

## Neighborhood-oriented Care

### Our population is ageing.

There is a growing number of older people who are in need of care. It is expected that the amount of citizens aged more than 65 will increase by 30% in 2060. Senior citizens prefer to live independently as long as possible, but the group of elderly people and, as a consequence, the need for care will grow rapidly. How do we respond to this tendency? We have to adjust care facilities to the changing needs. Our local government developed a systematic and structural program to make elder care policy more adequate.

### A transparent and concrete procedure.

In Maaseik volunteers will be trained to assist in this program. They will visit a large number of elderly citizens at home. We decided to focus on people aged over 86 at first. Surveyors inform this group of people about the care facilities and services our town can provide, and at the same time, they enquire if the person can use any help. Every remarks or concern about home and living conditions will be reported in an individual fact sheet. The information gathered from the home visits will be examined by the coordinator of the Neighborhood-oriented Care Program. The outcome can lead to an additional home visit when signs from the first visit require this. If necessary, undeniable need for either formal or informal care will be included.

The keystone in this program is the encouragement of neighbors helping each other. In this way, we can improve neighbors' involvement. Small social networks will be able to respond to the need for care to a certain extend and they can function as a buffer against loneliness.

### Promoting social networks.

A man or woman living next door can play an important role in addition to professional care or service. However, the demand and supply of neighbor care lie dormant. In order to stimulate the social network of neighbors helping each other, we would like to give it an external boost. The coordinator of the Neighborhood-oriented Care Program can help organizing it.

### The local government as director.

The research of home visits enables us to:

- gain insight in the living conditions of senior citizens
- inform those involved about elder care and services
- register individual need for care
- encourage small social network

The local government will play a crucial role as initiator and the coordinator will take the different steps necessary to implement the elder care policy throughout the community. This will be realized in close collaboration with volunteers and with the support of RIMO Limburg. (Rimo is an organization that connects frail people and helps them to find a solution for the problems they all experience)