



Welcome to the first issue of the EQUASS Newsflash in 2013! This publication is an initiative of the European Quality in Social Services to provide you with regular updates about the most recent developments and achievements of the EQUASS System. The EQUASS Newsflash is published four times a year. Next issues will be published in April, September and December

Upcoming events

24 April 2013
EQUASS Awarding
Committee

11 June 2013
EQUASS Awarding
Ceremony 2013

In this Issue

- EQUASS Excellence auditor training
- EQUASS Assurance auditor training
- QUALL Conference in Vienna
- Contribution to the Slovenia Seminar
- Quality in Social Services—EPR Public Affairs event
- New EQUASS Excellence Certified Organisations
- Overview of the latest EQUASS certified organisations

New EQUASS Assurance Certified Organisations

The following organisations have been certified since the last Newsflash:

Rosenvik AS, Kompetanseutvikling Grenland AS, Aktør A/S, Serviço Social e Gabinete do Utente - Centro Hospitalar Lisboa Norte, Nordpolen Industrier AS, Origod AS, Industriprodukter AS, Bømlo Industrier AS, Åspro AS, Helgeland Industrier AS, Instituto S. João de Deus - Casa de Saúde S. Miguel ISJD - Casa de Saúde S. Rafael - Reabilitação Psicossocial, Sølve AS, Vev-Al-Plast AS, Mølla Kompetansesenter AS, Mitra as, Hadelandprodukter AS Senter for yrkeskvalifisering, iFokus barnehagene, MAKSS - Meland Arbeids- og Kompetansesenter AS, Stiftelsen Haugesjøen, Arbeidstrening Oslo KF, Molde kommune, Ressurstjenesten, Avdeling for Arbeid og Aktivitet, Nordnes Verksteder AS, Lofoten Industri AS, Astero Serviço de Reabilitação Psicossocial: Valências Residênciais, Stiftelsen Kirkens Bymisjon Vestfold, Tromsø ASVO A/S, ATS Gjøvik/Toten as, AS Haugaland Industri, ISJD - Residência S. João de Ávila Rehabilitations- Zentrum Stadtroda gGmbH , Bad Klosterlausnitz Bahnhofstraße 35, Josefs-Gesellschaft gGmbH Vinzenz-Heim Aachen, ISJD- Casa de Saúde do Telhal, Lofoten Industri AS

EQUASS Excellence auditor training, Amadora, Portugal on 1-2-3 October 2013



On 1, 2 and 3 October 2012, 21 professionals from 6 different countries participated at the auditor training for EQUASS Excellence. The auditor training was offered at the premises of Fundação AFID

Diferença in Amadora, Portugal. The training was carried out according a new format based on the EQUASS Excellence 2012:

- ◆ A theoretical part with information about the EQUASS Excellence standard, the guidelines for scoring the performance of the applicant based on a self-evaluation document and the preparation of the site visit.
- ◆ A practical part with information about a real case which should be assessed and

a site visit that should be prepared by an auditor team of two persons.

- ◆ Calibration of performance of the auditor teams.

All participants have contributed to preparing the training by sending in advance their individual preparatory works. During the training participants received feedback about their individual performances and the work in the smaller groups by comparing facts, figures and graphics. This facilitated the discussions and the calibration session.

The evaluation figures (average score of 4,5) showed that the new format of the training with a variation of lecturing, case study, practical exercises and discussions, was highly appreciated by all participants. Also the hospitality of AFID has been highly appreciated.

EQUASS Assurance auditor training, Tallin, Estonia on 10-12 December 2012

On 10, 11 and 12 December 2012, 15 participants attended a training in the requirements of auditing to be followed through the whole EQUASS Assurance 2012 process.

The training, hosted in the offices of Astangu, EQUASS's Licence Holder for the EQUASS Assurance certifications in Estonia, contained the following topics: Fundamentals of EQUASS system, case study, bench marking and bench learning, calibration of experiences and requirements for verifying performance and reporting of results.

The overall quality of the training was evaluated as 4,6 out of 5 by the participants, with 1 meaning 'very poor' and 5 meaning 'excellent'.

For EQUASS and the local licence holder in Estonia, the added objective was to update and expand a pool of auditors for the upcoming 2013 audits. Over 30 organisations in Estonia, active in various areas of social services provision, are planning to be audited in 2013, thanks to a programme supported by the Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs and ESF funding.

QUALL Conference in Vienna

On 5 and 6 November 2012, the final conference of the thematic Network QUALLL on quality assurance in Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education took place in Vienna.

Guus van Beek was invited as external expert by the Dutch National Agency for the Leonardo Da Vinci Programme. At the conference Leonardo da Vinci projects which have been selected as lighthouse project, had the opportunity to present the results.

The project EQUASS in Practice has been said to be a 'best practice project' and Andreas Tommerbakke (project leader, AVRE) and Guus van Beek (Key Expert, EQUASS) presented the results of this project and promoted the EQUASS certification programs to potential VET-providers/stakeholders.

The experiences of the various projects were presented and exchanged in smaller international workshops. At the QUALLL conference other opportunities have been

explored by investigating possible cooperation with other initiatives to promote quality assurance in the VET sector.

The attendance at the QUALLL conference leads to the initiative to exchange information and carry out a cross-reference study between EQUASS and the European Quality Mark (for VET). The cross-reference study will be finalised in the first quarter of 2013.



EQUASS in Practice
Group of participants

Contribution to the Slovenian Seminar

On 25 September 2012 Guus van Beek, EQUASS Key expert presented the value of EQUASS certification for VET-providers at the Conference on Vocational Rehabilitation in Portoroz, Slovenia.

Around 160 professionals working in the Vocational Rehabilitation sector received a presentation of the EQUASS system, and the various methods for implementing a quality standard in the SSGI sector.

Quality of Social Services EPR Public Affair event, 6 December 2012

Guus van Beek, EQUASS key expert, contributed to the EPR Public Affair event by showing how the Principles of the European Quality Framework for Social Services can be measured and how evidences of successful implementations can be provided. He emphasised the importance of measuring the Principles of the European Quality Framework by giving examples of the EQUASS certification programs. Measuring quality should be carried out by defining effective indicators which are:

Relevant, they show you something about the system that you need to know.

Easy to understand, even by people who are not experts.

Reliable, you can trust the information that the indicator is providing.

Accessible data, the information is available or can be gathered while there is still time to act.

He focused also on the challenge in identifying and defining valid indicators for measuring and the challenges in using these indicators in benchmarking. The emphasis on benchmarking fits in the nowadays trends of performance measurement and transparency. Especially in those sectors which are not so familiar with the so called 'market approach', the concept of benchmarking may increase the overall performance of the service providers and give some pressure on the cost of the delivered services to the individual. Mr. van Beek gave some examples of research on benchmarking in social healthcare and education in the Netherlands and the United

States of America. Based on these examples some doubts have been shown on the usefulness of benchmarking especially in the way benchmarking is carried out and how the results are presented. He concluded that:

It is possible to measure the Principles and the criteria of the European Quality Framework for Social Services. The two EQUASS certification programs have proven to be a valuable instrument to proof the quality of the services provide by more than 450 rehabilitation service providers in 15 European countries. To measure the "quality" it is necessary to identify and to define performance indicators. Choosing and defining the indicators is the most crucial step in the process. If wrong indicators have been chosen or defined in a way that does not represent what has been intended to be measured... the consequences could be enormous.

Once defined the indicators, it is important that those who will use these indicators have a common understanding on the definition and the way the information is gathered and presented. In this case the context plays an important role in the relevance of the indicators. The way the performance is presented may create other expectations than intended.

It strongly supports the initiative to include quality requirements as a criterion in the public procurement selection processes. However, the proof for quality should be based up-to-date and clear measurable and verifiable information and assessed in an independent way.

New EQUASS Excellence Certified Organisations



On 20 December 2012, the EQUASS Awarding committee took the decision to award the Excellence mark to CRPG - Centro de Reabilitação Profissional de Gaia in Portugal. This is the 4th time this certification is awarded to CRPG, including when it was called the EQRM (European Quality in Rehabilitation Mark). EQUASS congratulates all clients, all employees and all your partners of Centro de Reabilitação Profissional de Gaia in achieving this prestigious recognition for the fourth time. Even in a difficult period of economic and financial crisis, CRPG - Centro de Reabilitação Profissional de Gaia (Portugal) has managed to make a substantial progress in meeting the EQUASS Excellence criteria through solid approaches and deployment and by measuring its results by clear indicators which are benchmarked within Portugal and with other Social Service Provider in Europe.



On 2 December 2012, the EQUASS Awarding committee took the decision to award the Excellence mark to Josefsheim gGmbH for their services in Olsberg, Olsberg-Brunskappel and Lippstadt, Germany. This is the 3rd time this certification is awarded to Josefsheim gGmbH, including when it was still the EQRM (European Quality in Rehabilitation Mark). EQUASS congratulates all clients, all employees and all partners of Josefsheim gGmbH in achieving this prestigious recognition for the third time, and is very proud of the progress in the performance on the EQUASS criteria for Excellence.

Upcoming event: EQUASS Awarding Ceremony 2013

The EQUASS Awarding Ceremony 2013 will take place on 11 June 2013 in Dublin, Ireland, in the framework of the EPR Annual Conference.

More information will be available as soon as possible on the EQUASS website.

EQUASS is an initiative of the European Platform for Rehabilitation (EPR). EQUASS provides a range of comprehensive services in the area of approval and certification of quality, all of which comply with European requirements for quality in the provision of social services.

The EQUASS Newsflash is issued four times a year.
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