Dear colleagues,

The sunny spring has finally arrived and another academic year will soon reach its end. It has been a great year for PRC in terms of research, education, and growth as an organization. Our Master’s programme in Population Studies was highly acknowledged recently by both experts and students: it ranked second best among the geography- and planning-related Master’s programmes in the Netherlands!

In this, the 15th PRC Newsletter, Mirjam Klaassens introduces one of the PRC’s research projects, ‘Care Without Rules,’ within the Healthy Ageing, Population and Society (HAPS) programme. Billie de Haas provides insights into her fieldwork on sexual behaviour among adolescents in Uganda.

In a few weeks’ time, the next European Population Conference will take place in Stockholm. A lot of PRC members will attend the event; we hope to see many of you there!

If you want to know more about PRC, please visit our website www.rug.nl/prc. For users of social media, the PRC also has a Facebook page (search ‘Population Research Centre Groningen’) which will carry our news updates and it provides an interaction platform for current, former and prospective members. If you have demography-related news or announcements you would like to share in the next PRC Newsletter, you are very welcome to contact the editor at a.kou@rug.nl.

Kind regards,

Anu Kõu (Editor),
also on behalf of Clara Mulder (Head of the PRC)
The search of home within an institutional setting
A participatory approach within an institution for elderly care in the Netherlands

Mirjam Klaassens

In July 2011, I started, together with Louise Meijering and Inge Hutter, the project “Care Without Rules,” which was carried out in three wards in an institution for elderly care. At the outset, this institution aimed to improve the well-being of the residents and felt that rules and regulations stood in their way to achieving this. Carers were bound to strict care plans and rules, and they spent an increasing amount of time on administrative tasks, so that the needs of the older people became less central in their work. By abandoning superfluous rules, it was expected that the well-being of the residents would increase and that the healthcare workers would regain a passion for their profession. The participatory approach, along with a variety of qualitative research methods, was used. Although many stakeholders were involved, the most important actors were staff at various levels within the institution and the residents of the three wards.

Our research plan consisted of different phases with several aims. First, I conducted an ethnographic study in order to gain more insights into the needs and wishes of the residents living in the wards. Second, on the basis of this research, and together with the other stakeholders, we identified and put in place different types of measures that contribute to the improvement the residents’ well-being. The progress of the project – which will continue until summer 2012 — will be monitored in order to evaluate it and to establish ‘best practices’. At this juncture, I will present some preliminary results based on the ongoing monitoring of the project, which includes interviews with residents and staff.

Initially the project was intended to focus on increasing the well-being of the residents. Throughout the project, however, the focus seemed to shift more towards enabling residents to continue the lives they had led before moving into an institution; in other words, the focus is on their search for home within an institutional setting. This idea is being operationalized through measures that have been put in place to make the residents feel at home, that they are in control, and able to be themselves. This implies a cultural change not only for the health care workers, from care-oriented to demand-oriented, but also a very important change for the residents as well. Residents should be encouraged to express their needs and wishes. As a result of this change, many staff members have indicated that they are more positive about their job for a number of different reasons. They feel less pressure from formal and unwritten rules, which results in less stress and allows them to keep the elderly at the centre of their work. This makes many carers feel more contented. Because of the project, the carers on the wards have a shared goal, which creates mutual understanding and improves the workplace climate. More results will follow.

To be continued...

Announcements (part 1)

- A short movie to promote the MSc Population Studies is available on Youtube: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vDRDlaa2HcA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vDRDlaa2HcA).
- You are very welcome to join the ‘Dutch Demography’ group on LinkedIn to share information and to discuss demography-related issues in the Netherlands.
- On November 20, the Netherlands Demographic Society (NVD) will host the 5th Dutch Demography Day. Demographers and researchers from demography-related disciplines will have the opportunity to present their current research. Abstracts in Dutch or English should be submitted by June 29. Students are encouraged to present their recently completed Master’s theses. Theses are eligible for the NIDI student award to the amount of €500. For more information and registration, visit [www.nvdemografie.nl](http://www.nvdemografie.nl).
- June 25-28, 2013, the 7th International Conference on Population Geographies will take place in Groningen. The Organising Committee consists of PRC members with Clara Mulder as the chair. More information will follow soon, please visit [http://www.rug.nl/frw/onderzoek/icpg2013/](http://www.rug.nl/frw/onderzoek/icpg2013/).
Message from the field: Billie de Haas

Last August I went to Uganda to collect data for my PhD research. The topic of my research is sexuality education in Kampala, the capital of Uganda, and so I went to interview teachers involved in sexuality education in secondary schools and to observe them as they taught classes on sexuality education.

My previous visits to Uganda helped me to come prepared. Not only did I bring enough stroopwafels (Dutch cookies) on this visit, but I was also aware of several pointers to keep in mind when doing research in schools in Uganda. For instance, one had to be aware of the school timetables. This I learnt by experience when I was in Uganda in 2008 collecting data for my Master’s thesis. It just so happened that three of the four weeks I had planned for my data collection fell within school holidays, so there were no students available! This time I made sure I checked that school was in session!

So this time, I thought, I was prepared. Of course, PhD study is all about learning, and I certainly did learn. For instance, a school day has three sacred moments: the tea break at 10 a.m., lunch at 2 p.m., and the second tea break at 4 p.m. This means that interviews must be scheduled wisely, or else the interview must be put on hold while you have a break together.

There are a few NGOs in Kampala which helped me to contact schools. One of their calls to a teacher went as follows:

NGO representative: ‘Hi, I’m sending you Billie, she is a mzungu (white person). And you know, these mzungus are very strict on time keeping. So you make sure you keep time!’ Then to me: ‘Billie, let me give you one piece of advice: you call them before you go. Because you know, Ugandans tend to make appointments in their head not on paper, but their head fails them sometimes.’ This was a very valuable piece of advice that saved me quite a lot of unnecessary travelling. When I was on time, I kept being met with surprised faces!

I loved being in Uganda! The benefits of doing qualitative research is that you have the opportunity to learn about people’s cultures, and that they share their personal experiences with you. Despite the many laughs I had with my participants, there were times when their stories made me feel sad and realize how lucky we are, for instance, to have free, good quality education in the Netherlands. They also made me realize how lucky I am to be doing a PhD study. When I told them that I am a PhD student, they said, ‘Wow! And what is your job? Oh that is your job?! Wow!!’ Some teachers used me as a role model to the girls in their class: ‘You girls, this is Billie from Holland. And she is a PhD student. And she is only 28 years old! If you work hard, you can do that as well!’

The schools welcomed me very warmly, which I appreciated very much. I was never allowed to leave without having a warm lunch or tea. They often regarded it as a high honour that ‘a mzungu’ came to visit them. At one school a student took me into every classroom in the school to introduce me to the students. And in every class they would start clapping their hands and thanking me for my visit!

I used a camcorder and a voice recorder to record the lessons. Once I asked a student to operate the camcorder so that I could focus on making notes. However, I had not anticipated that the student would run between the teacher and students like a real cameraman, putting the camera right in their faces! Then another student took the voice recorder and, like a real reporter, he also started running from speaker to speaker. It turned into chaos but it was fun, and I think I still got some good observations out of it once the teacher and the students got used to all the running around.

The interviews showed me how teachers are trying their best to provide their students with a bright future. In the Netherlands we tend to disapprove of the Ugandan approach of promoting abstinence-only among unmarried youth without the promotion of condoms and other contraceptives. But when you talk to the teachers you come to understand their reasoning and point of view. I think that is very valuable and a good starting point for discussion between the different parties working together on sexuality education in Uganda!
Visitors to the PRC

Dr Toni López from Univeristat Autònoma de Barcelona in Spain visited the PRC in March and April. During those two months, he was working on a paper 'Does cohort size matter to residential mobility? The case of Barcelona's central city' together with Clara Mulder.

Vincenzo Marrone from the Faculty of Political Science at Bologna University, Italy, is a guest PhD student at the PRC from February to June. His PhD focuses on the house and the constitution of family ties within the residential area. He has conducted a survey in Groningen for a comparative research, under the supervision of Clara Mulder.

Shirish Darak has completed the data collection for his PhD on the understanding the reproductive career of HIV-infected women in Maharashtra, India. He is visiting the PRC in May and June to discuss further plans and analyses with his supervisors Inge Hutter and Fanny Janssen.

Recent publications


Education

The PRC now offers a new short course, Qualitative Research Design in Population Studies and Health. For more information please see: http://www.rug.nl/prc/education/shortcourses/qualresearch/index.

Our MSc Population Studies has been ranked as second best among Earth Sciences, Environment, and Geography Master’s programmes in the Netherlands. The ranking is an annual exercise carried out by the Higher Education Information Centre (Centrum Hoger Onderwijs Informatie) and it reflects a critical comparison of studies, partly based on students’ evaluations over the years 2010 and 2011. See the ranking at our website: http://www.rug.nl/prc/Keuze-gidsUniversiteiten2012?lang=en (in Dutch only). More information about this list can be found at http://www.keuzegids.org (in Dutch only).

External activities

November 9, the Dutch Demography Day was held in Utrecht. Eva Kibele was on the Organizing Committee, together with three colleagues from NIDI, PBL, and VUMC. Many PRC researchers and Master’s students attended the event. With 150 participants, this was the largest turnout for the conference so far.

November, Fanny Janssen was a discussant at the Theme Conference Projecting Mortality in Rotterdam. The title of the panel was ‘Projecting future life expectancy: an interdisciplinary perspective.’

December 5-9, Billie de Haas presented a poster on ‘Perceptions of contraceptives of adolescents in Kampala, Uganda’ at UAPS: 6th African Population Conference, in Burkina Faso.

January, Anu Kõu’s PhD research on highly skilled migrants was featured on the website of Population Europe: http://www.population-europe.eu/Library/PopDigest.aspx?q=w/XLCRJUZIi7nrvtv7Rwwg==.

March 1, Fanny Janssen became a member of the Editorial Board of ISRN Epidemiology.

March 22-23, Myriam Hemsteede participated in the workshop ‘Developmental Evaluation’ with M.Q. Patton at the Centre for Development Innovation in Wageningen.

April 29 - May 9, Hinke Haisma visited the UK to consolidate and establish collaborations with MRC-Human Nutrition Research in Cambridge, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Institute of Child Health in London, and University of Southampton.

May 24-25, Ajay Bailey presented his research on the global migration of Indian nurses at the international conference on Highly Skilled Migration into the 21st Century, held at Middlesex University, UK.

Clara Mulder became a member of the Working Group Housing, Rural-Urban Development and Mobility of the European Joint Programming Initiative ‘More Years, Better Lives’.
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December, Myriam Hemsteede embarked on her PhD investigating the application of Participatory Action Research on the Population Health and Environment programs. Her supervisors are Inge Hutter and Frank Vanclay (Cultural Geography).

December, Shirish Darak completed his PhD fieldwork. Over a period of one year 623 HIV-infected women in the age group of 15-45 attending a clinical care facility of Prayas Amrita Clinic, Pune, were enrolled in the study.

January, Ori Rubin joined the PRC as a PhD researcher under the guidance of Clara Mulder and Luca Bertolini (University of Amsterdam). His research is part of the project ‘Mobility in social networks’.

March, Sylvia Karen Rutagumirwa started her PhD on the role of masculinity and femininity in health-seeking behavior among elderly in Tanzania. She is supervised by Inge Hutter and Hinke Haisma.

March, the German Society for Demography and Allianz paid tribute to exceptional work by talented researchers with a first-ever award for junior researchers in demography. Eva Kibele was among the winners and she received the award for her PhD dissertation on the impact of residential location and social status on life expectancy in Germany.

March 29, Corina Huisman received a PhD degree for her dissertation concerning a microsimulation model on demography of firms.

As of May 1, Fanny Janssen will work one day a week at the Department of Pharmacoepidemiology (Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences), where she, together with Prof. Eelko Hak, coordinates research on the application of demographic techniques to the study of medicine use.

May, Hinke Haisma was awarded a VIDI grant for her research proposal Normative indicators of child health – one size fits all.

June 21, Rizwan Ul Haq will defend his PhD on subjective well-being of the elderly in Pakistan.

Mirjam Klaassens and Louise Meijering are conducting fieldwork in northern Netherlands for a participatory project ‘Care Without Rules’ for De Hoven, an organization involved in care for the elderly.

Announcements (part 2)

In May 2012 the new version of the Wijkscan (Neighbourhood scan) was released. The Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) in the Netherlands has – commissioned by The Jan van Es Institute and SINFO – generated data at the lowest possible geographic level (6ppc) with regard to age, household composition, ethnicity and (household) incomes. Furthermore, data about episodes of different diseases in primary and secondary care have been combined with the demographic information. By means of historical data and future estimates until 2020 it will be possible to view the normative, statistically expected, demand for care in the Netherlands. Information is visible at different geographic levels: regions, municipalities, postal code areas (4ppc), neighbourhoods and even at the level of buildings (6ppc). The Wijkscan is an interesting tool for research in areas such as health care, ageing, population decline, real estate and spatial planning.

For questions, please contact Paul Reijn (p.reijn@jvei.nl) or visit http://www.sinfore.nl/wijkscan/ and http://www.jvei.nl.