



European Union
European Regional
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Minutes Peer2Peer meeting WLE Limburg 29 January 2020, Workshop Health and Nature

Present: Liesbeth van Gysegem, Hettie Meertens, Liesbeth van Gysegem (moderator), Oliver Pielmann, Dan Blomkvist, Janina Pankratz, Marinda van den Eijnden, Raymond Tilmans (moderator), Serna Widdershoven (minutes)

Pitch Liesbeth van Gysegem, Regionaal Landschap Kempen en Maasland

Responsible for the project around nature & health

Nature has a positive effect on their health being. People who experience that nature is good for them will also take care for nature

Good practices

- 1.) Research program; between university of Hasselt and landscape Kempen en Maasland; people are restoring in nature before they get burn-out. These are people who have stress and insomnia, pain in the muscles. Trying to prevent them from a burn-out, so they are not out for work for months, that saves costs. conditions:
 - Tradition psycho-education; setting boundaries
 - Nature program; walks, swimming
 - Combination (psycho-education + nature), go home in the evening
 - Combination (residential, where they sleep in nature, with the birds)
 - Control group (don't get anything)
 - Are trying to find the right mix in psycho-education and nature to prevent burn-out.
 - They see already a big effect of nature. Difficulty is to keep up the effect, when they go back home to their families and work.
- 2.) Nature cure
 - Green exercise program, for people with chronic diseases; for example cardiovascular ...
 - Go together in nature with a group and guided by a nurse and a nature guided. This way the people feel more secure and supported. Aim: keep them fit, and lower the medication. Saving medical expenses.
- 3.) Healthy village Leende: sports doctor and general practitioner (cardiovascular, diabetes, cholesterol diseases) Aim: decrease body mass index of whole village. Set up a program with a healthy diet and exercise in nature. The whole village is involved and they are all encouraged to become fitter and healthier. Local restaurants, supermarkets, little shops are offering healthy products and alternatives. People are encouraged to choose the healthy choice. Results after 3 years: BMI decreased, less referrals, less medication needed.
- 4.) Beet the street: developed by William Bird, general practitioner. Developed a game where the people of the village get a card and have to swipe it against boxes to collect points. With the points you get a discount on healthy alternatives (for example discounts on salads, on sports equipment). By offering a game, making it fun for people to walk, making them more fit and healthy. Indirectly the projects reduces the health costs
- 5.) Healthy park and healthy people project (Europark organization); we maximize the contribution of European park to health
 - developing good practices,

-connecting people and nature.

Project: green exercising Europe

Discussion, questions, recommendations and other examples

- Suggestion: involve insurance company's
- Target group: doctors, IT, professor of University (had only stress), came for a quick fix, aware of stress and aware of risk to get in a burnout. (15 people for each condition), Did the research in summer 2019 (research was on hold last year because of Corona). When they came one could see the stress in their eyes. Offered the program 9-12 and in the afternoon nature activities.
- Janina Pankratz Pilot training about forest therapy: relaxing and enjoying nature as health instrument. Intervention: with children and teenagers, prevention and exercises in mindfulness. Every participant has to make his own business model. Interesting to exchange knowledge and experiences between Janina and Liesbeth.
- Oliver Pielmann: good experience, psycho-education, nature and residential. Who pays for it? The lottery (charity organization) --> bring insurance companies to pay for it.
- Janina: interventions with COPD patients.
 - One group outside in the forest
 - Another group was insideThe patient with the intervention in the forest felt better, than the people inside. They talk already with health insurances Insurance company's want facts and numbers.
- Hettie: Don't forget the children. Involve the children in nature. Let them play in nature. Children should learn to play in nature. Especially children which come out for war.
- Raymond: by investing in children --> parents will have less problems at home.

In the Netherlands a lot of people want to protect (the dangerous) nature against children. In this case alienation of nature starts already in an early age. We need more nature and more wild nature and a way to bring children closer to nature.

- Oliver: a way to come more in contact with nature is: holidays on farms to get in contact with ecological farm culture.
- Janina: leading holiday camp children for 6 – 16 years. If you show the children nature it is very important to go into nature with children.
- Liesbeth: recommends the book of Richard Louv: Last Child in the wood – about nature deficit disorder, children have less developed skills, do not see as far, have more asthma of hay fever. He is introducing nature family groups.
- Hettie: especially take care of migrant backgrounds and children who lived in war zones, they have no contact with nature, but it might help them dealing with war trauma.

Use glasshouse in the garden as psychological practice. The green, smells, sounds of birds helps you.

Health and nature, do we want economic return from it or should we invest in it?

We need more nature, it is better to invest in nature, that saves health costs.

Convince people that we need more nature, since it is a medicine.

It's not clear to politicians how much money we save if we invest in nature.

More people, insurance companies and big companies will be convinced to invest in it.

- A lot of companies do already invest in nature organizations.
- We miss the health sector to invest in nature.
- Nature helps to cut medical expenses through both preventive and curative health measures. How can health insurances reinvest these savings in nature?
- How can we get the insurance companies in to our group?
- How do we get them to talk to them?
- You can always give lectures/symposiums to students and doctors or even politicians or involve students in studies nature and health. Liesbeth says she has already contact with the universities of Maastricht and Hasselt.
- We have to show the insurance company's the figures and invite them in our project and studies. Copy what the insurance companies do with sport, with health and nature.
- We have to monitor. One of our goals is to monitor how we achieve our goals. What is the situation before and after (on the people and the savings)?
- If you involve students you also have a good contact with the universities.

Healthy landscapes, healthy Limburgers (Dutch and Belgium side and health faculties of 2 universities are involved).

Other suggestions and remarks:

- Government should raise a sugar tax -->invest in nature
- Ask also the government to invest in health and nature
- Companies who invest in nature, have a good advertisement among people.
- Promotion (by nature organizations) insurance companies who want to invest in nature.
- You can give the insurance company a (green) label.
- It's good to involve other influential circles on this theme but also to the other themes in the project of WLE (tourism, landscape business models, etc.). Influential circles can be the Lions Club, Rotary Club/Rotaract, Rountable but also big entrepreneurs like Microsoft, Shell.