



## **Proposal for a Belgian Network of Researchers in Global Health – Health Policy and Systems**

**BNR-GH-HPS**

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Be-Cause Health (BcH) is the Belgian Platform for International Health. It is composed of institutions and individuals working at the confluence of international health and development cooperation. It functions and produces results mostly through the following activities: annual general assembly, annual seminar and thematic working groups (WGs). The latter are the “working arm” of the platform and enable to lead policy dialogue on important issues.

### **Why a network of Belgian researchers?**

The different universities, research institutes and other think tanks in North and South of Belgium count many academics and researchers from various disciplines (medical science, public health, health economics, socio-anthropology, political science, law, psychology, etc.) working on global health (GH) issues and Health Policy and Systems Research (HPSR). However, despite some of us being members of one or several WGs of BcH, we do not necessarily know each other because (i) we are not part of the same WGs and/or (ii) many colleagues, especially outside development cooperation agencies, are not members of BcH. Henceforth, either we get connected during international conferences, or we do not get connected at all. That is why we felt the need to set up, within Be-cause health, a network of academic and researchers to facilitate the connections between all of us in order to strengthen the visibility of our research findings. To do so, we decided to build on the existing BcH platform, so as to benefit from its experience and network, and to foster exchanges of knowledge with the “practitioner” members of BcH. Its proposed name is the Belgian Network of Researchers in Global Health – Health Policy and Systems (**BNR-GH-HPS**).

### **Objectives**

Its overall objective is to **contribute to the quality and visibility improvement of GH&HPSR research performed by Belgian actors.**

Its specific objectives are to:

- Document who is doing what and where in order to improve the knowledge of each other’s work and competences.
- Foster learning amongst researchers by peer exchange on research methods; network events and/or workshops ;

- Foster scientific collaborations between researchers; peer exchange/informing on ongoing and new potential research;
- Increase the visibility of GH&HPSR products by Belgian actors; articles and/or research reports made available via a mailing list or newsletter/update.

The BNR-GH-HPS intends not to position itself in competition with the existing WGs of BcH. On the contrary, it aims to be a transversal network, based on the primary function of its members (i.e., research or action-research,) rather than on specific activity topics.

## Membership

Many universities, research institutes and departments, and other think-tanks (development agencies, consultancy firms, ...) concerned are already members of BcH, and the BNR-GH-HPS does not want to duplicate that. Henceforth, **membership will be individual**. Conditions for joining are the following:

- To hold an official academic, scientific or researcher (in the broad sense) position in a Belgian university, research institution or other think-tank; PhD students are also invited to join, but not Master's students;
- To actively lead researches or research-actions in the field of Global Health, particularly on Health Policies and Systems;
- Be a member of Be-cause health and share the vision, values and principles of the platform.

## Functioning and activities

The network will be first tested as a **pilot project for one year** (until Dec. 2019). If it proves to have an added value compared to existing bodies of BcH, it will be institutionalised. It will be piloted by two researchers – one Francophone (Elisabeth Paul, ESP/ULB and ULiège) and one Dutch-speaking (Dimitri Renmans, IOB/UAntwerpen) who will be in charge of organising its activities. The latter will consist in:

- 1) Elaboration of a repository of Belgian (or living in Belgium) Researchers in Global Health and Health Policy and Systems, comprising: the contact details, short bio, most significant publications, expertise discipline and research topics/competences of each member;
- 2) Presentation of the network to the steering committee and to BCH WGs;
- 3) Organisation of 2 informal gatherings of the network, one aimed at getting acquainted with each other and one aimed at sharing research methods;

The group will choose whether and how to engage in a joint activity (in form of a product or event) to increase the visibility of Belgian Research in Global Health – Health Policy and Systems