etc.) exists. This stimulated communication between VICTIMLINERS.
- **Contact and communication between volunteers and the co-ordinator** were believed to be "sufficient" because "the co-ordinator is always there and willing to listen and to help". Contact could be improved if "continuous training sessions are planned well in advance" and "communication could be more regular". In general, the volunteers were of the opinion that "the co-ordinator tries his best to meet their expectations as the midpoint of the support service" but "that he has too much on his hands". A Feel Free facility where volunteers could give feedback to the co-ordinator regarding the functioning of VICTIMLINE has recently been introduced in the office.
- **Contact between volunteers and the previous Action Committee members** was experienced as "fair" to "minimal" to "none" and only on "a social or training level". None of the volunteers expressed the feeling that contact between themselves and the previous Action Committee members should increase.
- **Contact between the various VICTIMLINE committees** was perceived to be "essential in order to develop a co-ordinated VICTIMLINE strategy". The new VICTIMLINE structure was described as "promising" and the contact between committee members (of one committee) was "sufficient if the chairperson would communicate information to all levels". However, "the contact between the various committees could and should be improved". "The management of VICTIMLINE on a daily basis is an excellent idea."
- **Nature and quality of individual supervision/continuous training** were influenced by the fact that the majority of volunteers had not yet received any telephone calls during the time that they had served and could therefore not have had any individual supervision. The general feeling was that "individual supervision/continuous training is essential" and "that it should occur regularly". The general understanding among volunteers seemed to be that the new structure of VICTIMLINE and

- **Selection of volunteers** was "thorough" but some experienced it as "too strict", and too "objective" and "impersonal".
- **Training of volunteers**, especially that of LIFELINE, was experienced as "excellent", "professional" and of a "high standard" but not always "applicable" to VICTIMLINE. The theoretical training was experienced by some as "too long", "too detailed" and "boring". Possible improvements in the training of volunteers could be to integrate theory and practice, to make use of visual aids especially during the theoretical training sessions, to provide more skills training than theory, to adapt the LIFELINE course to have a more directive approach and to give more attention to crisis intervention.*
- **The examination of volunteers** was generally perceived to be "fair" and "thorough" but "too theoretical" and not always "applicable to the needs of crime victims". Immediate feedback on the results of the examination is essential and should be consistently undertaken.
- **The continuous training of volunteers** was "essential" because volunteers "can be motivated" and can "practise" (even if they hadn't received any calls from crime victims). Continuous training should be "presented regularly" (once every month) and "should start immediately after training". Some of the volunteers were of the opinion that "the attendance of continuous training sessions by volunteers could improve if sessions were planned well in advance". Additional supervisors needed to be recruited to provide sufficient continuous training to volunteers.
- **The motivation of volunteers** "should come from within" and "volunteers should motivate each other". In general, the motivation of volunteers to "participate in social gatherings and to serve on the various committees is satisfactory". Tangible recognition of achievements and service (certificates for the passing of exams, birthday cards, thank you cards, small incentives and gifts at the end of the year etc.), continuous training and regular feedback to all volunteers would "improve the team spirit". The lack of telephone calls was experienced as an important factor in the demotivation of volunteers. However, the fact that they were "informed about this", as well as the "positive attitude of the co-ordinator", counteracted any negative reaction.

* In an effort to increase the standard of the training and to be more practical, adjustments to the training package for VICTIMLINE volunteers were made following the completion of the first training session.

community resources, specific services, legal advice and crime prevention (Andrews, 1992:184-207), VICTIMLINE had to follow a more directive approach. VICTIMLINE would therefore not duplicate any existing support service but would aim to complement it.

The rationale for VICTIMLINE was thus based on the increasing risk of victimization and on the fact that apart from physical and economic damage, crime victims undergo mental and emotional suffering as a direct result of the crime itself. Although victims may perceive their problems as serious, they do not receive direct assistance which is tailored to address their difficulties.

All victims of crime somehow have to cope with their negative experiences. Those who do not receive timely help tend to cope in maladaptive ways that may lead to long-term problems and even serious pathology. A well-co-ordinated support service for victims of crime, especially those victims for whom no such services exist, could thus help to work towards improving their lot.

THE OBJECTIVES SET FOR VICTIMLINE

The broad aims of VICTIMLINE are:

- to provide skilful support by trained volunteers to victims of crimes for whom no services exist and to help these victims face their losses, manage their stress and the demands made upon them while regaining their physical and psychosocial strength and develop new coping skills, and
- to advise and guide the victim towards a preventive life style and create an awareness of crime prevention through the provision of information to the general public.

More particularly the objectives of VICTIMLINE could be set out as follows:

- to develop a telephone service manned by trained volunteers who would offer emotional support, crime prevention information and reference to other resources in the community to crime victims of all cultural groups living in the Pretoria area;
- to make available information brochures in three languages, English, Afrikaans and Northern Sotho, to suit the particular needs of victims

and potential victims of crime. These brochures would cover topics varying from crime prevention to the functioning of the criminal justice system and the rights of the victim;

- to construct a register of all available community resources that could be used to help crime victims and members of the general public to become informed citizens capable of making informed decisions regarding the use of support services and personal safety and the security of property;
- to co-ordinate local services available to victims of crime, and
- to provide a platform for continuous research by HSRC researchers in order to develop and evaluate VICTIMLINE.

AIMS OF THE REPORT

This publication aims to report on an evaluation of VICTIMLINE as a support service for victims of crime other than rape and child abuse and on whether the service has achieved its stated objectives, that is to identify VICTIMLINE's weaknesses and strengths, the problems it has experienced and the services it has delivered and to present some guidelines for the improvement of the service.

More specifically the aims of the report are to determine whether VICTIMLINE delivers an affordable and an accountable service to the Pretoria community, and whether it is

- able, with the help of trained volunteers, to contribute to the recovery of crime victims by (1) presenting them with accurate information; (2) offering a sensitive understanding of their needs; (3) referring them to other community resources; and (4) endeavouring to prevent secondary victimization, i.e. victim stigmatization and the unsympathetic attitude which the general public, bureaucratic bodies and the criminal justice system have toward crime victims.
- providing a cost-effective crime prevention service by guiding crime victims, potential victims and the general public toward situational and community crime prevention by providing information on how to (1) avoid some risk situations completely (e.g. walking the streets alone at night); (2) reduce risk situations in order to lessen the extent of loss (e.g. limiting the amount of valuable property on site); (3) spread the risks by using security measures that would deny, deter, delay or detect

operation) were frequent. This could indicate that VICTIMLINE should operate at different hours than at present. The following table summarizes the situation:

Month	Day message	No message	Inquiry	Victim support
June	0	6	2	5
July	0	3	0	2
August	0	10	1	6
September	1	7	6	14
October	1	15	4	9
November	1	11	0	5
December	0	8	1	6
January	0	9	0	5
February	1	0	4	11
March	0	17	3	13
April	0	12	2	9
TOTAL	4	98	23	85

PROCESS EVALUATION

The fact that so few people made use of the VICTIMLINE services had an adverse effect on most of the factors which had been identified as criteria to be measured for the process evaluation of VICTIMLINE (the record-keeping system, the use of community resources, satisfying the needs of crime victims, the victims' perceptions of VICTIMLINE, the personal satisfaction of volunteers and the turnover of volunteers).

The aspects which could be measured and modified continuously to determine whether the process by which VICTIMLINE had been implemented was successful or not, included the following:

- Recruitment of volunteers was generally perceived to be undertaken in a "positive" and "professional" manner. Some volunteers were however of the opinion that recruitment should be further extended to outside media, such as newspapers, in order to include the recruitment of non-professional people. More information regarding the extensiveness of the training and the working hours should be given so as to facilitate the identification of volunteers who could not maintain the pace.

- the perception of all involved persons (volunteers, the co-ordinator, committee members) of the overall success of the programme;
- the influence of the programme on the recovery of victims;
- the affordability of the programme, and
- the accountability of the programme.

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

THE ANALYSIS PHASE OF THE PROJECT

The VICTIMLINE Action Committee realized that there was a need for a comprehensive service to crime victims and potential victims residing in the Pretoria area. After analyzing the current situation the Committee concluded that the crime situation in South Africa and the fact that the needs of the victims suffering from the effects of crimes other than rape and sexual and child abuse were neglected, warranted the development of a specific support service:

The crime incidence in South Africa is very high. For the year 1988/89 389 978 crimes were committed which means that 1 292 crimes per 100 000 of the South African population ... most victims of crime do not voluntarily assume their role. They are forced into the role of victim through the offender's behaviour ... victims can be deeply reassured by the simple knowledge that the crime they have experienced matters to other people and that assistance is available ... (Proposed strategy to start a victim support scheme, 1990).

A thorough literature study of victim support schemes in various overseas countries, such as the United States of America, Britain and Australia, was undertaken by a member of the Action Committee. The broad aims of these support programmes were identified from the literature study which helped to determine which aims should be set for VICTIMLINE and to distinguish the primary, secondary and tertiary functions of victim support schemes. In addition, the needs of crime victims were identified which helped to anticipate the needs of victims making use of the VICTIMLINE services.

The availability and accessibility of local support services were analyzed to determine whether the needs of crime victims in the vicinity were adequately met. No specific services were provided to victims and potential victims of crime. The only organizations rendering specialized services to victims of crime at the time that the analysis was conducted were (1) services to rape victims by the H.F. Verwoerd Hospital and Rape Crisis, and (2) services to abused children co-ordinated by the Department of Child Welfare and the Child Protection Unit of the SA Police.

It was found that a general support service was rendered by LIFELINE to all members of the public, including crime victims. LIFELINE's non-directive approach and their view that crime victimization should be dealt with as a life crisis made it impossible for them to address all the needs of crime victims (specifically the need for information) in a satisfactory manner. The available support services in the Pretoria region were thus found to be insufficient to deliver a high quality service to the victims of crime.

An analysis was made of the content of victim support schemes (e.g. LIFELINE, CHILDLINE and Radio 702 Crisis Centre) with special reference to available brochures and pamphlets, the recruitment, selection and training of volunteers, physical facilities needed for the practical functioning of the service, structuring and administration of the service etc.

A feasibility study was conducted to determine whether the planned service could be operationalized in its present form and if it would meet the special needs of the target group (crime victims). The feelings of the public regarding a service to crime victims were investigated by means of a national phone-in programme on the SABC GMSA programme on 29 August 1990. Within two hours more than one hundred calls had been received from viewers countrywide. In addition NICRO had to deal with various follow-up calls and inquiries.

The nature of the calls ranged from those seeking help for marital problems, family violence, victims of incest and child sexual abuse to those not knowing how to deal with the law and the indifferent attitude and insensitivity of police or court personnel. It was clear from this exercise that victims of crime were in need of a support service that could provide them with accurate information, referral to the necessary community resources, emotional assistance, and a support service that strove toward the prevention of secondary victimization by the criminal justice system. From this the VICTIMLINE Action Committee concluded that:

... die oefening bestaansreg vir 'n aksie soos VICTIMLINE bewys in ag geneem dat die program slegs toeganklik was vir die nie-werkende persoon wat oor 'n TV beskik. Die breë massa (werkendes/swartes/laer-inkomste groepe ens.) was nie direk

betrek nie en behoort die kategorie die werklike nood in die verband, baie hoër maak.

[... in view of the fact that the programme was accessible only to unemployed persons who were in possession of a TV, the exercise has demonstrated the need for a service like VICTIMLINE. The wider population (i.e. the employed/blacks/persons from low-income groups etc.) were not directly involved which means that in reality the need should be much greater.]

THE DEVELOPMENT PHASE OF THE PROJECT

By means of a series of operational steps in the analysis phase, data relating to the provision of services to crime victims was transformed in order to develop VICTIMLINE as a new and unique service.

The challenge to members of the Action Committee during this phase was to develop the theoretical model for rendering services to crime victims (the model had thus far been designed on paper) into a practical and operational one. In order to achieve this the following concerns had to be dealt with: (1) co-ordination, management and administration of the project; (2) nature of the service to be provided; (3) physical facilities (office space, furniture, equipment, security system, insurance etc. necessary for the provision of the services; (4) recruitment, selection, training, continued training and motivation of volunteers; (5) structure of the programme; (6) nature of the crime prevention information; (7) marketing and funding of the project, and (8) research design.

The following subcommittees were formed and the following tasks were undertaken by members of the VICTIMLINE Action Committee assigned to the different committees:

- **The subcommittee on fund-raising.** Various fund-raising events involving several embassies and firms were organized by the members of this subcommittee. The companies which were approached included Liberty Life, Rentmeester, AVBOB, Sanlam, Santam, Old Mutual and Prestasi. Prospective donors were very sympathetic but none of them were prepared to offer financial assistance. Although NICRO's fund-raising number could be used, the development of VICTIMLINE was constantly hampered by insufficient funds.
- **The subcommittee on information gathering.** An evaluation of available information, pamphlets and brochures on crime and related issues was undertaken and a number of these pamphlets were made available to

- the personal satisfaction and involvement of volunteers and volunteer morale;
- funding, public relations and marketing;
- the nature and pattern of crimes reported by victims in relation to the local crime pattern;
- the impact of crime on the victim;
- the needs of crime victims and immediate families;
- the recovery period of victims;
- the effect of telephone counselling on the victim;
- the value of routine follow-up procedures;
- the value and use of information supplied by counsellors of VICTIMLINE, and
- the victims' perceptions regarding the accessibility, nature and purpose of VICTIMLINE.

The following criteria were used to determine the outcome evaluation of VICTIMLINE:

- the victims' perceptions of services provided by VICTIMLINE;
- problems with the programme as experienced by victims;
- problems with people running the programme;
- positive aspects of the programme;
- positive aspects of people running the programme;
- the ability of the programme to meet the immediate needs of victims;
- the ability of the programme to meet needs experienced at a later stage;

- The development phase which was regarded as the central phase since the new service to crime victims residing in the Pretoria area was created during this phase. Through a series of operational steps, data relating to the provision of services for crime victims had to be generated in a new service. Relevant parts of training programmes for volunteers and services pertinent to the needs of crime victims were extracted and used to create VICTIMLINE as a unique service for crime victims.
- The implementation and evaluation phases which comprised process and outcome evaluation of the new product (VICTIMLINE). The research activities were twofold. Firstly, process evaluation was undertaken (by members of the Action Committee) through ongoing monitoring and modification of the programme. This will have to be continued until the victim support model has proved to be successful and the desired aims have been reached. Secondly, outcome evaluation was undertaken whereby the overall effectiveness of VICTIMLINE was measured.

The following criteria were used to perform the process evaluation of VICTIMLINE:

- the number and characteristics of victims utilizing the services (support, referral, information) of VICTIMLINE in relation to local crime rates;
- the record-keeping system;
- the use of resources which are already available;
- the recruiting, training and ongoing training of volunteers;
- the contact between volunteer counsellors and victims;
- the communication between committee members, the programme co-ordinator and volunteers, and supervision and support of volunteers;
- the turnover of volunteers;
- the ability of trained volunteers to monitor and evaluate their own activities;
- the tasks and roles (job description) of programme co-ordinators and trained volunteers;

VICTIMLINE. Where pamphlets were not available, as in the case of sexual harassment, wife abuse, crime reporting, crime prevention and the criminal justice process, members of this subcommittee had to either facilitate the writing of such pamphlets, or write the pamphlets themselves. In addition a list of emergency numbers and a register of community resources were also compiled.

- The subcommittee on marketing. Various efforts were made to market VICTIMLINE. These ranged from the printing of special posters to a letter of introduction to the SA Police and the publishing of articles in popular journals and magazines. However, since the marketing of a product involves money, the lack of funds hampered the proper marketing of VICTIMLINE. Since the majority of the VICTIMLINE committee were volunteers, the limited time that this subcommittee had available, as well as the lack of expertise in the marketing field, had a negative influence on the development of VICTIMLINE.
- The subcommittee on physical facilities had the important task of supplying the VICTIMLINE office with the necessary furniture and equipment. Other telephone support services, e.g. CHILDLINE, were visited to determine the needs of the VICTIMLINE office. NICRO supplied the necessary funds for the establishment and maintenance of the VICTIMLINE office. A special telephone number for VICTIMLINE was secured and a security door was installed.
- The subcommittee on volunteers was responsible for recruiting, screening and training the volunteers for VICTIMLINE. Established telephone support services (LIFELINE, CHILDLINE, Radio 702 etc.) were visited with the aim of evaluating available administration services, recruiting and screening techniques as well as training programmes.

A suitable package for the training of volunteers in counselling techniques was found at the Krugersdorp branch of LIFELINE. In an effort to save money and to be more cost effective, the Action Committee decided to make use of this screening and training programme after adapting it to the needs of VICTIMLINE. A special programme for VICTIMLINE would be developed, if necessary, at a later stage. The cost of the training of VICTIMLINE volunteers was carried in part by the volunteers themselves and was partly subsidized by the HSRC's Co-operative Research Programme on Affordable Personal Safety.

- The subcommittee on research had to decide on a suitable research design for the evaluation of VICTIMLINE. The data-gathering instruments (questionnaires) had to be drawn up and approved by the Action Committee members.

A co-ordinator was appointed to develop a plan of action and to co-ordinate the efforts of the members of the various subcommittees. The following tasks were assigned to the co-ordinator:

- to develop, together with the subcommittee on volunteers, a recruitment, orientation and training programme for volunteers, and to assist in their recruitment, selection and training;
- to assist the subcommittee on research with the evaluation of the project on a six-monthly basis;
- to draw up job descriptions for all volunteers;
- to keep record of all the services delivered by volunteers;
- to motivate committee members and volunteers to participate fully in the activities assigned to them, and
- to provide continuous training to volunteers.

THE IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION PHASES

The VICTIMLINE telephone support service came into being on 1 June 1992. Twenty of the 24 volunteers completed the first course successfully. Because of a shortage of volunteers the hours that VICTIMLINE initially functioned in had to be reduced to between 18:00 and 21:00 on weekdays and between 19:00 and 22:00 over the weekend. After the second group of VICTIMLINE volunteers had been trained the hours were extended. VICTIMLINE operates at present from Monday to Friday between 09:00 and 12:00 and 18:00 and 21:00. Provision is made for an answering machine where messages can be left during the times that VICTIMLINE is not in operation.

The number of victims who made use of the service from June to January was remarkably low but tended to increase during the last few months. Very few telephone inquiries regarding the services of VICTIMLINE were made during the times that VICTIMLINE operated. Hardly any messages were left on the answering machine. Silent calls (where no message was left during the times that VICTIMLINE is not in

possible access to the target; and (4) transfer some risks through the purchase of insurance or by collaboration with other potential victims (e.g. neighbourhood watches), and

- contributing toward the research that needs to be undertaken with regard to the needs of crime victims, the patterns of various crimes and the affordability and accountability of victim support services.*

RESEARCH DESIGN

VICTIMLINE as an innovative service to the victims of crime had to be developed within a framework which made provision for both evaluation and development research. The development research and utilization model - the DR & U model of Edwin Thomas - was used as a basis to set specific standards for scientific analysis, development, evaluation and distribution of the proposed service. The different phases of the development of VICTIMLINE were the following:

- The analysis phase which included all the activities that preceded the development of the programme. These activities were undertaken by members of the VICTIMLINE Action Committee and comprised the following: (1) identifying the negative impact of crime on its victims as a problematic human condition which needed some kind of action; (2) undertaking an analysis of the current services in the Pretoria area which were rendered to victims of murder/attempted murder, assault, indecent assault, theft, robbery, fraud, vandalism, burglary, car theft, child abuse, bag snatching, wife abuse, blackmail and kidnapping; (3) analyzing the nature of existing programmes dealing with crime victims; (4) conducting a thorough literature survey of support schemes for crime victims; and (5) conducting a feasibility study to determine whether the planned service was workable.

* According to a national survey of services for crime victims written by Albert Roberts (*American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 61(1), January 1991:128-137) a major weakness of the programmes which were reviewed was the absence of a built-in research component to determine which programme components work best. In order to avoid this weakness the VICTIMLINE Action Committee decided from the outset that systematic evaluation was needed to determine short-term and long-term adjustments to the programme.