

## **Tranzo Evaluation Report for the Period 2007-2012**

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This report describes findings, conclusions and recommendations of the external assessment of Tranzo, Scientific Centre for Care and Welfare. The Centre was visited in September 2013 by an international committee including Prof. Arja R. Aro, Prof. Kim Putters and chaired by Prof. Ernst W. Roscam Abbing. The assessment, commissioned by the Tilburg University, followed the standard research evaluation protocol and covered the period 2007-2012.

The committee compliments the staff and leadership of Tranzo with achieved results in the said period, and awards the overall performance score of very good / excellent (4,5).

The Centre functions as a bridge between research and practice operating through a network of Academic Collaborative Centers. This rather unique structure produces research of high quality and relevance, and provides a sound financial basis. The committee has confidence in the future of Tranzo.

The assessment committee is grateful to Tranzo staff, collaborators and PhD students, as well as the leadership of the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences and Tilburg University for their time and input in preparation and during the visit.

On behalf of the assessment committee:

Prof. E.W. Roscam Abbing  
chairman

The Hague, November 2013

## **Introduction**

We are reporting on the external evaluation of the Tranzo Scientific Centre for Care and Welfare, a department of the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences of the Tilburg University. This is the third assessment of the Centre, previous ones have been in 2003 and 2007. Research achievements of Tranzo for the period 2007-2012 have been appraised.

The evaluation committee has been chartered by the University Board and its members are

Prof. Arja R. Aro, University of South Denmark

Prof. Kim Putters, Netherlands Institute for Social Research and Erasmus University Rotterdam,

Prof. E.W. Roscam Abbing, emeritus Radboud University Nijmegen, chairman of the committee

The Netherlands Organization for Health Research and Development (ZonMw) has provided secretariat for the committee, dr. J. Bruil and mr. C. Cucic.

## **Evaluation methodology**

The assessment has been performed according to the Standard Evaluation Protocol 2009-2015<sup>1</sup> for research organizations in The Netherlands.

Tranzo and the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences have performed a self evaluation exercise in the first half of 2013 and published the results in July<sup>2</sup>.

In June of 2013 the external evaluation committee and evaluation secretariat have been chartered by the University Board. During the summer they have received and assessed the above mentioned self evaluation report as well as extensive background information.

In September the evaluation committee visited Tilburg for two days of meetings with staff, collaborators and PhD students of Tranzo and University. Program of the visit, including listing of people met, is in the appendix of this report.

In November 2013 the evaluation committee has submitted its assessment report to the Board of Tilburg University.

The assessment has been performed on two levels, that of the department (Tranzo) and of the research groups (Academic Collaborative Centers). Four main criteria have been used, namely: quality, productivity, relevance and feasibility.

## **Aims and tasks**

Two main aims have been:

Improvement of research quality based on an external peer review, including scientific and societal relevance of research, research policy and research management.

Accountability to the board of the research organization, and towards funding agencies, government and society at large.

We have been assessing three vital tasks of the research organization: producing results for the academic community, producing results that are relevant for society and finally educating and training the next generation of researchers.

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<sup>1</sup> Protocol for research assessment in The Netherlands; VSNU, KNAW and NWO 2010

<sup>2</sup> Self evaluation report Tranzo 2007-2012; Tranzo, Tilburg University July 2013

## **Tilburg University and School of Social and Behavioral Sciences**

### The University

Established eighty years ago, Tilburg University today consists of 5 Schools: Economics and Management, Law School, School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, School of Humanities and School of Catholic Theology. Guiding principle is promoting and sustaining academic education and research with a pronounced Catholic signature. In the Times Higher Education World Rankings is their world rank 201-225 (2012/13) being #15 in Europe in the field of Social Sciences. University credo is: understanding society.

Although it does not have its own hospital, and hence no graduate medical training, the university considers health care a priority topic and strongly supports Tranzo's development. The Center is commended for its strategy combining high scientific level with credits and incentives of working with and in practice. Also, the University recognizes solid financial basis and independence of Tranzo. Special word of praise is reserved for the leadership of the chair of Tranzo Prof. Henk Garretsen.

Tilburg University aims for an international profile, about 85 nationalities roam their campus. International activities are decentralized to schools and departments. Tranzo has up to now been mainly focused on regional and national work, also due to briefs of its collaborating centers. Linking further to the international research community could be an important opportunity for the future.

The rector of the university recognizes that Tranzo works with a very limited number of tenured staff, with most of the supervision being provided by adjunct professors based in collaborating centers. Adjunct professors represent about five percent of the teaching staff at the university as a whole, whilst in Tranzo they are the majority. In numbers, in 2012 the Centre had 2,5 fte tenured and 8,9 fte not tenured staff, with the latter growing from 2 fte in 2007.

### The TSB

The school founded in 1963 has an international orientation aiming to provide excellent, research-based education in the areas of Psychology, Sociology, Organization Studies and Human Resource Studies. It also strives to conduct research at the frontiers of core areas of the social and behavioral sciences.

The School has ten departments, some of them are also harboring a multidisciplinary research center (named between brackets). Tranzo is both a department and a research center.

Other departments are:

Methodology and Statistics

Sociology

Organization Studies (The Center of Innovation Research CIR)

Human Resource Studies

Leisure Studies

Social Psychology (The Tilburg Institute for Behavioral Economics Research TIBER)

Developmental Psychology

Cognitive Neuropsychology

Medical and Clinical Psychology (Research on Psychology in Somatic diseases CoRPS)

With over 150 employees TSB has gone through a period of rapid growth, with the research faculty increased from 88 full-time equivalents (fte) in 2007 to 128 fte in 2011. Of those number of PhD students increased from 45 fte in 2007 to 69 fte in 2011.

TSB works with MERIT principle: management, education, research, importance, team

Tranzo is a little miracle!

*Dean of the TSB*

Ethical and quality embedding of the research is a priority at the School. The internal ethics review committee at TSB evaluates research protocols with respect to ethical issues in relation to human participants in psychological and social science research, and medical ethics committee of the St. Elisabeth Hospital Tilburg for medical and health sciences research. The Science Committee oversees the quality of the TSB research activities, including quality control of data handling and reporting of research methods. The Science Committee evaluates TSB researchers and reviews the quality of the way in which researchers report research methods and handle data storage and analysis.

Leadership of the School considers the societal and scientific impact of the Tranzo research as high, comparing it favorably to other departments. The nine academic collaborative centers Tranzo works with can be seen as a measure of societal impact, as they are providing evidence based solutions to practical problems. The fact that all collaborative centers get funded by their 'parent' healthcare organization is a very tangible proof of relevance and support. Tranzo has the unparalleled capability to connect with external partners.

This unique position is certainly to a large extent due to inspiring academic and managerial vision of Prof. Garretsen. In the past years he has also managed to strengthen the management team and delegate responsibilities cultivating the next generation of potential leaders that would be able to take Tranzo further.

Department of medical clinical psychology and Tranzo jointly form the health cluster of the School. Since recently they share the same campus building. Accredited training courses of the clinical psychology are also the main channel for Tranzo's contribution to the (graduate) teaching program of the TSB. Also, all PhD students are part of the graduate school. External PhD students and science practitioners<sup>3</sup> are being supported with web based training and specific courses, for instance on research methodology or statistics.

TSB leadership is very supportive of Tranzo's proposal to develop its own master of science program. A plan for such a program has been submitted to the national accreditation board and at the time of the visit no decision on that application has been made. In case a separate program does not get accredited, the School will support further extension within already accredited psychology course.

The new master course should also help in solving another issue that is potentially a limiting factor in further development of Tranzo, namely relatively small tenured staff. The School maintains the ratio between tenured, not tenured staff and PhD students at approximately 1 : 1 : 2 (for instance in 2011-> 30:29:69 fte). On the other hand at Tranzo ratio tenured to non tenured is almost 1 : 4 (2011-> 2.4: 9.3). The real headcount is even more impressive, given the large number of PhD students that are not full time. In 2012, 7 staff members were working with 35 external teachers and 38 researchers in the PhD track.

At the moment Tranzo is financially sound and through specific arrangements with collaborating centers for the most part self financing. Investments of the University and TSB are limited and that is being appreciated. This model of financing through cooperation with healthcare organizations would have to serve as the basis for future developments as well, but a regular master course will provide some additional funding that can be used to increase staffing.

The School would also support extending the scope of the research internationally, and sees this as one of future challenges for the Centre.

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<sup>3</sup> science practitioners are external PhD students employed by a collaborating centre with part of their working hours (usually two or more days a week) specifically allocated to their research, also called Boulder model in psychology

Strategic priorities of the TSB, aligning with Tranzo's, include: increase research funding acquisition (Europe and valorization with funds, corporations and industry), promotion of collaborative research and training / retention of faculty.

## **Scientific Centre for Care and Welfare**

Since its establishment in 2000 Tranzo is building bridges between science, practice and care. Its interdisciplinary research program harbors both fundamental and applied research. The aim is to develop and exchange knowledge and promote evidence based working creating scientific and societal value. Three core research areas are:

- Quality of care
- Quality of life
- Evidence based practice

Research at the Centre utilizes three interlinked sources of evidence, namely: scientific evidence, professional knowledge and client values and experiences. Just like shops and arches of the Old Bridge over Arno, Tranzo spans research and practice with its collaborating centers. It's about structural cooperation that through co-creation creates substantial added value for all involved.

In 2000 Tranzo started with 4 people and no partners, today there are 80 research staff and more than 50 partners that (financially) invest in academic collaborative centers. Its researchers produce about one fifth of all peer reviewed scientific publications of the TSB, last year more then 100, and about the half of professional and lay articles. The Centre delivers around 10 PhD graduates a year and manages to pull a disproportionally large part of the grant and contract funding.

A short description of the Tranzo is included in the appendix of this report.

### Quality assessment of the Centre

Research done at Tranzo is generally regarded as of good quality, with scientific publications scoring high. University high standards of academic performance are being met and nationally recognized valorization research published in leading journals. It focuses on daily practice in healthcare, and from there connects to policy and science. Large part explores effectiveness of interventions and is evidence based, share of fundamental research is limited. Variety of research subjects and their sound base in practice is being assured through the system of collaborating centers. This diversity also applies to methodology used, from randomized trials to implementation and exploratory studies.

As already mentioned elsewhere Tranzo has grown and flourished under the leadership of professor Henk Garretsen, the chairman. His vision and energy have captivated and seduced the top of the university and school, but even more important again and again he was able to build up and maintain relations with collaborating centers. Many of them are large health care organizations that not always have time and attention for science, but somehow he and his staff had managed to keep them focused, with a few already beginning on their third 5 year cooperation cycle. At present two other aspects are also getting justified attention, efforts to improve interdepartmental collaboration (for instance with psychology within school or economy within university) and extension of the tenured staff including leaders for the future.

The reputation of the Centre is very good. It had managed to avoid being tarnished by problems in research quality assurance that have troubled the TBS in the recent years. At the same time Tranzo managed to benefit from efforts of the TSB in the last year and the half to considerably improve the quality system, including the developments of research protocols supported by RIVM<sup>4</sup>. The collaborating centers, with years of experience on working with registration protocols are fully compliant.

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<sup>4</sup> National Institute for Public Health and the Environment

Thanks to its pretty unique decentralized structure with academic collaborating centers Tranzo has an exceptionally sound financial basis. On the other hand, working with a large number of external collaborating partners requires extra investment in facilitating operations. Arrangements for that have been made with the TSB, for instance allowing Tranzo to have its own support staff as opposed to other departments that utilize School personnel. On the other hand investment of the university and the School in core tenured staff of the Centre remains limited, also compared to other departments. This goes even more so for the investment in research that is to a large extent financed by collaborating centers. Financing of the research at TSB as a whole in the past years more or less fluctuates around 50 % direct funding and 50 % grants, contract and other. At Tranzo, however, the ratio in the last 5 years is around 15 % direct funding, 50 % grants and 35 % contract. In the last two years the Center managed to pull in around 2 430 000 € in external funding per year, whilst receiving annual direct budget of 460 000 €. In the same period the budget of the School has decreased from just under 17 million to just above 14 million €. Tranzo's budget has hardly changed, stable at 2.89 million €.

### PhD program

A PhD training program is the core educational activity, and as could be expected it is organized in a rather peculiar Tranzo way. Whilst the rest of the School and University mostly has full time employed PhD students, here the majority are science practitioners or specialists in training. Most of Tranzo's PhD students have to combine research with healthcare work, and they appear to enjoy it.

It does, however, require quite a bit of coordination and planning. On the other hand, given that PhD students are employed by collaborating centers and are doing research that has been initiated and is paid for by their employers, they do seem to get a lot of support and room to focus on their projects. Meetings for 'regular' job are being combined with research, and due to multiple connections of their institutions with Tranzo it is easier to organize inclusion and data collection. In the words of one of the students: "connections are close".

Each PhD candidate is supervised by at least two adjunct professors, often from different collaborating centers. Students are being well supported, within the TSB courses are organized on general research (and publication) skills, staff of Tranzo and collaborating centers provides more hands on guidance. There are regular meetings with supervisors and ample e-mail contact. Students are even facilitated in contacts with experts that they would not necessarily meet in a classical university setting, for instance from national and local government.

In general, researchers feel that they are working on real problems and they see results of their work implemented into practice. An added boon is the pleasure of being able to teach other colleagues at work, have your research published and present it nationally and internationally. For most, construction with collaborating centre brings also job security (now and future) and decreases the need for constant grant hunt. Consequently, the dropout rate that has been a worry and well above the School average in the beginning is dropping considerably in the recent years. Small absolute numbers and high proportion of science practitioners among PhD candidates at Tranzo make direct comparisons with the rest of the TSB of limited value.

Improvement brought around to decrease dropout include changes in selection procedure, minimum of 2 days a week for research for science practitioners and evaluation after one year.

The committee wishes to stress that it has been a great pleasure to meet and talk with a group of Tranzo's PhD students. The future research is safe in their hands.

## Productivity

Tranzo has a fair share of the total research output of TSB. For instance, it alone produces more than the half of all professional / general public articles of the School. Some other outputs listed below:

Main categories of research output at institutional and program level<sup>5</sup>:

### *Total Tilburg School of Social and Behavioral Sciences of that Tranzo*

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<i>Refereed articles</i>	327	371	407	442	455	477
Tranzo	34	51	60	84	109	104
<i>Books</i>	18	31	16	24	31	18
Tranzo	1	2	0	5	4	8
<i>Book chapters</i>	113	151	129	113	158	98
Tranzo	12	11	8	12	25	23
<i>PhD theses</i>	38	27	30	46	41	45
Tranzo	3	0	1	8	6	10
<i>Prof. publ.</i> <sup>6</sup>	135	174	169	138	157	120
Tranzo	72	89	77	63	90	58
<i>Total publications</i>	631	755	751	764	843	749
Tranzo	122	153	146	172	234	203

The strategy of focusing on the research issues that are closely linked to practice and are being selected by collaborating centers leads also to diversity in publications. Combination of practice related questions with academic work and methods requires a sophisticated balancing act, as well as selection of topics and priorities. Results demonstrate proficiency of the Tranzo Board and staff in this.

It remains a challenge to maintain a minimum set of criteria as well as fitting indicators to be able to monitor and evaluate impact of the research. This has also the attention of the Tranzo Board. At the same time, using the network collaborating centers get cross fertilized with research ideas and results and that certainly reinforces the genetic pool of the scientific infrastructure.

Given the practical applicability of most of the Tranzo research, there is probably room to further expand publishing in peer reviewed journals for applied research and practice. Also, there is plenty to offer for the international, maybe in the first place European, collaboration. That could include joint publications.

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<sup>5</sup> Source: Data obtained from Stuurkaart Onderzoek/ self evaluation Tranzo 2013

<sup>6</sup> Including publications for general public

Finally we should not forget the unique output that science professionals deliver, one we are not able to capture with academic research measures. They remain healthcare professionals in their own organizations, and present regularly the topics and results of their research to assorted professional groups and committees there. Tranzo network also facilitates exchange between collaborating organizations.

Tranzo's rapid growth should also be appreciated regarding high attention to quality, transparency and integrity at University and TSB in recent years. By investing in a quality assurance system and a research protocol with supported of RIVM experts, the Centre is spearheading improvements in the School.

### Relevance

Undeniably, Tranzo has strong links to society and could probably be described as an antipode of the academic isolation. Academic collaborating centers are organizations directly involved in health care delivery, and that is where the research happens. This structure, number of centers that applies to collaborate with Tranzo and collaborating centers in their second or third five year research plan – all can be considered indications of societal impact.

Tranzo as a whole has a Societal Advisory Board in which 8 stakeholders are represented. The scientific work and the relevance for society are discussed in depth and evaluated by this Advisory Board.

On the other hand, there is certainly still a need to be able to measure that impact more precisely. Tranzo has applied for a grant for researching the subject, however that application has been denied. At present there has been limited evaluation in some collaborating centers and exploratory contacts with other research institutes (for instance RIVM) that are involved in similar exercises. This lack of good measurements for societal impact has been mentioned in the report of the previous assessment in 2008, and remains a point of concern today.

The Board and scientific leadership of Tranzo is aware of this challenge and is working on meeting it. The evaluation committee strongly supports further explorations in this direction.

### Vitality

Tranzo's position is solid. Its network model of research and practice is low in costs and high in motivation and output. The vision and perseverance of its leadership have created in thirteen years a research department with considerable societal and scientific impact. The future seems bright and secure.

On the educational side, there is a proposal for Tranzo's own master of science program: "Transformation in Care and Welfare". Envisaged as a one and a half year curriculum it would include, beside theoretical courses, a year working as science practitioner. The proposal is being supported both by the University as the TSB. At the time of this evaluation, the MSc course application is submitted to CDHO<sup>7</sup> for approval. Once set up, such a program would bring extra income that would also help in increasing the numbers of tenured staff. Tranzo has even developed a reserve plan, in case accreditation is not being given, to expand its participation in the already accredited master program of the psychology department.

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<sup>7</sup> Committee for Efficiency of Higher Education (Ministry of Education and Ministry of Economic Affairs)

However, reinforcing and further building on the research network of academic collaborating centers also has full attention of the Tranzo Board. Annually there are about 4 applications to join the network as collaborating center or to set up a chair for an adjunct professor. Among others, presentation of a five year research plan is required. Each application is being carefully evaluated, also with respect to research areas of the existing collaborations. On the other hand, three of the collaborating centers are now applying for a third five year research cycle. The collaborating centers strategy is being described in more detail in the next chapter.

Tranzo is also constantly working on strengthening links with others within TBS and the University. There is close cooperation with the medical psychology, and contacts with sociology and human resources departments of TBS. More and more they are reaching out to other schools at the university, like economy and law.

University and TBS leadership, as well as Tranzo board, recognize exceptionally solid financial position of the department. The arrangements with collaborating centers financing their own research has provided to be a reliable and strong financing source now and a very promising one for the future. Confidence in financial security on the longer term is high.

However, given that these cooperation arrangements are 'in kind' without money changing hands, they at the same time expose a potential weakness of the model. Financing for the tenured and support staff at the department have to come from the university and the TSB, and it doesn't seem that there is a perspective of a considerable increase in these. Although Tranzo has managed to obtain proportionally higher contribution for facilitation and coordination of its network than other departments, shortage of tenured staff is being felt and remains point of concern. Approval and start of the master course could mean a change of fortunes in this. The department needs to develop a vision and strategy on structuring the staffing pyramid aligned with its growth plans.

Tranzo is facing the future with ambitious plans, including:

- Strengthen research programs towards quality of life, quality of care and evidence based work
- Embedding of programs in priority areas Health and Care (TSB) and Health, Care and Aging (TiU)
- Development of social innovation, study on forms of new alliances and on the functioning of academic collaborative centers.

Growth will be based on quality rather than quantity. Within the network more and more links grow between centers with tentacles reaching abroad. That interlinking and exchange, regionally, nationally and internationally are all trends that are being strongly supported by the evaluation committee.

Tranzo is an embodiment of co-operation and co-creation between science and practice. A vision consequently translated into reality created a very robust organization.

## Academic Collaborating Centers

In the Tranzo model academic collaborating centers function in many aspects as research groups. Each has developed a five year plan and had it approved by the Board. It is important to note that also the (usually large) care organization 'hosting' the center is committed to the proposed plan and provides financing. Two parties, university and care organization, work in a long term collaborative venture based on equality and benefits for both. A proof of the model is possibly the fact that three centers are now starting their third five year research cycle.

Collaborating centers each have their defined main research area, coordinator, one or more adjunct professors and often a small network of partners. They do, however, vary considerably in size of their research portfolio and consequently in number of PhD students and academic output.

### The collaborating centre model

Given the rather unique structure of Tranzo and its interdependency with centers we have taken a closer look at the model itself. The committee is grateful to representatives of both the academic and care organization side of the centers as well as to the PhD students working there, for meeting us and shearing their own experience.

The centers work based on a long term research program and knowledge exchange that at the same time builds research infrastructure and stimulate evidence based work. The basis seem to be personal contact and relationships, principle of participation and cooperation 'in kind' with no money being transferred and sharing of common goals. The function of science practitioner is crucial and in itself the best example of the settle combination of a practicing professional and researcher.

Tranzo works together with eight collaborating centers and health economy interlink. We provide here just a short outline of each:

- Academic Collaborative Center Geestdrift (Mental Health Care)

The oldest (since 2003) and the biggest.

Central topics are: 1 )Evaluation and outcome research and 2) strategy, organization and information management.

Main partners include GGz<sup>8</sup> Eindhoven & Kempen, GGz Breeburg, Trimbos<sup>9</sup> and 13 others.

In addition to other research staff 6 adjunct professors: R. Janssen (2001), C. van Nieuwenhuizen, J.van Weeghel, I. Bongers, C. v/d Feltz en sins this year H. van Bakel.

Last year (2012) they have been working on 38 research projects in their area.

- Academic Collaborative Center Public Health Brabant

Has as main themes health policy, monitoring, evidence based working.

It is a partnership of 3 community health services (GGD's) in the province of Brabant with RIVM.

Adjunct professor at Tranzo is Hans van Oers, and prof. Ien van de Goor coordinates the group that is operational since 2004 and has led 14 projects in 2012. One of the specific topics is for instance poverty and children, where methodology has been developed, evaluated and even transferred to other (5) regions.

- Academic Collaborative Center Chronic Care

Focusing on the chronic care for the elderly, this centre established in 2004 is being merged with the center on policy for elderly. This is a cooperation with the Foundation for Scientific Research in Chronic Care (of resident chronic care institutions in central and west Brabant and supported by health insurer CZ). Built by prof. Bert Vrijhoef is now led by J. Schols as ad interim visiting professor. In 2012

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<sup>8</sup> GGz in this context large integrated mental health care organization

<sup>9</sup> Trimbos: national centre of expertise on mental health and addiction

worked on 10 research project, of that 4 have been rounded up in that year. That brought 25 national and 11 international publications. They participate in European (FP7) research program.

- Academic Collaborative Center Policy for the Elderly and Informal Care

Started in 2003/4 with inauguration of R. Schalk as adjunct professor of policy for elderly. Will merge with above mention centre for chronic care. Partners are Foundation policy for the elderly and provincial government of North Brabant that financed 2 projects in 2012/13.

- Academic Collaborative Center Addiction

From last year under leadership of prof. H. Roozen, a cooperation with two large addiction clinics Novadic-Kentron and Iriszorg. Research concerns quality of care and prevention, specifically diagnostic, treatment, etiology and progression of addiction. In 2012 they have had 4 project going, including one that compares situation in the Netherlands and Norway.

- Academic Collaborative Center Quality of Care by General Practitioners and Hospitals

Initiated in 2005 by the Netherlands Institute for Health Care Research (NIVEL) that still sponsors two adjunct professors D. de Bakker and R. Friele. Sins last year the chair of prof. D. Delnoij, originally set up by the Centre for Client Experience of Care is being taken over by the Institute for Health Care Quality of the National Insurance Board (CVZ/KI). RIVM is also involved. Tranzo Board is working to include one or two hospitals in the partnership. With focus is on quality of care, 19 research project have been run in 2012.

- Interlink Health Economy

Started in 2007 with a brief to connect and built on health economy research in all centers. Established with the support of the RIVM, that finances the appointment of prof. J. Polder. Other partners include Central Plan Bureau, the Dutch Healthcare Authority, Network for Studies on Pensions, Aging and Retirement and research institutes at Erasmus University(iBMG) and Free University (EMGO). Collaboration with national research groups and international presentations. In 2012 led two major projects.

- Academic Collaborative Center Prevention Assured

Established in 2009 with the support of the Health Insurance CZ for research on (cost) effectiveness of individual prevention and implementation aspects. Prof. I. v/d Goor and colleagues led in 2012 6 projects. The Centre manages a rather broad and diverse network where its research is taking place, from housing corporations and social services to care group and hospital.

- Academic Collaborative Center Living with an Intellectual Disability

The youngest in the family, just established last year (2012). This is a partnership between 5 organizations for handicapped care, national support organization (mee) and national clients organization (lfb). In addition two colleges and insurer CZ are also involved. Led by prof. P. Embregts, the Centre has ambitious program aiming to empower persons with intellectual disability and the professional involved working on 5 research topics.

### Quality in ACC's

To be able to assess the quality of research done at collaborating centers we have tried to understand its peculiarity. And it seems that it lies in real, deep co-creation where academic institution and health care organization manage to use their own strengths and expertise to maximal benefit. As the chair of Tranzo puts it: "they connect, not mingle".

The academia gets access to research field, possibility to put forward own interests. Professionals in care organizations get scientific recognition and possibly status, whilst being able to tackle research related to actual care they provide. That brings also innovation, evidence- based care and quality improvement. Maybe the essence is in the inner satisfaction of knowing that your and your colleagues' professional work has been getting better. That what they do both as care providers and researchers matter. And it does!

This would all not be possible without the considerable effort and leadership of the adjunct professors and coordinators of the collaborating centers. The professors all combine academic work with their regular assignments and jobs in care organizations and institutes. Considerable energy is being

invested in maintaining the network, for instance with annual 2 day retreat of Tranzo's professors to present current work and discuss strategy for the future. Or twice per year meeting of all professors and coordinators.

Truly remarkable are the changes in strategic positioning of health care organizations that host or work with ACC's, in their attention to scientific work. We heard of large mental health conglomerates that now has one of the Board members explicitly tasked with scientific research, similar construction is set up in a municipal / regional health service organization (GGD). In other Tranzo partner organizations professors leading the ACC have regular meetings with the Board discussing the research plan and results, a practice that can and does influence the care provided.

An ACC seem to be a desirable place to be associated with. It provides career opportunities for people that feel limited within just care provision or academic work, and thrive on the combination. Scientific research might just be a glitter in the duty rosters that makes them challenging, seeing the actual patent improve as result of your research could be giving a deep personal meaning to academic work. This seems to apply both to PhD students / science practitioners as well as adjunct professors. With a long tradition of registration and privacy regulation in care organizations all ACC's seem to be able to implement and follow new quality assurance protocols being developed (by RIVM) for research at TSB.

Cooperation through ACC requires both parties to invest resources. The University / TSB / Tranzo had to make more staff available for coordination, support and facilitating of the network than average for other departments. Also, given a limited proportion of elsewhere in the university typical full time PhD students, additional support and training had to be provided for research competences. Special courses are being organized, flexible enrolment in Tilburg University and TSB courses is made possible, and sometimes access provided to courses on other universities.

The evaluation committee is of the opinion that there is still more room and need for support of the ACC network by the TSB and the University. The success of the model and the newly established priorities in health area of both the School and the University would require a more solid infrastructure at Tranzo. Having collaborating centers around one research line / professorship can be at risk if academic leader departs.

On the other hand the organizations partnering in the collaborating centre are investing heavily as well. This is being recognized by the TSB and the University as both consider Tranzo finances sound despite relatively limited investment made in the department. Basic investment of an academic partner is support for the adjunct professor position or positions, either directly or through a purpose set foundation. The latter constructions enable more than one organization to sponsor an academic post. In addition, a coordinator for each ACC is being financed. Some centers are even able to provide specialist research staff, like statisticians and epidemiologist. And, of course, the main contribution of partners is in hiring staff specifically for research (full time PhD) or allowing existing staff time to engage in scientific work (science practitioners).

Most hosting care organizations are large and have a substantial and rather secure budget, making the part invested in academic collaboration proportionally small. The benefits of the cooperation experienced by partners assure the continuation of investment in scientific work. Given the relative size of the ACC costs to the organization budget, there seem to be little or no elasticity with respect to pressures on the care financing as a whole.

## Productivity at ACC's

Despite the combination of care practice with scientific work, the productivity of the academic staff at Tranzo is at par or better to the rest of the TSB, as the table below shows<sup>10</sup>:

	<i>TSB</i>	<i>Tranzo</i>	<i>Tranzo as % of TSB</i>
<i>staff</i>	121	17.2	14%
<i>staff and science pr.</i> <sup>11</sup>	128.5	24.7	19%
<i>total publications</i>	749	203	27%
<i>pub/ fte staff</i>	6	12	/
<i>pub/fte staff +s.p.</i>	6	8	/
<i>refereed publications</i>	478	104	22%
<i>r.pub/ fte staff</i>	4	6	/
<i>r.pub/fte staff +s.p.</i>	4	4	/

Based on combination of practice and academic work Tranzo delivers well above average on publications in professional journals. Some of those professional publications could possibly be adjusted to meet the criteria of refereed journals, including international. This would increase the academic status of Tranzo's output.

There is guidance available to PhD students to navigate mazes of refereed publications, and some international exchange. However, the impression is that although praised this exchange is left to ACC's individually and not actively coordinated or stimulated by Tranzo. That might be an opportunity for the future.

The cooperation between academy and practice apparently works very well in selecting research topics. On the one hand issues forthcoming from the annual Public Health Status and Forecasts Report<sup>12</sup> are being explored. For instance, there is attention to problems of alcohol consumption or overweight. On the other hand, very specific treatments, procedures or health issues of organizations involved get the benefit of being researched and reinforced by scientific evidence. We have heard great examples of new treatment programs in mental health being evaluated, sometimes using tailor made methodology that fits better than randomized trials. Another case, related to effects of insurance co-payments (for specialist care) on primary care visits initiated by one of the partners has evoked sufficient interest at other centers to enable a multi-center study.

Upcoming reforms in care organization and financing, including decentralization to municipalities, are seen as a new opportunity for knowledge intermediaries of Tranzo. It is impressive to hear how partnering organizations naturally speak of ACC network as solution of their problems.

## Societal relevance

As described earlier in our report, the model of research groups as collaborating centers is a measure of societal relevance of the Center's work. The evaluation committee is impressed by the apparent ease the cooperating agreements are being set up, including number of new applications each year, the number of centers applying for a new five year research cycle and the fact that thirteen years after its inception more than 50 partners are associated with Tranzo.

The ACC deal with questions from practice and provide scientific answers that have impact on the same practice and care delivery. It seems that this construction also manages to speed up the use of knowledge in practice, compared to for instance more traditional reading in journals or hearing at the conference. On the other hand scientific foundation and legitimating of practice in care organizations can be developed.

Having said all that, the committee is of the opinion that further measurement and evaluation of the societal relevance is needed. This should be done structurally and systematically, and be embedded

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<sup>10</sup> Data Tranzo 2013

<sup>11</sup> Science practitioner PhD is being counted as estimated average of 0,3 fte

<sup>12</sup> VTV publications of RIVM

in all research done by the Centre. The imperfection of methodology and other difficulties related to evaluating relevance and impact, especially societal, should not be seen as an obstacle. Tranzo might be in a premier position, given its collaborating model, to take the national and international lead in this area. This would require concerted effort of the Board and investment of the School and ACC's.

#### Vitality and feasibility of the collaborating centers

The pluriformity of the collaborating centers is undoubtedly the best proof of their vitality and feasibility. Some stop after a certain period, or merge, others add new partners in the cooperation expand and apply for a new five year affiliation. The model is flexible enough to allow even for major changes in partnering organizations, like merger or reorganization – new structures take over the collaboration. And there seem to be sufficient candidates for the ACC status to chose from every year. The strategy devised by Tranzo has proven its worthiness and makes a solid basis for the future. Not surprisingly, it has also been promoted as best practice on the University level and is getting increasing national and international attention.

Dependency of a large number of staff and PhD students that have double affiliations, to the university and the care organization, remains an issue that requires continuously careful balancing. Flexibility demonstrated in previous years, and the understanding for (sometimes temporary) needs and priorities of the other partner, are a good way forward.

The ACC structure also does not necessarily deliver tenure staff. Adjunct professors usually involved in academic work 1 or sometimes 2 days a week do not really feel that they have influence on the University policy and community. Also, there are not enough mid career positions like assistant professorships. Still, people like being associated to Tranzo and the committee has the feeling that the culture is open and the atmosphere is good.

Taking into account declared priorities of the University and the TSB, we feel confident that Tranzo and its Academic Collaborating Centers are a robust scientific organization with a bright future. Tranzo has all it takes to expand and enhance its position and reputation, within the TSB, Tilburg University, nationally and internationally. It would be a challenging and perilous path in the times of economical crisis around us, but this evaluation committee feels confident that the leadership, the staff and collaborating partners of Tranzo are more than capable to accomplish that.

## Evaluations scores of the committee for Tranzo in the period 2007-2012

	<i>comment</i>	<i>score</i>
<b>Quality</b>	<b>The quality is very high, especially given the major role for the practice-based research</b>	<b>4.5</b>
<b>productivity</b>	<b>Scientific production is excellent both in international and national forum</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Relevance</b>	<b>The infrastructure and potential for relevance is in place with presumed very high societal relevance</b>	<b>4.5</b>
<b>vitality</b>	<b>The potential is good due to collaborative structures, but strengthening is needed in the staff structure in general and especially that of tenured staff</b>	<b>4.5</b>

### Main recommendations following evaluation in 2013:

#### Quality of research:

- Further development of international collaboration and funding, including staff and PhD student exchange programs
- Developing and defining measurable indicators for societal relevance of research

#### Productivity:

- International publications area could be further expanded

#### Relevance:

- Developing indicators for relevance is still a challenge
- Scientific added value of the collaborative centers should be made more visible and measurable

#### Vitality:

- Strengthening the staff structure by expanding on mid-career and senior (tenured) staff
- Pursuing to establish a Master of Science level education both for sustainable income but also to educate next generation science practitioners
- Guaranteeing sustainable support for managing the wide ACC network, infrastructure and staffing plus PhD training; in this both the University as TSB should also recognize their responsibility and take action
- Further defining of Tranzo's international niche/position/benchmarking

**Appendices:**

Description Tranzo

Previous research assessments

Program of the visit / list of people met

## **A brief description of the institute**

Tranzo is Tilburg University's scientific center for care and welfare.

Tranzo's mission is to build a bridge between science and practitioners in the field of care and welfare. The interaction between three parties is of crucial importance for this: researchers, professionals (such as care providers and policy staff) and our target group, citizens, patients, or more generally, the demand side. Our objective is, through interdisciplinary scientific research in collaboration with professionals, to obtain, to further develop, and to exchange knowledge in the field of care and welfare. The research program objectives include outstanding academic achievements and ensuring their value in practice.

## **OUR APPROACH: ACADEMIC COLLABORATIVE CENTERS**

Tranzo focuses on the interaction between science, practitioners, and demand for care. Since 2000, in collaboration with organizations in the field of care and welfare, Tranzo has set up various Academic Collaborative Centers. The Tranzo Academic Collaborative Centers are increasingly developing into long-term collaborations between the University and care organizations, in which work is carried out on the development of scientific knowledge and on innovation in the (care) provision in the sector concerned. There is also frequent collaboration with other organizations on a project basis. In Academic Collaborative Centers, science practitioners play a central role. Science practitioners are professionals who work partly in the field and partly within the University.

## **SHARING OF KNOWLEDGE AND INITIATIVES**

The overall objective of the research is to increase knowledge. The exchange of knowledge is immensely important, and this is achieved by Tranzo researchers in many different ways, including publications, presentations at national and international conferences, lectures, and PhD theses. The exchange of knowledge with care and welfare practitioners also plays an important role. In addition, knowledge is also disseminated through our post-academic courses; Tranzo offers three courses of study, for managers, directors, and professionals in the care sector and also organizes a number of discussion meetings and symposia every year.

The collaborating partners:

- Academic Collaborative Center Geestdrift (Mental Health Care)  
Mental Health Care (GGz) Eindhoven and the Kempen, GGz Breburg Group, and Tilburg University.

- Academic Collaborative Center Public Health Brabant

The three Community Health Services (GGD) in Brabant (GGD Hart voor Brabant, GGD West-Brabant, GGD Brabant-Zuidoost), the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM), and Tilburg University.

- Academic Collaborative Center Chronic Care
- Academic Collaborative Center Quality of Care by General Practitioners and Hospitals
- Academic Collaborative Center Prevention Assured
- Academic Collaborative Center Policy for the Elderly and Informal Care

The Foundation Special Chair Policy for the Elderly, the Province of Noord-Brabant, and Tilburg University.

- Academic Collaborative Center Addiction

The scientific bureau for research, expertise, and consultancy in the field of lifestyle, addiction, and related social developments (IVO) in Rotterdam, and Tilburg University.

- Academic Collaborative Center Living with an Intellectual Disability

## Results of previous research assessments

In the strategic plan 2010-2013 of Tilburg University the following is mentioned about their quality standards. Quality To operate successfully in the national and international market, we need to further sharpen our quality policy for education and research: without a rigorous quality policy, Tilburg University will not realize its ambitions and will fall behind its competitors. In the past years Tilburg University has made major investments in improving the quality of its research. Tilburg University will continue to do this in the knowledge that our reputation as a research university is primarily measured by our research performance. In the coming years our educational activities will be brought up to the same standard and the reinforcement of our education will therefore receive considerable attention, always on the understanding that scientific education only deserves the qualification “scientific” if it is fed by high-quality scientific research. We are therefore continuing the ‘4 out of 5’ policy from the previous Strategic Plan for education and research. A similar level of ambition will be pursued with respect to the support services for education and research as well as Tilburg University’s internal services. At this moment the strategic plan for next period is in the development process and will strive for maintenance or even higher quality.

- Beoordelingen visitatiecommissies

Programma	Quality	Productivity	Relevance	Viability
Social decision making (2011)	4	4	5	4
Cognitive neurosciences (2011)	5	4	5	4
Developmental psychology (2011)	4	3	4,5	3
Medical psychology (2011)	3,5/4,5	5/5	5/4	4/5
Sociology (2008)	5	5	5	4
Organisatiewetenschappen (2008)	4,5	4	4	4
Human Resource studies (2008)	4	4	5	4
Tranzo (2008)	4	5	5	4
Latent variable models (2011)	4,5	4	4,5	5

**Blauw: Verwachte resultaten Endterm Review CoRPS**

## **Program site visit Tranzo, Tilburg University, 25-26 September 2013**

### Wednesday, 25 September 2013

16.00-16.30 Introduction by Prof. Henk Garretsen  
16.30-19.00 committee internal preparatory meeting  
19.00-21.30 Committee dinner Location: Hotel Auberge du Bonheur

### Thursday, 26 September 2013

Location: Faculty Club

09.00-09.30 Welcome Committee, by rector magnificus Prof.dr. Philip Eijlander

09.30-10.00 Meeting with Board Tilburg School of Social and Behavioral Sciences  
Prof. Klaas Sijtsma (dean)  
Drs. Hans Dieteren (director)

10.15-11.00 Meeting with Board Tranzo  
Prof. Henk Garretsen  
Prof. Ien van de Goor  
Dr. Evelien Brouwers  
Drs. Jacqueline Frijters

11.00-11.30 Meeting with coordinators Academic Collaborative Centers  
Prof. Ien van de Goor  
Dr. Evelien Brouwers  
Dr. Katrien Luijkx  
Drs. Wietske van Oorsouw

11.30-12.15 Meeting with collaborating partners in the field  
Drs. Mark van Beers  
Drs. Lisette Schipper  
Dr. Helena Andrea  
Dr. Marja van Bon

12.15-13.15 Lunch with collaborating partners Location: Faculty Club

13.15-14.15 Meeting with (associate) professors Tranzo  
Prof. Johan Polder  
Prof. Petri Embregts  
Prof. Hans van Oers  
Prof. Chijs van Nieuwenhuizen

14.15-15.15 Meeting with PhD-students (Tranzo and science practitioners)  
Leonieke van Boekel MSc.  
Drs. Charlotte Barendregt  
Noud Frielink MSc.  
Drs. Meriam Janssen

15.15-16.30 Internal deliberations of the

16.30 Informal presentation of the committee's first impressions and findings  
and drinks Location: Hotel Auberge du Bonheur