

European research platform for inclusive community planning and service development for people with disabilities (EURECO)



Join us at 3rd EURECO-Forum 2019, 25/26 March 2019! Brussels, Representation of the State of Northrhine-Westphalia (NRW) to the European Union, Rue Montoyer 47, 1000 Brussels

EURECO is a European collaboration platform of academic researchers and service providers working on inclusive community planning and development of in the perspective of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The platform is a joint initiative of the European Association of Services Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD) and the Centre for Planning and Evaluation of Social Services (ZPE), University of Siegen, Germany to foster European theory-practice cooperation in the disability services sector. Since 2017 the research platform yearly organizes European forums in Brussels to discuss current trends and problems relevant for European research activities concerning disability, inclusive communities and service delivery. Whereas the focus of meetings in 2017 was on cooperation and co-production in comparative European research, the forum 2018 dealt with comparative issues around diffusion of innovations in local disability fields, including political implementation strategies. The two forum meetings not only resulted in productive debates and concrete ideas for European project activities but also led to valuable networking among participants from all over Europe.

In 2019, the EURECO Forum will be entitled: "Take measure: Social impact measurement frameworks for disability services in Europe"

Background:

In the past decades all over Europe and other parts of the world, disability services like others in the public and social economy sector have been confronted with the mega-wave of neoliberalism pushing for marketization of welfare state arrangements. Services were forced to establish strong internal management systems to achieve effectiveness and cost-efficiency and to position themselves in their external relations as market competitors in a field of social service production. While ideologically praising care markets and prioritizing the problem of efficient service production and delivery as main

This event has received financial support from the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation "EaSI" (2014-2020)

EASPD – European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities



challenge in the social sector, ‘contracting’ systems between governments and service providers were implemented. Following the idea of commissioning and purchasing these contracting systems should assure that tax payers’ money was spent under the motto “value for money”, rationally, i.e. targeted, efficient and with quality control over products”.

Highlighting economic arguments such as cost-efficiency of social services as main challenges of service provision systems has led to calls for measuring their outcomes and effects. Policy makers and service providers discovered the need for ‘technical’ **instruments for individual planning of care and services**. Applying these instruments was to legitimize the investment in a certain social service domain and to produce evidence of its effectiveness. It was expected that this evidence can result from measurement the fulfilment of objectives set in individual planning procedures and that this measured ‘output’ legitimizes funding. Effects were mixed, reported is an increase bureaucracy, stronger influence of governments in case processing and its quality depending on the effort that is put on understanding the person’s situation and designing support arrangements instead of ‘placing’

Parallel to this economically driven tendencies, in the late 1980ies **professional concepts on ‘person-centered planning’ (PCP)** emerged that had their philosophical origins in the US ‘communitarism’-movement and focused on the group of persons with intellectual disabilities. The approach tries to support the vulnerable person’s right for self-determination with systematic methods to identify and use informal and formal resources in the community. Planning procedures were supposed to be conducted under the regime of the key person supported by a ‘circle of friends’. Person-centered planning-approaches spread rapidly in other Anglo-Saxon and European countries and were further developed. Often person-centered planning approaches were practiced as mere professional concepts with no link to individual service planning. There is a shared assumption among many professionals that PCP holds a strong potential for creating individually supportive service arrangements in inclusive settings as an alternative to institutionalized care models. In some countries some PCP-elements have become part of the formal individual service planning procedures practiced in commissioning processes. There is reason to believe that person-centered planning-approaches have not changed the neo-liberal framing of service planning and production in the disability field so far.

Whereas on the first glance the neo-liberal model of efficient service provision seems quite logical, a further look draws a different picture and shows that reality is more complex. Practices of services are not only shaped by particular interest of only one’s own organization. There is also collective interest and responsibility and the wish to contribute to collective impact and quality of life for the community. Organizations don’t follow only rational preferences, but norms, social rules and routines, based on a shared value base and the need for stability including job security for decently paid staff. Often in the past, it was neglected by governments and other actors to argue for the public value of well-functioning social service systems and to work for a broad consensus on their essence of social protection for democratic societies.

This raises the need for an alternative framing of individual planning and funding systems for persons with disabilities. Could ideas on that be developed around the “logic of appropriateness” (March & Olsen 2011), under which public spending and performance of actors in the disability sector would be based on rules, public values, community interests and citizenship?

On the background of such assumptions participants of the 2019 EURECO Forum are invited to share experiences and discuss how market models and cost efficiency-thinking have been incorporated in legal texts and governments' steering efforts, in practices of services providers and their perspectives on clients in selected countries, as well as in research.

The discussions will start with the relation between individualized support concepts for persons with disabilities and allocation of resources in different European countries. Selected examples will include aspects of individual service planning, decision-making on personal service arrangements, and different outcome measurement instruments.

We will then deal with questions on how disability services adapt to changing expectations from their external social and organizational environment. Many services must handle ambitious conceptual missions for inclusive and affordable services, requested by consumers more conscious of their rights than before. Often they also have to manage relatively high annual turn-overs while depending on public resources, they must co-ordinate different organizational sub-units, fulfil responsibilities as employers, etc. often under conditions of competitions with other provider organizations.

We would be very happy to have you with us.

Prof. Dr. Johannes Schädler, ZPE, University of Siegen

Asel Kadyrbaeva, EASPD

Contact information: asel.kadyrbaeva@easpd.eu