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## Newsletter No. 4

12<sup>th</sup> of December 2001

Dear partners and friends,

“Equal but different” was the title of the first national conference in Hamburg on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November. The partners of the local dialogue in Germany collected ideas, concerns and issues on restructuring social services towards a full inclusion and non-discrimination of people with learning disabilities. Michael Langhanky gives an overview on the statements.

Best wishes

Dorothee Bittscheidt, Michael Langhanky, Anne Ernst

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## The first national Conference in Hamburg

Michael Langhanky, Hamburg

The partners who attended the national conference “Equal but different” are meanwhile well known to most of our transnational partners:

- from the provider “Stiftung Alsterdorf”: senior manager Wolfgang Kraft, department manager Birgit Schulz, Theodorus Maas, member of the management
- from the provider “Rauhes Haus”: senior manager Dietrich Sattler, department manager Michael Tüllmann, care manager Ursula Uderstadt
- from the Hamburg ministry of social welfare and family, department “social welfare and rehabilitation”: the head of the department Renate Kurt- Petersen and the assistang-manager Monika Offermann
- and last not least Dorothee Bittscheidt, Anne Ernst and Michael Langhanky (steps-project-management).

On Friday afternoon we met for a “stock exchange” of ideas and concerns. It was the first high ranking meeting between the Hamburg partners in the “steps”-project –a group of experts, which meets rarely in daily practice. So we were very curious about the exchange and discussion.

The conference was opened by the famous and in Germany well known author, restructurer and psychiatrist **Prof. Dr. Dr. Klaus Dörner**, whom we asked to take part in “steps” as a permanent consultant. He has retired three years ago, after years of engagement in the reform of clinical psychiatric hospitals, after years of efforts towards de-institutionalisation and he is still continuing his work.

In the conference he made very clear that de-institutionalisation had opened chances of more autonomy and self-advocacy, but that there is a certain lack in the communalisation. The shift into the community and to full inclusion in social life in the community seems to be risky for the providers, because their influence is diminished as it increases on the side of the service-users. There is a heavy load for the providers to give security to their staff, to gain financial security under new circumstances and to implement a shift in professional attitudes. Klaus Dörner focussed on the imperative to start always with the weakest or people with most severe disabilities. He emphasised on the function of the normal citizen in community care: They take on mostly unnoticed minute-services (in the shop, on the street, in the pub) which have a very inclusive and powerful function. The shift from “care in the community” to “community cares” should be a step in account.

From the Department of Social Welfare, **Renate Kurt- Petersen and Monika Offermann** told us their impressions about the new elected conservative government in Hamburg. The new senior manager of their department, Mrs. Maria Maderyc, seems to be very interested in the project and will probably support it. From the point of view of the administration they claimed different fields of interest in “steps”: expertising on structures of possible discrimination, experiences in the transnational partnership about social politics and financial experiences in other countries. In the transnational partnership they are interested in the circumstances in politics and society which are needed for a change to a non-discriminative practice, in the legal instruments, the competence which are needed in the administration on the one hand and on the side of the service-users at the other hand. And they would like to learn about the experiences of the providers concerning the economy. These and more questions show the concerns and the wish- both- to make progressive “steps” towards a new structure.

For the “Stiftung Alsterdorf” the senior manager **Wolfgang Kraft** showed the responsibility the providers have in a change that focuses on autonomy and inclusion. He asked for the role the providers play in this shift and strengthens that they are necessary partners for a fast shift. In his point of view the process of emancipation cannot be ordered but be supported. A precondition is that the professional staff and the community have to be interested in the process. Wolfgang Kraft made clear that providers cannot take on the job of the advocates but will still remain service providers on an open market with their competence and in competition. He makes clear, that providers are still “sheltered preserves”.

The manager for the Alsterdorf-Department in the community (“AlsterCity”), **Birgit Schulz** pointed out some basics which have to be taken in account: A big shift contains mistakes but also huge chances if there is a clear idea with a clear framework and a shared will to change. She claims for a cooperation of the providers in the community, with the quarter-management and city-planners. Birgit Schulz strengthened three aspects: There should be more possibilities to shape services in the region besides sheltered homes; care services should be rethought and sheltered work should be taken into the community. There should be a better cooperation with housing firms and local service-providers - housing seems to be a great obstacle. The professionals should participate in a partnership and the dialog of change. She made very clear that there is a strong wish to cooperate with other provider-systems.

The “Stiftung Das Rauhe Haus” with its senior Manager **Dietrich Sattler** searched a way not only to surf on the wave of a new perception but to find profound service improvements towards “doing the best”. His concerns focused on the promise for freedom which was given by the principle of subsidiarity but changed to a promise for the provider. He claimed for a self-estimation as a provider, who takes solidarity as a corrective and basic idea of his work, set against the goal of economism. And he made an appeal for a new role for the organisations: They should be a goalkeeper to the community, with a strong orientation of resources and professionalism in a culture of solidarity. Dietrich Sattler worked out the tradition and the knowledge which is summed up in the providers tradition and he claimed for a decent and responsible shift. The aim should be a non-discriminative access to all resources for the own living in the community.

The manager in charge for the department “care for disabled people” in the Rauhes Haus, **Michael Tüllmann**, showed that his department has changed more than 50 percent of his services into ambulant care during the last years. He claimed for the next shift towards “community cares”. There is a need to develop clear aims and there should be a “white paper” for Hamburg - which might be an outcome of “steps”. Michael Tüllmann worked out several aspects, which should be shaped out in this “white paper”: There should be an expertise on care-systems in town questioning also about improvements of regional services; more creativity should be spend on individual arrangements, more money into the community; we should take on an international measurement on quality (from Tizard) to compare standards; self-advocacy groups shall be supported and founded; providers should take over regional obligations for care in the district; an open and emphatic attitude of professionals should be supported and we should start changes with those people who show challenging behaviour.

All the comments, discussions and addresses show that providers and administration as well as the two institutes, HWP and University of Applied Sciences, are searching a clear picture of the future service structures and that international partnership and expertise will help very much. The conference gave us a good impression on the concerns, issues and claims of the different partners in Hamburg and will be a profound basic to work out a clear picture towards non-discrimination in services and daily life-structures for people with learning disabilities.

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## Information

for readers, who receive the newsletter of the EU-Project “Steps – Structures towards emancipation, participation and solidarity” for the first time:

Steps is supported in the programme to combat discrimination by the European Commission. In the project we want to develop structures for social services, which are able to realise Non-discrimination and full participation and which protects individual rights for people with learning disabilities. (In the list of the supported projects you find the project still under the title “Restructuring the municipal and local structures of social services for people with learning disabilities”.)

With the newsletters we would like to inform you regularly about the activities of the project. Furthermore we will publish organisational advice and statements of the partners. And we are looking forward to your contributions as well! Whether you know about persons, who

might be interested in the newsletter as well, do not hesitate to send the email-address to [anne.ernst@freenet.de](mailto:anne.ernst@freenet.de).