

The Flemish Care Living Lab experience: innovation in elderly care

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Issue: In 2012, the Flemish Minister of Innovation launched the 'Care Living Labs Flanders' (CLLF) to enhance innovations that tackle a wide range of challenges in elderly care.

Description of the problem: The program uses a layered approach, differentiating "platforms" and "projects". Platforms are the core of the program and are supported by three organisms: sounding board committee, Program Office and Scientific Consortium. Platforms are aimed to be developed as sustainable structures on which innovation-'projects' can be tested in a 'real life environment'. This contribution describes the implementation challenges of the platforms.

Results: The program consists of six platforms which host 23 projects. Every platform is governed by a mix of partners (public and private organizations, individual professionals). The "scope" of the platforms differs: some platforms aim at technological and person oriented activities to support elderly, while other platforms focus more on social community based approaches aiming at integration and participation of elderly persons.

Lesson: Translating the "program logic" of the government initiative in operational terms is an implementation process with many unanticipated hurdles. Many efforts are needed by all stakeholders to develop a clear vision and working practices on the role and operationalization of a platform. The implementation process will need the time to let platforms "mature". Coaching and support by the external boards can support this process, but mutual expectations on the role of these bodies and development of trust requires the necessary interaction time.

KIO is an interuniversity consortium studying innovations in elderly care in Flanders. The consortium consists of Mark Leys & Lien Pots (OPIH-VUB), Ellen Gorus & Charlotte Brys (GERO-VUB), Ezra Dessers, Geert Van Hootegem & Yennef Vereycken (CESO-KU LEUVEN), Marc Jegers & Lukas Versteele (iCher), Patricia De Vriendt & Juul Lemey (Arteveldehogeschool), Bart Jansen (ETRO-VUB), Bart Mistiaen & Bart Grimonprez (HOWEST). The consortium is financed by the Flemish agency for Innovation by Science and Technology (IWT).