

Living Lab in Ageing & Long-term Care

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Long term care in the Netherlands



- The Dutch system is financed by the Dutch social security system and health insurance companies. Home care nursing and intervention programs are mainly financed by municipality or the state and partly by patient's contribution.
- Large care organizations in the Netherlands operate decentralized employing between 1,000 and 5,000 employees offer nursing home and home care (community nursing)
- Universal access. The Dutch system is financed by the Dutch social security system and health insurance companies.
- Care at home when possible



Living Lab

Structural collaboration between universities and care organizations

- Maastricht University | Zuyd University of Applied Sciences | Gilde & Vista Intermediate Vocational Training Institutes
- 9 long-term care organisations providing professional home care and nursing home care
- More than 180 care locations; 27.000 staff; 50.000 clients

Living Lab



Mission

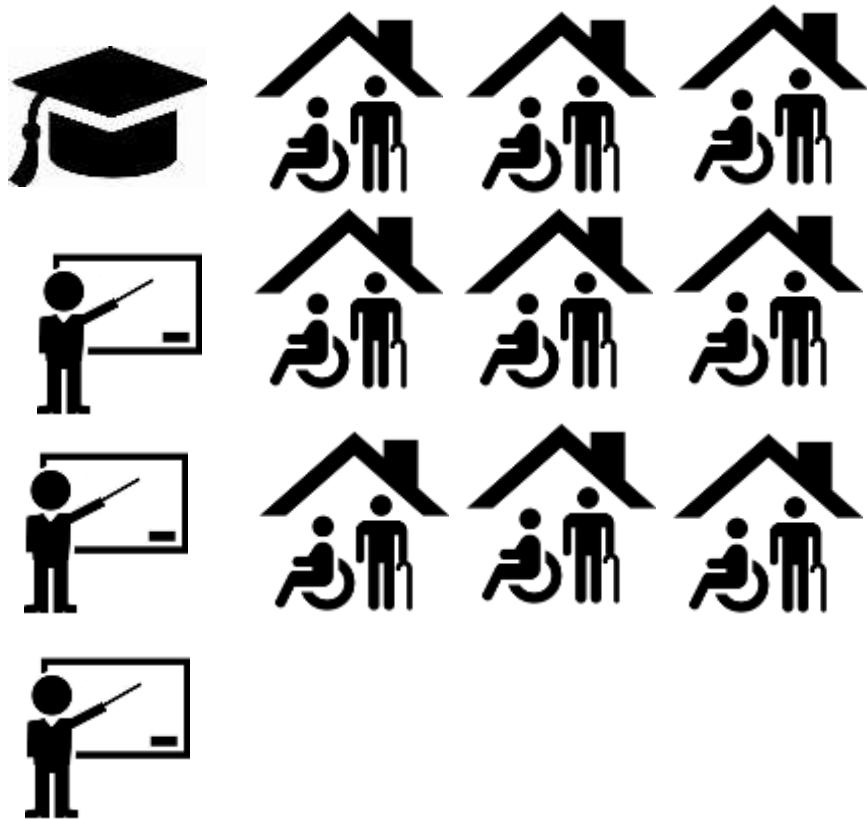
Contribute to

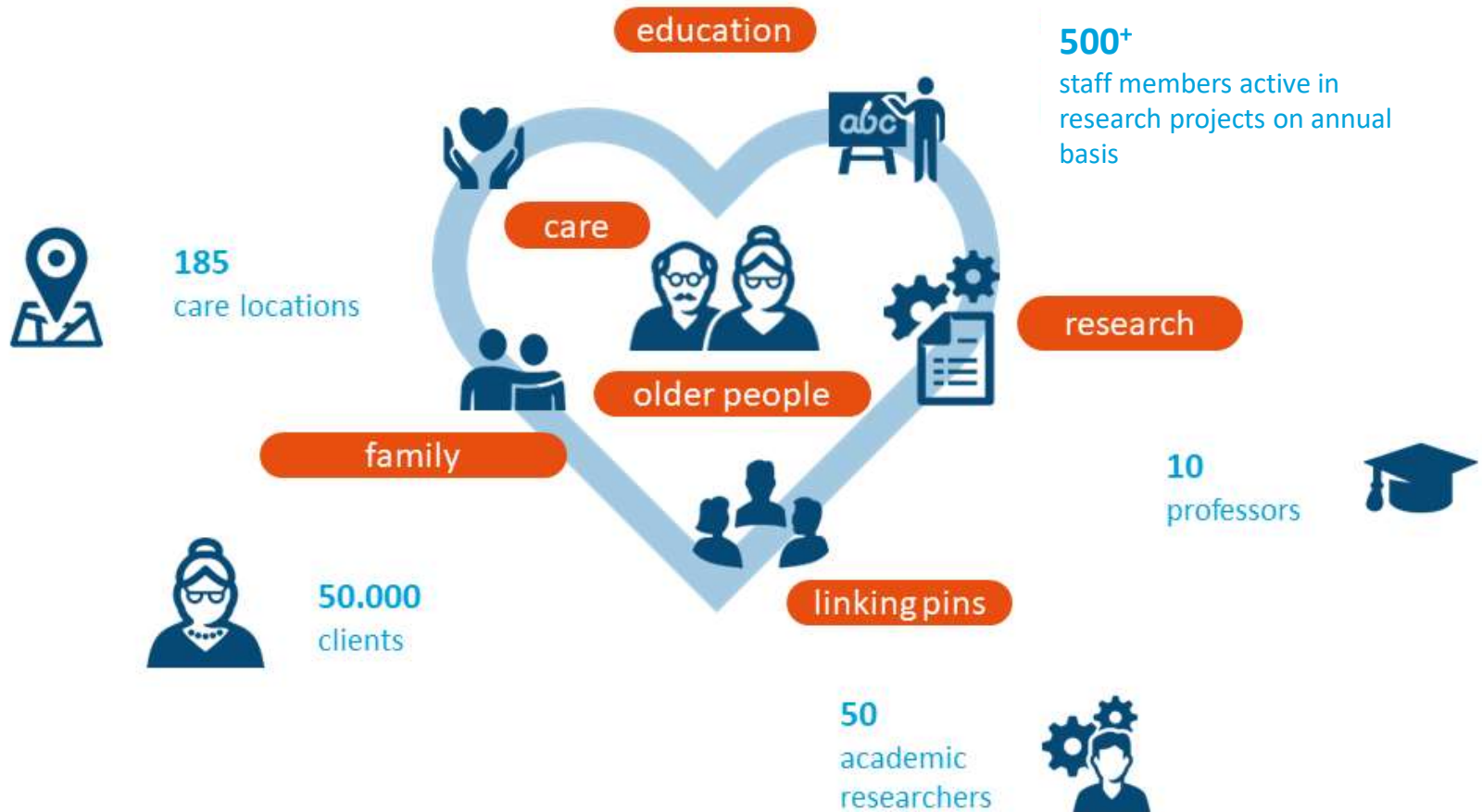
- quality of life
- quality of care
- quality of work

by means of scientific research



How it started





Key characteristics

- Interdisciplinarity partnership
 - Researchers & care staff have a background in different disciplines e.g. community nursing, medicine, psychology, data science, service science
 - Older adults, family members & caregivers setting the agenda: citizen science approach
- Joint appointments / Linking-pins
 - Scientific and practice linking-pins
- Tailor-made 'Learning network' approach
 - Organizations determine research agenda
 - Thematic group and network community nursing



Interdisciplinairity

Chairs & research teams

Backgrounds: nursing, old age medicine, psychology, health sciences, occupational therapy, physical therapy

but also: data sciences, service sciences, anthropology,

Older adults, family members & caregivers setting the agenda: citizen science approach

Organisational – multidisciplinary - research committees

‘Learning network’ approach

Peers: linking pin meetings,
older adults advisory board,
communication officers etc

Thematic groups: care technology,
datascience,
geriatric rehabilitation, etc



Linking pins



Dual appointment: scientific & practice-based

Building an infrastructure for scientific research in partner organization

Setting a research agenda & creating research lines

Link the organization to relevant living lab projects

Advise on research conducted in organizations

Picking up research questions from daily practice

Making research accesible & understandable for staff

Membership of the organisational research committee

Encouraging evidence based practice



Business model Living Lab



Basic infrastructure: i.e. linking pins, coordination, tenured staff

- Key financing: living lab partners
 - 'in kind' : make employees available to participate in the network
 - 'in cash': yearly contribution
- Co-financing: Ministry of Health, Well-being & Sports (from 2025 extra finance for home care living lab work)

Research

- Funds & Research grants: (inter)national
- Governments & Insurance companies
- Living lab partners



Illustrations of benefits

Scientific knowledge development

Innovation in care

e.g., restraint-free care; green care farms

Improving education

e.g., integration knowledge in curricula;

Increasing expertise & citizen education

e.g., annual symposia; learning network

Challenging environment for young people

e.g., participation in projects; dual appointments



Impact is challenging to measure because...



- complex outcomes
 - cultural change
 - strengthened professional networks
 - improved decision making
- time lag and the question of causation
- large number of stakeholders with varying ideas of 'value'
 - researchers, care staff, students, older persons
- narrow metrics don't reflect real-life innovation

... but also important!

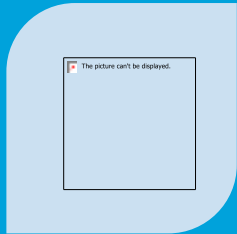


- accountability and sustainability
 - for funders
 - for partners
- visibility
- continuous learning and strategic direction
- impact drives motivation

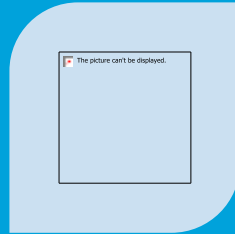
Based on interview study: how do participants perceive impact?



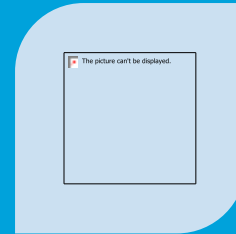
- increased collaborations & network
 - achieving shared goals
 - avoid uncoordinated efforts
 - increased professional network
 - quick and easy to gather information
- quality of care & work
 - supports improving care quality
 - develop and implement new interventions
 - personal growth and learning through research participation
- culture & motivation



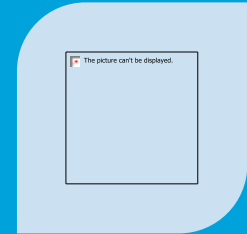
“I think a successful collaboration for me is one where science and practice are combined. So, needs in healthcare are translated to research, but the research is also translated back into practice.”



“It's about meeting people. If all you do is drink coffee with people you're doing a good job. I think there's kind of a core there. It's about knowing people and when you need each other that foundation is set.”



“It's hard work to put scientific results into practice. It takes a lot of steps and involvement, but without the living lab the research wouldn't even come up to our front door”



“I have a good understanding of practice, and don't sit behind my PC and think about what a potential research question could be. I have a good understanding of practical needs now. Those inform my research “

25 years of Living Lab in Ageing & Long-term care



een wens
voor de
ouderenzorg

academische
werkplaats limburg
ouderenzorg



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International Network of Living Labs

using the Limburg Living Lab model



- NICHE Leeds (started 2017)
- PraWiDem Living Lab
- OPINION lab
- Liverpool



Further reading on the Limburg Living Lab Model:



NICHE
Leeds
linking pins
on
the model

Verbeek, H., Urlings, J., & Hamers, J. (2023). Twenty-five years of aging research and innovation in the Living Lab. *Nature aging*.

Everink, I., Urlings, J., ... & Devi, R. (2023). Bridging the Gap: A Qualitative Exploration of the Scientific Linking Pin Role in Science and Care Partnerships. *Journal of Long-Term Care*.

Verbeek, H., ... & Hamers, J. P. H. (2020). The living lab in ageing and long-term care: a sustainable model for translational research improving quality of life, quality of care and quality of work. *The Journal of nutrition, health and aging*



Take-home messages

Living Lab is a promising real-life ecosystem for scientific research, innovation and impact

Thriving on people who share a passion and use results to lobby for change

Linking pins crucial for developing infrastructure for research within care organizations

Start small! Living Labs depend on relations – those take time to develop

No external funding is needed to set up and maintain an infrastructure



Thank you!

