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## INVITATION to the Public defence of

### Louise D'Eer

To obtain the academic degree of

### 'DOCTOR OF SOCIAL HEALTH SCIENCES'

### The development and evaluation of civic engagement in neighbourhoods concerning serious illness, death and loss

The public defence will take place on

**Monday, 14 October 2024 at 5 p.m.**

**In Auditorium Vanden Driessche**

VUB Health Campus

Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy, Laarbeeklaan 103, 1090 Brussels

**and can be followed online**, accessible through the following link:

[https://gf.vub.ac.be/redirects/PhD\\_defense\\_Louise\\_D'Eer.php](https://gf.vub.ac.be/redirects/PhD_defense_Louise_D'Eer.php)

## Summary of the dissertation

Civic engagement plays a central role in reframing responses to the challenges of serious illness, death and loss within public health approaches. This dissertation centres around the development and evaluation of neighbourhood civic engagement initiatives concerning serious illness, death and loss. The first aim was to systematically describe existing civic engagement initiatives regarding serious illness, death and loss worldwide in terms of their context, activities, engagement strategies, impact and evaluation. To address the first aim, we conducted a systematic mixed-methods review of peer-reviewed English literature and additional grey literature. The second aim was to identify development strategies for neighbourhood civic engagement initiatives regarding serious illness, death and loss, in terms of the extent, type and intensity of this neighbourhood participation, and the factors that are associated with it. In this regard, we conducted a cross-sectional survey study in the two selected neighbourhoods, before the development of the initiatives. The fourth aim was to evaluate the development process of the neighbourhood civic engagement initiatives regarding serious illness, death and loss in the context of two Compassionate Cities. Firstly, we developed a detailed study protocol for the evaluation, balancing control and flexibility in the evaluation process. Secondly, we conducted a multimethod process evaluation encompassing semi-structured observations, interviews and group discussions with all the relevant parties in the development process. This data collection was conducted from December 2019 to September 2023. The fourth aim was to reflect on the contemporary challenges, tensions and commonalities of the Compassionate Communities movement and to propose directions for future practice and research.

## Curriculum Vitae

Louise D'Eer is a criminologist with a second master's degree in conflict & development. Before the doctorate she worked as a researcher at the Odisee University College on the topic of civic engagement initiatives in the housing support of recognised refugees. She continued her work on studying civic engagement on the topic of serious illness, death and loss at the End-of-Life Care Research Group, where she started in 2019 as a PhD student. Her research was about the development and evaluation of neighbourhood civic engagement initiatives concerning serious illness, death and loss and was part of the CAPACITY project (Flanders Programme to Develop Capacity in Palliative Care Across Society), a collaboration between the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Ghent University, and the Catholic University Leuven, Belgium. The research project was supported by a grant from the Research Foundation Flanders.