

(Re-)integrating vulnerable populations into the health system: action research for and by the frontline health workers.

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RESUMEN

Conceived by low-threshold organizations including Doctors of the World Belgium and in collaboration with the Belgian Ministry of Health, the “0.5 line” originates from the notion of a preliminary stage preceding the traditional first-line of care. It encompasses a diverse array of multidisciplinary services and structures, providing primary healthcare for vulnerable populations (homeless individuals, international protection applicants, undocumented migrants, sex workers, drug users) with the goals of (re) integrating these patients into the traditional first-line healthcare system and provide them adequate services.

The TOOLINE 1 research project fits into this context and emerges as a dynamic initiative focused on augmenting skills and equipping the frontline of psychosocial services and its providers with tools, resources, and a network to facilitate the care of individuals in situations of great vulnerability, where access to the primary level of care is absent, limited, or suboptimal.



The TOOLINE 1 project serves as the embodiment of this initiative—a participative action research endeavor that encompasses three regions: Brussels, Mons, and Antwerp through diverse phases including the identification of challenges related to the integration of vulnerable populations into the primary healthcare system through in-depth interviews and focus groups, collaborative development of tools and networks, as well as rigorous testing, validation, and iterative enhancements.

The ultimate outcome of this research is the creation of a framework guiding individuals from the “0.5 line” to the primary care system which could be scaled up to other regions of the country. Through this framework, we expect that health partners enhance their ability to reduce cultural, administrative, and financial barriers to healthcare access, manage mental health and addiction issues, address the specificities linked to precarious populations, and establish, integrate, and work within a network focused on addressing precarity.

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