



**2^e CONFÉRENCE INTERNATIONALE
DES VILLES AMIES DES ÂÎNÉS**

VIVRE ET VIEILLIR ENSEMBLE
DANS SA COMMUNAUTÉ

Age-Friendly Cities in 12 Walloon cities (Belgium): similarities and distance with WHO framework

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Photo : Antoine Couturier



Structure

- A travel to the country of surrealism
 - The methodological perspective
 - A two-level analysis



Belgium, country of surrealism





2 illustrations, images... Not the reality

➔ Key message: In Wallonia, it's not an AFC framework or program...

Is it a problem?

Or is it because AFC does not exist itself *in reality* but *should* be considered as a representation?

➔ LIKE EVERYWHERE in the world, the Walloon case shows actors using AFC as a tool and producing 'participative episodes' (Bacqué, Gautier, 2011) for a time, in a place

➔ Target: understand the context of such episodes



Research methodology



Question : How wallonian cities use and translate the WHO framework? How do they put 'social participation of older people' in practice?

Method : Selection of 12 cities out of 60 financed by Minister of Health AFC plan (out of 168 demands... From a total of 262 cities) with:

- Urban / rural criteria
- Diversity of actors implied

Sample: In each city, semi-structured interviews with 3 different actors : policy officer (elected), older people representative, municipal employee



A total of 43 interviews

Province	City	Urban level	Project from	Elected politician	Munic. employee	Older people	'CPAS'	Other
Brabant Wallon	Orp-Jauche	D3	Com	1	1	1		
	Ottignies-LLN	B2	Com ET CPAS	1	2	1	2	
Hainaut	Beaumont	D3	Com	1	2	1		
	Boussu	B2	Com		1	1	1	
	Farciennes	B3	CPAS	1		1	2*	
	Mons	A	CPAS	1			2	
Liège	Amay	C3	Com (CCCA)	1	1	1		1
	Waremmes	C2	Com	1	1	1		
Lux.	Durbuy (BARVAUX)	D3	CCCA	1	2	1		
	Marche-en-Famenne	D1	Com	1	3	1		
Namur	Ciney	D2	Com (CCCA)	1	1	2		
	Namur	A	CPAS	1		1	1	
				10	14	12	6	1



Analysis 1: the Walloon context of a 'participative episod'



Capturing the picture

- The legal and historical wallon context

2 'Circulars' in 2006/2012 to encourage municipal councils to have Consultative Municipal Council for Older people (CCCA)

An orientation note on Older people policy in 2010: 1st priority of 1st objective : 'To encourage and support active participation of older people into our society'

2012: European Year on 'active ageing and solidarity between generations'

➔ **2012 : The Minister of Health call for AFC finances** (3.3 M CAD ; 2.5 M€, 1 year)

➔ **Activities** supporting social relations according to needs / wishes of older people

➔ Urban adaptation (benches, fitness kit, etc.)

➔ Improvement of information

- The financed Cities

57 selected cities, average of 15.000 people

3 'bigger cities' : 110.000 to 204.000 people

➔ urban, rural and peri-urban

Average funding/city: 53.000 CAD (40.000 €), double for bigger city

- The scientific context: a poor knowledge of AFC in Walloon Region



Analysis 2: Walloon experiences of a 'participative episod'



The case of the bench

Perfect illustration of a ‘participative episod’...

- Measuring the collaboration between the 3 actors
 - Political actors agree with the ‘visibility’ of the object
 - Municipal employee deals with its ‘reality’
 - Older people gives (or not) its ‘legitimacy’



What actors say

1) Older people representative from Consultative Municipal Council for Older people

- The meanings of 'activities' : playing cards as a citizenship experience? Rural realities
- Who are they talking for? Are they being heard? Are they closely selected by the Community Council?
- Being 'actors' or being 'consumers'?

➔ Such councils represent long-term social participation of older people



What actors say

2) Policy officers (elected politicians)

- AFC as a flagship: an object of local marketing, a good or a bad thing for local democracy?
- Very little knowledge of AFC program and WHO framework
- Tensions between 'CPAS' (Local Public Assistance Offices or +/- CSSS in Quebec) supporting 'dependent older people' Versus 'active & healthy seniors' → Avoiding reproduction of 3rd / 4th ages segmentation and building a complex vision of older people
- Being 'actors' or being 'consumers'?



What actors say

3) Municipal employees

- Central actors in terms of ‘connecting people’ (older people, policy officers, other community organizations)
- Already employed by existing funding schemes (in particular the ‘PCS’ = Plan de Cohésion Sociale)
- Being ‘actors’ (used to project conception) or being ‘consumers’ (or defender of its territory)?
- Ignoring the VADA/WHO framework and do not see its potential use: *‘Too far from our realities’*
- While not ignoring the ‘need/resources analysis’, rarely well understood in the name of the professional legitimacy: *‘We know the local field’*



Conclusion:
Behind 'participative episodes',
The importance of research support



A first Comparison

	Wallonie	Québec
Compétence politique	Ministre de la Santé, de l'Action sociale et de l'Égalité des Chances	Ministre des Aînés ; puis Ministre de la Santé & Aînés
Compétence administrative	Direction Générale Opérationnelle des Pouvoirs locaux, de l'Action sociale et de la Santé (DG05) Là : Dpt. des Aînés et de la famille	Secrétariat aux aînés ; puis Secrétariat aux aînés DANS le Ministère de la Santé
Place de la recherche	Inexistant (0,1%) until now	Central (18%, 2008-2013)
Rapport OMS (2007)	Un cadre très général pour le politique; quasi pas identifié par les acteurs	La base de départ ; réapproprié et dépassé par les chercheurs/acteurs
Timing du début du projet	Peu idéal (élections communales)	Idéal (consultation)
Traduction de « la participation sociale des aînés »	Lien social dans les activités aînés Poursuite des CCCA (« parlement »)	Comité de pilotage



Thank you for your attention

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