



International Conference: Independent Living through Direct Payments

Expertise Centre Independent Living

European Network on Independent Living

4 June 2010, De Zwarte Doos-Gentbrugge

Workshops: “Discussing the evolution of support/care suppliers”

I. The co-existence of Direct Payments and care in kind

Concept: We ask every nationality present to answer the questions 1 and 2. As for the questions 3 and 4 - we ask the participants to choose a ‘statement’ and motivate their choice.

Moderator: Cor Van Damme

Report: Elke Decruynaere

Questions:

1. Can you give us an overview of the support people with a disability can get in your country?
2. Is there in your country a co-existence of Direct Payments and care in kind. If yes, what is the proportion of each?
3. Choose one of the following ‘statements’:
 - Our goal must be a system of direct payments for everybody with a need for support.
 - People must always have a choice between direct payments and services in kind.
4. Choose one of the following ‘statements’:
 - There should be the possibility to buy residential care (in institutions) with direct payments.
 - It should be only personal assistance that can be bought with direct payments.

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II. Personal Assistants and quality standards

Concept: We ask every nationality present to answer the questions. After that we ask the participants to pick the country they would prefer to live in. Also we ask them to motivate their choice.

Moderator: Koenraad Depauw

Report: Linde Moonen

Questions:

1. Do you get support in finding assistants in your country? Is this support sufficient or not? Is it necessary or not?
2. Are there certain quality standards on personal assistants? If yes, who does determine them? Is this support sufficient or not? Is it necessary or not?
3. Is there training for personal assistants? Is this necessary or sufficient? Who organizes these trainings?
4. For which aspects of being an employer do you get support in your country? Is this sufficient or necessary?

III. How do we deal with commercialization?

Concept: We ask every nationality present to answer the question 1, 2 and 3. As for the question 4, we ask the participants to choose a 'statement' and motivate it.

Moderator: Nadia Hadad

Report: Juliska Van Hauwermeiren

Questions:

1. Are there private for profit initiatives in your country that offer services or support for people with a disability? If so, what kind of initiatives are there?
2. Has the situation recently changed in your country? Is there a shift towards more liberalization or more regulation?
3. Give us 2 positive and 2 negative examples of (the lack of) private for profit services in your country.
4. Choose a statement and motivate it:
 - An organization that aims profit cannot defend the interest of the clients. So private for profit initiatives are not what we need.
 - In a free market clients have the possibility to choose their service providers and leave if they are not satisfied. That is why we do not need any mechanism of control.
 - Private for profit organizations should be allowed in the support market, on the condition that they are controlled in a way (determine which way).



Conclusions of 3 workshops discussing the evolution of care offers in different countries

Peter Lambrechts: Introduction

Hello everybody. We are almost at the end of this conference. I hope it was a nice conference for everybody. I hope that we have learned a few things, that we have a better overview now how it is in other countries and that we have shared new contacts and experiences. We are going to conclude now. Firstly, we will bring very shortly the findings of the three workshops that we had this afternoon. Directly after that, Viviane is going to make her conclusion speech. And finally, last but not least, we will have a great reception in the nice weather outside, so please stay with us for that. I'm going to give the microphone to the reporters of the workgroups now.

Elke Decruynaere: The co-existence of Direct Payments and care in kind.

I was asked to bring the report of the **workshop about direct payments versus care in kind**. The first statement was - our goal must be a system of direct payments for everybody, or - people always need the choice between direct payments and services in kind. I will report the conclusions, not only the pro's and contra's, but also the things that have been repeated a lot.

First of all, it should be our goal that everybody has a right to direct payments. People can make a choice. They make this choice themselves, it's not a decision of the government (for example, excluding people with a mental disability from the direct payments). There should also be a training. Older people who have always lived in an institution, will have to learn to live independently and make decisions. They have to learn how to work with direct payments. It is very hard to force people to do something. We should give them a choice to choose instead of just giving them one system. Choices in life are important for us, so we cannot take the decision for services in kind away. So - direct payments for everybody, but with your budget, you can choose what to do. Only when you have direct payments, you can really choose who your assistants are, you can decide more.

Then we discussed: what do direct payments really mean? Does it mean that you have the money on your own account? Or is it about the choice who is helping you and how is it done? If it was about making the decisions, there was no discussion. Everybody should have the right to decide for themselves. But if it was about the money, there was some discussion in the group. Somebody suggested that maybe we should talk about "direct decision making" instead of direct payments, because it is not really about the money itself. It is about making the decisions for yourself.

At the moment, you also have two kinds of systems of direct payments. There is the system like here in Belgium and in the Netherlands, where you have the money yourself, but you also have the system in Sweden. Most of the people there make the decisions, but they don't have the budget. The last remark that was made was: everybody should work with a budget and everybody can do this. It was said that you had different competences: dealing with money, managing money is just one of them. But there is also communication with other people and with your own assistants. And not everybody has these competences. But you can make decisions about your own life without the competence of



full communication and without the competence of financial management. So that was the resume of the first statement.

For the second statement, I'm going to be a bit shorter. It was about the fact that it has to be possible to buy residential-homecare services by means of direct payments. Or - direct payments should only cover the costs of personal assistance. Then the question came: what is an institution and what is not? It was said that we had to make clear what kind of services we were talking about. Services or an institution - that is not just the building. It is the organizational structure in which you can't decide the content of your assistance. It is impossible, somebody said, for organizations or institutions, to fulfill everybody's individual needs. So this person's statement was - that direct payments should only cover the costs of personal assistance, because in organizations and institutions, you cannot decide. It's always the institution itself that makes the decisions. The system with personal assistance is the only one where you can make all the decisions.

Then we were thinking about the question: what are the advantages of a service? Somebody said that, if you are dealing with a service, you can organize permanence at night; so that you ring and within one minute, there is somebody to help you. You can only have that when you are dealing with services. But then there was a whole discussion about the fact that it depends on the budget you get. The last thing that was said, was - we have to obtain de-institutionalization. This means also that you don't buy services in institutions.

As you can see, a lot of the things have been discussed. Also – there were a lot of nuances and there were still a lot of questions.

Juliska Van Hauwermeiren: How do we go with the commercialization?

We had a **workshop about commercialization**. About the statement: if there are for-profit organizations on the market, is this a good thing or not? The first thing we discussed was quality. The question was: if there were for-profit organizations on the market, could they be qualitative or not? We had different views on that. There were people from Norway who had the example of for-profit organizations on the market. They were not really in favor of them. They prefer to organize their own personal assistance through a cooperative, called ULOBA, where they have everything to say.

However, there was also an other experience in the Netherlands, where there are also for-profit organizations on the market. In the Netherlands new initiatives are filling in gaps that were not filled in by traditional organizations.

The second statement was: what is the effect of commercialization on the accessibility? Will everyone be helped if there are for-profit organizations on the market? The conclusion was - the budget should be high enough. That is very important in the whole question.

As a conclusion I would say: there are a lot of new initiatives, also private for-profit or nonprofit. But the main thing that we have to keep in mind is that, as a user, you have to define whom your assistants are, what you can do with them and when.

Linde Moonen: Finding good personal assistants - how do we go with the quality criteria?

The third and last workshop was about **quality standards for personal assistants**. It was quite clear what all the people thought: we don't need quality standards for our assistants. We can decide for ourselves who is a good assistant and who is not. The people from ULOBA, Norway, told us that there would always be a lack of qualified people, so it would do only harm if we decide to hire only the qualified people. What we do need is training for the budget holders themselves. They can use this training, if they want to. It would be about how to be a good employer and how to train your own assistants. In this way, we can empower the people themselves. What we ask from personal assistants is - that they are happy in their jobs, that they like to do their jobs and that they are prepared to be flexible. These are the only things people ask from their assistants. I think this is quite a short conclusion, but it was very clear for all people.

