

People working for people

Developing personal assistance services

The issue of quality of life in the Gâtine

The personal assistance services sector is currently booming. In a rural area like the Gâtine, it is an important factor in supporting and ensuring the well-being of populations : for the quality of services rendered to elderly and disabled persons and infants and also in terms of jobs.



Since 2005, the Pays de Gâtine has been running a coordination and qualification project for personal assistance services. Designed and led in collaboration with nine partners (read p 4), it is called "People working for people". It is financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) through Equal, the Community Initiative Programme to combat inequalities and discrimination. Thanks to Equal, the project aims to bring together conditions that enable the Gâtine to exploit the growth and structuring of this sector of activity.

After reviewing the situation and studying lines of development in the field, the partners worked on a programme of experiments and actions, in order to support, in practical terms, the organisations and their employees.

This year these actions are entering their operational phase. Most of them could, in the future, continue to be implemented by players in the field.

Benchmarks

In France ⁽¹⁾:

- 1.3 million people working in this sector.
- 130 000 jobs created in 2006.
- 500 000 new jobs are planned over the next 3 years. Three broad categories: services for families (childcare, academic support), dependent persons (elderly or disabled persons, nurse) and daily life (housework, gardening...)

In the Gâtine, out of 22 500 working persons:

- 450 people in services caring for disabled persons ⁽³⁾.
 - 457 employees in home care services ⁽³⁾.
 - 560 employees in retirement homes ⁽³⁾.
 - 653 child-minders ⁽⁴⁾.
 - 100 people in extra-curricular services ⁽³⁾.
- i.e. approximately 10% of the people working in Gâtine. Mainly female employment ⁽³⁾. A large majority of part-time jobs ⁽³⁾.

In Gâtine, 30% of the population is over 60 years of age ⁽²⁾.

Sources: (1) Agence Nationale des Services à la personne (Personal Assistance Services National Agency); (2) Insee (National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies); (3) The Gâtine Equal research; (4) Deux-Sèvres County council.

Visit the Pays de Gâtine site:

www.gatine.org/equal



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A review of the current situation and of new requirements

The Equal project “People working for people” includes four areas of work :

- cooperation of players involved in services in the field,
- experimenting with new services for elderly people and infants,
- the incorporation of job seekers into this professional sector,
- qualification of employees.

A preliminary review allowed requirements to be defined. Two in-depth studies concerned methods of childcare and home care services for elderly and/or dependent persons.

Elderly or disabled persons: rethinking home support

Nineteen in-home service organisations operating in the Gâtine – with an associate status or linked to local authorities (Sivom – *association with multiple functions*, Sivu – *single-purpose intercommunal syndicate*, CCAS – *local social welfare centre...*) – were studied. They wanted technical support to improve the quality of services (in compliance with the 2002-2 law) and are willing to find a global organisation, by pooling practises and tools. The difficulties of employees in terms of work time and qualifications were also emphasized. At the same time, new requirements are appearing amongst persons receiving care, notably a “night service”, which would provide security to individuals and their families and extend home support.



Infants : between a demographic and a social issue

Attracting and retaining active populations in the Gâtine has led the area to consider the needs of families with regard to childcare. Childminders are the most popular form of childcare. The area has four crèches, two childcare centres in Parthenay and one in the countryside, in Thénézay. Leisure centres and extra-curricular centres complete the facilities. Long distances between work and home or increasingly varied working hours challenge the requirements of childcare in staggered working hours. In the same way, part-time jobs, often unwanted, and with a very low income, cause employees to leave as soon as a better paid job comes along. Qualifications exist, such as the support worker qualification, valid both for working with elderly people and children. Obtaining this qualification allows professional careers to be strengthened and unwanted part-time jobs to be increased in hours. It remains to be seen how an accessible training program, suited to the persons concerned, can be offered in the Gâtine.

New responses and concrete actions

Technical support and care support network

A priority measure initiated in 2006, support to home help services in their daily and forward-looking management is ensured by Rémy Le Stum, the Equal project coordinator for elderly and disabled persons. Management of skills and human resources, the implementation of tools provided for by the 2002-2 law (service project, welcome booklet...) and quality management form part of this action. At the same time, services have the possibility of incorporating a "care support network", an I.T. tool which allows different individuals providing care to the same person to communicate in order to anticipate problems that may arise (problems relating to medicines or food, repeated falls etc.).

Night nurse

To make this service more accessible, an alternative to continuous care was required. Hence the idea of a mobile night nurse who would offer emergency or scheduled visits, to ensure the safety of and assist the individual. Whilst the concept may be simple, it is complex to implement (the need for qualified staff, authorisations from regulating bodies...). This new service will be tested this year on three combined district councils (Parthenay, Espace Gâtine and Pays Thénezéen) where organisations (CCAS, EHPAD - *nursing home for the elderly*, ADMR - *in-home services association*...) will focus their efforts to ensure that it is a success.

Job sharing

Julie Fabien, Equal project coordinator for children and infants, is currently working on bringing together players from this sector (employees, home support services, authorities, community centres, child-minders...) to offer a job sharing experience owing to the interchangeable skills in the sectors of children and support to dependent persons. These interchangeable skills would enable work time to be increased and the precariousness of some jobs to be reduced. A training phase is planned for interested professionals. Objective: to offer an initial module this year and, eventually, to open access to a full support worker qualification. Finally, an experiment on care with staggered working hours could be carried out some time in 2007.



Psychological dependence sheets

Organisations which deal with psychologically dependent persons have come together to think about a support programme for "carers". Work with families has been undertaken with the association France Alzheimer to describe the symptoms of each disease and collect examples of best practice for supporting patients (adaptation of the living quarters, taking meals, daily activities etc.). This exchange of knowledge is extremely helpful for home help workers, who are not always trained and family members, often lacking the necessary knowledge/skills, especially when the disease first appears. These advice sheets will be completed on 30 June 2007.

A network of home visitors

Social relationships are essential for home support and the independence of elderly people. A network of voluntary workers, called "Papot'âge" (chat for the elderly), has been set up. Managed by the MSA (Mutual Agricultural Fund), it has an ethical charter and has benefited from training on the "place of the voluntary worker in relationships".

Teamwork

The "People working for people" project brings together ten partners who have contributed to analysis, the selection and implementation of actions.

- County association ADMR
- County association Familles Rurales (Rural families).
- Association Mission locale Gâtine Emploi (The Gâtine Employment local Operation).
- Association G rontologique de G tine (The G tine Gerontological Association) (CLIC de G tine¹)
- AIR
- Parthenay local social welfare centre
- The M nigoute district community centre (representing the three community centres of the G tine)
- Deux-S vres county council
- The MSA
- The CAF (third action)
- The Pays de G tine, project leader

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At the end of 2008, at its conclusion, The Equal programme "People working for people" will have allowed several innovations in personal assistance service activities to be created. It will then be up to the players in the field to take over the tools developed. Examples.

Qualification of employees

The key to improving the professional sector is staff training. Since last year, 56 job seekers have in this way had access to initial training in the services professions, via AIR (professional reintegration intermediary association). On the other hand, home help services have been able, for the first time, to offer their employees modules covering 9 different topics to be followed by 2008. An action made possible by sharing the training programme between several services. This pooling reduces the cost of training per employee, owing to local sessions set up with a sufficient number of participants. This initiative, managed by the departmental federation ADMR and CNFPT (National Centre for the Management of Territorial Service), shall be able to be repeated according to the needs of the sector.

The "People working for people" Internet site

A database is being created to network all the personal assistance services in the area. This Internet portal "People working for people" contains online technical documentation, links allowing regulatory information to be consulted, actions implemented within the scope of Equal to be followed up, an inter-service forum for exchanging information and providing feedback on experiences, documentation relating to training and a "job" platform. Professionals who are trained and available shall soon be able to appear under this heading and employers will thus be able to easily find replacements and new employees.

Objective: to combat the insecurity of part-time jobs by allowing job-sharing between several employers.

The database is accessible to professionals, from the end of 2006, in the "elderly people" sector. Some time in 2007, it shall be extended to the "children and family" and "disabled persons" sectors. Access to the public is planned for the end of the year.

Address: www.gatine.org/equal

