

This volume describes the ideational effort required to design and implement a training-course model for "Experts in proximity violence". The Pilot project design has envisaged a framework where the concepts referring to broad reflections on the topic have been related to the professional skills to be trained. Proximity violence concerns multiple forms of gender-based violence which conceal, in turn, more subtle, intimate and viscous forms of dependence. The course was based on modules and availed itself of a "mixed" methodology, where theoretical lectures were interwoven with experiential workshops.

During the first six months of 2019, over 800 Italian, French and Spanish operators engaged on the migratory front, attended the courses. The model presented in the first two chapters of the present volume was accompanied and corroborated by a set of ex-ante and ex-post questionnaires. The first set, illustrated in chapter three, aimed at pin-pointing the training needs of the operators and stakeholders to whom it was administered and who then attended the course.

The ex-post questionnaires, presented in chapter four, regarded an appraisal of the course provided by those who had participated in and completed the course, and confirmed the positive achievement of the goal established by the Provide Project (*Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme 2014-2020*): that of defining a structured curriculum capable of addressing the problem of proximity and gender violence by providing adequate training, appropriate tools and skills to be used by professionals to identify, prevent and treat the phenomenon.

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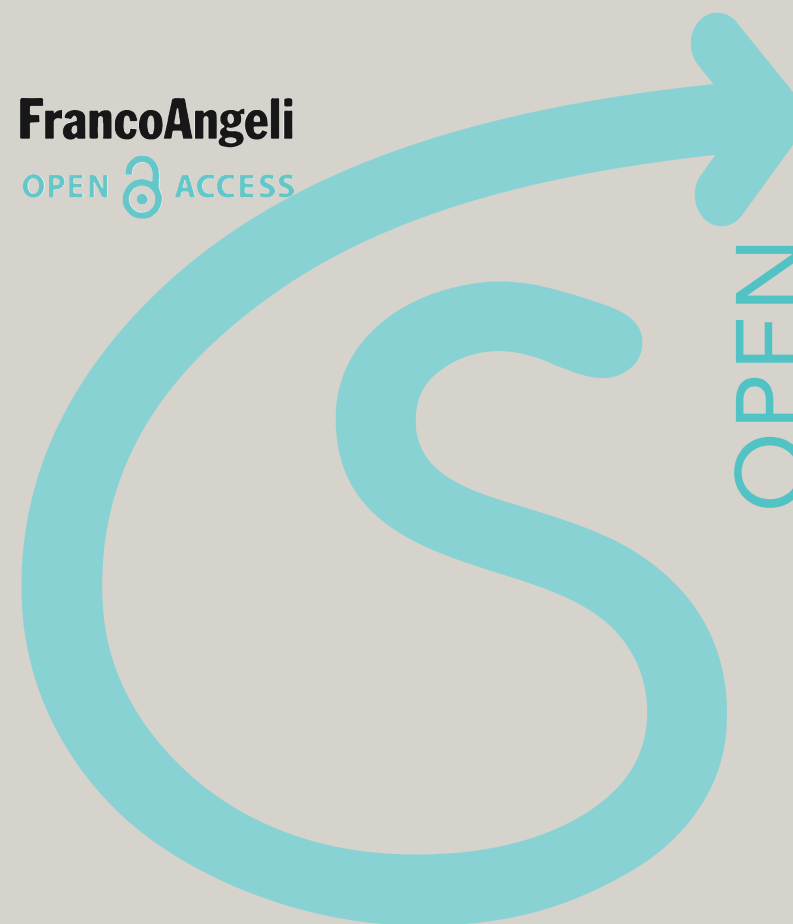
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THE PROVIDE TRAINING COURSE

Contents, Methodology, Evaluation

Edited by Ignazia Bartholini

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Edited by Ignazia Bartholini



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2. *The PROVIDE training courses for proximity violence' professionals*

by Ignazia Bartholini, Roberta T. Di Rosa and Lia Lombardi¹

2.1 The rationale of training by modules

2.1.1 *From proximity violence to the training project*

Training is one of the most important activities used to support the development of people. It provides ways by which to bestow form upon what has not been done as yet. It needs time to acquire an understanding of what is required and how to adapt individual abilities to the professional goals to be achieved. Therefore, it is characterised by a naturally constant, in-progress dynamism aimed at devising and designing a plan of instruction which, the better it is structured, the more it is open to modification, improvement and amendment. This is true in terms both of the creation of the strategies, processes and actions of which it is to be comprised and of those for whom it is intended.

Training is a relatively autonomous area of the theoretical-practical sciences, whose *raison d'être* is the need to tackle the issues operators and professionals have to deal with *in the field*. Here the emphasis is on how to approach Others who find themselves in a position of vulnerability², a situation requiring specific ability and skills. These matters are all the more pressing the scarcer knowledge regarding the overall picture from which they emerge is as well as the corrections to be applied. These issues do not regard the structural/emerging causes affecting the reception systems alone, but also the

¹ Paragraph 2.1 is by Ignazia Bartholini; paragraph 2.2 is by Lia Lombardi; paragraph 2.3 is by Roberta T. Di Rosa.

² According to directive 2011/36/EU "A position of vulnerability means a situation in which the person concerned has no real or acceptable alternative but to submit to the abuse involved" (art. 4).

links between bearers of needs and the operators/professionals whose task it is to recognise and accept their request for help, even when it is not expressed explicitly.

The phenomenon of proximity violence [PV] is precisely one of the issues that requires training proportionate to the urgency and alarming peculiarity of the needs new migrations have produced and/or brought to light. This section of this book deals specifically with a macro-group, vulnerable by definition – women – while emphasising the two-fold, asymmetrical dimension of forms of subordination attributable to customary, moral and collective attitudes rooted in values of male domination (Bourdieu, 1998), religious beliefs, practices handed down historically which normalise abuse, especially in situations where weaker subjects are particularly exposed. It is, therefore, a matter of “violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately” (*Istanbul Convention* of 2011).

The violence undergone by migrant asylum seekers is also – and at the same time – a constant and a variable, or violence perpetrated incessantly against women victims, often characterised by alternation among various perpetrators and abusers and leaving an indelible mark on their journey to Europe. One may, in this sense, speak of gender relations among migrants in the name of male domination legitimised by a “patriarchy of kinsmen”, which justifies, in extreme instances, the reification of the victims by means of abuse, exploitation, enslavement within relationships masked by blood ties or by particular structural bonds of affectivity. Since the abusers are almost always husbands, brothers, cousins and friends – real or presumed – of the victim’s, it is not easy for the operators to recognise abuse/violence hidden within the folds of parental relations or grounded in affective involvement, treat it as “real imbalance between vulnerable victims and abusive persecutors” and take the victims into charge.

It is not easy to understand, for example, what the deepest and most intimate needs of newly-arrived women may be. Their weariness and prostration tend to be attributed to what has surely been an extremely tiring journey across the desert first, the sea, then, though this is often not the most remote and profound cause of the tiredness and exhaustion “visible to the eye”. Even if the specialised medical assistance, psychological assistance and legal aid are provided at the first reception centres, in the opinion of the operators, it is extremely difficult to grasp the needs of those coming from countries where they are “exposed” to male alterity because they are women belonging to segregating cultural systems, and the victims, therefore, of rape and psy-

chological abuse considered “normal” by their communities. It is the particular conditions determined by context, by the viscosity and impenetrability of relationships, heightened by the impossibility/inability of the victims to express, even acknowledge, the consequences of the vulnerability of their own condition which keep the weakest in a situation of dependence on the strongest and of exposure to contingent situations (see vol. 1).

It was precisely the first volume of Provide – PRximity On Violence: Defence and Equity (Just/2016 Action Grants) – which identified many of the multiple factors which hinder access to care services by asylum seekers who are victims of proximity violence. These include – and not only – a pile-up of gender-based violence [GBV] and the need to enhance other services.

The most common obstacles, according to the operators interviewed (see vol. 1), are those concerning anti-immigration norms at legal level and the asylum-seekers’ socio-cultural *Lebenswelt* convictions. These factors cause barriers at communications level which prevent the asylum seekers from becoming aware of the services available to them, the reception system from sending them to those very services. These lacunae do not constitute only an accidental amendable gap but from the onset act as an obstacle impeding provision of pathways of accompaniment. Contrariwise, factors which would facilitate the charge-taking of migrants who survive the journey and/or detention in sorting camps include free healthcare and protection available in compliance with ad hoc legislation regarding sexual violence.

It appears to be extremely difficult to set up a transmissions network between systems for asylum-seekers and assistance for female refugees.

Planning and designing a similar training course – the first of its kind – which required incisiveness and specificity such as to meet the requirements of an emergency as pressing as proximity violence, proved a daunting task. Like every other model, this course had to respond not only to training as such, but it had also to grasp the unexpressed needs of those who were to attend it. To this was added the ex-ante burden of modelling the objectives to be achieved and design content consistent with these, effective in terms of procedural implementation.

The design for experienced operators of a prototypical training course in proximity violence focusing on asylum-seeking migrant women victims of violence, placed those who designed the course on the narrow crest of the distinction between the superfluous and the essential, the useless and the useful. It was, therefore, a question of identifying perceived usefulness and heuristic utility, of avail only if the participants had built up a clear vision of the cognitive interest and operational utility of the topics to be dealt with.

It was necessary, therefore, to unravel a problem-topic by moving centrifugally towards unexplored contours capable of extricating the nodes between gender violence and proximity violence and outlining a model of training content and seminar practice involving multiple layers of reflection from the cognitive to the experiential. It was a question, therefore, of delineating as clearly as possible the object of the training experience and the intrinsic “thing” to be explored by devising and providing tools, methods and skills. This, while keeping in mind the users for whom the various editions of the training courses were meant to cater and the goals the “Provide training course” prototype aimed at achieving in a tenaciously constructive and flexibly self-critical manner.

Therefore, planning this professional training course required greater commitment than might be commonly expected, considering that its fundamental function was to transfer the skills necessary to perform a very specific activity. It also required modulation of an interpretative key concerning the social role inherent in the task to be carried out and shared by the social scientist and the professional operator. The purpose essential to the educational effectiveness the course sought to achieve, represented a more complex phenomenon than the creation of study programmes designed to prepare people *tout court* to take maximum advantage of the opportunities arising from training and avoid or mitigate threats that might crop up during their work in the field. This course required a solid alliance between the designer/s of the course and the professionals to be trained. It foresaw the need for the training syllabus to be stripped bare, upstream, of the contents which the participants would later help provide. It envisaged a fruitful kind of conjunction between *pôros* and *penia*, a need for knowledge and tension, for a drive towards educational enhancement.

The topics treated became the transversal objectives intended to accompany the course progressively as it unfolded. It therefore dealt with:

- detecting and understanding the professional skills the operators working within the reception systems required in order to be able to recognise and, if possible, accompany victims of proximity violence along pathways of autonomy;
- re-orienting the professionals’ overall goals by enhancing and developing adequate role and behaviour styles;
- promoting the trainees’ ability to detect the needs of the Other in relation to emerging and gradually recognised requests;

- fostering acquisition by the trainees of techniques, tools, methods of analysis, process management within their contexts of reference;
- improving the trainees' basic communications skills (developing assertiveness, clarity of exposition, stimulating their ability to manage relationships with the various organisational interfaces associated with their roles);
- providing conceptual tools and methodologies regarding the control of relationship dynamics (motivational support, setting, group dynamics, conflict management);
- boosting the trainees' sensitivity towards the best possible management of moments of inter-dialogic communication.

2.1.2 The framework of the Provide training course

The design of the Provide project's "Training Course for Experts in Proximity Violence" envisaged a framework where the concepts referring to broad reflections on the topic (see volume one) might be related to the professional skills to be trained. The Operational Plan, and, therefore, the explicit educational objectives were drawn up in an effort necessarily 'upstream' of the subsequent empirical analysis of the training contents to be structured in generally repeatable modules. The training modules, developed in depth to direct guided seminars while outlining progressive teaching-learning pathways to follow, needed to adapt and enhance the trainees' skills upon an intrinsically homogeneous plane.

A number of key terms were identified following a brainstorming procedure involving open discussion of ideas and proposals among the experts of the international Provide team.

- a. Proximity violence – the use of this term during formulation of the training pathway for operators experienced in proximity violence was meant to foreground how female asylum-seeking migrants were exposed to two-fold violence: that of the males belonging to their own ethnic groups, that of the west which underestimated the situation or failed to devise instruments capable of accompanying the victims.
- b. Legislation – here it was a question of matching sources of international human-rights law, European Treaties/recommendations, and highlighting how they were transposed into the legal systems of the partner countries involved in the project.

- c. Humanitarian medicine – it was necessary to underline that the victims of proximity violence had precise health-care needs requiring specific skills on the part those providing service. For this reason, cultural mediation played a fundamental role.
- d. Behavioural disorders – it was necessary to emphasise how migration acts as a re-traumatising event in a context of deculturation which creates fractures which can assume the appearance of sensory-somatic signals that may not be understood because of being rooted in the victims' implicit memory. It was necessary, therefore, to reinforce the psychosocial pathways and post-traumatological skills of the professionals involved in Provide training process.
- e. Stress management – finally, it was necessary to pay great attention to the repercussions that such delicate and all-encompassing professional work had on the operators themselves and, consequently, strengthen their ability to deal with difficulties in a conscious, balanced manner.

The outcome was a training pathway for expert operators that may be summarised as follows.

Table 1 – Training pathway

<i>Module I</i> <i>GENDER INEQUALITY: FROM GENDER TO PROXIMITY VIOLENCE</i>	
Gender discrimination and inequality: a global overview.	Theoretical module 3 hours
Gender violence vs. proximity violence: differences and peculiarities	
Violence against women: types and markers.	
Violence against minors: types and markers.	
Violence against vulnerable persons: types and markers.	
Workshop	Practical module 2 hours
<i>Module II</i> <i>MIGRANTS AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN INTERNATIONAL AND EU LEGISLATION</i>	
Rules for entry into the Schengen zone and international area of co-operation: training and updating regarding immigration policies, legislation and systems in support of asylum	Theoretical module 3 hours
International protection legislation	

The Regulations, guidelines and services provided by the public systems	
The case of URMs, victims of violence	
Provision to LGBT asylum seekers: the challenges of discrimination in terms of jurisprudence	
Workshop	Practical module 2 hours
<i>Module III</i> <i>HUMAN CARE AND EUROPEAN HEALTH-CARE PROVISION</i>	
Humanitarian medicine as far as aspects of assistance to victims of proximity violence are concerned.	Theoretical module 3 hours
Psychological support for victims of violence, particularly women and children.	
Victim support provided by the public services	
Cooperative and network tools for the care of victims of proximity violence.	
Workshop	Practical module 2 hours
<i>Module IV</i> <i>MENTAL DISORDERS</i>	
Aggressive and deviant behaviour: specificities, diversities and approaches	Theoretical module 3 hours
Violence, torture and mental disorders: how to recognise them	
Forced migrations and mental disorders: how to approach them	
Differences in the mental health of minors, women, men	
Trauma and post-traumatic problems: how to act in these cases	
Workshop	Practical module 2 hours
<i>Module V</i> <i>STRESS MANAGEMENT</i>	
The cultural approach to GBV: how to deal with difficult situations	Theoretical module 3 hours
How to support staff when making operational choices	

What the operators may and may not do and the boundaries they may not cross at organisational and behavioural level	
How to protect personnel from aggression or help them manage stress	
Workshop	Practical module 2 hours

Source: own elaboration

2.1.3 The rationale of good practice

The rationale of training by modules took shape and foresaw:

1. a selection of potential trainees chosen on the basis of a grid of indicators contained in the call for applicants;
2. the outlining of the students' training needs by means of an ex-ante questionnaire to be administered to each cohort of trainees;
3. detection of the outcomes of the training courses, aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of the methods and criteria defined during the design phase of the individual courses.

It was also meant to register the good practices acquired by the students during their previous experiences. By tracing the participants' experiences back through time, with PROVIDE Training course sought to place particular emphasis on the good practices the students themselves had witnessed and/or created.

Therefore, if the objectives of the training course were subordinate to the possibility of detecting whether or not the trainees' abilities and skills increased compared to their initial situation (a) by verifying the degree of participant satisfaction; (b) identifying possible "feedback/return" regarding the networking of the good practices described; (c) and becoming a further indicator of performance. The implementation of this modular pathway was achieved by means of a "mixed" methodology, where the theoretical level of the lessons was interwoven with experiential workshops, then an attempt was made to store the good practices by preparing training pathways particularly innovative in terms of didactic methodology, of assessment and certification of the results and of the workshops inducing experiential brainstorming.

Within this overall panorama, and in view of the type of action envisaged, the group leaders represented one of the fundamental professional figures

charged with guaranteeing the “quality” of interrelations between the participants, their facilitation and familiarisation with the learning forums by subordinating their participation in planned team activities to their approval / refusal. The group leaders, besides detecting critical issues, also took note of the good practices implemented by the operators attending the various editions of the course.

By good practice we intended empirical construction of the developmental modalities of those experiences which, due to the efficacy of their results, the internal quality of their characteristics and the contribution made to the solution of particular problems, satisfied a complex set of professional-training expectations. At the same time, it was deemed necessary to attribute appropriate space to good practices, as well as to the critical issues detected, precisely because good practice possess a bottom-up characteristic – as it is built on the basis of exemplary and positive experiences believed to be transferable to broader contexts – and a top-down one – seeing that it requires the prefiguration of a systematised set of hypotheses to be verified on empirical bases, in the case of the Provide course by the tutor. The trainer (or classroom tutor often supported by a cultural mediator) provided the possibility/opportunity of outlining an optional solution – “in progress”, therefore, to the training needs which emerged gradually to be added that to those identified by means of ex-ante evaluation (see chapter 1).

The term “good practice” is based on that of “best practice” coined by Frederick Taylor in 1911 in his *The Principles of Scientific Management*, Harper & Brothers Publishers, New York. This managerial idea asserted the existence of a technique, a method, a process or an activity, considered more effective when pursuing the achievement of particular results, than any other technique, method, process, etc. Taylor held that by means of appropriate processes, proper controls and correct analyses, the desired result could be obtained by avoiding unforeseen problems and complications.

Within this framework, good practice was inextricably linked to a modelling process, which identified satisfactory solutions experienced in a given educational context, but it was also refers to in terms of its defining characteristics, which when better specified, were considered as criteria and indicators of good practice by those who experienced them. Finally, good practice was seen as a work-in-progress mode of developing experiences which, due to the effectiveness of their results, the characteristics of their internal qualities and the contribution made to the solutions of particular problems, satisfied the complex system of the training course’s expectations.

Generally speaking, it is only by assuming the most effective experiences that good practice provide that they may be considered such. When they

show their ability to inform models of action conventionally considered 'suitable' by the experts, they act upon the level of 'having to be' and are appreciated for their usefulness and functional feasibility. Therefore, each theoretical module of the course was integrated by a workshop demanding the intense, active participation of the trainees, through whom it was possible to detect and define good practices and valuable experiences. Thus, they became an essential feature of the course for experts in proximity violence funded by the European Commission and tested by the teams of the University of Palermo, Ismu, Telefono Donna, Oxfam, Jaén University, Samusocial International, Aseis Lagarto and Badia Grande.

2.2 The methodological implementation of the PROVIDE Training Course

2.2.1 Active methodologies and lifelong learning

As in the case of schools, the area of adult education has experimented with so-called "active methodologies" for several decades now. An important boost to active methodologies, applied to adult education, was provided by the process of "lifelong learning" (LLL). The term "lifelong learning" (LLL) refers to a process of self-orientation and continuous (self) education lasting one's entire lifetime. It is the tool preferred by the European Commission to indicate its goal of achieving the development of a kind of society based on knowledge, sustainable economic development, new and better jobs and greater social cohesion, while safeguarding the environment. The session of the European Council, held in Lisbon in March 2000, posited three strategic objectives: 1. the improvement of the quality and effectiveness of educational and training systems; 2. the facilitation of the access of all to education and training systems; 3. the realisation of educational and training systems open to the outside world (Lisbon Strategy).

The LLL model requires that people have the ability to manage their own knowledge in a critical way since, by this process, individuals are responsible for everything they learn, the way they learn and the environment in which they choose to carry out learning. The practice of LLL is applicable to both formal and informal learning types. Informal learning concerns adults in particular as it takes place outside of the main education and training streams and does not usually include official certificates. It can take place in the workplace or during participation in activities offered by organisations or civic groups (associations, trade unions, political parties, etc.). This process

originated in what today is called the *learning society* (or knowledge society), one where learning is vital to membership of society and keeping up with changes.

Self-regulation, the main characteristic of LLL, cannot be separated from the acquisition of both the transferable skills and techniques required to meet the demands of the working world. Active training methods are perfectly suited, therefore, to this type of learning and to the “knowledge society”. Said methodologies mark a transition from the so-called “transmission of knowledge” through traditional and substantially “lecture-type” strategies – which see the learner in a position of passive attention – to learning through the elaboration, analysis, discussion and solution of problems. These new methods are oriented towards the subject’s self-realization (self-development). Several methods refer to “active” training. Here we list some of those used most frequently used in adult education (Massa, 1997).

The case-study method. This involves analysis by the learning group of excerpts from stories concerning certain issues relating to the themes and contents of the course. The activity usually involves distributing the case(s) to subgroups, allotting their components a given time for reflection and analysis of the contents and further time to respond to questions that may be asked at the bottom of the case sheet.

A variation on this method is called the *incidental* – or open case – where the trainees are asked to provide the data missing from a very short excerpt drawn from a case study.

Simulation. This method envisages learning through direct experience of problems and situations requiring strong involvement on the part of the actors. It includes role-play – where representation and dramatization, starting from predefined roles – and analogical psychosocial exercises, relating to acquisition of relational dynamics or team-work training, are carried out.

Experiential groups. These groups focus on the analysis of the interactive processes occurring in contingent situations (the here and now). They are, therefore, of clinical and relational worth (Massa, 1997).

Study and own-case groups. This method foresees that the stories and problems to be analysed be posed by the participants, not by the teacher. For this reason, the tendency is to favour a more concrete learning style, close to the working and experiential realities of the participants. The self-case refers to a real case introduced by one of the participants and subjected to analysis by the other members of the group, according to procedures and times that may vary according to the circumstances under which the training is provided.

The Provide professional training course for adults had its organisational

peculiarities. The classes were usually small in numbers, while the permanent teaching staff included a training manager who identified, in collaboration with the project team, the lines and syllabi of the course and monitored their implementation. A classroom tutor was charged with guaranteeing congruence between the activities carried out in the classroom and the project. The teachers, as disciplinary and technical experts, were in charge of carrying out the training sections (or modules) of the course entrusted to them (Massa, 1997).

2.2.2 Implementation and outcome of a training model

The group entrusted with drawing up the Provide project's "Training course for experts in proximity violence", planned the methodological structure of the course by referring to sets of active methodologies designed for professional and adult education. The contents of the five training modules (see par. 2.1) were chosen on the basis of the educational and professional characteristics of the trainees – who were, above all, social workers and professionals employed in reception centres for migrants and in the public services and in significant contact with migrants. The course's five-hour modular structure was subdivided into lectures during which a teacher provided the trainees with basic theoretical concepts and references regarding the contents of the module, while interacting with them by posing stimulating questions to be explored and taking on board the stimuli, questions and other considerations proposed by the members of the class.

The second part of each module consisted, instead, in a workshop requiring the intense and active participation of the trainees. The approach and content of the workshops was inspired by the "case-study method" (Massa, 1997) with some variations with respect to what was specified above.

Proceeding in order, we need to point out that the course required the contribution of several professional figures, both organisational and teaching. For the scientific and organisational part a design team was set up comprising the Project's principal investigator as its chief reference, a referent for each of the partners who also acted as training manager for each area, and, therefore, as principal trainer for some areas, with the specific task of overseeing the realisation of the course. The principal trainers followed and attended the conduction of at least one entire edition of the course carried out in their own area.

A second organisational figure was that of the classroom tutor who followed all the modules and editions of the course held in his/her area, and was

charged with planning and organising the teaching schedules, enrolling the trainees, responding to the specific needs of the participants, organising the classroom set-up and guaranteeing congruence between classroom activities and the project.

The illustration of the training courses provided below was drawn up by the teaching staff, the professionals, experts and/ or technicians responsible for the training modules.

The Provide project held a total of sixteen editions³ of the course for “experts in proximity violence”, engaging six experts in proximity and gender violence, nineteen psychologists, two psychiatrists, seven lawyers, nine medical doctors and six cultural mediators.

The criteria for the recruitment of teachers and technicians were based on a number of specific guidelines like competence and experience in ; competence and experience in working with migrant refugees and asylum seekers; competence and experience in managing and caring for victims of violence, gender-based violence, torture and trauma.

As regards the structure and management of the workshop – albeit with some differences due to the peculiarities of the various territories, the resources available and the type of participants – these were held by the teacher and co-teacher who, in several cases was a cultural mediator or a professional like a legal operator⁴ or social worker. On the whole, the cases, always real and referred inherently to the theoretical part of the module, were read up on and proposed to the class which was immediately invited to form groups of 4-8 people. The teacher and the co-teacher then asked the groups to reflect on and discuss the case in hand on the basis of three analytical categories: 1. resources and strengths of the persons referred to in the case, their backgrounds and contingent situations; 2. fragility and weaknesses of the persons, their backgrounds and contingent situations; 3. the management of the case by the services (reception centres, health-care, social and other services), the critical issues, the good practices and how they might/ should have acted to make the action taken more effective.

At the end of each team-work session (approximately 30-40 minutes), the spokesperson for each group was invited to report to the rest of the class on

³ Seven editions in Lombardy, three in Sicily, two in Tuscany, two in the Paris area and two in Andalusia.

⁴ In the editions of the course held in Sicily and Lombardy the co-teacher was the cultural mediator. In those held in Lombardy, the legal-administrative module was co-led by legal operators since they, besides being experts in the law regarding asylum-seeking migrants and refugees, are those who also accompany migrants during the entire course of the application for asylum. The cases proposed to the groups were drawn up by the cultural mediator or the legal operator.

the discussion conducted by his/her group and present the results that had emerged. This was one of the most important aspects of the training day, as each group – and every single participant – had the opportunity to interact with the others, in a mutual exchange of knowledge and experience.

The workshop ended with a short summing up by the teacher and co-teacher of the analyses carried out by the groups to highlight the most salient points emerging and add any information requested by the participants and/or aspects considered relevant that had failed to emerge.

Some of the peculiarities of the PROVIDE project's training methodology were the preliminary meetings with teachers and co-teachers and the observation grid.

As to the first point, the person in charge of the training in each area organised a preliminary meeting before each course with the trainers and co-trainers of each module. The reason for these meetings was to specify the objectives to achieve and actions to carry out. This informed the methodology to apply while creating the possibility for the trainers to confront each other on specific matters of each module, its contents, the territory of reference and the possible participants, in order to adopt the approaches and methods deemed best suited to each area and group of trainees. These preliminary meetings proved very useful and effective, precisely because they bestowed homogeneity on the training effort without, however, neglecting territorial peculiarities.

The University of Palermo's training team, in order to monitor the various stages of the training course and collect data regarding good practices, carried out periodic briefings with the workshop leaders, two meetings (one intermediate; one final) with the tutors, collected feedback from each teacher at the end of the five modules and conducted a final evaluative meeting with workshop leaders.

As to the second point, the managers of the courses created an observation grid (see below) to be used by the principal trainers to gather data, information and observations for a qualitative analysis of the progress made by the training courses.

This bore fruit too by bringing to the surface training practices, strengths and weaknesses, the best-attended activities and modules and those most appreciated by the participants as well as differences in context.

Table 2 – Observation grid

<i>Lessons</i>	<i>Workshop</i>
✓ Teacher’s teaching method: lecture interactive, deductive, inductive, etc; ✓ The attitude of the teacher: detached, professional, engaging, attentive to feedback from the participants, etc; ✓ Trainee participation: attentive, interested, participatory, engaged, etc; ✓ The content which engaged the participants most; ✓ The questions asked most frequently by the participants.	✓ Workshop method; ✓ Continuity between theoretical lessons and practical workshops; ✓ Activation of class teams; ✓ Participation and involvement of the participants; ✓ Ability of the class to work independently; ✓ Working ability of individuals and/or groups of participants; ✓ Production by individuals and/or groups of participants.

2.2.3 A mirror up to good practices by operators

The mixed-methodology training approach promoted synergistic relationships between the teachers and the participants, between the instructors in legal matters and the professionals operating in the social services and at the reception centres for migrants, between the medical doctors and those operating within the social and health-care services, between stress-management psychologists and front-office operators.

In most cases the response from the local authorities during the promotion of the courses and recruitment of the participants was excellent and produced positive integration by means of action favouring “top-down” awareness and spontaneous applications.

All the courses were appreciated for the effectiveness of the interactive lessons where the participants proved attentive and interested thanks to the continuity between the theoretical lectures and the practical seminars and the use of the case-study methodology. Considerable participant satisfaction was observed regarding the teachers and the contents of the courses. Particular appreciation was expressed concerning the theoretical contents capable of deconstructing stereotyped representations of the phenomenon of violence and migration.

The University of Palermo’s team highlighted, however, the need to distribute some aspects of the contents in a better manner in order to improve the protocol. In particular it remarked on the need to balance over-representation of the psycho-medical area; it proposed integrating social work with an ethno-anthropological module as well as modifying the highly general

nature of the legal module, which should focus not so much on migration law in general as on the specific issue of violence and the legal instruments required to protect victims.

In some editions of the course a marked involvement of the participants in group sessions was observed, while, at times they also provided an occasion for horizontal supervision and inter-professional comparison. This involvement was stronger in smaller groups (around 20) this leads us to hypothesise that the appropriate number of participants in the case-methodology sessions should not exceed twenty.

Several of those responsible for training held that in order to draw up a Provide protocol it would be necessary to secure specific investments to assure the involvement of cultural mediators, emphasising the centrality of that particular figure and the need to provide teaching on how to engage as a team where cultural mediators are involved. In the same way, the figure of the cultural mediator was deemed indispensable as a support to social worker dealing with migrants and while they accompany them during their complicated pursuit of asylum. If, in actual fact, the social professionals are unable to avail themselves of cultural mediators, adequately trained in the same issues as themselves and in the specific ability to work with them as a team, a situation of uncertainty and risk with respect to the outcome of pathways of protection remains.

The project teams suggested enhancing the workshops regarding gender-violence case studies (the Tuscan team) and the skills required by operators to recognise violence (markers, service support, the role of cultural mediation); analysing the main services available in the different contexts where the operators act, by focusing on good practices and the fragility of the context itself; increasing individual and collective work to avoid stereotyping migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, their traumas and the impact of these on mental health and resilience.

Both the French and the Italian project teams underlined the need to establish criteria and markers of stress and burn-out on the part of operators working with vulnerable migrants and victims of violence, just as they insisted on the fact that proximity and gender violence have become a reason for requesting and obtaining concession of asylum (French and Italian teams).

In short, the characteristics of the Provide project's training methodology which made it effective, innovative, repeatable and highly appreciated were:

- its simple and efficacious method;
- continuity between the lectures and workshops;

- the involvement of trainees as teams;
- the participation and involvement of the individual trainees;
- the ability of the class to work independently;
- the ability of the participants to work and reflect.

2.3 The significance of the experiential seminars

2.3.1 The experiential workshop

The choice of dedicating specific space within the training course to experiential practicals (called Workshops) stemmed from the study of reports regarding the issue (UNFPA et al., 2015; UNHCR, 2014; The Women's Refugee Commission, 2013; Human Rights Watch, 2010; the United Nations' Human Rights Council, 2012) and indications provided by various national and international bodies (Article 2 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, 2000; Directive 2011/95/EU, Directive 2013/32/EU, Directive 2013/33/EU, the European Parliament's resolution of the 8th of March 2016 regarding the condition of female refugees and asylum seekers in the EU (2015/2325 INI). In these, as also in all other homologous documents, the protection of migrant women, victims or at risk of violence, propose and advocate not only the identification of different reception and treatment procedures, but also and, above all, the training of operators in skills capable of responding adequately to the instances of this particular kind of vulnerability.

All these reports emphasise the urgent need to make operators aware of the risks inherent in standard reception procedures and of the urgency to train staff so they can implement specific procedures to prevent, identify and respond to sexual and gender violence, provide training and professional development so that operators in the field may be able to cope adequately with this emergency within the emergency (Di Rosa, 2018).

2.3.2 Aims and results of the experience

To implement the PROVIDE project it was decided to focus on training at the level of both content and the professional reflexivity of the operators. The objectives of the workshop were, therefore, the following:

- to provide space to listen to the professional needs perceived by the operators and to the effectiveness of their self-perception;
- to encourage group experimentation of the contents transmitted;
- to verify if from one module to the next what was learned during training was put into practice in the workplace;
- the group leader – an expert in group and cross-cultural relational dynamics and the mediating assistant trainer, followed the trainees for the entire duration of the course, precisely to ensure continuity within a space that provided the trainees with:
- an occasion to reflect on the theoretical stimuli received;
- an intra and interprofessional group within which to compare experiences, perceptions and concerns regarding professional experiences in the field of hosting.

From a methodological point of view, the group leaders elaborated some useful materials to re-elaborate with a view to defining the PROVIDE Protocol, in terms of the tools used and the contents which emerged regarding the methodology adopted (focus groups, role play), the contents discussed and training needs. Experiments were carried out using role play while, later, focus groups discussed the vital importance of paying attention to the awareness of signs of the distress experienced by people who underwent torture, violence, or trafficking (markers like difficulty of expression, possible memory lapses, difficulty in telling their story or narrating the events that occurred; inconsistencies within narrations, accounts of violence allegedly suffered by others; demonstrations of mistrust and closure; manifestations of a sense of powerlessness; feelings of anger and fear; demonstrations of shame, guilt and impotence because of having suffered shameful acts or for not having been able to prevent the perpetration of torture against loved ones). These elements, possible “clues” to untold experiences, need to be reported as a team in order to devise increasingly targeted support strategies to enable persons to bring experiences of torture or violence to the surface and express their own needs. It appeared evident, therefore, how support required to have violence brought into the open should be prepared and guaranteed by means of an integrated effort between the various components of the multidisciplinary team, work making each professional contribute to the enhancement of the skills and broaden the point of view of the individual professionals.

By arranging objectives according to levels of reflection, activities and objectives may be distinguished with respect to the subjects dealt with from

time to time: personal/professional reflections, team dynamics, networks and relationships with the context, the political-ethical impact of intervention.

The objective was, first of all, to provide a space where the professionals could question themselves regarding their ability/possibility of placing themselves in a position where they could listen while taking into account all the aspects set out in short above: the inability or impossibility for the female migrant who had been subjected to violence to narrate her own history; the victims' loss of trust in other human beings; the self-protection measures the victim might employ as a safeguard; the risks of breaking the alliance with and losing faith in those providing help.

Attention to self, as self-understanding, enables one to become a critically conscious presence: «Learning to exercise attention to self is a condition which permits us to pay attention to the other: to make his/her experience the object of our reflection» (Mortari, 2003: 143).

Furthermore, the activities developed in the workshop permitted the trainees to revise and update their competencies in terms of multidisciplinary intervention and teamwork aimed at fostering relationships with female victims of violence, but also at the construction and maintenance of a network of reference between hosting and territorial services. The importance of cohesion and solidity in teamwork was experienced with particular regard to the risks inherent in the fragmentation and in the lack of joint management of reception projects and services.

Again, awareness of the need to enhance work carried out through networks of public and private services in given areas grew stronger; networks capable of contributing to taking charge of vulnerable situations like those in which migrant women victims of violence find themselves. This regarded in particular situations where team competencies needed to be corroborated by external expertise (as in the case of victims of real or presumed trafficking) and when the health of the persons in need required targeted care, support and rehabilitation measures. It was held it was believed equally important that reception of vulnerable cases should trigger the activation of shared, jointly-planned social services, supported by collaboration between a territorial project and local health-care facilities, in order to provide operators with indispensable tools like training, refresher courses, supervision, consultation and continuous collaboration also through the comparison between the various communities (one's own and those of others) and the constant presence of linguistic-cultural mediators.

Last but not least, during the training course, the participants were able to rediscover the ethical roots of their professions, by not only by recovering

the ethical bases of their disciplines, but also by exploring their as yet unexpressed potential or that recuperated during encounters with the world of today (Dominelli, 2010).

One significant aspect of the training course was the creation of links between actors and experts already active in training in the sector to avoid duplicating the training provided and make collaboration between the actors involved in the sector a part of the system.

2.3.3 Group dynamics

Under the guidance of the trainers, who balanced the stimuli and guaranteed the possibility that all the trainees might intervene, the workshop proved to be a form of mutual co-training of the operators. This thanks to the fact that all the trainees shared their knowledge, professionalism and experience, with a view to improving the effectiveness of the experience and the self-confidence it boosted when it came to understanding highly complex and problematic issues like those arising from cases of the proximity violence undergone by migrant women and to improving global assessment of cases on the part of operators. All this was possible thanks to the contents of the various modules related to the personal, relational, family, cultural and social aspects of the phenomenon.

The considerable difference in levels of training and experience among the participants was considered a positive opportunity favouring exchange capable of revealing complementary factors. During the meetings, the trainees discovered a number of rather important issues: first of all, they experienced the course positively as a response to their training needs as far as the specific issues addressed by the course were concerned. These trainee-operators initially expressed their awareness of some of the limits of their previous training experiences, which, added to the “implementation deficit” of welfare legislation, did not always provide them with the opportunity of acquiring knowledge regarding the overall network of the various services and legal skills necessary to address the phenomenon.

In the light of the contents discussed and the work carried out with the group leaders, the operators gained a deeper awareness of the risks inherent in the difficulties of relationships between operators and foreign patients, actual or suspected victims of violence. In particular, the opportunity of establishing a relationship with colleagues belonging to the group, in a climate of trust, permitted the trainees to reflect also upon the critical personal and professional dimensions which might impact negatively upon their diagnostic

abilities, to the degree of invalidating the moment of reception and the preliminary interview, by producing significant bias when seeking to understand the distress borne by female victims, similar to that described by George in his studies on the issue, «Social workers' knowledge on their own biases, prejudices and subjective interpretations of others that are borne from different life experiences helps to prevent any transference or counter-transference. The degree to which the social worker can have a multicultural perspective will affect the degree to which he or she can understand refugee clients' points of view, barriers, and strengths and incorporate effective interventions» (George, 2012: 433).

2.3.4 The dynamics within the course

The division of the course into theoretical lectures and practical workshops was highly appreciated by the participants. The workshop became the place where views, opinions and good practices were exchanged and shared and where participants could establish cooperative networks.

The workshop adopted a training modality based on reflection on experience (Consoli, 2005; Sicora, 2005; Fabbri, 2007) oriented as much in the direction of 'reflection *in* action' (attention to the context, to the situation, to unique cases, to problems, work on emotions to learn how to remain within uncertainty) as well as that of 'reflection *on* action' (reconstructing the process, analysing every event which took place, identifying the desires that triggered the action, determining whether the change took place or not and, if so, what practical implications it brought in its wake).

The involvement of professionals, though already trained, took into account the fact that as the practice of a profession becomes routine and the knowledge becomes tacit through practice (Polanyi, 1979), the professional may lose important opportunities to reflect on what he/she does. Professionals, as well as users, need support when adapting their own models to the specificities of the users, in the absence of which, the professionals feel the brunt of their loneliness, their own inadequacy and that of the means available to address the situations they are called upon to manage.

The provision of a laboratory aimed at developing the trainees' ability to ponder on experiences (Schön, 2006) starting from analyses of action taken, sought to stimulate reflection by focusing on the ideas (theories, opinions, judgments) examined during the workshop, by outlining the geography of the emotions experienced, evaluating the results achieved through the action undertaken to reveal tacit assumptions, ideas rooted in the cultural context

which informed the action taken to deal with cases of female migrants, victims of violence. The participants deemed the workshop carried out following this approach the feature which made the real difference between this course and others they had previously attended, since the Provide workshop was perceived as a space where the trainees were listened to and taken care of, meaning that the focus was on their needs, so much so, that some experienced it as a supervision group.

In some editions of the course strong investment on the part of the participants in group-work activities was observed. At times they became a space permitting horizontal supervision and inter-professional comparison. This investment was stronger in the smaller groups (of no more than 20) and was lower in the groups with greater numbers of attendees. The maximum number for the full future development of the protocol should be 20 operators per edition.

The mediators made a fundamental contribution to the workshop activities; they provided a different perspective regarding the case studies which led to a deeper understanding of specific situations.

The issue of protecting victims of violence certainly requires training professionals (social workers, legal advisors, psychologists, educators, etc.). But if these professionals cannot avail themselves of properly trained mediators or do not train with them, a situation of uncertainty and risk will continue to impact on the outcome of pathways of assistance. Protocols should be implemented paying particular attention to the massive involvement of mediators in order to guarantee that professionals in the field can always work with mediators with proper specific training.

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