



EUROPEAN PLATFORM FOR REHABILITATION
The network of leading service providers to people with disabilities

NEWSLETTER

Editorial

Special:

- Latest developments in EPR member centres
- Election of the EPR President
- Annual Conference
- Projects
- Public Affairs



Dear EPR Members,

I am pleased to welcome you to the December 2013 European Platform for Rehabilitation newsletter. 2013 has been another very busy year for EPR.

I am delighted to have been elected to a second term as President of the European Platform for Rehabilitation. EPR is comprised of some of the most innovative and forward-thinking organisations in Europe and has played a central role in supporting these organisations to achieve excellence in the services they provide to people who need their support. During my second term, I will work to ensure that EPR continues to provide invaluable support to its members to ensure that the strong, can-do spirit, which characterises EPR members, continues to thrive.

This has been a year of many highlights. In Ireland, we were delighted to see so many members of EPR make the trip to the 20th Anniversary EPR Annual Conference, hosted by RehabCare. The conference highlighted many issues of importance to our sector and, in particular, focused on demonstrating added value through innovation in disability services. This has been a key theme throughout 2013.

The EPR goes from strength to strength and it gives me great pleasure to announce that we have recently signed a partnership agreement with the European Commission for the period 2014-2017. This partnership affirms the recognition that EPR

receives at European level. The funding received will enable EPR to strengthen its public affairs activities at both EU and national levels.

In early 2014, we will be developing a new strategic plan to define EPR's direction and activities over the next two years. This plan will be developed in consultation with all members and we look forward to your support in defining our priorities.

I very much hope that this strategic plan will support members to enhance their existing capacity to innovate and to drive best practice in service provision. Our organisations have been to the forefront in developing person-centred, individualised services for many years. Public policy now recognises the value of these approaches and EPR members have an opportunity to demonstrate considerable leadership in this area. Ensuring that we contribute positively to policy development at EU and national levels, to ensure real improvements in the lives of hundreds of thousands of people across Europe, will be a key objective of our strategic plan.

I would encourage you to disseminate this newsletter widely throughout your organisation, ensuring that staff at all levels can participate in and benefit from membership of EPR. I would also like to thank the EPR board for their commitment in 2013, as well as Jan Spooren and his team for their continued hard work. I look forward to meeting you all again in 2014.

Angela Kerins
 EPR President

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News from the members

AFID GENERATION

A space of care and well-being and the beginning of a new journey



It is a dream came true! The construction of the new equipment AFID GENERATION is the fulfilment of a long felt need: the constant concern for the Quality of Life of the citizens and the awareness that there is insufficient social support coverage in the Municipality of Amadora led to a decision that in 2013 became reality. With this Equipment the Foundation will enhance its offer of Social Responses, increasing its support to approximately 140 new clients: Residential Structure for Elderly People - ERPI, with capacity for 60 people; Nursery, with capacity for 33 children; and Home Support Services – SAD with 50 new clients; also contributing to the creation of 40 new jobs.

Why “Generation”?

Because essentially we intended this space to become a truly intergenerational area of connections, of emotions, of activities and learning, promoting the relationship between the older and youngster, enriching affection and the improvement of quality of life, either of the children or the elderly. We believe that the relationship between generations is the key ingredient for an active ageing and for a more harmonious growth with a greater respect for Life.

We need positive and active mind-sets, the involvement of all the actors - families, institutions, local authorities, communities – participation and cooperation in order to promote well-being, exchange experiences, disseminate values and build a continuous relationship, towards a caring citizenship. We became a reference institution in the social

sector thanks to the excellence of our technical intervention, our ability to innovate and achieve sustainable growth always by assuming a commitment of continuity and responsibility.

Our work is based on principles that are oriented towards the clients, respecting their Rights, the Ethics of intervention, privileging the Policy of Partnerships and Participation, ensuring the Scope of Services Delivered and guaranteeing thus a Continuous Improvement in Intervention and consequently in the Quality of Life of Clients. AFID GENERATION provides continuity to this decision. For this reason we will continue to grow and we will continue to dream.

The new building has 4 Floors. The First and the Second Floors are composed by bedrooms, leisure areas and activity areas; the Ground Floor is assigned to the pantry, canteen, administrative services, director’s offices, medical room, nursery; the Basement hosts the parking, the storage, the laundry and the technical areas. It is estimated that the total cost of the Project reached a sum of 2.800.000 €, (amounts net of VAT), for which we have obtained non refundable financial support from the Government through the Pares Program, in the sum of 1.328.063 € and from the Municipality of Amadora, in the sum of 413.985 €. The financial effort of AFID Diferença Foundation rose to about 1.007.952 €.



Opening of new living apartments in Heliomare



On 3 December a lot of guests showed up for opening new TBI living apartments of Heliomare. Client staff, neighbors, colleagues, builders, constructors and staff of Parteon (house renting company on behalf of whom the apartments could be build) came to the official opening in Krommenie. Height new clients are very happy with the possibility to live on their own with 24 hours a day support if needed. In total there are 24 Heliomare apartments for this target group with the Heliomare Daily occupation centre on walking distance right in the middle of the town Centre! A great achievement, considered the bad financial times! It took only a little bit more

than one year to realize the actual building! The opening was performed by Prof drt Coen van Bennekom, Heliomare's TBI rehabilitation medicine and Rawin Rijkland, one of the new clients.

Heliomare magazine!

Eight clients of the Heliomare living department came up with a plan to launch a new magazine about their lives and possibilities of adolescents with a handicap. The message is "we can reach more with our talents than you think in the first place". All of them follow courses in the education and vocational rehabilitation departments of Heliomare. The initiator is Yuriandy Martina, born on Curacao and already experienced in writing for (digital) media. The idea is to publish four issues per year with the help of some sponsors and advertisements.



Workshop Panagia Eleousa

celebrated the International Day of People with Disabilities

On 3 December, in the framework of the International Day of People with Disabilities, "PANAGIA ELEOUSA" organised an event on the topic "Supported Living Facilities for people with intellectual disabilities as an indicator of social cohesion and culture".

The event took place on 1 December 2013 in the venue of "Papastrateio Megaro", in Agrinio city. Distinguished speakers attended the event such as Ms. Eutihia Bekou, Secretary General of the Welfare Department of the Ministry of Labour, Mr. George Kontogiorgis, University Professor of Political Sciences and Mr. Michael Crowley, as a representative of EPR, who introduced the EQUASS quality system to the local community. The discussion was moderated by the journalist of ET3 (National Broadcasting Channel 3), Mr. Pantelis Savvides. At the end of the event our service users' dancing group of traditional dances presented folk dances wearing traditional costumes.

The local community supported the event by its presence, honouring in this way the work done by "PANAGIA

ELEOUSA" and at the same time appraising its innovative actions such as the construction and operation of Supported Living Facilities for people with intellectual disabilities in the city of Agrinio. The dancing group of our service users received the warm applause of the audience, thus showing the acceptance by the general public.

This year we were especially pleased that our group of traditional dances was accompanied by a traditional music orchestra, which played live music voluntarily giving pulse and vibrancy in the hall of the event. Involving the service users in the group of folk dances has contributed significantly at developing their social skills since they have learned to cooperate with the other members of the group. They had to follow specific steps and the rhythm of the music and work in harmony in order to accomplish the best result. "Panagia Eleousa" continuously strives to facilitate the social integration of people with disabilities and to empower them to participate in community activities.

News from APPACDM de Gaia

Celebration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities



The City Hall of Gaia joined APPACDM de Gaia on the celebration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3 December.

this population a better life and a spontaneous action as the one that took place here, reminds us the importance of promoting public awareness to break barriers and open doors for an inclusive society for all.”



Our clients launched hundreds of balloons and distributed flowers, hugs and smiles during the afternoon. Eduardo Vítor Rodrigues, President of the Gaia City Hall, stated that “what APPACDM de Gaia does is irreplaceable and priceless value. This institution has all our support. It is a great honor to join an institution that on the 13th of the current month is going to inaugurate a new Residential Care Home in Rasa.” As Mário Dias (Chairman of the Board of Directors of APPACDM de Gaia) said “Our work is to provide

A new awarded project

The Project “(Per)cursos À MEDIDA: Ensinar a Querer Trabalhar” (“Tailor Made Courses: To Teach To want To Work”), designed by APPACDM de Gaia’s team, was distinguished by the “Special Education: 2013” promoted by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. The competition this year focused the attention on children and young people with special education needs. Our project aims to promote quality of life at individual and social development level, in order to facilitate the social inclusion and the participation of young people with disabilities. Working together with schools, companies and therapeutic centers, we try to answer to the needs of youth when they leave the school.

Programa Escolhas: Escolhe Vilar

“Escolhas” (Choices) Programme intends to promote social inclusion for children and young people, particularly those from vulnerable socioeconomic environments, in order to allow equal opportunities and to support social cohesion.

This project has many goals, such as to promote children and young participants’ development at individual and social level, in order to integrate and motivate them to participate in their schools’ and community’s activities. On the other hand, the project aims to work with their parents by developing abilities and strategies that allow them to improve the interaction with their children and also to look for a job and a better future.

APPACDM de Gaia is partner of this project and participates in some activities, such as:

- Inclusion and non formal education
- Professional education and employability
- Community strengthening and citizenship
- Digital inclusion
- Entrepreneurship and empowerment

Project Aurora (led by ALF AS)

Association of Vocational Rehabilitation Enterprises (AVRE)

Project Aurora is a joint effort between Bergen Prison and ALF AS which is a training centre for employment. In the last ten years it has been a central, innovative and active contributor in the field of rehabilitation for persons with mental ill-health and social or drug-related problems. This gives Aurora the unique opportunity of maintaining contact and working with women prisoners throughout their sentences. One of the project's strengths lies with the fact that participants are closely monitored through the criminal justice system to ensure their aftercare.

The project is based on the premise that quality comprehensive services and programmes in prisons and after the release from confinement, contribute to successful rehabilitation. However the availability and quality of these services often do not match the needs of women within the correctional services. Women are found to be in a particularly vulnerable position with regards to substance abuse problems, background, needs during the confinement and gender specific needs.

Project Aurora and Daphne III

Aurora was invited to participate in the Daphne III project in December 2012: *From Street-to-Home: investigating how an integrated approach to housing provision and social support can reduce the threat of violence against women.*

Previous research has indicated that violence against women often occurs in the home. This is particularly evident in respect of women released from prison, many of whom have little option other than to return to the home they share with a violent or abusive partner. In many cases, this can result in further abuses and a continuation of the cycle of re-offending. Women in such circumstances often have accompanying issues including problematic drug use and/or engagement in sex work, which require additional support if they are to be successfully tackled.

Experience learnt during the four years of the Aurora project points to a lack of any integrated approach to housing and on-going social support for this group of women. Our target group is associated with social problems such as drug addiction, multiple deprivation, social exclusion,

poverty and difficult family backgrounds. While it is generally accepted that stable housing is a key factor in enabling women to successfully complete work training, drug treatment, ending a criminal lifestyle and/or exit prostitution, there is a lack of safe housing and very few tenancy support services for this group. Recent critique of the housing first- paradigm has pointed to the need for meaningful activity outside home in order to fully appreciate the private sphere of a home.

The Aurora project undertook an internal evaluation after three years, and found that one of difficulties faced by participants, besides housing, was exactly the attendance of this vocational training or the commitment to meaningful daytime activities. To respond to that issue, Aurora in association with Klosterhagen Hotell provides training with low threshold for vocational. This gives women in our target group the opportunity to follow a vocational and social training, daily activities once week and drug treatment.

The overall objective

The overarching aim of the project is the development of a framework for good practice in working with the target group. This will be achieved through a comparative analysis of practice in the partner countries and an evaluation of an innovative pilot project taking place in the UK. The framework will promote a model of partnership working among organizations to provide an integrated approach to meeting the needs of vulnerable women in the provision of housing and social support. The proposed framework is necessary to increase women's ability to avoid the threat of violence, escape the cycle of re-offending and regain control of their lives.

For more information on the project, please visit our website: <http://www.streettohome.eu/>. For more information about ALF as, visit our website: <http://www.alf.no>

News from MEREK

Development of social services with support of the assistive technology products on the field of home care

The aim of the project is to develop services which allow to insure the home care supporting assistive technology products (electrical beds, hygiene instruments, ceiling hoists, mobile lifters, other products which helps the home accessibility) in the frame of a rental system for claimers.

Nowadays, the physical workload of staff working in the field of social and home care is extremely high. There are not available products that can help workers to accomplish their activities and in the same time develop in a greatly way the autonomy and integration of the service users. The lack of adequate assistive technology products in the this field of the social sector show that the fluctuation is very high. The work can be carried out less effectively, the temper and the moral of the service users is maleficent and in their opinion the quality of services is poor. Family members, friends or relatives have also a significant impact, they end up the care of people with serious and/or multiple disabilities in their families or rather they carry out the temporary care and personal assistance.

The new project is the continuation of the so-called "Guruló -Rolling" project realised by the Rehabilitation Centre for Physical Disabled People (MEREK). This project created, in

seven regions of Hungary, seven workshops where the employees are people with impaired ability. One of the main objectives was to realise the servicing of the different assistive technology products and to give to users the time to adapt themselves in using the products. The project ended on 31 March 2013.

The new project aims to set up in six locations logistical units which allow the storage, lettings, transportation, the resumption and the re-delivery of this products to the service users. The system should ease the home care services and the recovery of the service users following a shorter hospitalization and rehabilitation. In this way the hospitalization harm can be reducible, the social integration can be realised sooner and easier, the family members and the care users can return sooner to the labour market.

The objective of the 3.3 Million Euro project (partly financed by the ESF) is to create a national logistical network which allows to provide a state of art of the rental system of the assistive technology products, according to international standards supporting technologies, for people receiving home care.

Gyroset device

There are only few sufficient devices on the market which can support people paralyzed from the neck down to control their power wheelchairs. Therefore these people have to use mechanical tools for example a head stick or mouth operated joystick. The joystick console blocks the vision of the user, therefore a significant part of the road and upcoming barriers are not perceptible. There are alternative controller developments from market leader companies and universities which enable wheelchairs to be steered by voice recognition, myography of facial muscles or by electro-encephalography. These solutions are resource intensive and cost prohibitive. Gyroset is a specialized headset that measures the spatial head position constantly. It enables the paralyzed individual to control the wheelchair with head movements in an intuitive manner. As it can connect wirelessly to any computer, we developed an Android software that implements a head mouse function. This software the Gyrosphere opens up the access for communication and navigation systems as videophone, GPS, voice controlled web browser, screen-keyboard and speech synthesizer. The abovementioned application supports the tenders for monitoring the wheelchairs technical parameters, receiving alarms and controlling the wheelchair from short distance in emergency cases with their own smartphones. Those paralyzed individuals who are isolated and require persistent tender are now supported by Gyroset to access computers and perform PC related tasks independently.



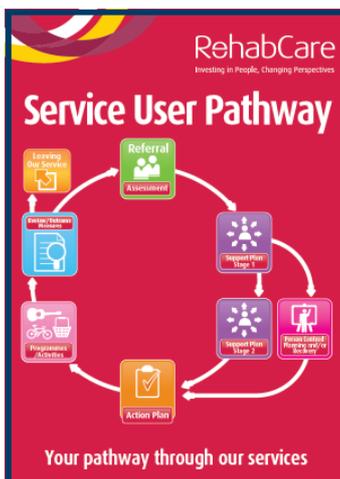
“We empower uS bH” project

Josefsheim Bigge (Germany)

In 2013, the Josefsheim coordinated two national and European projects for the improvement of job opportunities of people with disabilities. “We empower uS bH” concluded with a final symposium in Bigge in April. The project partners developed a toolbox for people with spina bifida and hydrocephalus. Seven partners from five countries set out to sustainably improve the quality of vocational training and transition to work of this special target group.

The toolbox is available on the project website: www.we-empower-us.eu. “Competently mobile” is concerned with enabling people with disabilities to manage the way from home to workplace competently. The project partners developed an assessment instrument and a set of learning units based on the ICF system. The results will be presented in two symposia in Hamburg (in January 2014) and Bad Wildbad (in March 2014).

RehabCare won poster competition in October 2013



The National Disability Authority of Ireland (NDA) hosted a poster session as part of their 2013 Annual Conference. Ten posters were selected for this session one of which was RehabCare. The theme was Supporting transitions for people with disabilities. RehabCare submitted the Service User Pathway.

The process supports and directs how each person and service in RehabCare has a clearly defined, best practice, person centered process. This process is consistent throughout the organisation and every service user is entitled to have his or her service delivered in this way. The organisation presents the Service User Pathway in a highly visible and accessible poster format to all people we support, staff, stakeholders and visitors. This reinforces the message for everyone from across the board. Supporting individuals to achieve their desired individual outcomes is the primary objective. The Pathway Poster shows how an individual’s journey through services is supported and delivered in a person centred way.

RehabCare launches Knowledge Management Centre

In October 2013, RehabCare launched their new Knowledge Management Centre (KMC) and it is now live on the RehabCare site. The KMC site has been developed as an internal information resource centre, which allows staff to access information relevant to their day to day work. In addition, it will be a bank for all the interesting, creative and innovative solutions and ideas that services across RehabCare have developed. There are many examples of innovative projects and solutions that RehabCare support teams have developed in response to the needs of the people they support and to overcome barriers.

Within the new KMC, there are links and information on areas including:

- Mental Health and Autism
- RehabCare memberships and assistive technology apps
- Learning resources and award-winning projects
- New RehabCare booklets on supporting a person who is bereaved, employment rights, person centred planning, an advocacy directory among many more

Information and resources have already been uploaded which will be useful to 1,100 staff and there are some great examples of innovative practices. The KMC is a live site and will be updated regularly with new and user friendly information.

“Inclusion has many facets” - Review of the Symposium

Berufsbildungswerk Suedhessen (bbw)

Some organize events merely focused on self-praise, others put together high-quality professional events for a relevant theme. The bbw Südhausen chose the latter for its 30th anniversary. Their invitation to the symposium on “inclusion” was received extraordinarily well. More than 300 participants and 30 experts from economy, politics, science and society had come to Karben to discuss the prospects for the training and employment of young people with disabilities, and to deal with the question of how inclusion can be realized and put into practice.

The way to an inclusive work environment still requires some more steps. This fact was made clear at the beginning of the meeting by two experts who were actively involved in the negotiations on the UN Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Diana Radtke, co-founder and area director of the Zentrum für Selbstbestimmtes Leben e.V. (Centre for Independent Living) and long-term vice president of the Disabled Peoples' International (DPI) talked about the background and particularities of the UN CRPD.

“The convention fulfilled the demand for a binding instrument to implement equal rights for people with disabilities” were Radtke's words in appreciation of the

convention. She further explained that Inclusion as the new keynote has brought along a paradigm shift the adjustment of the system to the abilities and needs of individuals with disabilities. Previously integration was the guiding principle, i.e. the adaptation of people with disabilities to the system.

Despite all of the good intentions and the successful structural implementation there is still a need for action; this is what Dr. Sigrid Arnade pointed out. She is Co-founder and board member of the network for women with disabilities, “Weibernetz e.V.”, and “Netzwerk Artikel 3 - Verein für Menschenrechte und Gleichstellung Behinderter”, (Association for Human Rights and Disability Equality). Arnade emphasized that the high unemployment rate of people with disabilities is a violation of human rights. She called upon the responsible persons to provide more inclusive training offers in companies and provide more support for people with disabilities; This could be Peer Support as well as the introduction of a successful pilot project like Job-win-win, VAmB or “Integration inklusive” (integration inclusive).

For more information about the panel discussion and workshops please consult the “News from members” section on the [EPR website](#)

New challenges for LOS

Similar to other European countries, big changes are happening in Denmark. Some of these changes can be ascribed to the general economic crisis, while others should be ascribed to the general adaptations of the society. There is a clear political focus on minimizing the government consumption. This focus challenges us in many ways.

LOS represents the private social service providers, which by definition are the alternative, supplement and competition to the public service providers. LOS members are dealing with continuous adjustments, with greater differentiation and greater flexibility respect to the public sector. Often “adjustment” means significant economical savings with lower level of quality in the service offered to the citizens. LOS members consider the primary importance to provide

high quality services and in this process of financial adjustment are having hard time in compete with public service providers, especially on services' prices formation.

Another big change regards the new social supervision system in Denmark. The new legislation centralises the system, Denmark will change from a fully decentralized social supervision system, conducted by the 98 municipalities of the County to a more central solution with only 5 regional regulators. Those new regulators will be responsible of the entire social sector. In practice this means, that both public and private providers in the social area, will respond to them and their guidelines. LOS would have preferred a national model with only 1 regulatory authority, but it is open to collaborate with the public institutions for a correct implementation of the new system.

Welcome to the new member

EPR reinforces its presence in Ireland!



Irish Wheelchair Association

In 2014 EPR will welcome The Irish Wheelchair Association as new member. The IWA is a national organisation dedicated to the achievement of full social, economic and educational integration of people with disability as equal, independent and participative members of the community. IWA was founded in 1960 by a small group of wheelchair users committed to improving the lives of people with physical disabilities in Ireland. IWA has gone on to become an important provider of quality services to people with physical and mobility impairments in their homes and communities. Today, IWA is made up of a vibrant network of 20,000 members and 2,300 staff, as well as many dedicated volunteers. IWA runs approved Rehabilitative training courses for people with a physical disability, provides assisted living services, accessible and supported holidays and breaks, supports to help individuals with physical disabilities find their own home.

For more information about Irish Wheelchair Association please visit www.iwa.ie

Election of the EPR President 2014-2016

Rehab Group Chief Executive elected to second term as President of EPR



Angela Kerins, Chief Executive of the Rehab Group, has been elected President of the European Platform for Rehabilitation (EPR) for a second two-year term. Speaking after her election at the EPR's AGM this week, Angela Kerins

said, "I am delighted to have been elected to a second term as President of the European Platform for Rehabilitation. EPR is comprised of some of the most innovative and forward-thinking organisations in Europe and has played a central role in supporting these organisations to achieve excellence in the services they provide to people who need their support.

The combined work of EPR members contributes positively to policy development at EU and national levels, driving change and ensuring real improvements in the lives of hundreds of thousands of people across Europe.

"EPR members are renowned in their field and EPR supports them to share learning, collaborate and pioneer new service models, enhancements and quality projects. During my Presidency, I will work to ensure that EPR continues to provide invaluable support to its members to ensure that the

strong, can-do spirit, which characterises EPR members, continues to thrive. "EPR is particularly proud of EQUASS-the European Quality in Social Services award which recognises excellence in the field of disability services and provides a framework for continuous improvement. Rehab's divisions National Learning Network and RehabCare have achieved EQUASS Excellence and Assurance respectively. This has had very positive benefits for the Rehab Group as it has challenged staff at all levels of the organisation to constantly do better, to ensure that services are meeting the needs of those we serve and that we are leading the way in terms of service provision".

Jan Spooren, Secretary General of the EPR, added, "The Rehab Group is recognised in Europe as an organisation which delivers and supports innovative and best practice services. We are delighted that Angela has been elected to a second term as her energy and enthusiasm has had a hugely positive impact on the work of EPR over the last two years. With her support and that of other members of EPR, we will continue to lead innovation in a changeable external environment, ensuring that the focus remains on service development and quality."

Centre Action Plans (CAPs)

EPR Workshop for Directors

Top-managers from EPR member organisations met in the Netherlands, hosted by Heliomare, on 2-3 October 2013 to think and exchange on communication challenges within their organisations. Menno Lanting, trainer consultant in digital leadership and executive development, opened the perspectives offered by new technologies and social media in relation to leadership and internal communication and raised questions with regards to the possible impact on the organisation's internal processes and knowledge management.

Juan Pablo Escorcia, expert trainer in leadership, communication and change management, drew the attention of the participants on two communication models, and more specifically on stories that empower or limit the professionals and the organisation. He pled for freeing the potential leadership and entrepreneurial spirit of all professionals in the organisation.

In the evening, the EPR group enjoyed a picturesque guided tour through Amsterdam's oldest islands, before discovering the wonders of the school restaurant "Le Début". Participants particularly valued the contents of the workshop and the speakers, giving an overall score of 4.6 on a 5 point scale.



Assistive technologies in living environment

New technologies offer many opportunities to improve delivery of health and social care services to people with disabilities. They represent a strong asset for individuals within their homes or living in wider communities outside formal institutional settings. Sensors, switches, operator terminals and automatized environments augment the security and stimulate the autonomy and the empowerment of the client.

Technology in living environment enables service providers to better target the use of their resources and be more efficient. It facilitates the work of the professionals, relieving them from documenting tasks and gathering useful information to optimize the care and assistance process.

EPR participants visited Sozialwerk St. Georg, a service provider in Germany that offers a continuum of person-centred services to people with disabilities and mental illness which allow an original and flexible change-over between in-patient and out-patient levels of care. They visited an outpatient living community for people with dementia with latest technical innovations integrated into the care process; sensor-based monitoring systems for ambulatory home care featuring technology and an adapted business model; and learnt about professional terminals used by staff for documentation and monitoring purposes.

Integral Performance Management



On 4 December 2013 a training seminar on Integral Performance Management (IPM) took place in the EPR Office in Brussels. IPM is a methodology to improve the performance of an organisation by translating organisational strategy into customer driven processes. As an outcome of the seminar the participants gained understanding and knowledge of the basics of IPM as well as the 'know-how' in the following areas: implementation of IPM within their organisations; strategy deployment; setting the right performance indicators to align daily activities with strategic objectives; results improvement; ownership and quality-driven culture and behaviour; integration and reinforcement of IPM with quality systems such as EQUASS, ISO, etc.

Focus on Thematic communities

Thematic Community on Cooperation with Employers: marketing and job finding skills

On 5 and 6 November 2013, 12 professionals from EPR member organisations gathered for two days of learning and benchmarking with Mike Evans, experienced trainer in the field of cooperation between providers of services to people with disabilities and employers.

The participants explored different methods of employment support, their strengths and weaknesses, and discussed the issues faced by employers such as lack of awareness, skills or experience in employing people with disabilities. They exchanged on the obstacles faced by job coaches and people with disabilities themselves, and ways to overcome them. The group reviewed the steps to contacting employers and the key assets to put upfront in order to engage into successful collaboration.

The discussion went on to establishing business networks and was rich of the experience of several EPR members in this domain.

Particular attention was given to organisational factors influencing the cooperation with employers, such as funding, team staffing, caseloads or partnerships.

All interested EPR professionals are invited to continue the discussion on the online EPR forum in the section "Work and Employment" on EPR website: www.epr.eu

The theme "Partnership strategies with employers" will be tackled in the framework of the Thematic Community in 2014 through a benchmarking seminar hosted in France on 8 and 9 April.

Services to Young People with mental health problems

Opportunities for real and meaningful social inclusion are considered critical to the achievement of mental health recovery. Service providers are challenged to address the experience of mental health difficulties in the young population in the educational/vocational environment, and how to more effectively address unhelpful attitudes and behaviours, promote positive mental health and well-being and assist the young person reach their true potential. The webinar on 13 December 2013 with Johan De Groef, past President of the European Association for Mental Health in Intellectual Disability (EAMHID) provided participants with a psychodynamic and holistic framework that can help different professionals, beyond their specific specialist background - thus in a trans-disciplinary way - to gather observational elements and to interpret them into a coherent 'basic story' of a young person.

Public Affairs

EPR public affairs event on “Social Innovation: The role of service providers and the impact on social services”



On 5 December 2013 the European Platform for Rehabilitation (EPR) organised the Public Affairs event in the hearth of the European quarter in Brussels in order to reflect on the important role that innovation plays in the social services sector. The hearing gathered relevant stakeholders from the sector including some key officials of the European Commission, Directors and Managers from EPR members and other relevant representatives of the European civil society.

Social innovation has recently become a buzzword of European policy in relation to the societal challenges. It refers to developing new ideas, services, processes and model to better address social issues. It invites input from civil society, and in particular service providers, to improve social services. While social innovation is an approach that can influence all walks of life for the better, the focus in this event was on the impact of social innovation on services providers' ability to continue to adapt as scenarios change.

The event, chaired by Jan Spooren – EPR Secretary General – and opened by Angela Kerins -, President of EPR and CEO of RehabGroup in Ireland - welcomed Raymond Maes, from the Cabinet of Commissioner Andor who is responsible for Employment and Social Affairs in the European Commission and Conny Reuter, Secretary General of Solidar and Chairman of Social Services Europe. They presented to the hearing their insights into the opportunities and potential impact of social innovation on social services.

The event welcomed also two EPR member organisations presenting innovations that they have introduced into their practices to enhance their service delivery. Reuben Jayawardene from RehabCare in Dublin talked about “The invisible mouse”, which is a very creative use of assistive technology. Pablo Gomez from INTRAS in Spain talked about community-based services for people with mental health problems and the necessity to develop models ensuring continuity care.

The closing sessions was held by Harald Hauben, Senior Consultant of Eftheia bvba, who invited the hearing to reflect about the meaning of social innovation and how innovative ideas, products, processes, methods, models and services offer opportunities of continuous improvements in whatever sector. Following the short debate, Jan Spooren has thanked all participants and invited them to enjoy the complimentary cocktail that gave to participants the opportunity to interact with each other and to exchange opinions and personal considerations.



Analytical paper on Personal Budgets: a new way to finance disabilities services

The impact of the crisis on the rights of people with disabilities and on their participation at the society has led to growing reflection of different ways to finance disabilities services. The pressure on public budgets reinforces the need to modernise social policies and to re-think the health and social care services provision in order to optimise their effectiveness and efficiency.

One of most fundamental policy and practice changes of recent years in the social services sector is the move towards self-determination and person-centeredness of care and support provision. In the large majority of European countries, governments, service providers and users have supported and advocated those changes with the intention of ensuring that care and support become more tailored to individuals and their particular needs and preferences.

Some countries began this process from a direct service model – where public authorities decide how to allocate public spending on health social care services – to a model based on personal budgets, where resources are in the individuals' hands. Other countries have introduced personal budgets but are still testing how to definitely move towards an individualised system of funding.

EPR wrote an analytical paper on the implementation of personal budget models in some country cases and on their impact on service providers. The paper defines the personal budget by considering the eligibility criteria, target audiences, availability and usability of the budget and it takes a closer look at the opinions of different European stakeholders on personal budgets. The analytical paper is available for EPR members in the Public Affairs section of the EPR website, www.epr.eu

First assessment of the new directive on public procurement (still to be voted by the European Parliament)

Last year, EPR produced a paper analysing in details the text proposed by the European Commission for a new directive on public procurement and its impact on social services. After several consultations, in January the European Parliament will finally vote the text proposed.

The overall approach of the new directive is welcomed by EPR as it is recognising the specificities of SSGI, ensuring them a higher threshold (750.000 euros) and giving them specific award criteria including quality, affordability, accessibility, availability and comprehensiveness of the services, with specific references to the European Voluntary Quality Framework (recital 11). Moreover the text clearly stated that Member States are free to social services themselves or to organise them in a way that does not entail the conclusion of public contracts.

In the new text an important reference to the UNCRPD has been added and the accessibility criteria for persons with disabilities and reference to design for all are present in many of the Articles of the directive.

Reserved contracts, in particular for sheltered workshops, are clearly supported by the article 17 but the conditions to reserve contracts to certain health and social services as stated in the Article 76a are ambiguous in their formulation.

Regarding the need to guarantee high quality services, EPR considers that even if the Article 66.1 says that *contracting authorities shall base the award of public contracts on the most economically advantageous tender*, the use of “shall”, “can”, “may” create certain ambiguity on the compliance of privileging quality rather than cost in the award criteria.

EPR regrets that quality of social services has not been made a mandatory element of the MEAT as well as that the formulation of Article 76.2 does not make compulsory for Member States to take into account the need to ensure quality and affordability of social services as well as users 'involvement. The risk is that this weak formulation can leave open to the possibility for contracting authorities to award social services only on the basis of the cost.

All will depend from how Member States decide to transpose the directive, thus we ask the European institution and the Member States to work together on a correct implementation of the new procurement rules, once the new directive will be put into force.

EPR will produce a final assessment once the new directive will be voted. For more information on public procurement, please contact Cinzia De Letis at cinzia.de.letis@epr.eu

EPR Annual Conference 2014



The EPR Annual Conference 2014 will take place in Kholn, Germany, on 26 and 27 June 2014. This year, the conference is organised in cooperation with EPR's German member Josefs-Gesellschaft (JG).

The programme of the conference focuses on the theme: "Impact Assessment" of disabilities services on individuals/society. EPR and its members recognise the importance to look at the long term impact of their services on clients by identifying and evaluating the practical tools used to measure the impact. The Conference sessions will address important questions on why to measure the impact and how and to whom communicate the results. The draft programme will be available as soon as possible on the EPR website (www.epr.eu), "upcoming events" section.

The conference will be held in the NH Hotel Mediapark, Im Mediapark 8B, 50670 Köln, Germany. A number of rooms have been pre-booked for participants who are invited to book their accommodation by contacting directly the hotel by 24 April 2014. The registrations to the Conference will be open from 3 March 2014 till 23 May 2014.

More details will follow in the coming months on the EPR website.

Innovation Prize 2014

Also this year EPR will launch the Innovation Prize competition!

The Prize winner will be selected by the EPR Centre Coordinators based on a series of pre-defined criteria on the quality and innovative aspects of the practice. The winning organisation will be given the opportunity to present its best practice during the Innovation Prize Awarding Ceremony, at the upcoming EPR Annual Conference, on 26 - 27 June 2014 in Kholn, Germany. Be ready to submit your best innovative practice! The contest will open in April 2014.

Projects



Final Workshop: exploitation of the collaborative portal on assistive technologies

On 9 and 10 December 2013 the ATIS4all networks hold the final workshop in Madrid, Spain. EPR attended the workshop aimed to discuss the allocation among partners of the portal's intellectual property rights and agree on the further exploitation and dissemination actions. The third release of the portal is now available with some translation and more interactive contents. EPR is actively promoting the portal and inviting interested parties to join the community as simple user or supporters in order to share information and disseminate initiatives, best practices and case studies to a wide community. EPR invites member organisations and partners to visit the collaborative portal, share feedback with the Secretariat, and promote it.

For more information about ATIS4All, please contact Cinzia De Letis at cinzia.de.letis@epr.eu or visit the project website www.atis4all.eu

EPR signed the four years partnership agreement with the European Commission (DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion)

Following the formal news that EPR application for Structural Funding from the European Commission (DG Employment and Social Affairs) has been accepted, EPR announces the signing of the partnership agreement for the period 2014 – 2017.

The purpose of this long-term contracts is to strength the cooperation with networks, that as EPR, are active in promoting social inclusion and poverty reduction in society. In the current macroeconomic climate EU needs to strengthen synergies with civil society organisations to help overcome challenges related to poverty, inequality, social exclusion, and unemployment.

This grant confirms the recognition that EPR has at European level in playing an important role in supporting its members in creating a more social and inclusive Europe by

providing services to people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups.

This overall partnership agreement would be operationalized via annual work plans with a corresponding grant. The exact amount of the grant for 2014 and the related contract will be signed during January 2014.

Jan Spooren, Secretary General at EPR said “this is a great opportunity for EPR to improve its activities at both European and national level and to develop new strategy for the coming period”.



EQUASS

EQUASS launched its own website!

In November 2013 EQUASS has launched its own website. While the contents for the most part correspond to the previous EQUASS website hosted on the EPR webpage, currently the information is conveniently spread out, expanded and freely displayed on an independent EQUASS page.

Aside from the sections already accounted for on the EPR web space, the fresh looking website is in addition featuring publications, latest news, quality control measures, information on how to apply, awarding ceremonies photo galleries and various databases. Auditors and other EQUASS stakeholders can now log into the secure platform from wherever they are in the world to access documents and templates for audits,

consulting and other assignments. Another innovation entails separate pages for each Local Licence Holder (LLH).

The new website also includes databases of Assurance and Excellence certified organisations. The EQUASS brochure is now available in 11 European languages under the Publications section. Apart from the rewarding improvements in sitemap management, graphics-wise the independent website has allowed us space for displaying flashing galleries along with quotations and interactive maps. You can now get a geographical sense of where the EQUASS certified organisations are spread throughout Europe. The interactive map also allows you to visually appreciate the number of sites that have been certified under EQUASS to this date. We are also proud to say that the website is available in a fully accessible version.

Visit the EQUASS website www.equass.be



DeSqual Project Kick off meeting



On 23 and 24 October 2013 the DeSqual (Development of Sustainable Quality assurance in VET) partners met for a kick-off of the project. DeSqual is a collaboration of 4 Quality assurance expert organisations and 10 social service/ VET providers for people with disabilities, who will pilot a newly-developed training for sustainable quality assurance.

The EPR General Secretary, Mr. Jan Spooren's welcome was followed by an introduction by the project leader - Rea College Pluryn, introductions of project partners, brainstorming seminars on sustainability in quality assurance and sessions on project contents by the key quality expert Mr. Guus van Beek. The meetings also allowed for discussing practical matters such as monitoring and evaluation

overseen by Mrs. Brigitte van Lierop as well as finance and administration co-ordinated by Mrs. Birgit Grimbergen and Mrs. Angelique Wibier. With an EQUASS quality assurance certificate as a start point, partners will develop a training program that focusses on individual quality behaviour and quality awareness of professionals and quality culture in the organisation. In this way, project DeSqual will contribute to the sustainable implementation of EQAVET requirements in their quality system.



PRIME final conference

On 24 October 2013 the PRIME project partners met for a final conference to reflect upon the 2 years of work. PRIME was launched in November 2011 and it aimed at using EQUASS as a tool for the implementation on the EQAVET framework for quality in the provision of Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Europe.

The meeting was headstarted by Mrs. Herma Veltman, Director of Rea College Pluryn, which was the leading organisation for the project. Among others the presentations included sessions on EQAVET by Mr. Ron Reeuwijk (Rea College Pluryn) and Mrs. Alie Kamphuis (Senior manager NCP EQAVET); input on management culture by Mrs. Birgit Grimbergen (Rea College Pluryn), reflections on culture of self-assessment by Mrs. Tita

Destovnik (CenterKontura d.o.o.) as well as use of data and feedback to improve VET by Mrs. Kristina Maciute Stukane (Vilnius Psychosocial Rehabilitation Centre). The meeting was finalised by Mr. Michael Crowley of Rehab Group who was the evaluator for the project.



APPACDM organised a benchmarking on Quality within EQUASS Framework



On 15 November, 23 participants from APPACDM de Gaia, AFID, APPC Coimbra, APPC Porto, ASSOL, Cerciag, Cercimarco and CRIA participated in a benchmarking event, which was offered by APPACDM de Gaia, in Vila Nova de Gaia, and was presented by Guus Von Beek, EQUASS Key Expert from EPR.

Participants had the chance to exchange experiences and learn more about the concept of benchmarking and bench learning, identify opportunities and limitations for benchmarking in the social sector and discuss about the challenges of benchmarking with EQUASS Assurance and EQUASS Excellence.

Estonian conference on quality on social services: “Made it ourselves, made it well”

On 11 Dec 2013 Astangu VRC as EQUASS LLH carried out an Estonian conference on quality of social services “Made it ourselves, made it well” for all the different stakeholders involved.

Together with 200 participants the presenters from Estonian Quality Association, Ministry of Social Affairs, Social Insurance Board, EQUASS Europe and Astangu itself went through different aspects of the past developments, present activities and future plans for improvement of the services.

Conference was concluded with an EQUASS Awarding Ceremony where Estonian Minister of Social Affairs Mr Taavi Rõivas recognized service providers for their work and contribution in improving of the quality of services.

16 service providers received their EQUASS Assurance certificates. Astangu center was one of the recognized organisations.



EUROPEAN PLATFORM FOR REHABILITATION

The network of leading service providers to people with disabilities

Wishes season's greetings and a very happy new year!

EPR on the web!

For regularly updated information on EPR and its activities, visit our website: www.epr.eu

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