



EVALUATION

« THE SLIDING LEASE »

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I — POSITIONING

À) PHILOSOPHY

a) Options

Today ELIA raises the question to know if housing is really its social object or if it is only about one support for its action. In the reflexion carried out by the whole staff and the members of the administration's board, some confusion might spring from this interrogation. About its apparent vocation, the public financings obtained and lasted send back clearly to the fact of offering housing's option to hardness people.

However, if this point of view can "be objectified", to occupy a housing supposes "subjective" motivations on behalf of the people concerned. About this matter, nobody gets the power nor text can legislate or enact.

In front of the requirement of a "durable insertion", professionals of housing often meet symbolic dimensions of the human life which, by definition, cannot be reduced to the particular field of housing.

If ELIA proposes a housing, it is necessary that the person inhabit it, i.e. occupies it, projects itself in. It should find health, incomes, link again the bonds with its family. all things which require a return on oneself and the capacity to reinterpret its own history.

Making it possible to reach a housing to one whose history led to the frontier between the desire of living and the abandonment, it is like giving a hand to someone who drowns. Without making assessment, with respect to decency and silent sufferings, it is necessary to be able to propose a framework, a roof, a heat.

By this limit between Eros and Thanatos, nothing counts except the desire which a person has to go on an even chaotic history, parcelled out, marked out by the disease. None the categories which our society manufactures in the crucible of violences symbolic systems is then relevant. It is here that each one meets the human condition, the singularity and the precarious situation of its existence. The suffering is the instant and the revelation of this vital force and its volatility. The sentence carried by the social judgement collides with the suffering and its procession of regrets, of remorse, the missed times and impossibility of going back.

Allis then yet possible.

Believing ardently that any human being, even at the brink of the abyss, can regain control of his own life is what ELIA driven the action of ELIA for more than 14 years now and it would like to transmit this experience acquired through its contact with human reality.

Thus we find ourselves in the ethical domain, searching for what is beneficial or good for others. It is at this point that anyone, even those unfamiliar with the domain of housing, can have access to the collective discussion and inquiry about the real aim of emergency accommodation.

The latter should not be a new way of hiding away the poor who would disturb law and order, of herding together those excluded from economic growth. On the contrary, it is about dignity, humanity, and the desire to continue living which can be felt by those whose suffering ELIA taken them to life's extremes.

At the heart of ELIA action, is the offer of housing, which could be defined as normal or an individual right, whatever you will. Being able to become a leaseholder is strongly motivating. The technique of the sliding lease protects against the mechanism of the ruthless housing market which prevents people from accessing tenant status. Protected by the expedient of the sliding lease, people will have the time to consolidate this new image of themselves as a tenant.

b) The ethical framework

It is necessary to seek beyond the socially acknowledged aims of an accommodation centre, which constitute a recognized social framework, to find the deeper reasons which govern the action of an association such as ELIA. An ethos only makes sense when it confronts moral principles with their practical application. The real question then is concerned with the position that people occupy in society, their recognized rights and the way in which their suffering is taken into account.

The methodological slant which, since its foundation, ELIA been the driving force behind the action of ELIA is that it is impossible to compartmentalize the search for solutions for the "excluded" into autonomous sectors. There cannot be, on the one hand, the reallocation of social aid without taking into consideration reinsertion through housing and health (...). Faced with the question of real suffering and the handicap this represents for a future of a very "relative social and moral comfort", along with recovered health, housing is only a vector or a prop in the process of helping someone to find their place and status.

For a professional, an ethos is also about looking for what we must do (or what is good ?) in order to give to others a position and personal status. "How it is done" counts just as much here as "Why it is done".

The real difficulty thereby lies in the development of tools which will enable the practical application of our stated ethos. There is a real effort to be made here to ensure that good intentions don't transform the individual into an impersonal entity.

When the institution seeks to impose the perception of its own beliefs as for the good of others, it runs the risk of becoming a bureaucracy, divorced from its primary social identity. It is not, or no longer, a question of imposing a concept of normality in areas such as work, family and emotional life, behaviour and hygiene.

The ethos of ELIA can be summed up in the following sentence :

"Our philosophy is based on the fact that each person, even destitute, is entitled not only to decent housing, but is capable of living in it. It is also necessary to provide people with the appropriate means of achieving this : fine, reintegration into a stable social environment and the right to permanent housing".

The ethical question is not a philosophical abstraction; it is put into practice daily in our relations with others, trying to navigate its way through the narrow paths between the traditions of social work, its jargon, economic constraints and the status that the excluded have in a democratic society.

B) ITS AIMS

The framework of the mission

Right from the beginning, the ultimate aim of the association ELIA been to work towards insertion, or reintegration through lodgings for vulnerably-housed people of any age with very little income and unstable jobs or training. It does this through :

- ⇒ *giving people access to appropriate housing as quickly as possible and in the best possible conditions ;*
- ⇒ *acting as an intermediary between marginalized people and leasing organisations. This is the idea behind the sliding lease.*

Our mission aims to be preventive by :

- ⇒ *helping people on low incomes who can't find accommodation because of insufficient financial security to avoid hostels or squats ;*
- ⇒ *guarding against the risk of marginalization through drugs, alcohol or prostitution, a consequence of a vulnerable situation ;*
- ⇒ *reinforcing the relations of every nature that these people in difficulty succeeded in establishing in previous institutions.*

C) THE BENEFICIARIES

ELIA places great importance on the abilities and potential of the people they help, not by denying the reality of their symptoms, but neither by reducing them to this single reality. Without distinguishing any particular symptom, we can detect the characteristics of three types of problem faced by the households concerned :

- ⇒ *economic precariousness : very little income, socio-professional insecurity ; long- term unemployment... |*
- ⇒ *social and relational difficulties : the absence, or near absence, of the family unit, non-existent or very loose social ties, a conditioned attachment to former behavioural patterns (drug-addiction, prostitution.) ;*
- ⇒ *psychological vulnerability : situation of dependence on a substance or a type of environment, a lack of prospects, low self-esteem based on a negative selfimage...*

The current definition of housed beneficiaries

The social groups concerned by the service given by ELIA are in danger of exclusion or in difficulty of reintegration. We direct our work to :

- ✓ *unemployed people ; people on income support or welfare benefits ; young people under 25 ; people with anti-social behaviour or problems of addiction, other people with multiple handicaps, of a social, economic or cultural nature.*
- ⇒ *The disqualification of every kind that these people fall victim to is an added ordeal when they access housing. Their institutional past is often revealing. Thus, a large majority of people come from hostels, some from squats or from living on the street, while others are in conflict with their family. Added to this, the huge demand from single women and parents is becoming even more and more frequent.*
- ⇒ *The low academic achievement of these people is a permanent feature. However, this should be qualified as people with a level IT and IT education have recently been coming to ELIA. They are a minority, all the same, and most beneficiaries have a level V and VI education (the basic skills of reading, writing, counting and the practical part of the CAP). As a result, the issues relating to > bureaucracy are often inaccessible to these people.*
- ⇒ *The lack of regular employment or satisfactory wage conditions characterizes the majority of housed people. Very few people have long or short-term work contracts whereas there is an abundance of temporary work through temping agencies.*
- ⇒ *Here, then, are the main sources of income for these social groups. Most of them receive bridging benefits from the C.A.F and the A.S.S.E.D.I.C (unemployment). Others are in training or employment. Some people have no income at all, particularly the homeless under 25; still others are completely marginalized when it comes to social benefits either because, voluntarily or not, they reject the system as it stands, or because they have difficulty in understanding how it works and so give up administrative procedures and therefore lose their welfare rights.*
- ⇒ *Ethnic origin remains a real barrier in gaining access to housing and employment. This is aggravated according to the social and political context in which these people live. For the most part, they come from North Africa or the Comoros Islands.*
- ⇒ *These social groups in difficulty often suffer from deteriorated mental and physical health, which only adds to their exclusion. The symptoms of mental and physiological illness are becoming more and more common and acute.*

What contact do these people have with the various sectors of their daily lives ?

Housing remains essential and represents another opportunity to think of oneself in different terms and be more positive. The ‘desired’ habitat allows people seeking housing or rehousing to become part of the dynamic process in elaborating their project. Housing in individual apartments can have several effects and reveal certain kinds of behaviour which, until then, remained undetected. They are :

- ⇒ *immediate occupancy and rapid appropriation of the residence; undertaking any work needing to be done or desired ;*
- ⇒ *immediate occupancy and continual et insistent complaints without the desired improvements ;*
- ⇒ *differed occupancy and regular requests to ELIA, either for technical help or material support ;*
- ⇒ *differed occupancy without requesting help from ELIA, or repeatedly missed meetings on diverse pretexts.*

These types of behaviour are useful indicators at the time of social support.

Health constitutes one of the nerve centres of our assistance. Denying the body and its language is a near-constant in beneficiaries. It does not seem essential to them to be concerned about their health when they have other more critical problems. Most of the time, self-abnegation is tied up with the causes which generated exclusion in the first place.

Other beneficiaries, however, are treated regularly, in particular single women with children. Taking effective consideration of physical and mental health marks considerable progress in becoming aware of how we value ourselves.

For this reason and with this aim, the staff at ELIA all the necessary tools at their disposal which enable them to meet their clients' requirements. Resolutely turned towards medical and psychological partnership, our staff are constantly reinforcing and diversifying it so as to come up with the most appropriate strategy for each situation.

The budget plays an important role in the households daily life. It gives an indication of the mental and material involvement on the part of the beneficiaries.

The relationship that the housed beneficiaries have with money is rather fluctuating. However, it is interesting to note that, beyond observable behaviour, the unconscious mind recognizes the multiple powers of money and what it means to have it, or not as the case may be. The qualities conferred on money by some of the housed people is a source of significant valorisation, but in fact, it is not uncommon to meet people who have no sense of budget planning or prioritizing. The link between maintaining people in housing and the respect of financial commitments is a part of our work which cannot be ignored and is dealt with all throughout the assistance we offer. It is a question of establishing priorities in the family budget with regards to the necessary fixed payments such as rent, electricity, telephone and food.

Employment is treated in different ways but is a major concern of beneficiaries. It is still THE means of increasing monthly income. Often, the employment market is not fully understood and the hopes of finding a job and receiving adequate remuneration are often unrealistic.

The loss of motivation caused by confronting the reality of the job market and the regularity required to hold down a job, further weakens these people who are already living with failure.

Some people, on the other hand, have a constructive approach to employment and manage to establish a productive and effective job-seeking strategy. The status of wage-earner gives these people a sense of importance and structure, sometimes even relief. Some work out a professional project in progressive stages: in-work training courses and employment are organized around a pre-defined and desired aim. Being eligible for employment is the determining factor for these people when facing the reality of employment and their own potential.

Some people become aware of the ground they have to cover before obtaining permanent employment. Others continue to repeat the behaviour which leads to failure. In this case, working on self-awareness should bring the person to modify his/her inappropriate conduct.

Dealing with public services is also essential and impossible to circumvent as this category of people depends on public services and benefits, be they in terms of income or financial rights. The need to understand the utility of receiving benefits from appropriate organisations is not a matter for debate. | |

The people accommodated by ELIA still consider this domain with mistrust or in terms of conflict. The anxiety they feel on receiving an administrative form is only equal to their fear of completing it. Consequently, the general attitude is to ignore it which, in the medium term, deprives beneficiaries of all their social payments and, paradoxically, forces them to go through even more complicated form-filing than the initial ignored request. Anger appears at this point although there is no questioning of how the situation came about in the first place.

Other people, however, are perfectly capable of coping with this essential part of their rehabilitation process and don't hesitate to contact the appropriate service if there is anything that they don't understand or don't know how to answer.

Leisure is often ignored. The beneficiaries of ELIA services tend to neglect the notion of pleasure or "giving oneself pleasure". They think that their efforts must mainly go into the more "noble" areas like work/training, the family budget or administrative procedures, and so live under permanent constraint and lack of pleasure. This often leads them into unbearable and de-structuring states of physical and emotional stress.

Taking up an activity which corresponds to one's desires and personality brings about relaxation, well-being and increased readiness to deal with the events of daily life. Becoming physically and mentally involved in whatever type of activity brings positive, tangible results. This sense of well-being makes it possible to energize sometimes static situations; this need to rehabilitate self-esteem finds an effective answer here.

D) THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ELIA IN ITS ENVIRONMENT

a) Its offices

The association's head office were designed so as to make it an agreeable place for employees to work in and also for households to feel good about creating their own living space there.

Here, the idea of setting an example is very important since it is about making people want to become involved in their future housing. Colours are bright and peaceful (an apricot colour is used in the entrances and corridors of the two sites) ; each employee ELIA his/her own office and was able to choose the colour of the walls and decorate them with posters. Each room has curtains and a telephone.

The armchairs in reception are bright and comfortable and seating in each office allows visitors to be at ease, whether they be talking about their situations or completing administrative forms.

À is at the disposal of Al the personnel have access to a central photocopier with fax and printer. Air-conditioning is installed because of the bad insulation of housing.

Each social worker has a computer in his/her office which can be used exclusively to consult the financial management of the apartments, with or without the presence of the beneficiaries.

There are kitchens equipped with microwave ovens and a dishwasher allowing the personnel to prepare their own food.

An agreeable workplace where everyone ELIA their own office and up-to-date computer and communications” equipment is the basic requirement for carrying out quality social work.

b) Its relational network

Constituting the different networks necessary for réhabilitation requires a broad partnership, on a local as well as nation level. This partnership needs to be built up progressively through common and concerted action and the patient maintenance of the institutional network resulting from this action. This partnership is varied :

✓ *Partnership negotiation*

ELIA adheres to the “Union Régionale Interfédérale des Organismes Privés Sanitaires et sociaux (URIOPSS).

In addition, ELIA adheres to the “Fédération Nationale des Associations de Réadaptation Sociale(FNARS)

✓ *Project partnership*

The housing sector is ELIA first partner. First of all are the leasers, like HLM (social housing) organizations, whose social service mission ELIA become difficult to fulfill and who are in general very interested in this partnership.

c) The managing association

The decisions which only fall to the Administration Board are the adoption and approval of the provisional budget, approval of the operating account and reallocation of the financial results.

Since 2004, the members of the Board have met with the director every month so that she can report on the activity of the institution and inform it of the difficulties of certain households. Her knowledge is based on her permanent contact with employees. He is in the position of a mediator, informing and performing. Every three months, the Administration Board meets to prepare its Annual General Assembly which generally occurs in May.

The association ELIA had an Administrative Board since its creation. The President is elected for three years and for democratic reasons, a new candidate postulates to this position every three years.

II — SOCIAL AND EDUCATIVE ASSISTANCE

A) THE SERVICE WE GIVE

ELIA central service is concerned with giving personalized social assistance households who have difficulty in finding housing through their own means and enabling them to become tenants in their own right. This assistance is taken from a variety of available services and takes into account the overall situation of the household.

These services are centred on three essential axes that the social workers aim to implement:

- ⇒ the elaboration of the project,
- ⇒ social assistance,
- ⇒ accommodation and access to housing

- **The elaboration of the project**

- a) *Informing the beneficiary about his rights and duties and examining his/her personal situation |*

The social worker gives the necessary information concerning the rights and duties of the accommodated household which is followed by listening to claimants and helping them to identify their difficulties in administrative, legal, social, fiscal, family and personal matters. From an assessment and diagnosis, the social worker offers the household personalized assistance based on, and developing, their own private resources.

- b) *Helping households to work out a project and put it into practice*

The social worker is able to help to work out, to put in words the household's desires so that they reach more autonomy with regards the different social services and use them more advisedly. It is a question of understanding their requests and leading them to be responsible for their choices. It is also about helping them analyse and understand their own situation in order to clarify their objectives and develop their capacities to achieve them.

- **Social assistance**

- a) Providing the beneficiary with logistic and financial support*

After examining the beneficiary's situation, the social worker, if necessary, offers personalized financial assistance in the form of a 0% interest rate loan. This financial aid concerns all aspects of personal life and can cover the deposit needed before accessing housing, grocery, transport, clothing, insurance, legal costs, in short, everything necessary for reintegrating society.

If there is financial assistance, repayment is also subject to negotiation according to the beneficiary's resources and needs and follows a revisable schedule.

Moreover, ELIA offers logistic support by providing a secretarial service for mail or curriculum vitae, a fax, telephone, photocopier or even pens and paper. This is very useful when job-seeking or carrying out various administrative or legal procedures.

- b) Helping beneficiaries in their various procedures*

After an evaluation of the beneficiaries' needs, the social worker undertakes to help them in various personal procedures of an administrative, legal, or other nature, but also in their management of everyday life. With the aim of leading people to become rapidly independent, help is given by stages, and can take the form of physical assistance if necessary.

- c) Helping the beneficiary to reintegrate society and establish contact with social services*

The social worker brings beneficiaries into contact with the whole range of social partners — local social centres, priests, schools, administrative and housing organisations, etc — based on their wishes and personal profile. In addition, the social worker can even accompany beneficiaries to these places if necessary. This support helps people to reintegrate society and enables them to re-establish ties with their environment.

- d) Giving relational support*

Interviews with a social worker (at the head office, inside or outside the home) enable beneficiaries to get a better perspective on their personal difficulties or emotions. Educational action based on the enhancement and recognition of people as initiators in their own project, provides motivation enabling them to readjust or modify their self-image.

- e) Giving medical and psychological support*

Through free-lance personnel (a doctor and a psychologist), ELIA helps beneficiaries to come to terms with their bodies and treat their suffering by meeting professionals who suggest the type of therapy adapted to their situations and requests.

- **Accommodation and access to housing**

- a) Providing beneficiaries with adapted accommodation*

ELIA offers beneficiaries housing according to their income, family size and, where possible, their wishes (district, proximity to workplace or social ties, where they exist). After an interview intending to examine the beneficiaries' situation concerning their income and the welfare payments that they can claim, ELIA determines the appropriate type of housing in each case. The beneficiaries visit a certain number of apartments (maximum 3) and have 24 hours in which to make their decision. ELIA thereby brings into play its usual network of lessors to adjust supply and demand.

- b) Giving material and technical assistance when moving into accommodation*

The social worker can lend beneficiaries the material necessary to repair and to maintain housing (drill, splicing unit, brushes, toolbox, etc). Maintenance workers are also on hand for more significant work. The social worker also gives advice about utilities such as heating, water consumption... Maintenance workers can take on the move into new accommodation, if necessary. The social worker can also give advice about any purchases for the new apartment, such as basic furniture, crockery, or for its general upkeep, financial assistance is available for this.

- c) Helping the beneficiary to acquire tenant status via the sliding lease*

ELIA enables beneficiaries to remain in the accommodation which they have occupied and invested in by suggesting that lessors transfer the lease into the household's name.

B) BASIC FOUNDING PRINCIPLES

All of the previously developed topics, in so far as they concern beneficiaries directly or indirectly, are part of a way of thinking, an ethical framework, a way of seeing the world, human beings and life.

Thus, when dealing with the questions of assistance, financial support, receiving claimants or giving advice... each member of the association's personnel acts in the name of the principles which underlie his/her action, behaviour or words.

These principles, at the heart of every stage of the association's work (before, during and after), are defined according to one single approach: giving precedence to those elements and situations which develop a responsible and autonomous position for each accommodated person.

- a) Confidentiality*

Beyond the concepts of professional secrecy or discretion, the professionals at ELIA are extremely careful when it comes to the channels of information concerning their clients' background and situation.

This vigilance is oriented to a strict selection when giving out information. An external interlocutor will only have that information which concerns his area of competence.

Consequently, information concerning employment and training are only given to partners in the socio-professional field; administrative matters are only dealt with in collaboration with the C.A.F, ASSEDIC, Social security, etc.

Moreover, information is never given to a third party without necessary verification.

On the contrary, when an outside agency requests information from the association about a household's situation, the personnel communicates only that which is essential to the progress of social support. Whatever the case may be, the institutional rule consists in getting the accommodated households' authorisation to give as well as receive information.

This fundamental principle aims at guaranteeing people's rights and freedom to be and to appear however, wherever, whenever and with whomever they want.

b) *Centring on the future*

This is concerned with helping people to elaborate and put into practice their aims for reinsertion.

This does not mean that there is no interest in their past history, but rather that it is necessary to adopt a clear and determined professional line. 'The amount of time stipulated in the contract (cf Contrat Personnalisé d'Accompagnement Social) does not allow for the identification and resolution of deeply-rooted problems, within the family in particular. It does, however, allow for the elaboration of personal objectives centred on the future.

Nevertheless, when beneficiaries express the wish to understand their own pasts better — on a psychotherapeutic or even psychoanalytic level — ELIA orientates them to the appropriate organisations (private consulting clinics...).

This position and its underlying principle reveal a professional commitment to respond to problems with adapted means, In each case, the pragmatism of this approach affects the real possibility of reaching the fixed objectives and of getting tangible results.

c) *Working with individual resources*

As a corollary to the previous point, this position makes sense for people who are generally stigmatised by all kinds of difficulties. Here, the question is primarily to examine the household's "strong points". If it is proved that beneficiaries are personally vulnerable, the fact remains that they possess a whole range of capacities or faculties which they can develop in certain situations. The subtlety of the work undertaken lies in allowing them to realise this and giving them the desire to achieve.

Thus the type of support given is accompanied by a series of actions or procedures which are retrospectively examined with the social worker in order to verify and confirm the viability of solutions found with and by the households.

One of the dominant axes of this principle is that competence developed in one domain can, little by little, be transferred to other problematic fields.

d) *Networking*

This is one of the key principles of social support as well as being a prerequisite for any committed action. Indeed, ELIA does not have the authority to stand in for the whole range of actions necessary for effective social support.

However, it requires the conditional participation of multiple partners in administrative, medical, socio-professional and cultural areas, for example. Actually, only housing can be regarded as entirely "covered" by ELIA actions.

Consequently, it is an established principle that the association must cooperate with the diverse organisations which have different roles from its own. This being said, the question remains of the position occupied within a network; working with isn't enough to signify how one fits into this work schema.

Without going into detail, it should be said that in any system of relations, ELIA tends to work without hierarchical presuppositions; neither above, nor below, its intervention takes place alongside beneficiariés, working with them on the links of the network. This means that with no top or bottom there is a centrality of action: if there is a central position, it is not for ELIA but for the beneficiaries to occupy it.

The principle of networking, impossible to circumvent if efficiency is to be achieved, has the effect of giving households the perception that active interactive systems exist which function transversally. In this way, it indicates the whole range of useful reference points for desired social integration.

C) OUR APPROACH

Theoretical models

The social workers use certain theoretical elements borrowed from various schools of thought to guide their practice; these are very useful for understanding and analysing difficulties encountered in the course of their work, but are not often very practical in the realm of "doing".

The discovery of a particular systemic theory : "solution-centred short therapy centred", through a supervisor formed by this method, ELIA greatly influenced the ELIA team. This theory, on the whole optimistic, refuses to concentrate on the problem, on what doesn't work, and deliberately chooses to concentrate on what works, trying to introduce change by using the potential of the people concerned.

"Solution-centered therapy" is an model of intervention mainly created and described by Steve DE SHAZER and Insoo KIM BERG. This theory views the processes of change as something which occur regularly and inevitably, contrary to traditional family therapy which considers that the family unit is motivated by pressure to maintain an equilibrium and protect its frontiers.

It is based on the idea that it is more profitable to put together solutions rather than cradicating problems. This results in central work on defining objectives. These objectives are in two parts :

- ⇒ *what the person wants,*
- ⇒ *how this will be achieved.*

They must be treated in terms of interaction. It is essential to be clear about the nature of these objectives, as precisely as possible, in terms of behaviour and presence (not absence) and to put them into a contract which enables consequent evaluation.

The social worker, along with beneficiaries, is actively involved in looking for change and exceptions (the moment when the problem does not occur), by constructing imagined solutions and asking questions which subsequently help people to discover their own solutions.

If the basic philosophy of the "solution-centred theory" is quite simple, it is less so for the tools used and the attitude of person who orchestrates the interview. Therefore, the educative personnel at ELIA are often involved in full-time training in order to develop and integrate this method.

The discovery of this theory ELIA considerably modified the way of conducting interviews and evaluations with beneficiaries. Emphasizing what ELIA, rather than what ELIA not, been achieved gives beneficiaries an idea of their progr ess which they are not always aware of as it is more usual to look at what ELIA 'gone wrong'. This gives dynamism to the process, makin g it possible to consider the road ahead as different stages to be accomplished rather than failures to be rectified.

D) PERSONALIZING THE SERVICE

- **Receiving beneficiaries**

People have to apply voluntarily to the association in their request for housing. On the telephone, the switchboard receptionist gives information about the objective criteria .

If people correspond to the objective criteria of the services, and that they seem to be eligible for an educative service, au appointment with a social worker is made.

- **Admission**

After the presentation of ELIA and its services, (a leaflet is distributed to that effect before the meeting) the interview is organized in such a way as to allow the association and beneficiaries to enter into a mutual partnership. It is concerned with making a socio-economic and psycho-relational diagnosis by verifying the appropriateness of the project of the association to the household's difficulties and personal resources.

To do this, the social worker evaluates successively all the aspects of the personal problems: isolation, family instability, past institutions, delinquent behaviour, accumulation of social difficulties, personal vulnerability...

At the outcome of this interview, a decision is made immediately and is clearly explained by the social worker. In the event of a negative answer, the applicants are systematically oriented to the Service d'Accueil and d'Orientation (SAO).

In the event of a positive answer, a waiting time follows and leads to an offer of housing.

ELIA decided to make this waiting period (2 months on average before obtaining housing) a formative time.

So the offer of housing is conditioned by the respect of certain engagements: having realized savings as agreed, having fulfilled the requested administrative procedures, having kept in contact with ELIA once a month in order to measure how far people are prepared to commit themselves on the one hand, and on the other, to adapt the request for accommodation in case of a change of configuration in the family set-up, (notably when a couple is formed).

- **The housing contract**

Socio-educative assistance takes effect when the beneficiaries accept the proposed housing. This agreement is finalized by the signature of the housing contract with a social worker who then becomes the liaison worker.

The housing contract, in terms of determination or making choices to achieve the household's project, is the first reciprocal commitment that the social worker and the household accomplish together. It is a way of seeing how the household relates to different aspects of their problems.

The objective is to put the socio-educative assistance into context by proposing a structuring framework. The process consists in :

- ⇒ *Showing that the work undertaken by ELIA is situated in the field of housing benefits financed by the DDASS (the principle of National Solidarity).*
- ⇒ *Jointly defining the financial, material and administrative terms of the social support.*

- **The personalized social assistance contract (CPAS)**

By its very existence, the CPAS shows beneficiaries that the association is at their service and wants to do everything possible to enable them to take control of their lives again by making their own positive decisions. This document drawn up in the very first months of socio-educative assistance consists in :

- ⇒ *Defining the pursued objectives as well as their implementation within a jointly defined timeframe.*
- ⇒ *Evaluating the results of any action undertaken and giving positive feedback so as to encourage personal appropriation.*

The process lies in making a contract of respective commitments (those of beneficiaries and social workers) as well as developing the appropriate means of implementation.

- **The finance sheet**

It is the practical application of the accommodation and assistance contracts in the budgetary and financial fields. Its objectives are :

- ⇒ *Preparing the household to make a provision in its budget for the expenses related to moving into accommodation.*
- ⇒ *Negotiating investment priorities while ensuring that the household ELIA the basic equipment whatever its financial situation: refrigerator, cooker, bed or couch, table and chairs, clothing storage unit, kitchen utensils.*
- ⇒ *Ascertaining that the household is able to refund the advance granted by the association, in the terms of the negotiated financial repayment schedule (guarantee, insurance, furniture...).*
- ⇒ *Monitoring the regularity of the remaining rent payment in order to measure the degree of household responsibility.*

- **Evaluation**

It reinforces the position of the household in the association and in society by showing the evolution of the sometimes still negative image that beneficiaries have of themselves.

In this way, permanent assessment is carried out by both beneficiaries and social workers, which then gets feedback in the educative team. If necessary, after a few months of assistance and with tripartite agreement (beneficiary, social worker, pedagogic director), an overall evaluation is agreed upon. This is systematic with long-term assistance and takes place every six months.

During this assessment, the themes of the personalized social assistance contract are gone over again. This moment is a privileged time for beneficiaries to express themselves. The social worker intervenes then to emphasize the action undertaken by the household. The pedagogic director reformulates, synthesizes and can question the éducatif relation established between the two parties. At the end of the evaluation, and with the household's agreement, he determines the continuation of assistance with new objectives set within a specific timeframe along with the date of lease transference or the reorientation of the household.

⇒ *Continuation of assistance*

When evaluation underlines that transferring the lease is premature for various reasons (health problems, complex administrative problems, lack of autonomy...), it leads to an amendment of the CPAS which then redefines the working axes for the following period. As far as possible, a more precise timeframe for the attainment of objectives will be defined, in the same way that targets will be fixed for the realisation of certain administrative procedures.

⇒ *Re-orienting beneficiaries*

When assessment shows that beneficiaries have not respected the commitments made under the housing and personalized social assistance contracts, and that they have not used proposed educative tools to conclude their project, they are reoriented to a more adapted service. Following on from this assessment are "realignments" between the social worker and the household, readjustments of objectives and means of implementation and the elaboration of certain actions to be accomplished which have not been respected by the household.

⇒ *Transferring the lease*

When the assessment shows that all the conditions have been met for beneficiaries to take on an apartment, the procedure for lease transference is engaged: beneficiaries become the titular tenant of their housing; this is finalized by a meeting with the leaser and signing the lease in the presence of a member of the ELIA management.

In this way, means of action were given to, and taken by, the household to become integrated into a position of common rights while becoming responsible for their choice of life consolidated by a positive self-image. This is what happens every year in the majority of cases (approximately 90% of the accommodated households).

E) THE RELATIONAL NETWORK:

- **Functional partnership**

This concerns the unavoidable institutions whose services are essential for the daily lives of accommodated households. It can concern :

- the CAF (family allowance) for granting, transferring or other payments,
- the C.C.A.S (local social action centre) for requests for the RMI (minimum wage) or CMU (universal health insurance), for example,
- the DGAISS (health and social action and intervention) with PMI (mother and child protection), ASE (childhood social assistance), RMI services, professional training centers, hospitals and various health services: social security in particular,

All these institutions are used at one time or another by beneficiaries to achieve their project. The concern is with mutually defining how these organisations will improve beneficiaries' progress and above all defining modes of intervention.

- **Intermittent partnership**

Like the heading says, this partnership is intermittently set up and always with the aim of finalizing the beneficiaries' project. It can occur in other actions and only concerns a specific aspect of ELIA support.

The need for an established partnership doesn't preclude intermittent collaboration with other services when necessary,

The definition of working in partnership is when an institutional exchange was possible and profitable. This exchange tries to ascertain if certain services are complementary for social support and comes to an agreement about its basic principles.

Confrontation and differences of opinion may be expressed in this working framework. It requires that there be a permanent exchange of information. Indeed, it is not about occasionally contacting different interlocutors by phone, but about real meetings between people who have a mutual working knowledge of the other's field.

Consequently, being a partner means: "institutions and people encountered several times, and sometimes at length, with whom we elaborate a joint reflexion and maintain inter-professional relations of trust, people with whom we act and collaborate".

Thus the keys of the partnership are, according to ELIA :

- ⇒ *identification of the appropriate partnership,*
- ⇒ *continuity in the transmission of information,*
- ⇒ *interdependence of the fields of competence,*
- ⇒ *meetings with chosen interlocutors,*
- ⇒ *the possibility of adjusting the plan of action.*

We can observe that working in partnership occurs before, and in preparation for, social support. It comes into effect at the time, and not on the basis, of this assistance.

On an institutional level, it is about wanting to work within the framework of overall support and aims to include all the domains (professional, administrative) which could bring about the process of reinsertion.

The purpose of overall social support is to reassemble different social agencies when there is the danger of dispersion or a separation of action. Working in partnership is necessary for realizing quality work with long-term effects.

For social workers, it offers the possibility of constant work-fulfilment and counteracts professional lassitude. The partnership is set up and elaborated on the basis of people's specific needs. It is built upon and evolves according to the situation.

ELIA acts as a special interlocutor and is thus able to coordinate the envisaged and implemented plan of action. The clarification of objectives and the allocation of different functions are established at each meeting so that the action in favour of the beneficiary's project is clear and univocal.

According to the objectives determined by CPAS, a series of partnership measures are implemented. This involves contacting a specific interlocutor whose competence ELIA has ascertained. The particular problems of the beneficiary (administrative, socio-professional, medical, financial...) will condition the nomination of a partner and subsequent coordination when this is necessary. In all cases, the exchange of information between the association's social worker and the concerned partner is subject to the preliminary authorization of the beneficiary who is the only person entitled to allow the diffusion of information relating to him.

This partnership exchange takes several forms : it can be written or verbal communication as well as meetings. The work undertaken is supervised by neither party but takes place with the full collaboration of each of them.

The identification of a network and the different functions of all participants must be clear to beneficiaries who will then be capable of interacting with their social environment.

F) THE COORDINATION OF SOCIO-EDUCATIVE ASSISTANCE

- **The beneficiary's file**

It includes three parts :

- ⇒ the housing file : inventory, lease and receipts,
- ⇒ the administrative file : DDASS cover and extensions:

- ⇒ the pedagogic file : the social worker writes up a report synthesizing the evolution of the beneficiary's situation. This file includes a diagnosis of the household at the beginning of support, the socio-educative objectives, assessment and the situation of the beneficiary at the end of this support.

This file enables social workers to be more objective about their support work. Moreover, this internal file can be consulted by the whole of authorized ELIA personnel.

The decisions and exchanges occurring during the hereafter mentioned meetings are also included in this file.

- **Strategic Meetings**

- ⇒ *Synthesis : "meetings for future action"*

This is where educative strategies are elaborated and collective reflection on the practice of social assistance and exchanges about implemented means take place. This meeting occurs once every 15 days at each office by the pedagogic director or the director of ELIA, and assembles all social workers. Its purpose is to study beneficiaries' problems using the previous synthesis as a starting point, relating the approaches used and any progress made in between times. It allows for the readjustment of the plan of action and the determination of new objectives.

Here, this meeting aims to enable the team to remain detached from the problems they encounter and also clarifies certain situations for strategic development. These meetings give equal importance to the position of each participant in the dynamic process and results in shared cooperation and elaboration of solutions.

- **Means of evaluation**

- ⇒ *Organizational meetings (3h every two months)*

As with general supervision, these are in fact the only meetings which gather the whole ELIA personnel, of all categories. They aim to give all employees the same level of information in the following fields :

- the associations policy,
- institutional strategy,
- organizational evolution.

Moreover, organizational meetings aim at examining closely how services operate on an internal as well as external level. They are held in four distinct stages :

- reading the minutes of the previous meeting to the personnel,
- learning about progress made since,
- treating the new agenda,
- discussion and debate leading to new strategies and objectives.

Finally, each organisational meeting supplements and refines a central dimension of ELIA work : keeping informed about institutional procedures and processes.

⇒ *Pedagogic meetings (3h every 3 months)*

This is the formal arena where general themes are discussed collectively. Based on the principal axes of the association's project, each subject for reflection is given a concrete form. Indeed, it is a question of adjusting professional practices as close as possible to the ethical and pedagogic values of the institution.

Thus, since 2004, these meetings have led to a clarification of the procedures for leaving ELIA (lease transference, voluntary departures, reorientations), the adjustment of solutions for financial aid (subsidies and loans : why, how and for whom ?) and an improvement in the admissions' process (functions and criteria), etc.

⇒ *Technical evaluations (2h per month)*

Every month, each social worker and the pedagogic director examine together the overall situation of beneficiaries from a technical viewpoint in order to target the problems encountered during social support but which do not require being discussed in a general meeting. It is question of evaluating, in a pragmatic way, each household's progress in order to clearly fix timescales and plans of action.

III— THE ORGANISATION OF THE INSTITUTION

A) PERSONNEL

- **Objectives of each team member**

Each employee ELIA own job description.

PEDAGOGIC BRANCH

⇒ *The pedagogic director, a delegate of the director, is in charge of the pedagogic staff (social workers) and of implementing the necessary means to complete administrative and financial objectives related to pedagogic aims. She is specifically involved in psycho-social support. His functions are to conduct internal meetings, regulate socio-relational systems arising from social schemes. She is responsible for relations with leasers, prospecting tenements and doing technical inspections. She is in charge of the assessment, follow-up and verification of the technical staff's work.*

Moreover, he is in charge of assessing the progress of individual households and organizing regular meetings which determine medium and long-term objectives and their mode of implementation. He is responsible for all action relating to the stabilization of households.

- ⇒ *The social workers* are responsible for welcoming the public, for ongoing socio- educative support for people in housing, for working with the institutional apparatus and dealing with the technical and administrative aspects relating to housing.

ADMINISTRATIVE BRANCH

- ⇒ *The administrative manager*, a delegate of the director, with the help of the accountant, is in charge of using the necessary means to achieve the administrative and financial objectives. She makes sure that overall organisational procedures and circuits are operational and is the intermediary between the executives and the whole of the personnel. She is, by delegation, in charge of the administrative staff and of implementing the necessary procedures to complete administrative objectives (project follow-up, insurance and tax files, supplies and the general running of the head office and the annex in Vitrolles).
- ⇒ *The receptionists/secretaries* welcome the public on the telephone and at the reception desk; they deal with phone calls and contribute to general secretarial work.

TECHNICAL BRANCH

- ⇒ *The maintenance workers* must ensure the security and safety of tenements. This includes repair work (wallpapering, painting, plumbing, electricity, joinery, tiling...) and the work related to the household's investment in housing (installation, transport-removal, assembling furniture.....)

• **Selection criteria of personnel**

By the complementary nature of their skills and by the value of their know-how, the men and the women who make up the whole team are obviously the major ingredient of its success.

And since the director obtained the creation of the post of pedagogic director, the latter ELIA worked with her in an advisory capacity in the selection of candidates for positions of social

- ⇒ *Practical criteria* : diplomas, the capacity to elaborate and synthesize and write down ideas. At the end of each interview, the director asks the candidate to write a summary of the interview in 10 minutes.
- ⇒ *Assistance work criteria* : the ability to remain detached in the event of conflict with a household, the ability to ensure the respect of specific structures, the ability to become involved in a working relationship.
- ⇒ *Criteria related to the respect of deep human values* : availability, generosity, a team spirit, the ability to share, solidarity, creativity, moral strength, enthusiasm and... the deep conviction that housing is the right way to insertion.

It should be noted that each employee is met twice and that the decision is quickly transmitted after the final selection. However, selection can take between three and six months. Becoming an employee of the association is a major step. A social worker does not replace another social worker. A secretary does not replace another secretary. The human being is certainly more important to ELIA than skills alone as the work demanded and given is incomparable with the usual social work. In any case, three months' in-house training will be given to each new employee.

Anyone will understand why the association never called upon an employment agency, especially to recruit social workers; it believes that the success of an enterprise is due more to a person's value than to their transcendent skills! And who is better placed to recruit than the people who built up the enterprise and makes it live from day to day?

B) THE TIME FRAMEWORK

Its very structure envisages an adaptation of the work rhythm to the clients' rhythm.

This means that privileged relational times can be adapted to the availabilities of housing beneficiaries (after work, at meal times...) but also to the moment when they are the most receptive to their commitment to ELIA. In this way, an appointment can sometimes be postponed to the following day or a social worker can be on the scene nearly immediately in the event of a crisis, for example.

In addition, the flexibility of the time schedule allows the possibility for convivial meeting times (over an evening meal) or even meetings with no fixed purpose (at the weekend).

C) HOUSING (80 apartments)

- **Nature and localization of apartments**

ELIA operates with structurally separate and individual apartments which allow access to housing benefits (Allocation Logement or Aide Personnalisée au Logement) and belong to the private as well as public sector. As far as possible, the association privileges the public sector which offers lower rents than the private sector and an APL which is more financially beneficial than an AL.

If the rent suggested by the private leasers exceeds the ELIA upper limit, it is subject to negotiation or for a reduction to repair the offered accommodation.

Subsequently, vis-à-vis these prohibitive costs, there only remains the public social housing alternative whose vacant apartment turnover is low. These rental limits are determined and re-assessed with two parameters in mind : > the variation of the INSEE construction cost index, > the capacity of households to reimburse ELIA, taking into account their overall

income level after the deduction of everyday expenses and fixed payments (other than the rent) and from their social housing benefits.

As far as looking for accommodation is concerned, the geographic location is determined by the wishes of future beneficiaries. Thus, insofar as this wish is compatible with the household's financial situation and the reality of the rental market (private/public, rent level), ELIA does everything possible to meet the request. Where this is not possible, the Association brings the person to an understanding of the situation so that they redirect their choice.

- **Housing size - Dimension and composition**

As to the composition of these apartments, ELIA takes into account the minimal conditions of comfort and habitability in accordance with decree.

It is question of attaining a double objective; on the one hand to give precedence to a better quality of life, on the other hand to satisfy the requirements of the CAF.

In short, the apartments offered by the Association include, at the minimum, one room and a kitchen or a cooking area, a bathroom and toilet. The room is never less than 9m² if the kitchen is separated, 12m² if the cooking area is included.

ELIA also takes into account the height of the room which must be at least 2,20m, with windows and ventilation.

The apartments are always equipped with electricity, water, gas 1f necessary, as well as a heating system.

- **Safety**

For a few years now, faced with the increasingly precarious situation of people seeking accommodation, the Association ELIA chosen (for only a small proportion of its rental properties in the town centre) to rent dilapidated 80 apartments by negotiating the price in exchange for redecoration, rent allowance or reduction.

For the refecton of these apartments, ELIA employs four maintenance workers who sometimes notice that these apartments are not always in conformity with electric safety requirements, in particular. So, in accordance with the requirements formulated and to ensure the safety of the people we house, work is done to bring them up to standard.

Other standardizing work can be carried out such as gas installation ot restoring heating systems.

Safety of location is also taken into account by the Association. Thus, ELIA will choose not to rent an apartment in a particular building, or a district or a housing estate which could jeopardize the safety of the people we house because of the surroundings (important problems of delinquency, drug-addiction, "gangs" etc).

- **Health**

Beyond the minimum health standards already stated, namely the presence of a WC and bathroom, the Association is also concerned with checking the sanitary conditions of collective areas of buildings, the stairwell in particular. Indeed, ELIA does not rent housings in buildings where a large quantity of mould and/or cockroaches could harm people's health.

- **Comfort**

Even when health and safety conditions are adequate, there is a third parameter, comfort, which must be taken into consideration.

The idea of comfort exists on several levels :

- ⇒ *for people whose health limits their physical effort : the Association takes into account the floor on which the apartment is situated and if there is a lift or not,*
- ⇒ *for people who can't afford to have a telephone installed : if their physical or mental health make it necessary, the Association covers the expense of installation,*
- ⇒ *when the apartments require new wallpaper and paint : ELIA tries as far as possible to take into account the wishes of the people to be housed, which encourages active involvement in their accommodation,*
- ⇒ *when housing is located on a main road or in a noisy district : light or double- glazing are other parameters taken into account by ELIA,*
- ⇒ *when, after renting, ELIA notices problems related to noise in particular : the Association tries to find a solution with the leaser or carries out the necessary work at its own expense, if not too costly.*

CONCLUSION

"The sliding lease, 14 years on"

- ⇒ *95% transferred the lease to their own name or left ELIA under good _ conditions (returning to their parents or to an ex-companion),.*
- ⇒ *One of the positive aspects of ELIA work is the ability to measure its effects on households, well after they have left the association. Where other housing institutions do not know what becomes of their clients once they have left their apartments, ELIA still gets to hear about them... from their leasers.*