
Simulation Game PlusPoint Kamperwaard

Policy making and implementation are complex processes that involve many parties with different interests. For the implementation of Health Impact Assessment (HIA) insight into the complexity of decision-making for policy is a necessary condition.

The simulation game PlusPoint Kamperwaard was designed to identify possibilities and constraints in policy making in order to design strategies for the integration and institutionalization of health issues in policy decisions.

Objectives of the game

In the simulation game PlusPoint Kamperwaard, experts in the field of public health participate in a policy making process at the local level, viz. they play a variety of realistic parties that are involved in decision making about a renovation project in the imaginary Dutch municipality of Kamperwaard. In this experience they acquire understanding of the difficulties that confront researchers and policy makers in the field of HIA. Reflection of this experience should contribute to:

- Understanding the choices and priorities of (other) stakeholders in the policy arena
- Better understanding of possibilities and constraints for integrating health issues in the policy process and advance health issues on the policy agenda
- Reconstruction and evaluation with the participants of the game process aims at understanding processes, mechanisms and dilemmas in policy and policy-making, to identify opportunities and obstacles to implement HIA.

The simulation world

The city of Kamperwaard, with approximately 350,000 inhabitants, is the economic and cultural center of Polderland. The river Waas was traditionally important for transport of products. In more recent times transport over road or rail has increased and AIRhoven airport has become of national importance. Kamperwaard is very important as a center of production and distribution and financial services.

Kamperwaard is a University city with many cultural features. The city has a regional function for the surrounding municipalities in the areas of shopping, continued and higher education, hospitals, and so on. The annual Theatre Festival attracts many visitors as well as the stadium of FC Kamperwaard, where in addition to soccer matches also musical concerts take place.

However, Kamperwaard is also struggling with inner-city problems such as unemployment, (poorly educated) immigrants and minority groups, rising crime rates and impoverishment and deprivation. Industry and traffic have also influenced the physical environment: residents are exposed to air pollution and noise. Increasingly, higher income groups are leaving the city for the suburban areas.

The recently elected municipal government focuses on four policy areas. The policy program for the coming four years should result in a more *Vital, Clean, Safe and Healthy Kamperwaard*.

The PlusPoint area

One of the projects to reach these goals should be the renovation of the old industrial area the Point. Although many companies have already moved elsewhere, there are still some old industries in de Point, such as a major factory in paints and dyes, a declining shipyard and some distribution and transport companies. In addition, there is a marshalling yard for the railways.

The project 'PlusPoint' will be the first step in the renovation of the Point: it means redeveloping the remaining area of the former gas plant, located between the railway tracks and the river Waas. The area is about three hectares large (approximately three soccer fields) and since the closure of the factory it has lied wasted. In the course of time new vegetation has conquered the barren land and it has become a kind of 'green' buffer between the neighborhood Bouwlust and the remaining industries in the Point. The area has grown into a 'recreation park' for the residents of Bouwlust. However, not all 'recreative' activities are appreciated. For example, it is also used as a car park and car repair shop, for illegal motor crossing and dumping trash. Drug use and prostitution have been increasingly reported.

Bouwlust is a typical old working-class neighborhood consisting of small one story houses, narrow streets, little public space and little green. The situation in the neighborhood is deteriorating rapidly. The traffic and parking pressure is high. The houses, 60% in possession of Housing Corporation Waasoever, are in very bad shape, maintenance is largely overdue. Unemployment is high, and almost half of the inhabitants are of immigrant origin. Day and night groups of idle youngsters hang around in the streets. There is a shortage of senior accommodation. Elderly people are obliged, against their wish, to leave the area. Many traditional retailers are gone and stores have been adopted by immigrant entrepreneurs. An Islamic prayer room is located in an abandoned shop. The nearby municipal swimming pool Zwin, next to the railway tunnels was recently sold for a 'symbolic' price to the former Manager, but exploitation is not successful.

After the closure of the gas plant in the 1960's, Housing Corporation Waasoever built the prestigious residential complex Waaszicht. The expensive rented apartments are now sold to the residents. The old Postal Office on Main Street is now used as a distribution center. There is still a green buffer between Main Street and the River. South of the Waas bridge is the wealthy neighborhood Marlot, with a lot of villas and stately avenues, adjacent to the Emma Park. Several ideas for developing the project of PlusPoint are going around, both within and outside the local government. New (social) housing is an option, or a modern shopping mall. Others believe it should be used to give a boost to big city night life; some prefer a more cultural destination.

Assignment for participants

The decision-making process for the development of the project PlusPoint is the central feature in the game. Participants represent the stakeholders that are involved in this city planning process. The objective is to develop project PlusPoint, a plan for the first stage of the renovation of the Point.

Residents and advocates

Residents' Interests Bouwlust (BBB)
Association of Owners Waaszicht (VvE Waaszicht)
Residents Committee Marlot
Islamic Association
Waasoever Housing Corporation
United Retailers Kamperwaard (VGK)

City government and Public Services

- Elected Alderman Public Works
- Elected Alderman of Social Affairs and Public Health
- Urban Development and Maintenance Service
- Social Affairs Service
- Municipal Health Service

The environment

The participants do not operate in a vacuum. The game facilitators represent the environment, that is to say, all actors and the factors that may be relevant for a realistic game process, such as:

- Environmental Service provides information on environmental data;
- The Health Monitor: information on residents' evaluation of their environment;
- The larger groups of residents that participants represent;
- The Daily Kamperwaard Newspaper.

Rules of the game

Each party has its own 'office' and specific information to play its role:
 Inhabitants and advocates have information on relevant interests and issues;
 Municipal parties have qualitative and budgetary framework conditions;
 Participants operate on their own judgment: from the given history they are trying to influence the future in any way they deem appropriate.
 Participants communicate indirectly by 'mail' with each other and with the environment. The game facilitators act as mailmen. This way they can make appointments for consultation and/or organize meetings.
 The 'environment' responds in a realistic way.

Actor Scheme simulation game PlusPoint Kamperwaard

