



welzijn,
volksgezondheid
en gezin

Policy Research Centre

Welfare, Health and Family

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Policy Research Centre for Welfare, Health and Family

A collaboration between

KULeuven, Ugent, VUB and KHK

Within the continuously growing field of Welfare, Public Health and Family, the Flemish Government has expressed the need for a broad-scale and comprehensive research programme. In order to enable such a programme, a five-year funding plan has been designed.

The goal of the research centre is to support the Flemish minister in pursuing a thorough, effective, innovative, and inclu-

sive policy, and to do this on the basis of scientific research results. The Policy Research Centre for Welfare, Health & Family or 'SWVG' (*Steunpunt Welzijn Volksgezondheid en Gezin*, in Dutch) will realize this by means of a multidisciplinary and coordinated perspective, which will make it possible to get a grip on the complex nature of contemporary welfare, health and family issues.

The consortium

The Partners

The consortium assembles experts from three Flemish universities (Catholic University of Leuven, University of Ghent, Free University of Brussels) and one college (Kempen Catholic College). This collaboration guarantees a lot of expertise within a multi- and interdisciplinary framework. Given the scope and complexity of the Brussels situation, the consortium finds it crucial to have a Brussels partner included that is familiar with the governmental complexity of this region. The consortium is partly based on 'natural' collaborative relationships concerning welfare, health and family issues, and has partly grown out of discussions that took place in the course of drawing up this

SWVG project proposal. Its major goal is the development of a shared concept and framework for policy research in Flanders (as a region embedded in international contexts). Both prominent professors and young researchers in the field of welfare, health and family are engaged in SWVG. The second group can ensure a second five-year research term. Kempen Catholic College is engaged in the consortium for its important information input from and dissemination of results to the professional field of welfare and health and to the education of professionals. A list of researchers involved and their centres is included (see page 5).

The consortium as policy research centre for welfare, health and family in Flanders

A number of fundamental options taken by the consortium are intended to ensure that SWVG does indeed function as a coherent policy research centre:

- *a comprehensive expert network* structurally assembles 28 experts within SWVG (besides the 9 professor-promoters). Each of the experts represents a research centre, specific yet complementary within the field in question and embedded in international scientific societies and collaborations.
- *an academic establishment* includes a strong focus on education, training and professionalism, all at the same time.
- in addition to the expertise assembled, *a longitudinal research programme* is intended to provide basic data, inform the partners on central problem analyses, and add overall juridical issues to the research. Starting from this basic

data, the two centres can carry out further research in accordance with their interests, and the government can develop a more coherent policy on welfare, health and family.

- between 6 and 10 regions will be *carefully selected* to be integrated into the consortium (by means of a local multidisciplinary panel). They will supply data, fulfil the role of try-out regions, and add on specific, concrete and relevant practical expertise. These contacts with the actual domain are necessary to keep in touch with particular possibilities and problems for implementation. Furthermore, it is expected that the future organization of welfare and healthcare will be located at the level of the region.
- a *well-developed secretariat* ensures direct contact for the government and efficient communication within and coordination of SWVG.

“ The main point

is to take an

integrative

approach to

welfare

and

health”

The multi-annual research programme

An ever evolving policy domain

In order to prioritize research themes and programmes, the researchers started from an overview of the most significant public tendencies touching upon government policies (both in Flanders and at the international level). They noted the following tendencies:

- demographic developments with a strong increase of the ageing population and growing costs for care;
- economic and socio-cultural changes relating to employment, the altering of male-female relations, and the weakening of traditional institutions;
- globalization and ‘glocalization’;
- developments with respect to people’s life-style and health risks;
- institutional changes such as, for instance, the transition from government to governance, the growing focus on effects and effi-

ciency, the impact of a European policy, the open coordination method;

- innovations in the field:
 - * the development of new ideas on care;
 - * quality of life as a new outcome measure;
 - * the increasing attention being paid to inclusion, participation and empowerment;
 - * ‘care’ becoming more and more societal in nature;
 - * the approachability of care as a priority;
 - * developments concerning the ‘learning organization’.

Starting from these developments and based on the priorities as formulated by the minister in the formal request for a SWVG, as well as on their own expertise, the researchers designed a collective research plan.

Several sub-themes, yet one overall framework

The SWVG consortium brings together projects related to three different research programmes on three populations and spread over facilities for welfare and health care. This includes both pre-

ventive and curative initiatives. Each project is situated on one or more different boxes within the following framework.

Research programme	Target groups			Care facilities		
	Young people & family	Adults	Elderly people	Welfare	Health care	
					Prevention	Cure
1. Indicators and monitoring						
2. Evaluation and development						
3. Legal and institutional framework						

Three intertwined research programmes

1. Indicators and monitoring

Despite the numbers of registrations and the many data files, there is a significant lack of cross-sector information about the users of care facilities and the trajectories they follow through the complex field of welfare and health care. As such, the government has no accurate information at its disposal on the actual costs of care and support. It is the purpose of SWVG to fill this gap.

In the initial phase of programme one, a gap analysis will be carried out, which implies the mapping of all existing databases constructed by research centres, governmental administration, and local or more specialized organizations. This is intended to lead to in-depth insight into the information available, its overlaps, its redundancies, and its gaps.

The second phase consists of the collection of data from panels of care users and, more in particular, by means of a longitudinal cohort study (newborn babies, 6-year olds, 12-year olds, and their families; adults; and elderly people). A repeated survey will be taken of panels of people belonging to specific target groups (such as those in difficult educational situations or in poverty, or those with relational problems, mental health problems, dementia, and depression). Their needs and their search for care and support will be monitored over the long term. The results will allow policy makers to plan their policy more accurately. The panels will be organized in a number of carefully selected territorial regions, which have been chosen in a way that they are relevant for the Flemish situation and policies.

“The cooperation with policy actors and regional partners is central for SWVG”

2. Evaluation and development

In the second research programme, a number of questions raised by the government concerning effectiveness and efficiency will be tackled, again starting from a determination of the current state of affairs. Within the same regions as in programme one, different relevant groups of people will be asked for their priorities and major concerns related to the quality of health and welfare services (e.g. care users, professionals, managers, members of the local community and local policy makers).

Simultaneously, SWVG will provide the minister in question with an overview of the scientific techniques and instruments available to enhance the quality of the health and welfare services.

Finally, the researchers will implement a number of evidence-based practices and will evaluate their impact. This is connected with the evalua-

tion of the impact these innovations have on the overall comfort people experience.

Besides the study of the effectiveness of interventions and innovations, there is also the study of cost effectiveness. By means of the establishment of a “Health and Welfare Economic Research Cell”, economic evaluations of the delivery of health and welfare services will be conducted. This cell will enhance economic expertise in the field to support the policy makers. Whereas in the past, the economic evaluations were limited to the field of health, this group of experts will introduce efficiency and effectiveness studies of care trajectories in the field of welfare.

3. Legal and institutional framework

The third programme - 'Legal and Institutional Framework' - adopts an integrative approach to the organization of social care and public health. The institutional, managerial and legal aspects of social care and public health will all be addressed in this programme.

The initial, *legal approach* serves a double purpose. On the one hand, it allows for the legal benchmarking of research findings formulated within the other two programmes. Consequently, a legal test could be implied in translating results for policy purposes in these programmes. For instance, the integration of social and health care services and the delineation of the concepts of social and health care, necessarily implies a legal analysis of constitutional issues of competence. Also, with regard to the provision of services in the Region of Brussels, the constitutional background has to be taken into consideration.

On the other hand, the organization of care ser-

VICES is increasingly invoking problems of a legal nature, as for instance in relation to patient mobility and liability, to confidentiality and the processing of personal data, and the legal position of persons lacking legal capacity. Legal solutions are more frequently being solicited and analyses are being made to check whether existing legal concepts and instruments should be redirected and/or adjusted to meet the specific demands of a social and health care environment. As a result, the third programme explicitly aims to build a sound legal framework in order to enable a faster response to certain knowledge gaps.

The second, *institutional approach* ensures a novel view of the existing structures of policy implementation in the field of social care, public health and family. Through a supply chain management perspective and bottom-up approach, the third programme is aimed at enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of policy implementation.

Promoters and partners

Catholic University of Leuven

Prof. Dr. Chantal Van Audenhove (Promoter-Coordinator), Lucas en ACHG

Prof. Dr. Hans Grietens, Centre for Parenting, Disability, Special Needs Education and Child Care

Prof. Dr. Johan Put, Institute of Social Law

Prof. Dr. Anja Declercq, Lucas

University of Ghent

Prof. Dr. Lea Maes, Department of Public Health

Prof. Dr. Jan De Maeseneer, Department of Family Medicine and Primary Health Care

Prof. Dr. Ilse De Bourdeaudhuij, Department Movement and Sport Sciences

Prof. Dr. Ann Buysse, Department of Experimental-Clinical and Health Psychology

Free University of Brussels

Prof. Dr. Johan Vanderfaeillie, Department of Orthopsychology

Kempen Catholic College

Dr. Guido Cuyvers, Flemish Centre for Research and Knowledge Concerning the Third Age



Vrije Universiteit Brussel

Composition of the consortium

The Policy Research Centre assembles a large number of promoters and experts from three universities and one college. The following list contains the names of the academic staff mem-

bers engaged in the Policy Research Centre, and the specific research centre with which each of them is affiliated.

Catholic University of Leuven

Lucas, Centre for Research and Consultancy in Care

Ch. Van Audenhove (promoter-coordinator)
A. Declercq (promoter)
K. Hermans

Centre for Parenting, Disability, Special Needs Education and Child Care

H. Grietens (promoter)
B. Maes
L. Vandemeulebroecke
W. Hellinckx

Institute of Social Law

J. Put (promoter)
D. Simoens
Y. Stevens

Leuven Institute of Criminology

J. Deklerck

Centre of Sociological Research

F. Lammertyn

Youth Health Care

K. Hoppenbrouwers
P. De Cock

Public Management Institute

M. Brans
K. Verhoest

Research Group for Psycho-Diagnostics en Psychopathology

P. Bijttebier

Academic Centre for General Practice

J. Heyrman
F. Buntinx
J. Delepeleire

Research Group for Stress, Health and Well-being

O. Van den Bergh

Centre for the Psychology of Learning and Experimental Psychopathology

D. Hermans

Research Centre for Pharmaceutical Care en Pharmaco-Economics

S. Simoens

Department of Physical Activity and Health

J. Lefevre

Biostatistical Centre

E. Lesaffre

Laboratory of Exercise & Sport Psychology, and Coaching

F. Boen

University of Ghent

Department of Public Health

L. Maes (promoter)
S. de Henauw

Department of Family Medicine and Primary Health Care

J. De Maeseneer (promoter)
S. Willems

Department of Uro-gynaecology

M. Temmerman

Department of Movement and Sport Sciences

I. Debourdeaudhuij (promoter)

Department of Experimental-Clinical and Health Psychology

A. Buysse (promoter)
H. Roeyers

Department of General Economics

K. Schoors

Department of Procedural Law, Arbitration and Private International Law

P. Taelman

Free University of Brussels

Department of Orthopsychology

J. Vanderfaellie (promoter)
G. Loots

Departments of Agogics

D. Verté

Kempen Catholic College (partner)

Flemish Centre for Research and Knowledge Concerning the Third Age

G. Cuyvers

Centre of Expertise for Local Social Policy and Local Economic Policies

B. Storms

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