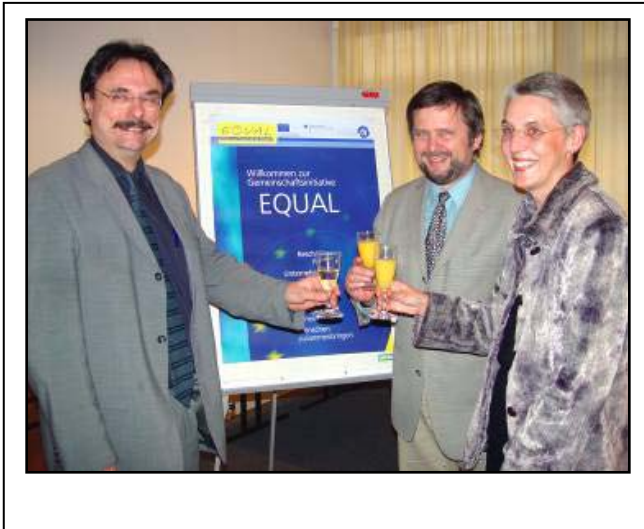


## AN ELDERLY CARE SYSTEM FIT FOR THE FUTURE

**Who will look after us in our old age? We are living longer, having fewer children, and no longer living in extended family units. There are too few skilled workers to meet the boom in demand for old-age care. Carers and clients would both benefit from a more planned approach. EQUAL's *Dritt-Sektor-Qualifizierung in der Altenhilfe* (Third Sector Qualification in Elderly Care) partnership, based in Stuttgart, brought together a critical mass of social economy care agencies to make a permanent impact on the training system in the care sector.**

The German welfare system gives a major role to social economy welfare federations (*Wohlfahrtsverbände*), which are in fact the largest employers in the country, with 1.3 million employees between them. The three largest are Caritas (linked to the Catholic church), the Diakonisches Werk (linked to the Evangelical church) and the independent Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband. Ninety percent of their income comes from federal or *Land* subsidy for the provision of social services.

*The welfare federations sign on the dotted line. From the left: Hansjörg Böhringer, Landesgeschäftsführer Paritätischer, Ewald Wietschorke, Caritas-verband Rottenburg-Stuttgart and Gisa Haas, project manager celebrate the launch of the 'Dritt-Sektor Qualifizierung in der Altenhilfe' development partnership.*



Hansjörg Böhringer, managing director of the Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband in the *Land* of Baden-Württemberg in southwest Germany, describes how the *Dritt-Sektor-Qualifizierung in der Altenhilfe* project came about. "We started from the problem of recruitment in the care sector," he says. "The demand for care workers is soaring, but the market is not meeting their needs for training. Care has changed, and women who want to return to work after having children are finding their qualifications are out of date."

One of the first things the partnership did was to get a clearer idea of what the future holds. "We carried out a study on trends in elderly care, which produced some striking results," says Irme Stetter-Karp of Caritas Baden-Württemberg. "There are two drivers – aging and family size. On the first score, the number of over-85s in our *Land* is going to rise by 45% by 2015, and will quadruple by 2050," she says. "As to family size, people nowadays are less and less willing to have their parents living with them. All this means that the demand for care workers is soaring. In Baden-Württemberg today, the residential and home care sector employs 89,000 people. By 2030 we are going to need 50,000 more carers and 25,000 more home helps. Third sector care is a major motor of growth in the service sector." The European employment guidelines make the same point, with guideline 18 – ensuring inclusive labour markets for job-seekers and disadvantaged people – noting that "special attention should be paid to promoting the inclusion of disadvantaged people in the labour market including through the expansion of social services and the social economy".

## MAKING CARE CAREERS MORE ATTRACTIVE

The partners reasoned that if they were going to attract so many people to work in the care sector, they needed to provide high-quality jobs. They therefore developed a whole series of actions to train care workers, eventually catering for 381 trainees. "To enable care workers to take time off to come to our courses, we piloted in three areas a tool we call 'job rotation'," explains Gisa Haas, the project manager. "This means that while staff undertake vocational training, their posts are filled temporarily by unemployed people, who thus gain work experience and an improved chance of a job offer. We got excellent results, and managed to place 70% of our trainees in jobs." What made it work was firstly the design of the training programme, which offered intensive support both for the trainees and for the host institutions. The second factor was the very willing support provided courtesy of the EQUAL structure. "We found that EQUAL's partnership methodology was the perfect tool for us, because it enabled extremely good collaboration from the employment authorities (*Agenturen für Arbeit*), especially in Stuttgart, where we are based. It also meant that all the institutions that were partners could use the network to support each other."



**Recruitment, team-building, management development coaching, mediation... human resources are the success factor in care delivery**

Looking back, the partnership draws the lessons that when you are working with people who are hard to integrate in the labour market, an individualised approach is indispensable – and this costs money. "The funding is a real benefit of EU programmes like EQUAL, and we hope there is some follow-up," says Mr Böhlinger. "Secondly, the project shows that a job rotation approach can work, but it needs an intermediate actor between the Labour Agency and the enterprise that hosts the workers. Thirdly, the way the network allowed the different partners to pool their complementary skills and information was absolutely crucial."

Though the partnership's first target group was women who had previously worked in the care sector and wanted to come back to paid work, it also arranged training for unskilled unemployed people. Chief among these are migrant women. "We carried out a survey in 2003 that showed that as many as one-fifth of all residential care workers were migrants, yet no specific training existed for them," says Mr Böhlinger. The partnership laid on German language courses in 11 places, and these were so successful that the majority of them have become permanent now the EQUAL support has finished. "This is another case where we found that market solutions – training vouchers for instance – just do not work. Lifelong learning for unskilled people needs a better planned approach."

## TOOLS FOR CHANGE

The partnership's activities have led to a whole range of innovative work to improve the vocational training system in Baden-Württemberg. The products, which are all available on a CD, include:

- a training course and handbook entitled *Staff – a success factor: staff development in elderly care and home care*
- training curricula for care qualifications, both for adult returners and first-time students
- a process to benchmark job quality
- concepts on the design of jobs suitable for older workers
- tools to implement flexible working time, based on lifetime work accounts
- a study on health at work for older people
- a scheme to promote more women to management positions

- a study on encouraging more men to enter the care sector
- a handbook on successful communication for social enterprises

The partners found that very little work had been done on what constitutes job quality in elderly care, so they offered 12 care services and homes the chance to try out various innovations with scientific support. What came out of it was the overriding importance of good internal communication. Of course care workers need to be properly paid, but in fact for many of them the most important factor in job quality is having enough time to do a good job. This finding is especially useful in designing jobs suitable for older workers, who offer greater experience and expertise even if they may possess less physical strength. Addressing the issue of job quality in the context of an aging workforce has enabled the partners to design jobs that carry an appropriate, but not an excessive, workload.

## **A CLEAR ROLE AND A CLEAR BENEFIT FOR EACH PARTNER**

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The salient feature of the partnership was that it brought together the three main welfare associations – Paritätische, Diakonie and Caritas – in a united front to tackle the problems in the elderly care sector. Such was the success of this approach that the size of the partnership nearly doubled over the course of the project, with 14 new organisations joining as new activities came on stream. This broad approach brought both wide coverage – 381 trainees, 181 placement workers and 777 care organisations took part in its activities – but also the range of skills and knowledge that enabled it to produce high-quality results. “We have definitely built up the capacity of the social economy to solve complex problems, and to transmit the need for change to the level of each enterprise,” says Ms Stetter-Karp.

“The EQUAL experience has built a willingness to work together that just was not there before,” says Gisa Haas. “Beforehand, the welfare federations did work together politically under the aegis of ‘leagues’ (*Ligen*) at federal and *Land* level, but never worked practically together. EQUAL has changed that, and there is now a thirst for permanent collaboration.” The idea for the project did in fact grow out of the political collaboration, and was developed during meetings of one of the Baden-Württemberg *Liga*’s working groups. “We asked ourselves where we could make a strategic intervention, and elderly care came up, along with care of disabled people. We found it was an area where each of the federations had its own speciality, so could work in complement to the others. The Paritätische was concerned with labour market issues, the Diakonie with job quality, and Caritas with human resource development. So it all fitted together very well: each federation could make progress on its own priorities and help the others at the same time.” The Paritätische took the lead role because it was the only one of the three that had project management experience.

The federations brought in well-reputed specialist firms to deliver the training programmes, but here too there was a mutual interest in collaboration. WBS Training, whose role was to conduct action research on job quality and staff development, and develop and pilot a self-evaluation tool, wanted to gain experience in the social sector. GVB, which delivered training on health and safety at work, used the project to gain experience with the process of benchmarking.

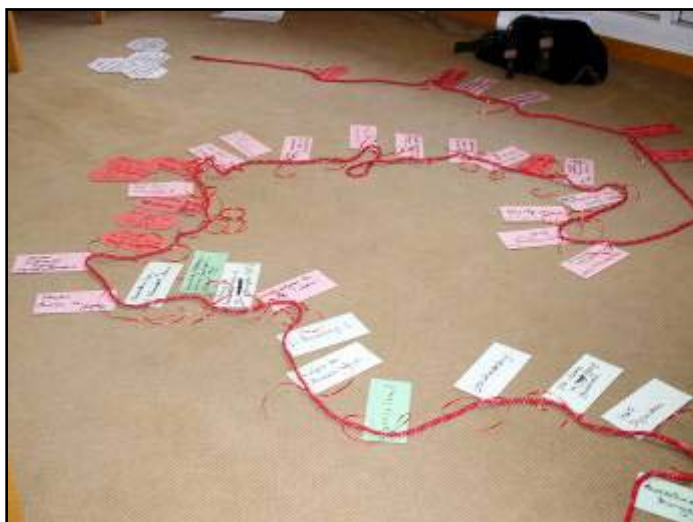
For such a big partnership – eventually there were 26 organisations taking part – there were surprisingly few management problems. “The only way we could make the partnership work was to give each partner a very clear role and to structure it hierarchically,” says Ms Haas. “Each of the three welfare federations was responsible for the operational partners working in their thematic area. And they handled it in a very committed and professional way.”

The partnership did however have some minor setbacks in its inclusive approach. On the formal level, the legal form the partnership took (a *Gesellschaft bürgerlichen Rechts*) meant that a state academy could not join, and the fee levels were too low to attract the prestigious Fraunhofer Institute. There was also a content-related issue. “Originally we wanted to make race a horizontal theme, and a Turkish organisation joined the partnership,” recounts Ms Haas. “But we found it impossible to cover a wide enough range of minority communities, in particular immigrants from Russia, so in the end we had to change tack. What we did instead was to launch German language courses for non-native speakers in the care sector.” The courses have proved so successful that they are being taken up on a permanent basis by a number of vocational colleges, but the integration of minority communities in the care sector remains to be addressed.

## THE RIGHT MIX OF PARTNERS

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Along with two Austrian partnerships, *Dritt-Sektor Qualifizierung in der Altenhilfe* built the transnational partnership *European Support in Social Service* (ESSS). “We wanted to get real value out of our transnational work,” says Ms Haas, “so we were very particular over the partners we chose. In the end, after some broader negotiations, we ended up with two organisations in the same country. But this had the advantage that we share the same language and could work together very intensively – towards the end we met every other month.” The two main areas of work were public relations in care institutions, and gender mainstreaming and its link to human resource development. This latter issue, where Austria is ahead of Germany, is of crucial importance in an industry where 70% of workers are women. The subject was discussed at the *Staying in the Flow* conference held in March 2005, appropriately, on a Danube steamer cruising between Vienna and Melk.



*Project planning – the thread linking ideas, actions, results and impacts.*

“What is important in setting up transnational work is to have the right mix of partners on board,” Ms Haas continues. “For instance we considered working together on the informal economy, but we realised that without the official state agencies, the *Agenturen für Arbeit*, in the partnership, this would be pointless. To achieve lasting change, you need to involve both the social economy and the public sector in the process.”

## ENGENDERING STRUCTURAL CHANGE

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For Gisa Haas the best moment came when the necessary co-funding was raised in summer 2004. The subsequent hard work has paid off, and its effects live on. The project has created change in the vocational training system in Baden-Württemberg through a number of routes. It has published some 20 books, as well as giving rise to 25 press and media reports and 36 articles in magazines and learned journals. “I have to confess that the project was so complex that many journalists found it hard to grasp,” Ms Haas admits. “We got the best results from our public relations when we put the spotlight on a single issue. For instance the job rotation agency got a lot of calls as a result of our focused PR.” The project’s website attracts downloads from all over Germany, and the partnership also projected its ideas onto the European stage by sharing a stand at Employment Week in Brussels.

Policy is also changing, as a direct result of the partnership’s research studies into demographic and labour and market trends that showed what a desperate need there is for a solid training system in the care field. “The Baden-Württemberg Social Affairs Ministry was a strategic partner, and we worked closely with them. The Minister attended both our opening and closing conferences,” says Ms Haas. And the authorities have learnt that the third sector can be a strong force for innovation. At a higher level, the structural development of the social economy is established as a core priority for the European Social Fund’s work in the region for the period up till 2013.

But the partners are pushing for more. “We need to give social enterprises a secure base in law, so that they can be part of diversifying service provision,” says Ms Stetter-Karp. “In a modernised social security system, the state must not be the only purchaser. Competition law must not be used to give the state a monopoly.” The partners are also arguing that jobs in care should be made more accessible through the better recognition of informally acquired skills.

“The social economy could also have an important role in making Germany’s labour market reform work,” says Gisa Haas. “The new federal government plans to introduce a scheme called the *Kombilohnmodell* (combined wage model), whereby employers will receive a subsidy from the state if they create new jobs for unskilled people. The employers are not particularly keen on this idea because it is too complicated, but it could be a way of integrating unemployed people if third sector organisations were brought in to act as a support structure.

Furthermore, the broad partnership has improved the structure of the regional labour market, by combining the demands of demographic change and diversity management. It has strengthened the role of the social economy by showing how it can provide high-quality jobs for all, not only ‘more jobs’ but ‘better jobs’, as the European Employment Strategy puts it. Irme Stetter-Karp of Caritas sums it up: “We have shown that by combining solidarity with competitiveness, the social economy is a productive factor.”

## CONTACT

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**DP Name: Dritt-Sektor-Qualifizierung in der Altenhilfe (Third sector Qualification in Elderly Care)**

**DP ID:** [DE-EA-76398](#)

**National Partners:** Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband; Arbeitsfördergesellschaft Ortenau gGmbH; Caritas-Akademie für Pflegeberufe e.V.; Caritasverband der Diözese Freiburg e.V.; Caritasverband der Diözese Rottenburg-Stuttgart e.V.; Diakonisches Werk der evangelischen Kirche in Württemberg e.V.; Gesellschaft zur Vertretung und Beratung sozialer Einrichtungen; Gotthilf-Vöhringer-Schule gGmbH; IAF der Katholischen Fachhochschule Freiburg; Initiative Senioren-genossenschaft Riedlingen e.V.; Landesverband für Körper- und Mehrfachbehinderte Baden-Württemberg; Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband BW; Stiftung Haus Lindenhof; WBS Training AG; Wohlfahrtswerk für Baden-Württemberg; aku Unternehmensberatung, Bad Dürkheim; also-Akademie für Leitung, Soziales und Organisation GbR, Heidelberg; Institut für Sozialforschung, Praxisberatung und Organisationsentwicklung, iSPO GmbH, Saarbrücken; logo Werbeagentur, Stuttgart; Volkshochschulen in Freiburg, Heilbronn, Reutlingen, Schwäbisch Gmünd, Villingen-Schwenningen, Taubertal; bfw Stuttgart; F+U Heidelberg; DRK Mannheim; Evangelisches Fachseminar für Pflegeberufe, Karlsruhe; and others

**Transnational partnership:** TCA 1927 – European Support in Social Service (ESSS). Partners: QSI – Quality-supported Skills for Integration (Austria); Berufsbilder und Ausbildungen in den Gesundheits- und Sozialen Diensten (Austria)

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