

Inclusion Europe – Complex needs Study

June 4th, pm : « Availability, accessibility and cooperation of services »

Housing and Residential services for adults with complex needs Comparison between Belgium and others European countries

When the person is over 21, what do he/she becomes ? In Belgium, all this depend the regions, there aren't the same opportunities. In Flanders for example, the person can live at home with a personal budget to pay a personal assistant that the person has chosen. In Wallonia, this opportunity is only an experiment for 20 people. The integration policy for disabled people is in fact a regional competence. So, it's still the regions who are responsible to subsidize residential institutions and to give a financial aid for housing accomodation. In the 3 regions of Belgium, institutions are the most used solution by people with a severe disability. When there are enough places of course. Because there are lots of waiting lists. In Brussels, there are even people who are waiting for several new institutes.

For those living in their own home, they are often looked after by a member of the family. It is difficult to find an available and adequate staff support at home. There aren't ever enough respite care services.

The third solution is a group housing where there is a 24/7 available staff but it's specially for physical handicapped people.

In the diversity of offers, Belgium is like a European meeting point in housing accommodation for adults. So I'm going to compare the Belgium situation with other countries. I will finish with a conclusion with barriers and facilities to create a adequate solutions.

1) In each country, a lot of people with complex disabilities live at home with family members

- In Spain and Italy, this choice comes from a cultural **tradition**. In other countries, it's often a solution by default and sometimes, it's by right and desire.
- In Czech republic, like in Belgium, when they stay and live with their families, people with complex needs are practically **excluded** from the society, and the **parents** are often the only assistant of their child with disability.
- Like in Romania, most often, the family of a person with severe disabilities is **poor**, in a bad need of resources, and therefore the living space is very small (in the urban area) or has no facilities (in the rural area).
- Like in United Kingdom, moves from family settings often occur in **crisis** situations.
- In Flanders, like Sweden and recently Spain, people living in family can pay a **salary to a parent** who is recognized as caregiver or a personal assistant who is engaged from private provider services or social public services.
- **Housing support services** for care and other daily aids are very important. Like in France, it's an interesting option for independent living. But, it's a life-long support and means aren't the same in all countries. Recently, some countries like Czech Republic have new laws on housing services which allow quality inspection and contract practices.

2) Except in Sweden, the residential institutions are the most dominant way for adults with complex needs

- Like in Czech Republic, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Spain, there still exist some **big and old institutions** with several hundred people, isolated from society, with multi-bed rooms, re-enforce group settings, there have a bad reputation. When there is policy towards deinstitutionalisation, it's difficult to all change in one day. There is improvement of services in comparison with the past, but there are a lot of things to achieve like security, specific needs adjustments, individuality, self-determination, etc.
- Like in Ireland, Germany and Belgium, some people with mental health trouble or severe behaviour problems live in psychiatric **hospital**, and those with severe physical trouble in medical hospital. Basic needs are certainly covered but what about the psychological and social areas ?
- Like in the UK and Germany, institutions are confronted with the question of **ageing** of residents. In this context, young people with complex needs, due to their care needs, are placed in those residences with older people rather than their own age group. What about the institution project with these two groups ?
- For the most part of countries, there exist **different kinds of residential institutions** (according of the handicap, age, care). These institutions are mostly be **created by parents** or NGO organisations, but are **subsidized by the administrative authorities**. The **quality** of service is very different from one country to another, and there is **few control** on the results. More importance is given to physical characteristics of environnement and personnel ratio like in Spain. In Netherlands, a culture of control and the power of lower risk limit the opportunities for disabled people to live like they want.

3) Some people with complex disabilities live into support accommodation community-based.

These accommodations can take a variety of forms and are **very well developed in Sweden** and are called group housing. Usually this means a few homes in a detached house, or a block of flats. The group accommodation includes communal areas, and care services are available there all day and night. There are also groups accommodations with maximum 8 people, with one flat reserved for staff. The municipality is responsible for subsidies. But there is not enough places and these people have to wait years until they can move to a flat. At the same time the numbers of people in each group accommodation have increased which can lead to negative effects for the individuals.

These group accommodations are developed **recently in other countries** but there is only few places, there is many administrative and financing obstacles, and people with difficulties to communicate personal needs won't be accepted.

4) Some transversal elements, whatever the person lives with the family, alone, in institution or group accommodation, he or she is confronted to the same discrimination :

- A lot of countries, like Belgium, Germany, Italy, Spain, talk about a **big difference of offers between the regions and communities into the same country**. In this case, the poorest regions can't answer for all demands. According to the place of residence of the person, she / he won't access to the same support services. The Sweden example is interesting, even if the person moves from one municipality to another, the money for the personal assistance is also moved.
- The majority of reports point a **lack of financial means to answer to all needs**

- The disabled person her/himself isn't looked after his **own opinion**, neither **satisfaction level** in front of her/his housing accommodations.
- Finally, the question of **choice**. In all reports, we can find the same reality, people with severe disabilities and with complex needs rarely have chosen the place where they want to live, neither their personal assistant, etc.

In conclusion :

After reading the question of housing for adults in all reports, what can I tell you when I pick out the main points ?

Which elements improve the emergency of good solutions for persons ?

- **a national policy, global and coherent, in favour of persons with high dependency which doesn't create disparity between regions**
- **a national policy which delegate means and responsibility to local authorities**
- **constant pressure from NGO and advocacy group**
- **practices with focus on the individuals needs, approach which gives attention on the demand of the person him/her self, an in-depth knowing of the person**
- **Practices with partnership and dialogue between the differents actors**
- **A focus more on the person than on the group**
- **A focus on the results and on the quality**
- **A good information on the rights of the person and the opportunity to make appeal**

Which elements slow the emergency of good solutions ?

- **Social representations and opinions which focus on disabilities and risks (from family, society of professionals)**
- **Budget and staffing restrictions, lack of means for all people**
- **Financial means only for residential services, lack of alternatives**
- **Policy differences according to the communities into the same country**
- **No results obligations, no sanctions if the law isn't be respected**
- **The weight of the history of the handicap field in each country**
- **No transversality into the policy of different areas**

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