

17th European Social Services Conference, Prague, 22-24 June 2009

Input of

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Session III, 23 June 2009, 1400 – 1600 hrs

“Development of quality objectives for service providers from the third sector for the improvement of effect for the users”

Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you very much for your invitation. I would like to inform you how the Deutscher Verein für öffentliche und private Fürsorge operates in order to achieve better outcomes and results in providing social services with focus on the users in Germany.

A few words about the Deutscher Verein für öffentliche und private Fürsorge: The Deutscher Verein which resulted from the welfare movement at the end of the 19th century has been pursuing the task of representing the interests of social institutions and services and influencing socio-political developments in Germany since almost 200 years. It has over 2500 members from the field of public and non-profit providers. Our topics are so multifaceted like the professional social work itself: from child and youth welfare services, care services for people with disabilities, health care, labour market integration and social welfare, senior citizens' welfare complemented by

social planning, financing, qualification and quality management of social services as well as cooperation between the public and non-profit service providers involved.

Today, I have gladly taken the task of presenting the current efforts of non-profit providers of high quality and demand-oriented range of services in Germany.

The voice of users of social services is a very good basis; a basis for the question – which requirement set and needs the standard today for high-quality social services. The basic requirement for the development of quality objectives is namely the dialogue and agreement on demand between the user and the service provider. However, even between the service providers and the public agencies bearing financial responsibility, quality objectives and development has to be intended internally and promoted actively. A statutory control principle will never achieve this objective alone. The significance of this internal process for many non-profit providers in Germany is the development of a so-called “guiding principle” as a concept. The concept as an embodiment of values and objectives of a provider is always operationalised during the specific planning of services and put into practise through quality management.

In a long-term process, the non-statutory social welfare organisations in Germany (e.g. Caritas, the Diakonische Werk, the Arbeiterwohlfahrt (Workers' Welfare Association) and others) have developed “quality objectives” in which they show how they want to achieve the “specific quality of services” which they have to guarantee. These quality objectives are a guideline for quality management in all fields of social work. Up to now, these objectives have been implemented particularly in the senior citizens' welfare and care. These objectives should also be implemented the field of care for people with disabilities and in youth welfare services in the future. The non-profit providers orient themselves expressly to the quality management systems that are recognised in Europe, namely to the DIN EN ISO 9001: 2000 or to the EFQM Excellence Model. They incorporate their “quality objectives” actively in the current development of a so-called “voluntary *European* quality framework for social services”. Colleagues from other European countries – so I am told – see a good reference model for the European quality framework in the quality objectives of German welfare organisations.

At the Deutscher Verein, we are currently working with the welfare organisations and the local authorities on key points for “cooperative quality management”. The concepts and instruments of quality management should be used for keeping track of the joint responsibility of the social or youth welfare office and service providers as a common goal when agreeing on services and fees for the provision of social services. An optimal service for the clients and users is thereby guaranteed. The background for this is: in Germany, we have indeed legally standardised a contractual system which is supposed to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of social services. However, the practical implementation doesn't work in many cities and municipalities due to lack of cooperation among the parties involved.

Orientation to demand not only means quality development *among* the providers of social services. Orientation to demand includes the development of new innovative products on offer as a reaction to changed demands. The opportunity for providers to select new forms strongly depends on how the applicable legal framework permits these new forms.

There are still a number of regulations which are tailored to traditional products on offer in certain institutions and which have to be reformed. To illustrate this, I would like to focus on two areas of our work:

1. German regulations on residential care are traditionally oriented to care *in* residential institutes for the elderly or handicapped people. New forms of housing fit these standards only conditionally - forms of housing which offer the concerned persons life in small, spatial, family-like units in their usual residential quarters with reasonable personal contacts and - at the same time - cooperation among social services providers and supervisory bodies. In 2006, the Deutscher Verein developed work instructions for the application of old legal material in the new products on offer. At the moment, it stands up for a new legal concept that is similar to that of the civil law consumer protection. The people-oriented and not institution-oriented approach of the law should be new in order to live up to the interests of the users better.

2. Secondly, I would like to direct your view towards the adjustment of regulations for the nursing care services for the elderly and handicapped people. The discussions on improvement of nursing care are currently mainly oriented to the development of a legal framework which sees the nursing care services for the elderly *and* handicapped people in one concept due to the numerous overlaps. Orientation to such an overall concept would give the providers more free rein – like in the new forms of housing – to orient nursing care more to the interests of the user irrespective of the place or kind of nursing care. Crossovers between the individual areas of performance in social law, e.g. for early intervention, education and vocational training, promotion of employment, health care and nursing care should have a less disadvantageous effect on the concerned persons. Far too often, a user is faced with shortfalls because for instance he has reached a certain age or achieved another status. This doesn't benefit the user or the provider of different social services.

To sum up, one can say that Germany is on the right path when it comes to people-centred/demand-oriented planning of social services. However, the legal guidelines which are strongly laid out in the area of social law in a regulatory manner must often be adapted to the new forms of offers and services or the cooperation of different professions first.

I would really be interested in knowing how the developments in your countries proceed and how you deal with the problem of developing effective and high-quality social services. I look forward to an exciting discussion and thank you for paying attention!