
WORKSHOP ABSTRACT

What are the key aspects of a caring neighborhood? Towards sustainable local and regional policies on caring neighborhoods.

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Background summary: This workshop is linked to the plenary session on the innovative policy of Flanders and the WHO on Caring Neighborhoods. From the Department of Welfare, Public Health and Family and the Flemish association of cities and municipalities (VVSG) we zoom in on the concrete elaboration of our policy and vision, regionally and locally, based on international principles. Through this workshop we want to both inspire and exchange knowledge about the key aspects of caring neighborhoods.

Policy: There are currently 133 caring neighborhood projects at work in Flanders and Brussels for two years, until the end of February 2024. These projects are supported by a consortium, coordinated by the King Baudouin Foundation, of more than 15 universities, colleges and civil society organizations that provide the projects not only with coaching, but also with training on key aspects concerning caring neighborhoods. There is also a complementary research by the Policy Research Centre for Welfare, Public Health and Family (SWVG) that will identify obstacles and incentives based on the ongoing projects, formulate policy recommendations and work on a toolbox for start-up caring neighborhoods. At the same time, we are working to scale up these projects through the dissemination of information, knowledge and inspiration to, first and foremost, all local governments and welfare and care organizations, but also to housing corporations, schools, etc.

Policy vision: Our vision on caring neighborhoods is based on the WHO model on “people-centred integrated care”. We present the three pillars of a caring neighborhood (neighborhood participation and inclusion, connecting informal and formal care and intersectoral collaboration between wellbeing and care partners and partners from other domains in a network that focuses on prevention, health promotion and the provision of integrated care and support with a focus on quality of life). In addition, we explain the model with the eight building blocks of a caring neighborhood, based on the model of the VVSG and the seven effectiveness principles for integrated community care of the Transnational Forum on Integrated Care.

Since our vision and policies are based on international principles, they are universally understandable and applicable.

Workshop: It will be quite a challenge to turn the knowledge learned into a sustainable local and regional policy on caring neighborhoods. Through this workshop we want to both inspire other regions and countries and exchange knowledge around the key aspects of caring neighborhoods.

We present several questions to the workshop members, in a World Café approach. (The concrete questions can be discussed further with the ICIC organization.) What is the added value of a caring neighborhood? What are key aspects of a caring neighborhood? What are preconditions for developing and sustaining a caring neighborhood? How can we ensure that local residents, volunteers remain committed to a caring neighborhood?

Target audience: Policy makers, experts working in the field of caring neighborhoods and researchers familiar with (key aspects of) caring neighborhoods.