



SAMPLE DELIVERABLE 24

OBSERVATION SYSTEM MODEL

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Project co-ordinator name:	Mrs. Monica Pratesi
Title:	Associate Professor of Statistics - University of Pisa
Organization:	Department of Statistics and Mathematics Applied to Economics of the University of Pisa (UNIFI-DSMAE)
Tel:	+39-050-2216252, +39-050-2216492
Fax:	+39-050-2216375
E-mail:	coordinator@sample-project.eu
Project website address:	www.sample-project.eu



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Editors:	Claudio Rognini, PP-UROPS (c.rognini@provincia.pisa.it)
Authors:	Claudio Rognini, PP-UROPS (c.rognini@provincia.pisa.it) Sandra Fierravanti, PP-UROPS (s.fierravanti@provincia.pisa.it) Moreno Toigo, SR (simurg@simurgricerche.it)
Document editing:	Marta Garro, UNIPI-DSMAE (garro@sample-project.eu)
Language revision:	Marta Garro, UNIPI-DSMAE (garro@sample-project.eu)

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1. Introduction. The State of the art before the Sample project

1.1 The Social Observatory – the Province of Pisa

The article 13, paragraph 4, of the Tuscan Regional Law n.41/2005 “Integrated system of interventions and services for the protection of social citizenship” assigns to the Provinces the task of implementing the regional system of observation, monitoring, analysis and prediction of social phenomena, and the dissemination of their knowledge. The Province of Pisa, in order to create a network for exchange of data and information with various public and third sector subjects, use the Social Observatory as a strategic tool to identify specific issues related to the provincial territory and for the data collection, processing and monitoring on social phenomena.

Every year, the Social Observatory produces a Statistical Dossier which includes, in one document, data and indicators at municipal level: here we can find data on demography, foreign citizens, families and housing, school system, health services, welfare system, justice, labour market, social security and Third sector. The data contained in the dossier come mainly from official statistical sources, that is from sources validated and published by institutions that belong to the National Statistical System. Then there are administrative data that come from institutional sources in the area.

Another important activity of the Social Observatory lies in the realization of periodical surveys on relevant social issues: poverty and vulnerability, urban security, immigration, interfamily, young people, etc.

The Social Observatory, together with other nine Social Provincial Observatories, is part of the Regional Tuscan Network of Social Observatory coordinated by the Regional Social Observatory. This network is actively involved in the definition of indicators for policies planning and policies evaluation and has created a regional common set of indicators to estimate the health state of local population .

1.2 The Counselling Centres of Caritas – the MIROD Network

Caritas is a catholic association and it is the most important association which realises actions to contrast poverty in Italy. Caritas coordinates and performs concrete operations to support poor people (counselling centres, dormitories, lunchrooms, vouchers, clothing, benefits, etc....).

In the year 2003, in order to facilitate contacts with other institutional and non institutional subjects, Caritas created a network called MIROD. The MIROD Network has, at first, designed an unique database, which contains the materials collected in all Caritas counselling centres. Caritas has more than 200 counselling centres in Tuscany which are part of MIROD. Moreover, within MIROD operate the OPR, the “Observatories of Poverty and Resources”. The activation of an observatory in each diocese is finalized to collect and to read the large amount of data on poverty. The results of MIROD Observatories are statistical reports about poverty and immigration, and statistical data of people accepted in the Counselling Centres.

The specific object of work of OPR is the competent, systematic and updated knowledge about:

- condition of vulnerable people;
- causes and dynamic of development of their problems;
- resources available for relieving their fragilities;

2. The Observation System Model: main steps for the start up

The experience within the Sample Project teaches that the following tools and skills are necessary for the construction of an Observatory able to monitor poverty and social exclusion:

- a deep knowledge of the resources present in the territory and an active involvement of local stakeholders;
- a formal agreement with the organizations of the Third Sector for monitoring poverty;
- the choice of relevant, appropriate and shared indicators for monitoring the social phenomena;
- the construction of information tools to enable the collection of indicators;
- the implementation of a shared web space/portal (web 2.0 model) for the development of a forum on poverty, able to collect the point of view of local stakeholders.

2.1 Knowledge of resources of territory

Firstly, PP-UROPS selected the structures and the services that work against poverty and social exclusion. This activity was divided into two parts:

- 1 – analysis, with the Network of Tuscany Region, of the structures and services which contrast poverty in all regional territory;
- 2 – selection of the associations of Third Sector which contrast poverty in the provincial territory.

In the province of Pisa there are 28 structures/services (family community, meals delivery, shower services, clothing distribution, care centre) which contrast poverty. Most of them are owned by public or religious institutions, but they are managed by the Third Sector. In these services/ structures work mostly volunteer operators. The level of personalization of services and structures is correlated to the single activity: it is very high within the family community, and very low for the shower services.

In order to select the Third Sector organisations and identify the names of representatives and operators, we started from the list of organisations affiliated to the Provincial Registry. In this Registry, 602 organisations are signed up (283 Association of Social Promotions, 272 Voluntary Organisations and 47 Social Cooperatives). Registration is required in order to receive some contributions from public entities. Some of these organisations are also part of Provincial Social Consult (elderly, disabled, youth, Immigrants, volunteer associations, cooperatives).

After several meetings with key people (the provincial head of the third sector and provincial coordinators of the Consults), we reached an initial list of 800 private organisations (associations and social cooperatives). The initial selection was based on their main activities specified at the time of registration and last update. Then we decided to exclude:

- 1) associations that operate only in a limited field of health, such as patient associations, associations for cancer research, etc.;
- 2) associations that operate only in the cultural, artistic and folklore sectors;
- 3) organizations that operate only in the sport sector;

Finally, after several meetings with the coordinators of the three Caritas of Pisa, we have included references to all the counselling centres of Caritas and main parishes. For the selection of immigrant associations we have met the operators of the 'North-South Centre' a key organization in the Province of Pisa for the management of immigration policies, intercultural and development cooperation.

2.2 The Involvement of local stakeholders

Another very important step has been the involvement of local stakeholders in the description of their perception of poverty and social exclusion. The tool we used to reach them was a survey on-line with a software Open Source.

We started from the list of the resources of territory and after some meetings with key persons we selected important stakeholders:

- **the municipalities in the province of Pisa**, with reference to the political and technical level, with expertise on social policy and health;
- **the Societies of Health of the province of Pisa**, with reference to technical and political level, with expertise on social policy and health;
- **the Province Union representatives (CISL, CGIL, UIL).**

The final list is composed of 690 institutional and not institutional stakeholders.

In the survey, in the last section of the questionnaire, we asked the stakeholders their opinion about the aims of the Sample Project, about the creation of a Permanent Observatory on poverty and social exclusion and about the creation of a web site.

We explained that one of the main results of the Sample Project would be to have good estimates of poverty indicators at local level and we asked them their opinion about the relevance and the usefulness of these estimates. Most of them (68,2%) judged the indicators very useful for the planning of social policies. The 42,1% said that this is also very useful for the implementation of his/her activity.

The involvement of stakeholders was participative because in the questionnaire we asked their opinion about some helpful tools for the construction of a local network against poverty and social exclusion.

We proposed:

- 1.the strengthening of counselling centres and front offices;
- 2.the strengthening of stakeholders networks;
- 3.the construction of a specific web portal;
- 4.the construction of an Observation System to monitor poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion.

These instruments were generally considered enough or very useful.

At provincial level the 52% judged important the strengthen of counselling centres and front offices and more than 90% judged enough (51,7%) or very useful (42,7%) the construction of the Observation System to monitor poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion, that is one of the main objectives of Sample Project.

These results show that the associations of the Third Sector need a common space where to confront each other and share available information (see Deliverable 10).

2.3 the formal agreement with Caritas

The second step for the construction of the Observatory System on Poverty, Vulnerability and Living Condition consists in the creation of a network of local and qualified stakeholders that work on poverty and social exclusion.

In 2010 the Province of Pisa has subscribed a formal agreement with the three Caritas of our territory and, through the above mentioned survey, has established a network of 252 stakeholders (institutional and non institutional). This network has been created with a participatory and multidimensional approach through the Delphi Method.

In the formal agreement with Caritas, the objective is the planning and the implementation of common actions for the construction of a database and indicators at local and at Health Societies level, through the interchange of information (MIROD database and administrative database).

In particular, the objectives of the formal agreement are:

- 1- the possibility for PP- UROPS to access the MIROD database;
- 2- the involvement of all provincial counselling centres- (101 counselling centres)- in the stakeholders survey (see next point);
- 3 - the involvement of Caritas in the Observation System to monitor poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion.

2.4 The construction of a set of indicators for policy planning and evaluation

The Social Observatory of the Province of Pisa is part of the Regional Tuscan Network of the Social Observatory coordinated by the Regional Social Observatory. This network is actively involved in the definition of indicators for policy planning and evaluation.

The indicators are the result of a shared process with all socio-sanitary areas.

At the beginning of this process it was selected a great number of indicators (more than 300). After several meetings with all the politician and technical referents of Health Societies we arrived at a list of 250 indicators referred to the following areas:

- demographic profile (indicators about age structure, population composition, etc.);
- health determinants (Indicators about revenue, employment, lifestyle, ambient);
- health state (Indicators about: mortality, illness);
- essential levels of sanitary assistance (Indicators about hospitalization);
- social and sanitary assistance (Indicators about: social expenditure distribution, assistance to persons in social distress).

Every indicator is considered at supra-municipal level.

The indicators are divided in two sets with characteristics and different functions:

- the Minimum set: indicators common at each Health Profile;
- the Complementary set: indicators useful to complete the reading of the Health state but not computable at all Health Societies Areas.

The analysis of these indicators allows to realize a multidimensional approach about social problems.

2.5. The web portal application

One of the aims of the Sample Project is the creation of a software application that could:

- give a real-world application of SAMPLE results;
- support policy-making and its implementation at the local level;
- contribute to the public awareness about poverty and social exclusion by creating information-rich, easy to use, easy-to-understand graphics;
- share knowledge and improve local capabilities.

This application, created by Simurg Ricerche, is embedded in a web portal that aims to be the entry point for social inclusion activities in the province of Pisa.

By the way of the web portal and the software application the public officers who will manage the Observatory will be able:

- to easily store and update the new available data;
- to estimate indicators using correction models based on small area methodology;
- to disseminate results between local stakeholders, promoting their capabilities in fighting and preventing social exclusion;
- to develop the communication and the network between the local policy makers and the other stakeholders.

The whole software application is actually available at the address:

<http://lab.sample-project.eu>.

The website primary goal is to make available with an easy interface a wealth of data, mainly related to poverty indicators involving the Province of Pisa.

We heard the stakeholders' point of view about the best tools to promote the exchange of information on the topic of poverty and social exclusion. The web application structure and content is tailored after these suggestions, hoping that this will be an effective, everyday work tool for people involved. The web site is based upon a social networking tool, to build upon the involvement and collaboration of local stakeholders.

Website registered users will be able to:

- create their own interest groups and blogs inside the portal;
- communicate with microblogging tools (à la Twitter);
- share documentation with team (group) mates;
- upload publicly available documentation;
- discuss and comment (almost) every piece of content (news, topics, graphics and so on..).

Apart from data gathered within the Sample project, the web application will be also a repository for collecting various documentation, other statistics and news of stakeholders' interest.

Most information will be open to the general public for viewing and downloading:

- statistics and indicators;
- official programming acts and regulations;
- useful links and resources;
- registered users "open" discussions.

The web portal is divided into the following parts: *indicators, reports, policies, resources, act now* and *news*.

The *Indicators Area* is used by the Local Observatory on Poverty and Social Exclusion to monitor Laeken indicators at LAU1 and LAU2 level and to disseminate results, in order to improve the knowledge of the phenomena and the local social policies.

In the *Reports Area* there are some reports on poverty and social exclusion at local, national and international level.

In the *Policies Area* there are the most relevant European, national and regional laws concerning poverty and social exclusion.

In the *Resource Area* there are the main important resources against poverty present in the territory of the Province of Pisa (counselling centres of Caritas, parishes, Health Societies, associations, map of structures of poverty).

In the site of the Province of Pisa there is a part dedicated to the Observatory of poverty where, besides the Sample Project, are published some documents about poverty and social exclusion:

1. Dossier Caritas 2010. “Vecchie e nuove povertà: verso quale modello di welfare?”
2. Report CIES “Povertà ed esclusione sociale 2010”
3. Report ISTAT “Distribuzione del reddito e condizioni di vita in Italia 2008/2009”
4. Report ISTAT “ Coesione sociale”

3. The way forward

As a public administration, the Province of Pisa needs to know which are the main findings of the Sample Project.

In September 2011 the Province will present the results of the survey of stakeholders, and during that occasion, the Sample data application will be disseminated to other local policymakers. It will allow to have a simple visualization of data and indicators useful for planning.

The next challenges are:

1. to disseminate this experience at regional level. The Tuscany Region has created a group of coordination of actions against poverty and the Province will use this experience to disseminate our results. One of the aims of this regional group is the opening to European experiences and exchanges;
2. to improve the process of acquisition of data from the Public Administration.
3. to animate the local network through the forum on poverty and by sharing: i) documents; ii) reports on poverty and social exclusions; iii) periodic monitoring of the opinions of local stakeholders.
4. to periodically calculate the social indicators useful for social planning;
5. to disseminate data, indicators and the software among other local policymakers.