

## SOLIDAR EU TRAINING ACADEMY 2014

November 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> 2014

In cooperation with the  
Institute for Social Work and Social Education (ISS e.V.)

Tagungshotel Höchster Hof

Mainberg 3-11 / 65929 Frankfurt/Main (Germany)

### DOCUMENTATION

The Training Academy contained five different blocks, including five inputs from different experts and five working group sessions covering different topics related to EU funding opportunities, key EU policy instruments and human resources as well as promotion strategies for social services providers. The main objectives of the Training Academy were to promote a good learning environment in an interactive way and to promote the exchange of points of views and networking between participants. This documentation includes the slides of the presentation and the list of all participants.

#### **Monday, 03/11/2014: Social Services: financing of and promotion for inclusive services**

The first day's contents of the Training Academy were related to various key EU social policy instruments, to the difficulties of social services providers to find financial resources in times of declining public investments, and to the different promotion strategies in the field of social services.

In the arriving session of the Training Academy Mr. Hoyer, research officer at the ISS, introduced the participants to each other and covered briefly the topic "Players within social economy – in how far are we actor within the social economy?". For further information you can find a **SOLIDAR's position paper** covering the differences and similarities of European social actors and the different definitions of the Social Economy within European countries.

#### **Block 1: Our connections to the EU**

In the first block Valentina Caimi, policy and advocacy advisor at Social Platform, gave an insight about key initiatives and EU working mechanisms in the field of social services, focusing on the European Semester, the Social Investment Package and the concept of Social Innovation. The insight contained information about the background, methodology, principles and main objectives of these three complex EU policy tools and concepts. The slides of the presentation are available [here](#).

After the insight, the participants worked in groups on two questions regarding their experiences working with EU policy making instruments:

- Experiences in working with the EU: In how far is EU policy making relevant for your work?
- Experiences with social innovation and social investments

The results of the working groups were presented in the plenary session:

The lack of transparency and inefficient information channels - sometimes within the organisations - about EU social policy instruments were one of the main considerations of the working groups' outcome.

However, a positive feedback was given to some EU policy instruments, e.g. the **European Voluntary Service (EVS)**, the **European Social Fund (ESF)**, the **Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)** or the **Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)**. Another relevant conclusion of the first working group session was the increasing need to exchange and find partners for common projects, where the Training Academy and SOLIDAR in general were seen as a good opportunity but more exchange is necessary.

## **Block 2: Financing of inclusive social services**

In the second block, Valentina Caimi, policy and advocacy advisor for Social Platform, gave an insight about financing opportunities of inclusive social services at the European level. Ms. Caimi exposed the background, procedures, thematic objectives and priorities of several EU-funding programmes targeting social service providers, including the **European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020 (ESIF)**, the **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**, and the **EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)**. The slides of the presentation are available [here](#).

After the input, the participants worked in groups on the following topics regarding the financing of inclusive social services:

- Existing mechanisms & instruments for financing social services
- Investments in the social organisations
- Private investments: chance or risk?

The results of the working groups were presented in the plenary session:

The three working groups discussed about numerous relevant topics, including their main sources of income, their membership fees for EU umbrella organisations, and EU-funded projects.

The working groups also presented some of their experiences working with the ESF. The difficulties in gathering information regarding EU funding programmes were stressed which

occur occasionally due to substantial differences between the implementation procedures of EU- funding programmes in the different EU countries.

### **Block 3: Ways of promoting social services**

In the second block, Patrick De Bucquois, President of CEDAG, gave an input about the main aspects of the current structures of NGOs at European level. “Europe costs one cup of coffee per capita per day”. He stressed the need of a more prevailing institutional Europe. He also exposed the main roles and objectives of NGOs, i.e. advocacy services and social services provision: “Never leave advocacy for the sake of service provision” and outlined the importance of the unique selling point, when promoting social services.

After the input, the participants worked in groups on the following topics regarding the promotion strategies of social services:

- What is understood by promotion?
- How do you inform the public about your work?
- How do you address different target groups?

The results of the working groups were presented in the plenary session:

The working groups presented several promotion and marketing strategies on the basis of their own experiences. The working groups outlined the importance of having different promotion channels for different target groups according to their age, background etc. The fact that too much promotion leads to too many users who cannot be served due to limited financial capacities was also outlined in the plenary session.

After the dinner a **voluntary meeting** of interested participants regarding the ESF-funded transnational project “**Integration through exchange**” with Arbeiterwohlfahrt (AWO) Ennepe-Ruhr took place. If you need further information, please get in contact with Rolf Kappel: fb5@awo-en.de

### **Tuesday, 04/11/2014: Attractive employment in social services for high quality services**

The second day’s contents of the Training Academy covered relevant employment policies and instruments at European level and dealt with the difficulties in recruitment and retention of high qualified personnel and volunteers.

### **Block 4: Employment in social services and our connections to the EU**

In the fourth block, Valentina Caimi, policy and advocacy advisor for Social Platform, gave an input covering the background information, main pillars and one of the main European

initiatives supporting attractive employment in social services: the **European Employment package**. The slides of the presentation are available [here](#).

After the insight, the participants worked in groups on the following topics regarding employment issues in the field of social services:

- Experiences working with the EU regarding employment issues.
- How can we improve job opportunities and the attraction of volunteers within organisations?
- The results of the working groups were presented in the plenary session:

The working groups outlined the need for a common and clear definition of volunteering. As discussed in the previous working group session, organisations pointed out the different framework conditions of employment and volunteering according to the European country they work in. The working groups exposed their most relevant experiences and strategies promoting volunteering: they pay, for example, a modest remuneration to the young volunteers and they offer certificates that people can then include in their CVs. The fact that the perspective and challenges of volunteering have adapted to the necessities of society was also pointed out by the participants, for example, some participants described that volunteering is seen as a first step to make a career in a NGO.

### **Block 5: Development of comprehensive strategies entailing objectives for good human resource management**

In the fourth block, Katharina Wiegmann, human resources expert at AWO, gave an insight about the importance of efficient human resources strategies in the field of social services covering relevant topics and approaches when entailing and recruiting qualified personnel. In her presentation, Mrs. Wiegmann exposed the human resources approach of German welfare organisations, with a focus on AWO human resources strategies and programmes. The slides of the presentation are available [here](#).

After the insight, the participants worked in groups on a question regarding human resources:

- Own experiences with new concepts of recruiting and retaining personnel

The results of the working groups were presented in the plenary session:

The working groups exposed several relevant aspects for their human resources approaches, such as the image of their organisation, the general working conditions and the importance of good leadership and team building. The working groups exposed the benefits they can offer to their personnel: cooperative work, vouchers, and pension-schemes.

## Evaluation

After the five blocks of the programme, participants discussed briefly about their impression of the Training Academy. Some of the participants emphasised positively the opportunity to meet and exchange different international points of view. As suggestion for the next edition of the Training Academy, some participants pointed out the importance of having more detailed contents attempting to underline the national differences in Europe.

A detailed evaluation will take place at SOLIDAR's Social Affairs Forum on 1 December 2014 in Brussels.

Pictures of the event are available here:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/31689406@N05/sets/72157649137496051/>

Please find all information about SOLIDAR's activities and future events at [www.solidar.org](http://www.solidar.org)

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