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## CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

# "Citizens in charge. The role of citizens in the development of an inclusive, caring society."

23rd International Conference on Integrated Care, Antwerp, Flanders, 22-24 May 2023

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If we really want to strive for an inclusive, caring society, we have to give a louder voice to citizens. As citizens each of us takes care for others: our partner, children, parents, neighbours, friends,... This voluntary involvement and commitment deserves more attention, recognition and support than it received until now. Because it's the foundation of every integrated care model.

In recent years we tried to include citizens more in the policymaking process around integrated care in Flanders, but BurgersAanZet believes we can do better!

BurgersAanZet is a partnership of 5 volunteer organizations (ArmenTeKort, Eigen Kracht Centrale, Lus, Home-Start Vlaanderen en Magenta) that wants to disseminate their accumulated expertise in setting up caring initiatives from citizens to citizens and letting them in charge of their life, care and assistance.

Citizens, professionals, local policymakers who seek inspiration, want to learn and want to get started, can apply to us.

In this presentation for policymakers, caregivers, health care organizations and citizens we want to present the story of the Citizens' Platform of the Primary Care Zone in the Flemish Ardennes.

In Flanders each Primary Care Zone is governed by a care council. This care council consists of many health care organisations, policymakers, caregivers as well as a few people with care and support needs.

The Primary Care Zone in the Flemish Ardennes noticed that their voice was not always heard and that the professional services often took over. People's stories did not get the necessary space nor attention, there was a meeting culture, the pace was fast, results had to be achieved immediately...

In their search for doing differently they formed a Citizens' Platform and asked BurgersAanZet to facilitate this platform.

The purpose was to provide time and space for citizens to think about themes that are important to them and to inquire into ways in which the integrated primary care in their region could become more person-centered, bottom-up instead of top-down.

In this presentation we would like to outline the development of this process: How did we get started? Who did we invite and how? What do we do and why do we do it? How do we make sure that citizens are in charge and stay the "owners" of the process and its results. What is the link with the care council and how does the citizens' platform communicate with the care council, the Primary Care Zone, with caregivers and other citizens...

A fascinating and challenging story of a process of connecting people with each other, with the things that matter in life, and with the care council.

A story brought to you by Emilie Van Daele and with a video-contribution by Guy Janssens - a committed citizen - and Eline Huysmans - a staff member of the Primary Care Zone.

You can find their stories here:

- Interview with Guy Janssens: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=72zazWoR-HU>
- Interview with Eline Huysmans: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDWyKbEYzwc&t=370s>