

Top stories in this newsletter...



Solidarity & SWVO: Day "At home" in the village of Sint-Maartensdijk



EMPOWERCARE Tech facilitators at Dartford elders forum



Province of Antwerp and GKC's care event with over 100 participants



Partners meet in person for the first time since 2020 in leper.

Kent County Council - Ensuring continuity

EMPOWERCARE's 12 month pilot Digital Ambassador and device loan scheme ended on the 30th of June. The project will continue within Kent County Council's Digital Kent Project, which has the same goal as EMPOWERCARE; to reduce social isolation through access to technology and will have several target groups including people over 65. 7 EMPOWERCARE Digital Ambassadors have agreed to continue as volunteers within the Digital Kent project.

Technology for Independent Living Facilitators



Tech Facilitators demonstrated the Robotic Interactive Companion Pets which provide support for people living with Dementia, Alzheimer's,

The EMPOWERCARE technology facilitators have supported the community at a variety of events including a presentation at the Dartford elders forum, as well as hosting a digital skills lab in the digital innovation centre in Folkestone they have supported dementia friendly community projects by assisting at the dementia virtual experience day.

Le Département du Nord; looking ahead

The team is currently experiencing a pivotal moment in the evolution of the project. This is due to staff turnover and the evolution of the project.

Gathering feedback from the people supported by the REPRISÉ method has proven energising to teams in the field. With the professional in mind, the future of the REPRISÉ method of communication is being developed so they can be REPRISÉ relays within their organisation.

Tests with the elderly have show that the digital tool needs to be further adapted for this audience. We aim to ensure that the method and the tools are synchronised so that they enrich each other.

Solidarity University & SWVO EMPOWERCARE—update on 3 projects

Empowercare Zeeland looks at the needs of the elderly and people with chronic impairments who wish to live at home independently for longer. We have three pilots in which they develop various approaches to these challenges.

DIGITAAL THUIS IN ZEELAND (Digitally at Home in Zeeland)

The elderly are provided with digital aids they can use for six months. Get togethers are organised for elderly people and their carers to spread the word on digital aids. They are keen to learn which technological aids are available and how they can be used. For example: *“I’m scared of falling in a spot where no-one can see me. Would a watch be a good idea?”* A team of prevention experts are available to address these personal questions and advise on the best supportive measures.

DIGITAAL ACTIEF ZEELAND

The pilot Digitaal Actief Zeeland (Digital Active Zeeland (DAZ)) digital platform had been offered by Care organisations to their clients during the Covid period. An intermediate evaluation has shown that the platform has become important to many users:

“It is nice to have something to do and to be in contact with others.”

Although the Covid period has (mostly) ended, and less people are participating, the value that people attribute to the platform means that it can play an important role for many more people. Welfare organisations from Goes, Borsele and Kapelle will team up and look into how they can use the platform to support informal care.

TUUS IN SMERDIEK—At home in the Village of Sint-Maartensdijk

Tuus in Smerdiek initiates activities that contribute to people meeting each other and forging bonds between residents, associations, churches, volunteers, care organisations, municipality and housing associations. The ‘Dag van Smerdiek’ was held on 18 June where associations, sports clubs, churches, local entrepreneurs and care organisations presented themselves in a fun way. All inhabitants were invited to come and join in the activities.



CCCU—EMPOWERCARE Today and Tomorrow

Canterbury Christ Church University’s (CCCU) evaluation of the EMPOWERCARE project has continued apace. As of this month we head into the final stages of data collection and August marks the point we move onto the analysis in earnest - which the team is all very excited to start. By that time, we should have a range of EMPOWERCARE surveys, social return on investment focus groups and photo exhibitions to analyse.

CCCU have continued to spread the word both within the university and further afield. EMPOWERCARE was recently promoted at the University open events and this month will be showcased to around 200 interprofessional undergraduate Faculty students as part of their virtual practice learning.



May was also the month the team presented an academic poster at the 22nd International conference of integrated care (ICIC22) in Odense Denmark. **This still is from a YouTube video on EMPOWERCARE. You can find it [here](#)**

CCCU Continued..



In May the team took the Eurostar to meet the rest of the partners in Ypres, Belgium. It is the only time the partnership has met in person since the pre-pandemic initial project meeting back in January 2020. While in Ypres CCCU's Professor Eleni Hatzidimitriadou took the opportunity to lay a wreath at the Menin Gate to commemorate those soldiers who fell during WWI – a very moving moment for all involved.

Province of Antwerp—EMPOWERing neighbourhoods

The Province of Antwerp, in collaboration with UCLL University of Applied Sciences, have developed within the EMPOWERCARE project, a training programme to encourage neighbourhood-oriented empowerment for care and welfare professionals and empower vulnerable individuals. The training consists of an online module (theory, case exercise, podcasts) and two in-person workshops with professionals from different organisations who work together in a specific area. More than 40 professionals participated in 4 pilotsites/neighbourhoods. Participants indicated that empowering neighborhood-oriented work is key to the care of the future.



On the the 3rd of May the Province of Antwerp and GKC organized a care event 'Zorg aan Z'. More than a 100 people participated : care organisations and professionals, educational institutions policy makers and local municipalities, We presented 2 workshops about the Empowercare project and presented the strategy, the caring villages approach and our learning trajectory neighbourhood. empowerend working.



Update From VITO - a fond farewell and lessons learnt

During the past year, 2 master students in Biomedical sciences from the University of Leuven dedicated their graduation projects to the Empowercare project. Jolien Broekmans worked with VITO on the evaluation of the technology pilot with elderly people, while Cato van Schyndel's goal was to develop a technology blueprint, guiding care organizations when implementing a new technology. They share their reasons why they chose Empowercare and the lessons they learned from it.

'I liked working on the urging issue of an ageing population and providing sufficient and appropriate care to this growing population', says Cato. She was especially interested in the similarities and differences of the regional care contexts in the cross-border collaboration. Jolien confirms : 'I chose to do my thesis on the Empowercare project because I believe that massively extending independence of elderly with help of technologies will have a big impact economically and on health and care, but especially on the people themselves'.

VITO continued..

Concerning the lessons, they have learned, they both agree that older people do need support in a world where technology plays an ever more important role. Jolien, who worked with elderly and other vulnerable target groups in the field, experienced that it helps to organize information sessions or to cooperate with their trusted health and care workers. Nonetheless, all the participants she talked to were willing to accept technology within their daily lives and most agreed it could help with self-management of their health.

Cato's goal was to draft the technology blueprint by aggregating the knowledge available in the consortium and beyond on technology implementation in elderly care. She learned that although there is still some work to do in this domain, the EMPOWERCARE pilots are excellent examples of caring technologies and that learning from each other and already existing good practices could be a major catalyst for enhancing empowerment of elderly.

Together, Cato and Jolien want to express a well-deserved thank you to all who contributed in the EMPOWERCARE project during the past year for investing time and sharing their perspectives and knowledge.

Update from Holy Heart -Toolbox Encouraging independence

The EMPOWERCARE project within the H.Hart care group is moving forward. The 5 toolboxes are up and running, staff training courses have been given and users are finding their way to our organization/pilot.



What does this mean for our users?

- ◆ Organizing an intensive observation period with a multidisciplinary approach
- ◆ Offering integrated care and support, together with the toolbox
- ◆ Offering respite care for informal caregivers
- ◆ Drawing up a multidisciplinary care and support plan
- ◆ Offering assistance when returning to the home environment or to another more suitable form of residential care

Activities already in progress:

- ◆ Training
- ◆ Working group with professionals, users and volunteers
- ◆ Awareness raising of tools and technology
- ◆ Support groups
- ◆ Evaluation of our pilot
- ◆ Stakeholder presentation : H.Hart Present
- ◆ Fysieke meeting with our project partners

Update from Family Help—Sharing is Caring

The EMPOWERCARE project partners were in Poperinge at the PRoF pilot site : Sharing is Caring on Monday 23th May.

Pieter-Jan Dumolein, the new CEO of NV Boone and project partner in Empowercare explained the methods and outcomes that citizens can expect to see on the pilot site.



"The images speak for themselves"

A mini exhibition "Sun is Shining" was held on the same day. SUN IS SHINING is the **in-person photography exhibition** FamilyHelp started in February 2022. The exhibition is hosted in different places throughout Flanders.



The photographs were taken by two care professionals – Ester and Veerle who have worked for many years in Family Help.

All persons in the pictures are clients of FamilyHelp or workforce in FamilyHelp. Some of them are included in the evaluation study.

Under the name 'Sun is shining', Care professionals Ester Verdurmen and Veerle De Schepper organized a photo exhibition with the clients and care professionals from NOAH Sint-Niklaas. The project was realized in collaboration with our Sint-Niklaas region and Empowercare.

Join us at EMPOWERCARE's Annual Event, 14th September 2022

The Annual Event will be held virtually and include:

- An update on the project and EMPOWERment strategy
- An overview of Caring Technology Principles
- Showcase of our Technology Blueprint Tool
- Workshops for you to review and test the Technology Blueprint Tool

See the [flyer](#) for full details and sign-up [here](#).