

Quality in access to social services in South Tyrol

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Access to social services is particularly complex in a heterogenous and multilingual community as it is the case in the region of South Tyrol in Upper Italy. The research aims to explore the institutional, organisational and professional level of access. In Italy the Law 328, which has inspired most of the regional or provincial laws regulating social services, acknowledges information and first counselling as an essential service. Additionally our hypothesis, supported by previous national and international research, is that the way people get in contact to social services has a huge significance and impact on the quality of social work interventions, on the use of resources and on how the rights of people are promoted and respected. Based on telephone interviews with all heads of social services districts, we could so far identify three "ideal type"- models of access accordingly to the focus the leader took on while describing "access": the value-based, the organisation-based and the profession-based access model. A following on site study in the three ideal type districts will support or challenge those first conclusions. Due to a relative freedom of decision making and specific local conditions in the districts a variety of "best solutions" have been developed in different districts throughout the region, rather than one unified procedure. If "best solutions" are good practises for access has to be evaluated - equally by all parties which are involved in the access: citizens becoming clients, social worker, other professions in the districts, head of services, policy makers etc. That's what the project is aiming for. We would like to offer a "work in progress" presentation in the section: Knowledge production and public accountability in social work or in the section: Research in social work as participative learning process.

Keyword: Access to social services