

Report of the first Multilinks policy conference (deliverable D7.3), the second progress meeting (deliverable D8.2), and the second meeting with the Scientific Advisory Board (deliverable D8.3)

The **first policy conference** of the EC-funded Multilinks research project *How demographic changes shape intergenerational solidarity, well-being, and social integration: A multilinks framework* (Grant agreement no. 217523, Seventh Framework Programme SSH-2007-3.1.1) was held in the Academy House of the Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium for Science and Arts, Brussels, March 19, 2009.

The **second progress meeting** was held the following day, March 20, 2009, also in the Academy House in Brussels. The second progress meeting also served as the second meeting with the Multilinks **Scientific Advisory Board**.

The list of participants, and the programme of the meetings are enclosed. Jan van Bavel and Maaïke Jappens of the Interface Demography, Free University of Brussels were in charge of local arrangements.

The morning session of the policy conference on March 19, 2009, was devoted to the presentation of the concept and indicators of the intergenerational regimes. The afternoon session was devoted to the presentation and discussion of three draft policy briefs. See the programme for details.

The first session on Friday March 20, 2009, was devoted to an **evaluation** of the policy conference. All felt that the conference had been instructive.

- There was general agreement that communication with policy makers is not self-evident. We need to work hard to bridge the gap between their world and ours. It is important to find connections with issues that are on the agenda of policy makers. For issues that are not on their agenda, we need to clearly specify the social problems that we are addressing in our research and convincingly argue why greater attention is needed.
- Linked to the previous point, we should not assume that policy makers are well-acquainted with issues of age segregation, intergenerational regimes, and so forth. We need to spell out the key premises of Multilinks time and time again. What we are doing is quite radical (combining the young and the old).
- Contrary to our expectations, the policy makers showed little interest in the intergenerational regime indicators developed by Saraceno and Keck. Whereas we feel their work is innovative and thoughtful, the policy makers wanted to hear more about outcomes such as well-being, inequality, and behavioural (dis)incentives in connection with the indicators. One of the points made by policy makers is that quantitative indicators are only part of the story: quality of services should also be considered.
- Another lesson learned is that great care must be taken as to how findings are communicated to the outside world. The concept of defamilialization served as a case in point. To those not familiar with the concept, there is the connotation of doing away with the family. As used in research, the concept refers to policy regimes where women are freed from the primary responsibility of caring for dependents.
- Linked to the previous point, we should tailor our messages to different groups within the “outside world”: media, policy makers, interest groups, and so forth. We should also be aware that policy makers are a diverse group: not only representing different levels (regional, national or European) but also with different substantive foci.
- In preparing for the Brussels meeting, we made a conscious decision to have separate meetings with policy makers and with the Scientific Advisory Board. We might wish to

reconsider this decision. The members of the Scientific Advisory Board who were present in Brussels expressed a clear interest in hearing the views of policy makers, whereas two of the policy conference participants requested permission to join the scientific meeting (and of course permission was granted).

The remainder of the program for Friday March 20, 2009, was devoted to the presentation of substantive results (see the enclosed programme for details). Examples of insights emerging from the discussion are:

- the importance of distinguishing between statistical significance and substantively meaningful findings
- the need to examine whether questionnaire items and scales perform similarly across countries
- the questionable applicability of “choice models” to residential patterns in former communist countries
- the need to differentiate parenthood and co-residence by stage of the life course (e.g. the “swollen nest” where children are staying at home because there are insufficient means to leave; the migration of adult children to other countries where they are involved in care provision).

Pearl Dykstra, March 27, 2009



MULTILINKS Policy Conference

March 19 2009

Academy House of the Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium for Science and the Arts,
Hertogsstraat 1, 1000 Brussels

Chair: Pearl Dykstra

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| 10h00 – 10h30 | <i>Welcome</i> |
| 10h30 – 11h30 | Presentation of the concept and indicators of “Intergenerational Regimes” |
| 11h30 – 12h30 | Discussion of the policy implication of an intergenerational regime approach |
| 12h30 – 13h30 | <i>Lunch</i> |
| 13h30 – 16h00 | <p>Presentation and Discussion of Policy Brief Drafts
Short but thought-provoking presentations that translate research insights into policy implications:</p> <p>Niels Schenk on Welfare state differences and their consequences for intergenerational solidarity
Aat Liefbroer and Francesco Billari on Age Norms
Gunhild Hagestad on how population ageing affects all age groups</p> <p>Presentations are followed by a lively, informal discussion between policy makers and researchers.</p> |
| 16h00 | <i>Reception</i> |



MULTILINKS Progress meeting

March 20 2009

Academy House of the Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium for Science and the Arts,
Hertogsstraat 1, 1000 Brussels

Chair: Pearl Dykstra

09h30 – 10h00	Evaluation of the policy conference
10h00 – 10h15	Niels Schenk on the status of the GGP
10h15 – 11h00	Paper presentation Britt Slagsvold & Katharina Herlofson, on filial norms, parental need, and support patterns
11h00 – 11h45	Paper presentation Aafke Komter & Nienke Moor, on cross-national differences in well-being
11h45 – 12h30	Paper presentation Leen Heylen & Dimitri Mortelmans, on living arrangements
12h30 – 13h15	<i>Lunch</i>
13h15 – 14h00	Paper presentation Allan Puur & Luule Sakkeus, on generations at macrolevel
14h00 – 14h45	Paper presentation Bruno Arpino & Alice Goisis, on mothers' employment and grandparental childcare
14h45 – 15h30	Paper presentation Pearl Dykstra, on a European family typology
15h30 – 16h00	Business & wrap-up

List of Participants Brussels meeting

Jorge Atunes (Policy conference)
EC-DG Health and consumers

Sara Arber (Scientific advisory board)
University of Surrey

Steinar Barstad (Policy conference)
Norwegian ministry of health and care services

Jan van Bavel (Consortium member)
Brussels Free University

Isabel Borges (Policy Conference)
European older people's platform

Javier del Castillo (Policy advisory board,
substituting for Pilar Rodriguez)
Spanish Institute for the elderly and social services

Pearl Dykstra (Consortium member)
Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute

Alice Goisis (Consortium member)
Bocconi University

Gunhild Hagestad (Consortium member)
NOVA (Norwegian Social Research)

Astrid Heiberg (Policy advisory board)
University of Oslo

Katharine Herlofson (Consortium member)
NOVA (Norwegian Social Research)

Leen Heylen
University of Antwerp

Ingeborg Hillaert (Observer)
Artesis College Antwerp

Lore Hostasch (Policy advisory board member)
Austrian ministry of social protection and consumer
affairs

Maaïke Jappens (Consortium member)
Brussels Free University

Wolfgang Keck (Consortium member)
Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung

Aafke Komter (Consortium member)
University Utrecht

Lauri Leppik (Policy conference)
Tallinn University

Aat Liefbroer (Consortium member)
Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute

Nienke Moor (Consortium member)
University Utrecht

Dimitri Mortelmans (Consortium member)
Antwerp University

Inge Pasteels (Consortium member)
Antwerp University

Annette Pauly (Policy advisory board, substituting for
Gabriele Müller)
German ministry for family, seniors, women and youth

Trond Petersen (Scientific advisory board)
Berkeley University

Allan Puur (Consortium member)
Estonian Interuniversity Population Research Centre

Luule Sakkeus (Consortium member)
Estonian Interuniversity Population
Research Centre

Chiara Saraceno (Consortium member)
Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung

Niels Schenk (Consortium member)
Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute

Britt Slagsvold (Consortium member)
NOVA
(Norwegian Social Research)

Liesbet Stevens (Policy conference)
Cabinet of minister of social economy and equal
chances Flanders

Helga de Valk (Consortium member)
Brussels Free University

Belinda Wijckmans (Consortium member)
Brussels Free University

