

A review of 2013

Equilibrium – the introspective organization

Within an organization that is approaching the 10th anniversary of its foundation, people are not sure whether to look ahead or backwards. In such circumstances, it is not a bad idea to look at the current state of play. Where are we? Who are we? What is it that characterizes Equilibrium as an organization that works for children and with children?

During the year, we launched a new publication – “Games and Adventures for Little and Large People”. It is simply a compendium of activities for children that we have come to use in our work. David wrote a separate article to explain the learning theory but, in the compendium, we wanted the games and adventures to speak for themselves.

In the autumn, we opened an office in fashionable part of Ruse together with Hope and Homes for Children. The space is devoted to our working partnership. Visit us there – it’s a place for informal conversation - and you’ll find yourself surrounded by memorabilia of nine years of games and adventures and examples of the arts and crafts produced by children and volunteers.

The working partnership sees us devise practical solutions to the challenges of deinstitutionalization – the Ruse complex makes a significant contribution to the coordination of the process in Ruse, carries its know how to other parts of Bulgaria and helps pioneer the use of ACTIVE family support by making the interventions necessary to build a support network around those who are vulnerable and build on those strengths that inevitably exist.

The complex has grown into its role as a training and resource centre and we hosted several professional training courses during 2013 exploring a variety of therapeutic and educational methods for engaging with vulnerable children. As in 2012, we took part in the Uzana-Polyana Ecological Festival where we both fundraise and contribute to the educational programme while making friends and cementing partnerships.

In September, Equilibrium contributed to the first PAAR conference to take place in Bulgaria exploring best practices in deinstitutionalisation and this has led to the participation of the eminent British psychologist, Prof. Tony Ghaye, in a project funded by the Bulgarian-Swiss Coordination Programme through which we hope to collaborate with other Bulgarian service providers working in centres of social support in answering the challenge of both assessing the impact of their work on the wellbeing of children and families and drawing down meaningful feedback from beneficiaries. In the spring of 2015, we will share our revelations with government and make recommendations about how methods of professional evaluation can be improved.

Late in the year, Ruse municipal authority provided us with a new contract that will enable us to continue managing the complex and the Pink House until the end of 2016 in partnership with the Open society – Ruse.

So where are we? Who are we? Equilibrium is an organization that has accepted the challenge of continuing to learn and improve as new challenges come our way. We are always happy to share our experience because we are proud of our team and their achievements. Thanks everyone.

