

Monitoring the rights of children in institutions: AudTrain – System Based Audit of Alternative Care for Children

Anniki Tikerpuu

Head of Department of Children and Families
Ministry of Social Affairs, Estonia

Vice-chair of the Expert Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk
(EGCC)

Council of the Baltic Sea States

Co-trainer of AudTrain method



Expert Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk - EGCC

The members of the EGCC are senior officials from the ministries responsible for children's issues in the 11 member states.

Ministry of Social Affairs: EE, FI, SE, LT, LV, DK, IS

Ministry of Education: PL, RU

Ministry of Children and Family: DE, NO

The group meets twice yearly.



CBSS

11 member
states + EU
Commission



Expert Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk

Adopted priority areas 2013 – 2016

1. ***Early intervention and prevention as a means to ensuring children's right to protection from all forms of abuse, violence and neglect.***
2. ***The protection of children from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse***
3. ***The protection of children in migration and children that have been trafficked***
4. ***The rights of children in institutions and in other forms of protection***



AudTrain project

AudTrain – Translating and adapting a Norwegian model of systematic audit; training for staff monitoring children’s institutions. *(24 months project funded by EU Leonardo da Vinci programme on lifelong learning)*

Coordinating partner: EGCC

Program developer: Eric Backer-Roed,
County Governor of Hordaland (Norway)

Pilot countries: Sweden, Estonia, Latvia





Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme



Barnaverndarstofa

AudTrain

SYSTEM BASED AUDIT OF ALTERNATIVE CARE FOR CHILDREN



Fylkesmannen i
Hordaland



sotsiaa
ministeerium





Internal control - Monitoring – System-based audits

Why and How





Background

Every country has a child welfare law which implements the requirements of:

- Convention on the right of the child
United Nations 20.11.1989
- Rec. no 5 (2005) Council of Europe
- Explanatory report





Why monitoring?

- To ensure that child protection laws are complied
- To provide legal safeguards for both children and staff
- To make sure that public means are used according to intentions





What is monitoring?

- Definition:
Monitoring is the authorities' outward activities to ensure compliance of the child welfare legislation

- 1. Inspections: Announced / unannounced

- 2. System based audit of the management system of services and facilities hosting children





Clarifying the roles

- The governmental authorities:
Responsible for making of the legal framework - the laws and other regulations which defines how child care facilities should be run (minimum standards)
- The executive level:
Responsible for taking care of children – running of childcare facilities etc.
- The monitoring authority:
Responsible for monitoring whether the childcare facilities are run within the framework of the law





Monitoring is not investigation

- Monitoring should be carried out with respect for all parties involved, children and staff
- The assumption is that child care facilities are law-abiding and fulfilling their obligations in the best possible way
- But - the police will be involved if there are reasons to believe that criminal activity is going on





Monitoring is predictable

- The legality principle:
To control that the childcare facilities follow the law and other regulations, not our own private opinions on how things should be done
- System based audits are conducted according to ISO-standard (19001)
 - predictable procedure
 - independent of the theme
 - evaluates the system, not the personnel

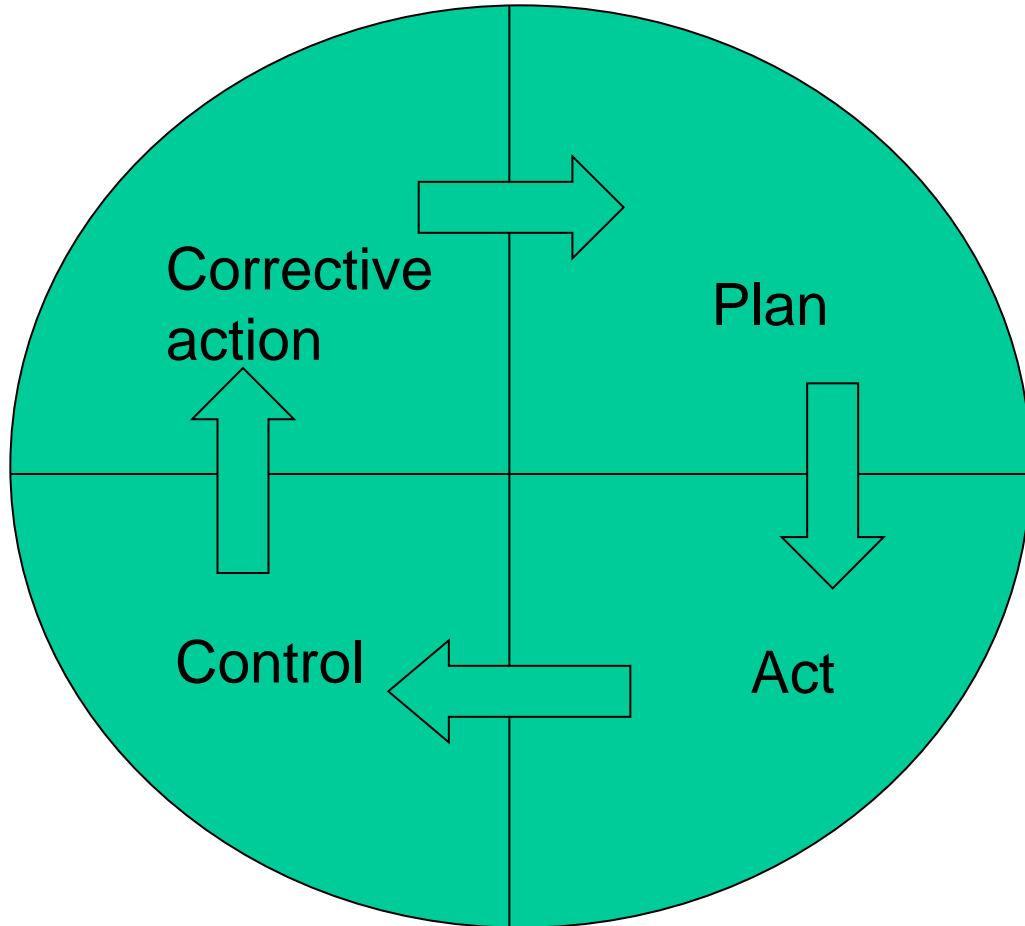




Organizational basis

- Every organization has a purpose and clear tasks
- The government has provided regulations and funding
- The organization needs to be thoroughly organized to fulfill its role
- A good management system is needed
- A management system based on Deming's circle for improvement is recommended





Deming's circle for quality improvement





Management system = Internal control

ISO-definition:

Internal control is all *systematic* measures designed to ensure that the activities of the enterprise are planned, organized, performed and maintained in conformity with requirements laid down or pursuant to the legislation





Why there must be a management system?

- A system that ensures that relevant legislation is known and understood by the staff
- A system that ensures that the legislation is fulfilled and that deficiencies are prevented by:
 - Risk assessment
 - Establishing necessary routines
 - Participation from the children and staff
 - Education of the staff
 - Registration of errors and shortcomings and learning from mistakes
 - Evaluation/control that the child care facility is run according to the established management system (self-monitoring)





A simple risk analysis

What can go wrong?

What can we do to prevent it?

What can we do to reduce the consequences if something goes wrong?





Example

Requirement:

We are obliged to prevent sexual exploitation of young children by older ones

- Could this happen here?
- How can we prevent it?
- What do we do if it actually happens?





Reasons for errors or shortcomings could be:

- Unclear areas of responsibility
- Lack of routines
- Errors in routines
- Routines not followed
- Lack of competences/experience
- Insufficient reports on detected nonconformities
- Nonconformities are reported, but no action taken
- Lack of internal monitoring





System based audit

„Baltic model“ of monitoring the rights of children in residential care





Method

Two tiers of auditing the child care institutions

1. Individual monitoring
2. Audit of the institution's management system



Content of the AudTrain training course

- The course is designed to enable participants to perform system based audits of child welfare institutions
- 4 days training monitoring skills from planning to final Report
- Preparing and executing an imaginary system based audit of a childcare institution (Sander's House)
- Mix of lecture, role-play and group work





The theme for the audit

AudTrain example:

- Human dignity and physical integrity – how does the institution ensure these rights



Timeline



ACTIVITY		WEEK							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
A.	Creation of audit team	X							
B.	Notice of audit	X							
C.	Preparations		X	X					
D.	Individual monitoring				X				
E.	Report					X			
F.	Preparations based on the individual monitoring					X	X		
G.	Management audit							X	
H.	Report								X





Individual monitoring

- Basis: Legal authority
- Principle: Participation of children
- Carried out by two persons
- The children's individual situation is the main subject
 - Interview with all or some of the children is essential
- Following up the individual situation with staff
- Written report with conclusions





System based audit

Definition

Systematic assessment to make sure that activities are in accordance with the demands in law or regulations

- Partly based on the results from the individual monitoring
- The institution as an organization is responsible, not the single employee





System based audit

- Assessment of documents
- Interviews with person on different levels in the institution
- Verification if the routines are followed as described





Audit of the management system

1. Decide who and what to audit
2. Choose the relevant sections in law and other regulations and what this implies
3. Notify the child care facility of the audit
4. Timetable for the audit
5. Meeting with the facility
6. Interviews with staff on different levels and other verifications
7. Analyze their practice against regulatory framework
8. Conclusion is drawn by holding observed practice against law and regulations – any non-conformities?
9. Make a report of the conclusions
10. Report from the institution on corrective action taken to eliminate the detected non-conformities





Summary – “The Baltic Monitoring Model”

1. Common criteria for monitoring:
 - Convention on the right of the child United nations 20.11.1989
 - Rec. no 5 (2005) Council of Europe
2. Child care legislation (national law)
3. Individual monitoring – Interviews with children – Report
4. Using the results as basis for an audit on the management system of the institution - Report





AudTrain pilot project activities (2012)

- Trainings in Estonia, Sweden and Latvia
- Participants performing system based audits
- Evaluation of the trainings, one day follow-up meetings in each country
 - December 2012: Final conference to present the experiences and results





Participants of the training

- Staff responsible of conducting audits
- Different groups:
 - Sweden – central authority responsible of monitoring (regional)
 - Latvia – Child Protection inspectorate staff (responsible of monitoring)
 - Estonia – mixed group (County Governor`s office, child ombudsman office, local municipality officials).





Some initial comments of the participants during the trainings

- As most people doing audits do not have any methods how to process the audit, it was most necessary and also motivating to take part in such training
- Different point of view how to improve the quality of the Institution
- This way of auditing really gives the institution the possibility to learn from the shortcomings, being supported rather than criticized and do better in implementing children rights.





Evaluation: participants

- Pre-training evaluation: 31 respondents
- The majority of the participants had an academic training (bachelor degree or master degree), mainly in social work
- The majority of participants reported limited training to carry out audits
- Participants had varied previous experience carrying out audits. Ranging from no experience to more than 20 years of experience.





Evaluation results (problems identified by the participants in auditing process)

- How to catch the experience of the child
- How to document and assess, what the child says and give feedback to the child
- The interview technique talking with staff and children
- Using the same standard for asylum-seeking children?
- Lacking child perspective in the method
- Complexity of the field combining practical issues and emotional aspects.





Skills gained through the training: participants reports

- knowledge how to prepare the audit together with a colleague and make a plan for the audit
- improved techniques to interview and communicate
- an increased ability to evaluate the results and to identify non-conformities in order to help the institution to improve.
- to think of the system rather than on a certain incident.





Focus group interviews after the follow-up meeting (1)

- System based audit model works

„...actually I believe that most of my colleagues would be happy with this and think you do a better job ... then raising children's voices in this, I think it is most plus in this really... „

- The child perspective is strengthened in the model

„... it raises the children's' voices more clearly... so that we really can include what the child says. I think sometimes... we lose the child's information sometimes, we have not really taken care of it ...“





Focus group interviews after the follow-up meeting (2)

- Collaboration with the institutions as an improved approach
„The purpose is to give the children better lives in child care institutions and the manager and staff of the institutions should have the same goal and if we make them understand that audit can give them some external ideas, a pair of fresh eyes, and the purpose is to help the children. Maybe this will also contribute to better co-operation.“
- System based audit method is more time consuming
„This is definitely more time consuming than just looking at papers...“
- Participants see the need for the wide use of the method





The view of the institution after system based audit

- *...the inspectors found out that the young people felt that we did not listen to their complaints on meals, rooms and activities ... we thought we listened.*
- *But it was a signal... that we need to be more clear and attentive with each one of the teenagers.*
- *Now if someone is unhappy with something, we take it more seriously and they see that we listen and ask further about what might be the alternative...*
- *...it was a great difference compared with previous inspections. The attitude was different, they showed trust and respect. They showed much confidence. It was very positive and they conveyed the sense that they wanted to do a good job.*





Results and follow-up

- AudTrain pilot received high rate (9 out of 10) from EC
- EGCC planning the follow-up project in 2014, training the trainers
- Lot of international interest





Summing up

- Systematic monitoring is an important element to secure children a life free from violence and other abuses
- We strongly recommend the countries to implement systems for monitoring child welfare services
- System based audits are a proven way to secure that services and facilities hosting children comply with law and other regulations



Thank you!

www.childcentre.info/audtrain

