

Top stories in this newsletter...



Project Update



Partner Vito is preparing to launch their BIBOPP App



Update on our Evaluation from CCCU

Project Update

Despite launching throughout the Covid pandemic the EMPOWERCARE Project is making great progress. The project launched at the end of January 2020, when the last in-person meeting was held, despite the challenges that come with working virtually all project partners are fully committed and have made significant efforts to keep activity on track. All planned site visits still took place virtually providing good demonstrations of existing models, technology and other work. Partners have also used the last year to gather information, create asset maps, and maintain communication with stakeholders and the wider EMPOWERCARE audience. Some partners were able, at times during the year, to conduct community meetings in pilot sites, accessing different local cultures even within the same countries/areas. The project evaluation lead by CCCU is also successfully underway (find out more about the evaluation on page 3). In our third quarterly newsletter we are sharing updates from each partner in the last 4 months.

New collaborations

The province of Antwerp is collaborating with the Thomas More University to help design the projects Empowerment strategy. Together, and with input from KU Leuven University, we have developed a support package for local authorities with concrete tools and methods to design caring villages themselves. The goal of this new collaboration is to further test this package and develop the next phase in the EMPOWERCARE project. Within at least two pilot sites in our province we will examine whether/how actions and interventions that focus on more caring villages in practice, lead to the empowerment of people over 65 and people over 50 with a chronic care need.



The Province of Antwerp will be promoting EMPOWERCARE and their Caring Villages programme at upcoming regional events:

- ◇ 9th March: in cooperation with Thomas More University and KU Leuven University the Webinar 'Caring villages and caring neighbourhoods' for local authorities, policy makers and care professionals and organisations in our province of Antwerp.
- ◇ 23rd April: They will participate as a partner in the Flemish congress 'Buurtgerichte zorg en zorgzame buurten' - 'Community based care and caring neighbourhoods'. This event will be hosted by the UAntwerpen (University of Antwerp) and VUB (University of Brussels). If you would like to know more about these events please contact: sofie.vanmarcke@provincieantwerpen.be

Researching Technology for Kent

Kent County Council have been researching technologies to support over 65s in the community. The EMPOWERCARE Team will be creating technology boxes, which individuals can borrow and sample different technologies and internet access. The technology will be supported by our Digital Ambassador network that will teach individuals how to use each device and offer them continued tech support. The technology will be customisable to suit the needs and preferences of each Individual to ensure that our approach is person centred and the technology will have the most benefit to each person.

We aim to offer the following technology on a 3 month loan scheme:

- A Tablet Device
- An age specific tablet device, designed for our target group (aged 65+ and over 50+ with a chronic health condition)
- A Voice controlled device e.g. Amazon Alexa
- 1 Easy to use smartphone
- A list of useful applications that can support the target group.

To find out more about the project in Kent please contact empowercare@kent.gov.uk

Familiehulp close on another Interreg project supporting the integration of refugees into the care network.

On 21th January 2021, our Interreg Project 'In de zorg – uit de zorgen', for which Familiehulp is the lead partner, held the online symposium with the results of the project. The consortium has worked around **the integration of refugees in the care workforce**. Around 70 participants have followed this symposium.

Refugees who have fled war or persecution try to resume their lives Belgium. Once they have settled in the region, they want to build a future here. They hope to be able to return to work in the Netherlands, Belgium or Germany, and most of them are highly motivated. With the In de Zorg - Uit de Zorgen project, 8 collaborating refugee, care and labor market organizations try to guide them towards a job or internship in the care sector.

Recognized refugees encounter all kinds of obstacles in society. Especially when looking for work in the healthcare sector. At the same time, (mainly) nursing homes and home care are faced with a shortage of care, nursing and other staff. Healthcare is highly institutionalized and bound to strict protocols. In addition, refugees often experience communication problems. You need considerable language skills to be able to communicate well in healthcare. All kinds of cultural differences also play a role, for example in the relationship between men and women.

The partners from Limburg (Belgium and the Netherlands) and the Städteregion Aachen (Germany) want to remove the aforementioned obstacles by developing a special care-oriented program with a mediation process, (additional) training and personal on-the-job guidance for refugees. The methodology used in this project will be transferred to their work for EMPOWERCARE. **To find out more about this project please contact: donaat.van.eynde@familiehulp.be.**

Vito is preparing to launch BIBOPP app!

With user feedback

From September to October 2020 our partner [LiCalab](#) organized an online survey about the user-friendliness of the health promotion activities linked to the BIBOPP-tool. The survey was sent to panel members of LiCalab, members of the advisory board of BIBOPP and Medical Management students at [Thomas More University of Applied Sciences](#). Their feedback was used to improve the tool in terms of structure, clarity, ease and lay-out.

With the help from students

With the help from students from the [Catholic University of Leuven](#) and the Thomas More University of Applied Sciences, we have expanded the activities that participants can enroll in to improve their health significantly. We have connected to organisations dedicated to different domains of health promotion and are setting up an exciting cooperation towards integrated health and wellbeing.

With a new branding

Together with [CAST](#) we are developing a branding for the BIBopp tools. They now give expression to what we stand for: trustworthiness and evidence-based tools to put citizens in charge of their own health. For a sneak preview take a look at our new logo and movie print screen below.



We are currently finalizing the last technical aspects of our platform, such as safe onboarding and data transfers before we can start recruiting (participants). Hopefully everything will run smoothly because we are looking forward to it!

If you are interested in learning more about our technology, or adding activities to the health promotion plan please email: Nathalie.lambrechts@vito.be

University of Brighton sharing EMPOWERCARE with research centers

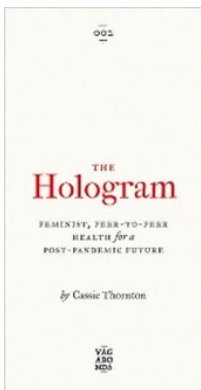
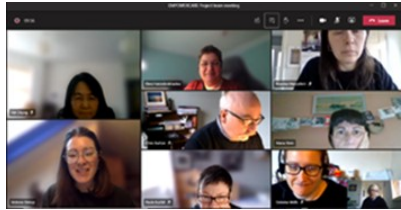
The team from the University of Brighton, recently had the opportunity to share the aims and current progress of the EMPOWERCARE project at an event organised by the Research Centre for Secure Intelligent and Usable Systems. The event 'Computing Applications on Digital Health' aimed to foster collaborations at the intersection of computing and health care through knowledge and experience sharing. The event was very well attended by directors of some of the university's research centres and other scientists working within the digital health area.

Update from our evaluation lead Canterbury Christ Church University

The Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) EMPOWERCARE Evaluation Team has continued to work remotely into the project's second year. The Team has grown since the last project update as a new Research Assistant joined us in the autumn of 2020.

CCCU has been delivering in-person teaching and placements to students studying across its critical programmes (health, social care and medicine) through periods of lockdown to help support the UK health and social care sector efforts during the Covid-19 pandemic. This endeavour is assisting the NHS's task of protecting and saving lives, the most vulnerable of which EMPOWERCARE is focused on (older adults aged over 60 and over 50 if living with at least one chronic condition).

Despite working remotely, the CCCU Team have been busy in a number of areas. Notably, as well as the usual round of arranging and attending regular multi-level project meetings and meeting various progress reporting milestones, efforts have been concentrated on gathering information from site visits and consultations across the partnership, which has resulted in the development of the evaluation strategy. This document provides all the information needed to undertake the evaluation of the EMPOWERCARE Approach. It takes an approach based on Realist principles, meeting the needs of the project whilst remaining flexible in uncertain times. The team has also produced a narrated PowerPoint presentation outlining the EMPOWERCARE project aims and objectives and progress to date that is being used by CCCU Lecturers to share with students registered across a range of critical programmes so they can better understand the project and its relevance to their learning.



This update's recommended reading from the Evaluation Team is [The hologram: feminist, peer-to-peer health for a post-pandemic future](#) by Cassie Thornton, published by Pluto Press. Taking inspiration from Greek solidarity clinics, models of mutual aid and care networks that have sprung up during the coronavirus pandemic and feminist principles, Thornton argues for the reinvention of care that is radical and innovative. Pluto Press describes;

The premise is simple: three people - a 'triangle' - meet on a regular basis, digitally or in person, to focus on the physical, mental and social health of a fourth - the 'hologram'. The hologram, in turn, teaches their caregivers how to give and also receive care; each member of their triangle becomes a hologram for another, different triangle, and so the system expands.

The book offers thoughts on current examples of the kind of care *The Hologram* proposes, as well as a guide to setting up hologram networks. The book echoes EMPOWERCARE's values of care innovation, co-design and co-production, as well as collaborative and collective action for social change.

To help inform the evaluation strategy:

- Dr Toni Wright, Principal Research Fellow, attended the [National Institute for Health Research \(NIHR\) living well with dementia and social care economics](#) event run by NIHR Applied Research Collaboration Kent, Surrey and Sussex (ARC KSS) and a webinar on [Interviewing at a distance: reflections on navigating practical, emotional and methodological challenges](#) run by a collaborative project between Birmingham and York Universities and funded by the Nuffield Foundation's *Covid Realities* programme. The webinar was recorded and can be seen [here](#).
- Victoria Stirrup, Research Assistant, attended the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Business and Local Government (BLG) Data research centre *Bounce back from Covid – create your data strategy* webinar focusing on evaluation strategies during Covid-19. The webinar was recorded and can be viewed [here](#).
- The whole CCCU EMPOWERCARE Evaluation Team joined for a presentation from Prof Chris Burton, CCCU's Faculty of Medicine, Health and Social Care and a Senior Expert Advisor to the Evaluation Team, for a Research and Enterprise Lunchtime Seminar on *Realist Inquiry: an overview of the challenges of determining 'what works in health care, for whom, and in what contexts' drawing on examples from the field.*

Stay in contact with the Evaluation Team via:

Twitter: [@CCCUEmpowerCare](#)

Email: <mailto:EmpowerCare@canterbury.ac.uk>

SWVO and Solidarity University roll out their pilot in St. Maartensdijk

SWVO and Solidarity University have taken the initiative to find out what the residents of Sint Maartensdijk are concerned about by means of offline and online meetings. Since March 2020 the project Tuus in Smerdiek is running. In various meetings we look at what kind of village Sint Maartensdijk is and what it takes to make life more pleasant for the elderly. The local newspaper, the Eendrachtbode, published a short story about Tuus in Smerdiek. Here's a piece from the article:

"Together with Tuus in Smerdiek, Terlouw is mainly looking for answers to the question: how can residents of St Maartensdijk continue to live happily in their own village for as long as possible? "That can be very different in St Maartensdijk compared to other regions", says Terlouw. "We can stuff a house full of technical gadgets and hope that it will work out, but it doesn't work that way. More is needed and we are investigating that." It is a pilot project that is also running in Sluis and in the west corner of Schouwen-Duiveland and has been set up to map out what is needed to grow old comfortably in your hometown. See the full article in Dutch here: [Artikel Tuus in Smerdiek](#).

There have also been a number of communication activities:

- ⇒ Sending out a newsletter to the Sint Maartensdijk community updating them about the project so far.
- ⇒ On the 18th and 26th January they hosted online community meetings to discuss the next steps in the project.
- ⇒ Plan regular newsletters and use local Facebook page to disseminate information.

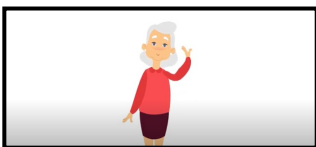
Overall, things continue in Sint Maartensdijk although it is difficult to keep people connected during these difficult times. On the 23th of February there's an follow-up meeting about the expectations of the participants taking part in Tuus in Smerdiek.

Le Département du Nord: family conferencing adapted to the elderly, launch of action research.

Le Département du Nord has established a partnership with researchers from the Regional Institute of Social Work in the region of Hauts-de-France and the Catholic University of Lille. They support Le Nord to carry out a research method of action-research. This method enables the comparison between the feedback from field professionals and the point of view of scientists. This research method aims to come up with an action plan, as a new method of social support for the elderly – based on the "Family Conferencing" approach.

Several working meetings fuelled the diagnostic phase from June 2020 until January 2021. The project team brings together researchers in psychology and sociology, social and medico-social professionals from Le Nord, professional local partners and experts from use.

This first phase aims in particular to formalize the specific problem of caregivers the elderly people with loss of autonomy, to work the adaptation of the "family conferencing" method as well as to identify the obstacles and assets to the implementation of "family conferencing."



Find out more about Family Conferencing and the Empowercare Project with their short animation video, click the above image or see it [here](#).

Care Group Holi Hart open Budalys building!

Based on the input of visitors and interested parties during the opening of the new site Budalys (a brand new building that consists of 48 service flats), Care Group H. Hart started with a pilot site enabling an orienting short stay. It provides a temporary stay for elderly people during which they aim to get a better view on their needs and to empower them – if possible – to return back home. In addition, this stay offers possibilities to test technological tools that may support temporary residents in their independence. All relevant actors? are involved in this process, ranging from elderly themselves and their caregiver to primary care providers and welfare professionals.

The existing partner models, guiding principles and technological blueprint of EMPOWERCARE will be used to build the strategy and service at the pilot site. Which methodologies are appropriate? Which training and coaching is key? Which technologies provide an answer to the needs of both professionals and customers? ... Via a cooperation with university college Howest (Kortrijk) the next steps are taken. Two bachelor students reading Digital Design and Development are looking into digital skills of residents and how to improve these to support them to live at home (e.g., for communication ends, for managing a formal and informal network). Further, a bachelor student reading Network Economy will investigate the opportunities, difficulties and pitfalls of starting with an orienting short stay by questioning both involved professionals and residents and/or their caregiver.

