

Better Together as Co-Creation of Urban Health Promotion

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ABSTRACT

Better Together in Amsterdam Westerpark is een co-production with a consortium of public health, psychiatric and social work organisations in Amsterdam aimed at improving the support of socially isolated people in Amsterdam neighborhoods. The project targets three urgent - and connected-urban challenges: firstly the increasing social isolation of older migrants and people with psychiatric histories; secondly the need of the Westerpark professionals in care and welfare to develop community-based strategies as crucial local resources for the well being of these vulnerable groups; and thirdly the implementation of the Positive Health-approach as a response to the rising costs in the socio-medical care provision.

The work of local medical care practitioners is traditionally guided by diagnoses, medication and treatment plans. This practice is rooted in a traditional 'deficit'-based view on health where sickness is the absence of health. However, increasingly in public health a broader, more holistic view, named 'Positive health' is being introduced. Positive health shifts the focus from combating sickness through diagnosis and treatment, to optimise the health-promoting resources in themselves and the community people have at their disposal (Huber et al., 2011). This new approach has potential in the transformation of sector-based public health and welfare services into more integrated and community-centred approaches. The positive health approach comes to help now practitioners experience more intensely how the traditional medical approach does insufficiently justice to the complexity of physical, emotional and social factors that burdens vulnerable people. Furthermore, the deficit-oriented medical approach neither seems to justify nor acknowledge the resilience and resources of individual patients but also the local community to face life challenges and create meaningful lives. In Westerpark, as elsewhere in urban areas, there is a need among the practitioners in local care to tap into the local knowledge of residents and other local community members on resources for their health and well-being, as well as to use that local knowledge to optimise the use of these resources. Better Together in Westerpark ('Samen Beter in

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Westerpark') is an experiment, in which citizens, and people with a migrant background and psychiatrically challenged people living in isolation co-create with organizations in local care and welfare effective community-based support arrangements. Together with our external partners, our researchers and students are 1) mapping the notions of health and wellbeing (together: positive health) of residents in a vulnerable position; 2) establishing a co-creation between care/welfare professionals and residents, in which they together shape a new way of working to improve their own well being. The co-creation is assumed to contribute to (knowledge about)local strategies for community-oriented care that integrates medical health and social wellbeing. This will enrich both the education of public health and care practitioners, as well as students in community work. Furthermore, the experiences in Westerpark will be disseminated in the Amsterdam professional networks of public health through our consortium partners, as well as nationally through the Samen Beter network.

Aim of the paper and urban challenge it addresses:

The proposal aims to present the first findings of the Better Together project in the Westerpark area of Amsterdam. The project targets three urgent - and connected- urban challenges: firstly the increasing social isolation of older migrants and people with psychiatric histories; secondly the need of the Westerpark professionals in care and welfare to develop community-based strategies as crucial local resources for the well being of these vulnerable groups; and thirdly the implementation of the Positive Health-approach as a response to the rising costs in the socio-medical care provision

KEYWORDS

Keyword 1	Co-creation residents and professionals Student-practitioner co-research
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Workshop

Workshop II: Health and Wellbeing in Urban Environments