
EPR MEMBERS' GOOD PRACTICES COMPENDIUM

EUROPEAN PLATFORM
FOR REHABILITATION



QUALITY

epr

europaean platform for rehabilitation



INTRODUCTION

EPR is a network of service providers for people with a disability. We support our members to provide sustainable, high quality services through mutual learning and training activities.

Between 2014 and 2017 EPR received funding from the EU EaSI Programme, which among other activities, allowed EPR to promote good practices on different themes of service provision. One of the four themes for activities funded by EaSI was quality. This leaflet aims to spread knowledge of some of those practices that have a positive impact on the lives of people with disabilities.

QUALITY

It is important that services in the social sector are of high quality. Quality is often perceived differently by individuals and is not easy to compare. Despite this, if a service is provided based on assessed individual needs, rights are respected, quality of life is improved and expected outcomes achieved, it can be considered as a quality service. Poor quality services can negatively impact a person's dignity and human rights.

EQUASS is an initiative of EPR, launched in 2003, that enhances the social sector by engaging social service providers in continuous improvement, learning and development. EQUASS aims to guarantee service users high quality services. The sector-specific quality framework provides a comprehensive approach to quality management, features a rights-based approach and is a recognised tool for implementing the European Voluntary Quality Framework for Social Services.

Quality according to EQUASS, addresses 10 principles: Leadership, Staff, Rights, Ethics, Partnership, Participation, Person-centred approach, Comprehensiveness, Result-Orientation, Continuous improvement.

This leaflet profiles initiatives that aim to promote quality services by implementing these principles, all initiated by EQUASS-certified service providers. One is a transnational initiative, two are national initiatives, one is a bilateral initiative and the last one is implemented at an individual service provider level. For more information on EPR's work on quality please consult <http://www.epr.eu/our-expertise/quality-of-services/> and www.equass.be.

EQUASS LEARNING COMMUNITY (ELC)

ELC is an informal network of social service providers (SSPs) committed to the EQUASS concept of quality and continuous quality improvement through learning by exchange of practices. The ELC facilitates benchmarking and action-oriented bench learning based on the EQUASS quality system. Benchmarking is a process of systematically comparing performance as a starting point for improvement. It involves collecting, reporting, comparing and understanding the variation of data from different SSPs.

The ELC allows SSPs to gauge their own position, to create a learning curve for improving their performance and helps boost transparency, profile and image. The ELC bench learning is piloted in Estonia, Lithuania and Norway and includes EPR members.

Example: Individual Planning

All SSPs shared an example of an (anonymous) Individual Plan for a service user. An expert explained the EQUASS concept of the Person-Centred Approach and 5 compulsory and 5 optional criteria of an Individual Plan. Each SSP reviewed all Individual Plans according to the 10 criteria and the results of all scores were processed into graphics. SSPs exchanged the way the Individual Plan is used in practice with each other, inspiring participants to examine how successful actions from other organisations can be implemented to improve their own practices.



“We are always open to other’s experiences and views in order to improve the overall system”
SSP, Estonia

IMPROVEMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN LITHUANIA

VALAKUPIAI REHABILITATION CENTRE, LITHUANIA

Public Institution Valakupiai Rehabilitation Centre (VRC) provides vocational rehabilitation, medical rehabilitation, social day care and driving school services for people with severe and moderate disabilities in Lithuania. Every year, more than 700 service users benefit from the supports provided in two Vilnius and Kaunas locations.

While the quality of social services is a priority in many countries of the EU, in Lithuania it had been a voluntary initiative of individual social service providers. However, the 2014–2020 European Union European Social Fund (ESF) program of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, underlined the importance of quality and strengthening of the system of social services in Lithuania. Based on that, VRC started to implement the ESF

project, whose aim is to improve the quality of social services by applying the requirements of Voluntary European Quality Framework for Social Services.

The project, which started in 2017, will last for five years and focus on a range of different social services, both governmental and NGO, using both EQUASS and a system to implement the Framework. The EQUASS Assurance model will be applied with a view to increase the efficiency and performance of social services by introducing a quality system in 120 social service providers. The project includes, amongst other activities, competence building of consultants, auditors, local coordinators and managers, EQUASS implementation and a study of its impact on the social sector in Lithuania.



The project also includes dissemination activities including the EQUASS national website
www.equass.lt

FORMEM'S BENCHMARKING GROUPS EXPERIENCE

FORMEM (Portuguese Federation of Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Centres for People with Disabilities) was established in 1991 and currently represents 49 organisations that provide support to people with all kind of disabilities. Their action is twofold. They work on an institutional level to improve the political and provision framework for people with disabilities and develop sharing and learning dynamics to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the support given by Portuguese social providers to people with disabilities.

In 2012, FORMEM's board decided that improving governance and quality of services should be a priority to achieve an increasingly efficient and effective support to people with disabilities. To operationalize this goal, they started to organize "Quality Meetings", where rehabilitation organizations discussed and shared their understandings and practices related to a specific theme connected to good management and social inclusion.

These "Quality Meetings" continued to occur with 4 to 6 meetings per year and with great feedback. They succeeded in creating a reciprocal learning and trusting atmosphere that allowed the incorporation of the EQUASS principles as guidelines of the meetings, and gradually transforming them into a real environment for benchmarking and bench learning for social providers in Portugal.

Today FORMEM promotes two benchmarking groups, one in the North of Portugal, one in the South, that assembles 80 participants including rehabilitation professionals, psychologists, nurses, executive and general managers, board members, human resources and financial managers from 30 social providers in Portugal. In addition to this FORMEM has created a benchmarking database with 178 key performance indicators and results.



"Our benchmarking group-experience has allowed us to build up knowledge, crystallise good practices, enhance accountability and improve the quality of support"

STUDY TOUR FOR DIRECTORS TO HOLLAND

MARIEHJEMMENE, DENMARK

The Marie Homes Foundation is a private, self-governing, non-profit organisation that offers housing, health and social care and professional support to people in need. It was founded in 1958 and has been establishing, developing and running homes since. Today the foundation has 18 self-run Marie Homes. In addition to further consolidating its position as a leading service provider, The Marie Homes aim at creating partnerships in their local communities and with various civil society organisations.

Aiming to improve quality within the organisation, Marie Homes organised a study tour for directors to Holland in 2015. The purpose of the tour was to develop the skills of the Marie Homes management in the field of rehabilitation, organisational development and motivational training. In addition, the tour aimed to build stronger management teams across the different Marie Homes by learning together with foreign experts.

The programme consisted of lectures, site visits, and team building. It also featured a workshop on Integral Performance Management (IPM) with Tessa Zaeyen from EPR member Pluryn. The workshop showed how a workplace can translate its strategies into customer driven processes. The participants were introduced to ways of implementing IPM within their organisations, setting the right performance indicators to align daily activities with strategic objectives, and other methods of applying IPM in specific contexts. Reflecting on the workshop, one director said, "I have been inspired to reshape our organisational strategy, so that we can restructure our daily work with the clients. The practical approach of the trainers gave a clearer understanding of the complex topic and it is great to have a physical strategy map on the wall now".



As well as accessing group mutual learning activities, EPR membership facilitates partnerships and bilateral exchanges between members of the network.

MORAL CASE DELIBERATION

PLURYN, THE NETHERLANDS

REA College Pluryn is an empowering expert organisation that crosses borders while supporting young people with disabilities in tailor-made education programmes to obtain sustainable jobs. REA College Pluryn promotes the rights of the target group and always looks for new opportunities. They believe that young people with disabilities have many valuable talents. Inclusion is necessary because everyone is valuable for our society.

A structural dialogue about Ethics

In social services, case workers frequently have to face dilemmas in which they must make a choice for which none of the known solutions is ideal, nor without consequences. Unless a particular situation is already described and regulated for social service staff, these case workers may face situations in their career for which there is no clear answer. Moral Case Deliberation supports social service teams with an innovative methodology that places the staff in a dialogue process

where they look at a specific situation from the point of view of their norms and values, those of the person served, the organisation and their colleagues.

When confronted with a dilemma, the staff contact a coordinator to submit their case. These have trained facilitators who can lead the dialogue session. Typically, the staff members who brought up the case, the service user or their representative and any external partners that play a role in that situation, will be invited to take part in a session. The result of the Moral Case Deliberation is that the participants look at an ethical dilemma from different angles and try to find which norms and values are leading for them. This different way of thinking helps find solutions for ethical problems.

This example featured in EPR's 2017 study on Rights and Ethics and was presented at the 2017 Public Affairs event, both funded by EaSI.



Everyone has an internal compass which shows what is right or wrong. Moral Case Deliberation helps staff use their personal compass to improve the quality of their services.

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