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101 Innovations for active aging

From the onset of mankind to nowadays

Name of the innovation

Assisted Living Atlas

Description of the innovation in its cultural setting

In order to support aging in place, Dutch elderly that cannot live at home any longer are housed in Assisted Living Facilities (ALF's). Here they live as independently as possible and can rely on care and services 24 hours a day. Nowadays the intended home-like atmosphere is threatened by the increasing number of inhabitants needing high levels of care. Initiators have to cope with this issue and have to decide on the most desirable scale of ALFs and the optimal mix of different user groups and facilities. The Assisted Living Atlas shows a huge number of different projects in a standard way, in order to help decision makers to be aware of different solutions and to find best practices.

Importance of the this innovation for active healthy aging

Decision making on Assisted Living Facilities in the Netherlands is mainly based on previous experiences, intuition and expectations and guided by policy letters and impact on exploitation. The Assisted Living Atlas can support decision makers to make well-considered and evidence based choices regarding scale, mix of tenants and mix of functions. The Atlas shows facts, figures, and reflections on safety, mutual informal care, social cohesion and facilitated active leisure. As such, the Assisted Living Atlas can be used as a decision support tool to establish maximum quality. It is based on the Dutch examples in the period 1998-2010, but the examples and guidelines can be extended to similar situations abroad.

Domain of daily living

Housing & Daily Living

Research / design / engineering domain

Architecture

Sociology

Inventors of this innovation

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Technical specification

The Assisted Living Atlas is a hardcopy and web based decision making tool. It consists of the interrelated quantitative information of approximately 600 projects as well as the qualitatively information of 24 projects. Initiators can support their choices concerning scale, group mix, facility level in order to achieve a larger social quality of housing. It provides guidelines for minima, maxima, and optima of these variables and adds best practices and evidence based design principles and examples.

Is the innovation patented?

No

Actual use of the innovation on a local and global level

The definitive hardcopy version of the Atlas is available at the end of 2012. A preliminary draft was used, tested and further developed in 2010-2012 in connection to an analysis of hundreds of ASL-facilities and a multiple casestudy of 24 projects. Amongst others, initiators and managers were interviewed concerning their choices on scale, group mix, and facility level related to the social quality of housing. In the interviews the Atlas was presented as a possible decision making tool, on which the respond was clearly positive. The web designed version is planned to be launched in spring 2013.

The Atlas is developed to use in the pre initiative phase of a building process to decide on the Key Performance Indicators: scale, group mix, facility level. In terms of Corporate Real Estate Management, a better balance is possible between strategic, financial and functional level by knowing the effects of these KPI's from the physical on the functional level, in particular the social quality of housing. The executed ex post evaluation and analysis of 24 projects provide more evidence based answers to ex ante decision making and modelling of Assisted Living Facilities.

Observed impact of the use of this innovation

Initiators and managers in the interviews expressed serious interest in the concept version of the Assisted Living Atlas. Both managers of the care corporations as well of the housing associations were comfortable in using the Atlas. The first use in the decision making phase of new projects by multiple stakeholders will take place in the first half of 2012 and will be observed.

An expected side effect is to bridging distrust in the multidisciplinary process; the Atlas provides a communication document for sometimes suspicious stakeholders. At first it will help to cover misconceptions between the social world of the care sector and the technical world of the housing sector. In the end it could lead to more inclusive design, allowing end users to join decision making, obviously representing the active aging inhabitants.

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