
POSTER ABSTRACT

Old but not out: Practical and theoretical implications for a caring and compassionate neighbourhood through civic engagement in later life

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Background: The importance of civic engagement for caring and compassionate neighbourhoods is often overlooked in public and academic debate. Especially, civic engagement in later life in neighbourhoods is understudied. Research on this topic can shed light on the various obstacles and enablers that can stimulate or hinder civic engagement in later life at the local level.

Aim: This workshop gives insight into the processes of in- or exclusion of civic engagement in later life at a neighbourhood level. Additionally, the goal is to stimulate reflection among participants about civic engagement in relation to caring neighbourhoods and compassionate communities and to jointly advance the state of knowledge.

Participants: This session is relevant for people who civically engage in their respective neighbourhoods, as well as for practitioners, civil servants, politicians, researchers, and others who are interested in stimulating and understanding civic engagement in later life at the neighbourhood level. Those who have no experience with the subject are also welcome.

Methods: The session starts with presentations of both researchers and a representative of a sociocultural organisation, to ensure both theoretical and practical coverage of the topic. Equipped with the background from the presentations, this workshop will continue by making personas to understand how a neighbourhood can create facilitators and barriers to civic engagement.

1.Introduction (10 min): The session starts with an introduction by prof. Dr. Sarah Dury about the meaning of compassionate and caring communities and how civic engagement activities like informal help and volunteering can play a role in it.

2.Three presentations (30 min):

1) The relationship of civic engagement in later life and the neighbourhood level (Toon Vercauteren, VUB): A presentation on how the neighbourhood interacts with civic engagement in later life with a focus on volunteering and informal helping behaviours.

2) Civic engagement in later life in a socially disadvantaged neighbourhood (Bas Dikmans, VUB): This presentation will focus on how the socially disadvantaged neighbourhood can pose obstacles to but also foster civic engagement in later life.

3) Practical examples of civic engagement in a socially disadvantaged neighbourhood in Schaerbeek (Ingrid Pecquet, Eva Bxl): Practical examples of civic engagement activities in later life that contribute to caring and compassionate communities will be presented.

3. Creating personas in groups (35 min): Together with the participants, we will construct personas, which are imaginary persons with characteristics and experiences of a particular group. In this workshop, we will focus on neighbourhood characteristics to understand how a neighbourhood can shape civic engagement in later life.

4. Plenary and closing session (15 min): The personas of each group will be briefly presented in the closing feedback round. The ideas generated during the session will be collected on a writing board that can be shared with the audience afterwards.

End goal: This workshop will inform participants about what civic engagement in later life can look like in a neighbourhood. It will discuss the challenges and opportunities that arise in its practical application linked to caring neighbourhoods and compassionate communities.