

Territorial Quality Standards in Social Services of General Interest

Results Workshop Faenza, 5-6 November 2009

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First workshop day, 5 November 2009

1. Reminder project activities: "Where are we now, where will we go, what are the objectives of this workshop?"

Objectives of the workshop:

- discuss and define key elements of quality (and of participation processes) that have to be taken into account when conceiving methods for the definition of local quality standards in SSGI (based on research results presented by the cooperatives and results of the second survey)
- deepen the issue of communication, interaction and participation between service providers, local authorities, service users and other stakeholders in the local community (identify key elements influencing service quality): Who should participate in the definition of these standards, when and how, by which means etc.?
- discussion of the TSR© approach as a method for participatory definition of local quality standards in social services of general interest

Upcoming activities:

- *November 2009-February 2010*: Research on methods for a definition of local quality standards in SSGI (might include short survey among partners)
- *December 2009-June 2010*: In-depth analysis of application and (methods of) definition of quality standards in SSGI at territorial level (based on a questionnaire which will be drafted after the Faenza discussions)
- *June 2006*: Workshop in Gdynia (PL)

⇒ *On the basis of the workshop discussions, REVES will conceive and propose a questionnaire that will guide partners through the local research phase.*

2. Presentation of the outcome of the second survey on basic terms and concepts such as "Social Services of General Interest", "General Interest" or "Quality (in social services of general interest)"

"Social Services of General Interest"

First of all, it can be stated that a concrete definition of the term "Social Services of General Interest" does not seem to exist in most member states and local territories. Moreover, the term seems to be rarely used. Public and private actors often simply speak of "social services" (which also helps distinguish them from services of general interest such as telecommunications, energy, transport...).

However, frequently, a basic understanding on what kind of services should fall in this category seems to exist in society and throughout Europe.

Most often, the following categories were listed:

- Care for elderly
- Social security
- Social re-integration and prevention
- Employment
- Specific services for orientation and re-integration into the labour market of disadvantaged persons
- Social housing ...

In some member states, health and education are not considered as "social services (of general interest)". However, in the framework of the TQS project, both service domains will be 'counted in', as they are often closely linked to other social services and have a considerable social impact.

In several cases, social services are partially defined and regulated through national and regional legislation.

In a majority of TQS partner territories, social services are delivered by public and private (social?) actors. Delivery of social services in Sweden and Poland has for a long time been ensured above all by public providers. However, this is now about to change - (social) private actors get more and more involved in service provision.

A peculiarity regarding legislation regulating relations between local authorities and different types of service providers represents the Italian "Framework law for the realization of an integrated system of social interventions and services" (Law 328)¹, which integrates a community perspective and participation into service planning, provision and monitoring/evaluation.

All TQS project partners seemed to agree on several main characteristics of Social Services (of General Interest):

1. SSGI are based on fundamental rights and principles.
2. SSGI serve the whole community.
3. SSGI contribute to social cohesion.

"General Interest"

In most TQS partner territories and their member states, definition and use of the term "general interest" are rather unclear.

If something is of general interest often has to be evaluated on a case-to-case basis.

However, most TQS partners listed the following more general principles that are, following their experiences, linked to the concept of "general interest":

- Respect of fundamental rights/human dignity
- Accessibility
- Equality
- Impartiality
- Equity
- Universality
- Reciprocity
- Transparency
- Participation
- Efficiency...

Yet, with regard to these principles the partners pointed to some challenges (see below: 'discussion')...

¹ Law 328 establishes the principle of cooperation between different service providers, service users and other stakeholders. Regional governments have to conceive concrete instruments for co-programming of social and health services in the framework of the Piani di Zona (zone plans set up through co-programming partnerships between different public and private stakeholders on a territory).

Challenges regarding SSGI and their quality

TQS partners from different regions and cities reported very similar challenges they now have to tackle when it comes to social service provision.

To give just some examples:

- demographic changes and the crisis of the traditional family model ⇒ a challenge for services such as long-term care
- increase of the migrant population
- increase of persons with disabilities acquired at different stages of life
- an increasing number of children and youngsters in difficult situations
- unemployment and working poor

It seems worth to highlight that all these challenges are linked to changes regarding the needs of different groups of the population.

With regard to this situation, all TQS partner organisations consider it necessary to review the system of service provision. A major issue herein is sustainability of the service system. New ways have to be found to allocate resources more appropriately and to share costs. Moreover, partners highlighted the need to re-define the role of social economy and other not-for-profit organisations when it comes to service provision: the missing level playing field with public authorities not only in service provision, but also in planning and evaluation of services is perceived as a major obstacle. Yet other difficulties are caused, in many TQS partner territories, by (EU) procurement regulations which, in their application, lead to advantages for larger (private) structures, a focus more on price rather than on quality, and ignorance regarding the characteristics (and possible added value) of specific service providers.

Solutions to the above mentioned challenges and difficulties are seen, by TQS partners, in the following elements (to quote only some examples):

- diversification of the service offer;
- the promotion of participative processes in service planning, implementation and evaluation;
- person-centred interventions based on the empowerment of the beneficiary;
- new forms of cost-sharing;
- networking;
- coordination between different actors in the social and health sector ...

Elements of quality

With regard to quality in social services in their city or region, most TQS partners deplore the current focus on the (lowest) price and, when it comes to the definition and measurement of quality, the use of an evaluation of general management procedures or certification only.

Ideally, TQS partners would like to see the following quality criteria applied:

Quality elements with regard to beneficiaries:

- Accessibility
- Diversity of responses to citizens' needs
- Beneficiaries to be considered not as an object of care, but as promoter and protagonists of the respective project (empowerment, autonomy, elimination of the need instead of assistance-based service provision)
- joint definition and evaluation of quality by service users, families, service providers and their staff and other stakeholders

Quality elements with regard to service providers (internal processes) and staff:

- Improvement of working conditions
- Training/Development of (social) competences of staff
- Participatory management
- Equipment and premises

Quality elements with regard to processes/procedures in general:

- Capacity to identify (changing) needs of citizens and to adequately respond to these needs
- Activation of better governance and participation processes involving stakeholders and target groups
- Reduction of bureaucracy and of the time needed to respond to requests of the citizens
- Traceability of actions
- Appropriate monitoring and evaluation
- Instruments to value the quality of processes as such (beyond quantitative assessment)
- Combination of research and action

Quality elements with regard to the local community

- Solidarity
- Networking (identify and strengthen/empower all stakeholders that are in a position to contribute to the system of service provision in one way or the other)
- Coordination (high integration of different services and bodies that concern an individual project) and horizontal subsidiarity

Discussion:

1. *Is accessibility a pre-condition to quality? Or, is a (universally) accessible service also in every case a quality service?*

Here, we are faced with the dilemma of limited resources which might, sometimes, require a trade-off between (universal) accessibility and quality. How could this dilemma be solved?

For TQS partners it is vital to clearly define the beneficiaries for whom a specific service was conceived and to whom it is delivered. Accessibility should be based on a (basic) needs approach.

In this context, accessibility and quality are also strongly conditioned by information and communication which should clearly help (potential) service beneficiaries identify which service is most appropriate for them.

It is thus important to consider not only accessibility as such, but also the means used to make a service accessible.

2. *Is the principle of social utility incompatible with the need to conceive person-centred services?*

Most partners (but not all!) agreed that a service should not be conceived based on the description of needs of a specific user only. Several criteria should be applied - the user has to be perceived as member of a community. This also means to take into consideration aspects such as (missing) relationships between the beneficiary and the community or the issue of (potential) indirect users of the service.

The SSGI quality chain

Following the previous discussions Luigi Martignetti invites the participants to always keep in mind the different stages of services conception and delivery (thus also of quality), and, in relation therewith, the different actors that influence quality with their expectations and actions.

Input (e.g. a state regulation – according to different legal frameworks, like for instance in case of federal states; a community demand etc.)



Programming (example: provinces)



Projecting (example: local public authorities and private service providers)



Delivery (example: private service providers)



User² (social economy organisations such as specific types of co-operatives might represent service providers and users!)

² the person in need of the service and, at a different level, the community

Most partners situated their organisations in first three categories, two in the last.

3. Presentation: Quality principles, criteria and their definition in co-operatives (by Cooperatives Europe, CECOP and PARSEC):

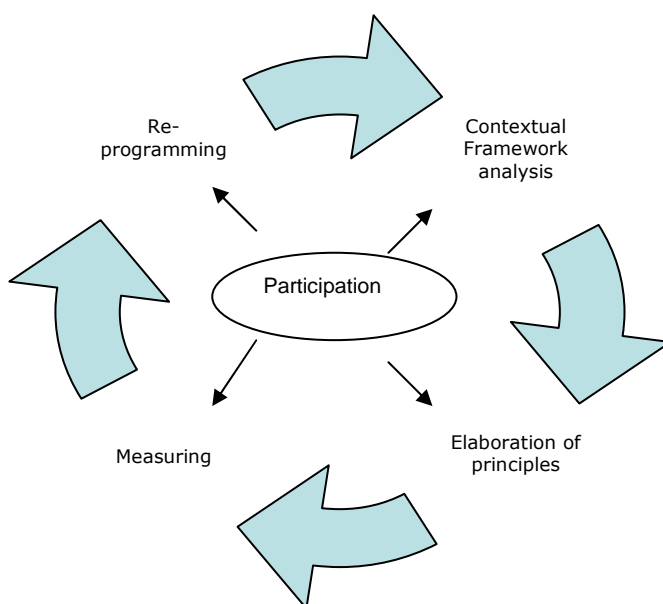
See annex

4. Presentation: Application of the TSR© methodology in Faenza

For several years now, the REVES network is working on the so-called TSR© approach, Territorial Social Responsibility. Point of departure of this work was the intention to extend the concept of CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) from enterprises also to other local actors such as local authorities, NGOs etc.

It is the very basis of the approach which distinguishes it from other methodologies and processes promoting responsibility in the social, economic, environmental and cultural fields: Local actors evaluate their policies, strategies and actions on the basis of values and principles that were defined by the local population.

The TSR approach consists of four phases:



1. The process starts with an analysis of the local context (demographic and socio-economic data, analysis of relations between different groups of the population and meeting places etc.). The results of this analysis enable local TSR facilitators to prepare the participation process and, at a later stage, identify the concrete meaning of expressed principles.

2. In a second step, through local animators, the local population is invited to express values and principles in the social, economic, environmental and cultural field (What do I like about my city? What don't I like? How should things be?). This is done through use of a number of different methods (questionnaires, discussion during different meetings, alternative methods of participation such as proménadologie or mapping ...).

Not in every case persons will express principles as such. It is thus the task of a local working group, together with an external expert (if possible), to deduce the principles and their concrete meaning from the answers given.

The results of this phase will be published and made available to the public.

3. Local actor(s), be they enterprises, local authorities, NGOs or others, start to evaluate their policies, strategies and actions on the basis of the principles defined. Which criteria for action do they use and do these correspond to these principles that express the expectations and needs of the local population? The results of this evaluation have to be made public!

4. Based on the results of the previous phase, the local actor(s) re-programme their actions and strategies (by re-defining their criteria for action). Again, results have to be made public.

It should be stressed that once a cycle is finished, the whole process has to start again so as to allow for improvements and adequate responses to changes in the local context.

Transparence (publication of results, possibility for the population to follow the process) and participation of an important part and different groups of the population are pre-conditions for the application of the TSR© approach as a vector for positive change.

Despite of this territorial approach, coherence with international and European guidelines is maintained, as the developed principles and revised criteria for action have to respect principles expressed in documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The city of Faenza (IT) and several cooperatives from Faenza are currently experimenting the approach - experimentation started in 2008.

After four months of preparatory actions (including the creation of the co-organiser group, the watch groups and the elaboration of a guide-questionnaire), virtually all households in Faenza received, in December 2008, information on the TSR® Faenza process and a questionnaire. Approximately 2% of the total population reacted immediately (1200 out of 57 000 inhabitants). Additional 4% were reached, by the co-organizer group, through interviews, alternative methods of participation and

approximately 80 meetings with various associations, social cooperatives, migrant organisations, business organisations and trade unions, schools and enterprises and others. Existing meeting places were thus used to encourage participation. About 3000 inhabitants expressed their vision of the city.

It has been vital, of course, to prepare this process by explaining its phases and objectives to the local population in order to encourage participation. This *communication* process took nearly a year and received support by the local authority, local social economy organisations and media.

The participation process with the aim to define principles for action had a duration of 5 months.

The content of the questionnaire was developed by an external expert (in cooperation with a local working group from Faenza).

(Local) TQS partners could verify to what extent (elements of) this approach might be useful also for the definition of local quality standards in social services of general interest.

Working groups

Second workshop day, 6 November 2009

For the following discussions, different working groups were formed (provincial level; partners from metropolitan cities; smaller cities).

Part I

Question 1: Apart from accessibility, are there any other preconditions for quality in social services of general interest?

Provincial level (Province of Piacenza/SOLCO Piacenza/County of Jämtland:

- human resources/financial resources
- common visions of decision-makers who should be willing to work towards quality
- knowledge of the territory

PARSEC (Rome)/Pfefferwerk Foundation (Berlin)/Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund(Berlin)/Cooperatives Europe/CECOP:

- open, dynamic processes (internal and external)
- taking into account geographic areas: rural areas etc.
- infrastructure
- resources (budget etc.)

City of Pordenone/City of Gdynia:

- open info channels without which (new) services could not emerge, be further developed or simply without which services would not be used
- availability and accessibility of data and procedures of diagnosis
- a minimum level of social utility
- sustainability (needs for specific services might change rapidly - therefore it is not always possible to carry out long term planning; however, sustainability in the long term can and should be ensured at least for specific services such as those linked to the pension system)

- social services have to be of general interest, i.e. they have to contribute to cohesion/social integration

City of Faenza/City of Livorno:

- need to understand the (local) context, analysis of needs and resources (human resources, economic resources, organisational resources etc.)



need to define different roles (who carries out the analysis of the territory, of needs, of existing resources)

- definition of a model of quality and characteristics of services (incl. accessibility) which is shared by different actors
- system of monitoring/evaluation
- dynamic model which strives towards improvement

Question 2: Which are, from your experience, the stakeholders that have to be taken into account when defining quality?

Province of Piacenza/SOLCO Piacenza/County of Jämtland:

Direct stakeholders:

- decision- and policy-makers
- final beneficiaries

Indirect stakeholders:

- service providers
- community

This is how it looks like in reality. However, ideally, all of these should be direct stakeholders!

Regarding service providers we have to distinguish between different types of service providers. Co-operatives, for instance, appear to be direct stakeholders, as they are in direct contact with beneficiaries (who are sometimes also members of the co-operative!).

PARSEC (Rome)/Pfefferwerk Foundation (Berlin)/Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund(Berlin)/Cooperatives Europe/CECOP:

Direct stakeholders:

- financing bodies
- service providers, including staff
- beneficiaries and their families
- different public authorities that are active in the respective field

Indirect stakeholders:

- society/social environment which profits from the services
- social networks that contribute to the well-being of persons (incl. service beneficiaries)
- science which carries out research
- service providers and their lobby organisations
- the local community
- media (which may launch debates on service provision and related obstacles or opportunities)
- politicians that take specific decisions/political parties

City of Pordenone/City of Gdynia:

Direct stakeholders:

- service beneficiaries and their families
- service providers (which have a direct interest in the whole process of service delivery)
- workers (staff of service providers)
- associations (planning, production and evaluation), trade unions (trade unions have a direct stake at least in planning processes - in other phases it is not always clear to what extent they are direct stakeholders)

Indirect stakeholders:

- community (population and organized civil society, but also administration and politicians)
- central decision-makers (government)

City of Faenza/City of Livorno:

Direct stakeholders:

- those who programme, those who carry out/deliver, those who benefit

Indirect stakeholders:

- Community
- the organized territory (different interest groups) as pre-condition for work in networks

Question 3: Concerning relationships between different stakeholders in the service supply chain, which methods exist to define quality?

Province of Piacenza/SOLCO Piacenza/County of Jämtland:

- TSR
- ISO

PARSEC (Rome)/Pfefferwerk Foundation (Berlin)/Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund(Berlin)/Cooperatives Europe/CECOP:

- certification, which might, however, somewhat limit the service provider in its actions
- legislation (from different levels)
- referenda/plebiscites
- licences/authorization
- working groups within charities and other organisations providing services
- procedures within trade unions: trade unions do not only represent the interests of employees regarding salaries and working conditions, but they also take part in the debate on quality in a wider sense (however, it should also be kept in mind that, under certain conditions, this debate might be instrumentalized to reduce salaries etc.)

Specification: The role of media is, on one hand, to represent specific interests and launch debates on service provision and service quality, and, on the other hand, to give a voice to specific groups of the population. They should become partners in the debate on service quality and draw the attention of decision-makers and other parts of the population to existing shortcomings.

City of Pordenone/City of Gdynia:

- social consulting (cycle of systemic workshops, meetings etc.) ⇒ service charter



- well prepared calls for tenders (service charter), based on a diagnosis of needs, existing resources, service charter,

- co-projecting (co-planning) the service

- assessment

- exchange of good practices, e.g. amongst administrative bodies

Discussion: Participants propose to also count in consultation by public authorities (regarding different groups of the population...). Yet, in this context, some point to the danger that public authorities might 'rest' on consultation processes without going any further.

Finally, participants mention the need to use different kind of communication channels, adapted to different groups of the population (e.g. internet might be useful, but not accessible to everybody or used by all).

City of Faenza/City of Livorno:

Methods depend on the service model that has been chosen (see discussion on pre-conditions for quality). They could be:

- sharing of experiences

- questionnaires (on perceived quality)

- participation

- individual colloquiums

- choice of a service model

- definition of indicators

- definition of the specific service

Work in working groups/Part II

Question 4: Which procedures/methods exist for the evaluation of a) relationships, b) outputs, c) impacts?

Province of Piacenza/County of Jämtland/(Prefecture of Piraeus):

a) Evaluation of relationships through:

- identification of key actors and the weight of each in the evaluation process (more concrete methods for this have to be identified) as a condition for transparency and a wide sharing of the evaluation process

b) Evaluation of outputs through:

- beneficiary-oriented quantitative and qualitative methods

c) Evaluation of impact through:

- analysis and statistical surveys

- analysis and monitoring of individual cases

PARSEC (Rome)/Pfefferwerk Foundation (Berlin)/Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund(Berlin)/Cooperatives Europe/CECOP:

a) Evaluation of relationships through:

- surveys/interviews

- experiments

-observation

b) Evaluation of the output through:

- concrete tests with the beneficiaries (e.g. in case of an education service)

- analysis of documents

c) Evaluation of the impact through:

- statistical analysis
- case studies carried out by different actors
- registration of the impact on the community
- scientific studies (e.g. comparative studies)

City of Gdynia/City of Pordenone:

a) Evaluation of relationships through:

- "Socialgramm" : Quality expectations of decision-makers (with their environment) influence quality expectations of Service providers (and their environment) which, in turn, influence user and his/her environment + community

b) Evaluation of the output through:

- definition very close to user necessary

- 1) define the area where the outputs are supposed to be found
- 2) define the area where the impacts are visible
- 3) define the stakeholders (direct and indirect)
- 4) design the evaluation tools with the strong participation of direct and indirect stakeholders
- 5) Analysis of data/relations between outputs+impacts+direct/indirect stakeholders
- 6) Diagnosis (look for the data and specific situation in a local context)
- 7) Follow-up process of evaluation

c) Evaluation of the impact through:

- is rather linked to decision-maker (linked to broader goals)

It seems necessary to have a closer look at the relationships and possible gaps between the output (linked to specific goals) and impact (linked to strategic goals). Two dimensions have to be checked: relationships between stakeholders and relationships between specific goals and strategic goals. However, it is also clear that both dimensions cannot be completely separated, they are linked (a clear definition is important).

A fundamental question hereby is: Who should carry out the evaluation: should it be external or internal?

City of Faenza/City of Livorno:

a) Evaluation of relationships through:

Concerning programming and organisation of the service:

- Sharing of objectives (joint project-planning) and concertation between different stakeholders (p. ex. contracting authority, provider etc.) ⇒ Instrument: Service contract (objective: sharing of characteristics of the service in its complexity); Instrument of communication: Service map

Concerning education:

- Shared and personalized processes; co-planning and shared realization of the service project (bringing together, for instance, the provider and the service beneficiary and his/her family ⇒ instrument: pact for education/assistance

b) Evaluation of outputs through:

- evaluation of results based on objectives that were fixed by taking into account different stakeholders

⇒ should be linked to the ex-ante evaluation

c) Evaluation of impact through:

- changes with regard to the community through the service:

⇒ statistics

⇒ community profiles

⇒ levels of participation

⇒ satisfaction

⇒ Human Development Index - type approaches

⇒ TSR

Question 5: To resume: Which approach should be taken to define quality in social services of general interest?

Province of Piacenza/County of Jämtland/(Prefecture of Piraeus):

- participative

- voluntary
- representative

City of Gdynia/City of Pordenone:

- participative and democratic
- oriented towards social utility
- ensure evaluation (ex-ante, during, ex-post)
- holistic approach
- person-oriented
- pragmatic approach
- continuity
- innovative

City of Faenza/City of Livorno:

A cycle structure which could produce also new and different cycles is important!