

Learning from each-other: being innovative, being inclusive!

CONTRIBUTION TO THE EASPD 15th ANNIVERSARY NEWSLETTER.



'Dienstencentrum GID(t)S' is a service centre for people with a disability in Belgium. It gives support on different areas, like education, employment, special revalidation and care, both ambulant and intra-muros.

THE USERS



Ariane is the mother of Tuur and Kaat, who both have a disability. Tuur goes to a special school, while Kaat attends mainstream education.

"Whereas special schools should be slightly more performance-oriented, mainstream schools should offer more support and assistance. Currently this is limited to two lesson periods per week. Furthermore, the support options available should be more diverse, and not limited to a number of predetermined programmes.

The special school organises annual team meetings to allow us to weigh in on the support that is provided and to accommodate our specific needs. In mainstream education, three meetings are organised per school year to discuss the support needed and make changes if necessary. This can also be done in consultation with home care services, which rely on a personal approach to find the best solutions.

Satisfaction surveys are conducted on a regular basis and the quality of support is discussed in review meetings.



Although our concerns are always heard and there is a lot of goodwill, it tends to take quite long for any changes to be made due to the administrative burden. This process could be made more efficient.”



Danitsja is a young woman with a physical disability. She currently lives with her parents and attends a day centre. She can also make use of home care services.

“At the moment I am still living at home, but I would like to find a place of my own. I am looking for a suitable and affordable home, but this is not an easy task and the waiting lists are long.

I feel I am sufficiently involved in the planning of my daily activities. These are discussed with us on a regular basis and I am given the opportunity to make changes if I want to. There is always someone to talk to if something is wrong. I am also happy with the home care services.

Regular satisfaction surveys allow me to review my daily schedule. However, sometimes organisational decisions are made, involving transportation, for example, or the set-up of the activity rooms, which have not been sufficiently discussed with us in advance.

While we are sometimes not enough involved in certain decisions, I believe it is important that the day centre users can make certain arrangements with each other without a caregiver’s involvement.”

THE SERVICE PROVIDER



Mr. Philip Vanneste is General Manager of 'Dienstencentrum GID(t)S'.

"The social care for disabled people in Flanders nowadays is well developed and of high quality, but mostly still empowered by the caring providences themselves. A financing program linked to the disabled person himself can be an important stimulating factor. This will influence considerably the relationship between the disabled person and the one providing the needed support and care: negotiation about the specific care which one needs and wishes. This will require however more flexibility of the care provider, which is not always so obvious. Extra creativity will be necessary in looking for innovative concepts providing more people with help and support using the same available financial resources. At the same time there is the concern about the available budgets by the government. We must keep alert that the small budgets cannot be used as a reason to economise at the cost of the disabled person. Special attention must be paid to the motivation of personal financing. It should be really motivated by an empowerment of the person needing support and care and not by the hidden search for saving measures.

Actually the government is the most important financing actor in the field of care providence. Consequently the government has developed a whole range of directives and rules in order to guarantee and control the quality of the care and support providers. The provider of care and support however does not only want to act as an executor but wants to act more like an entrepreneur in caring. Network shaping and cooperation are important and this with several partners, also in the commercial field.

Also in the social care we should act more client-oriented, market-passionate. This however should not be a synonym for 'purely commercial', but in full regard of the needs of the users.

Technology can offer big opportunities for people with a disorder, but it is not reaching the client nor the providers of care at this moment. Initiatives must be taken to bridge the gap between care and technology. In Flanders the government seems to have understood that. For the coming future we see forward to a potential of applications of standard technology in the field of care and supporting aids. Think for example of the possibilities smart phones can give for disabled persons. This is Universal technology and thus lower in price. Acceptance remains easier, also for the care suppliers.

Within the field of care for disabled people there has been a wave of professionalization: new services and new target groups have come forward. We should return to society itself, with its social network and existing social services to assist in this specific care for disabled people. Providers of care should work together. Their role is of great importance here. By transferring their specific knowledge and expertise they can support social services and providences. Only in this way inclusion can become more of a reality."

