

Developing Participation in EAPN Networks

What are the ways we can best work together?

Participation in Homelessness Services

Capacity Building Seminar

Silke Paasche

Brussels, 7-8 May 2010



FEANTSA

Participation in Homelessness Services

- Is not a given (yet) in all homeless services
- Will depend on type of service
 - Shelter, hostel, supported housing
- Different forms: FEANTSA Toolkit
 - Information (brochures and meetings)
 - Consultation (complaint mechanisms, committees)
 - Deciding together (representatives in boards)
 - Acting together (user body involved in policy)
 - Supporting Independent Initiatives (User led projects)



The big challenge: Tokenism

- Participation if done badly can be disempowering for people
 - Standardised service user meetings and consultations; feedback box without impact
 - Empowerment can happen without participation
 - People are provided with a home
 - Legal frameworks are important but they are not enough
 - Point of reference: Empowerment of and outcomes for the person
-



Participation is never a one-fits-all solution

- Requires time and creativity – don't give up!
- Needs to be developed through a bottom up approach
- Should provide opportunities for all to be involved (or make an informed decision not to take part)
- Should be part of a strategy
 - Planning, implementation, evaluation
- Requires the commitment from all
 - Service users, staff and management
- Needs sufficient funding



Example: Participation Strategy

- Client Involvement Strategy, St Mungo's, UK
 - *Outside In*: Service user led group
 - Runs its own meetings (staff attends on request)
 - Meeting with Directors every six weeks
 - Organises focus groups
 - Meetings and events
 - Peer facilitator course to train people
 - Post of a Client Involvement Manager



Empowering Ways of Working

Facilitating service user meetings

- Provide an independent peer facilitator
- Discuss power issues
- Find best time and provide clear information on timing, venue, refreshments
- Put up posters and distribute information
- Prepare an agenda together
- Participation needs to be free of choice
- Provide incentives for people to attend



More information?

www.feantsa.org

Available resources

- Shared Values for Participation
- Participation Toolkit
- Empowering Ways of Working
- Participation Database



FEANTSA