



Evelien Kelfkens

THUIS VOELEN IN DE BUURT

Feeling at home in the neighborhood



INTRODUCTION

- **We all live in a neighborhood and grow old there;**
- At the same time, there is a trend of **ageing in place** (Alders & Schut, 2019). Ageing in place is the ability to live in one's own home and community safely, independently and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level (CDC, 2022);
- In the Netherlands, there is growing attention for the neighborhood for instance in the Living and care vision 'Woonzorgvisie' (2024);
- The **'Zorg voor de buurtvisites'** is a method developed by the 'Thuis Voelen' foundation. This foundation visits various neighborhoods from the perspective "is this a place where I or my loved one could feel at home"? After every visit, a review is written with suggestions to improve the age-friendliness of a neighborhood;
- This easy-to-follow method allows for improvements in the neighborhood with just a few small, low-cost adjustments.

METHODOLOGY

- A **literature review** to outline a framework for the 'Zorg voor de buurtvisites';
- Three **interviews with experts** on the topic of age-friendly cities;
- To describe the method, the researcher accompanied 'stichting Thuis Voelen' during three of their 'Zorg voor de buurtvisites' and made field notes of these visits.

FINDINGS

- **Literature study findings**
 - Home plays a special role in our lives. It is a place where we can be in control, shape our surroundings and determine our own daily routines; (Graham & Gosling, 2015; Luijkx, 2015);
 - Wiles & Andrews (2020) differentiate between two key aspects that contribute to the feeling of home: physical-material aspects and social-relational aspects;
 - Residential happiness is important because it contributes to energy, a good mood, mental balance, health and happiness (Annink, 2018)
 - There are several elements of the neighborhood contributing to residential happiness ('Woonplezier'): A communal space, walkable paths and amenities within walking distance (Annink, 2018).
- **Expert interviews findings;**
 - Involve citizens in the Zorg voor de buurtvisites;
 - Involve the municipality or other organisations at an early stage;
 - Involve a neighborhood coordinator or a local sports coach;
 - Don't just point out areas for improvement, but also acknowledge what's going well;

OUTPUT

- **Output magazine with:**
 - How to do a 'Zorg voor de buurtvisite' by yourself;
 - Tips & Tricks;
 - Interviews with experts;
 - Regional continuation of "Zorg voor de buurt", "Oost West, Thuis Best", input for 'Woonzorgvisie'.

References

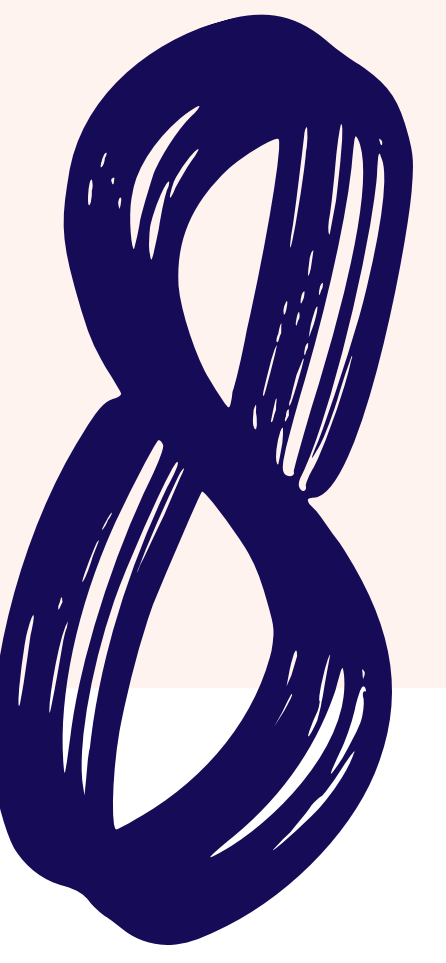
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Figure 1: Example of art Tree trunk knitting



SIMPLE TIPS FOR AGE-FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOODS

You can do it yourself!



1. Signposts and information

Helps people find their way around the neighborhood. When placing signage, include the number of kilometers.

2. Places for everyone

To facilitate contact between different groups of people.

3. Art

Improves the attractiveness and invites people to walk in their neighborhood. Art can be used to beautify "neglected" objects such as electrical transformer boxes.

4. Walking paths

Enable people in wheelchairs or with walking difficulties to go outside and engage in physical activity. Good walking paths could prevent falls and injuries.

5. Places to sit

Sufficient benches in the neighborhood offer breaks for walkers with limited mobility. Seating areas should be designed in such a way that they foster encounters and conversations.

6. Greenery

Well-maintained greenery increases the attractiveness of the neighborhood and has a natural cooling effect.

7. Use the neighborhood's potential

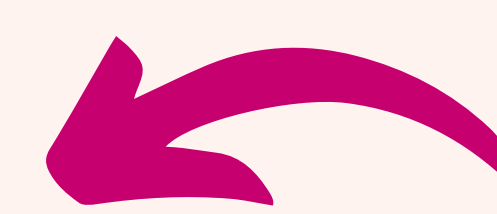
The neighborhood has hidden gems with great potential that are often overlooked or that could be transformed into local hotspots. Discovering the hobbies and artistic talents of residents is a useful way to improve the neighborhood.

8. Involve local businesses and organizations

When you involve shopkeepers, catering entrepreneurs, and artists in the ideas you have for the neighborhood, a win-win situation arises.

TAKE HOME MESSAGE

- Improving neighborhoods doesn't have to be complicated or expensive;
- Small, low-cost adjustments can have a major impact;
- 'Zorg voor de buurtvisites' is an easy-to-use method to improve the liveability and age-friendliness of neighborhoods;



link to magazine (DUTCH)



Every month, a new 'Zorg voor de buurtvisite' is posted on the website of ZorgSaamWonen. Are you interested?

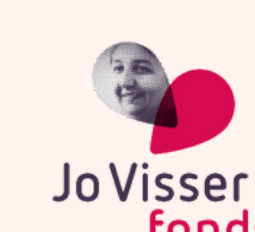
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Stichting Thuis Voelen
Lessen voor de praktijk



Leyden Academy
ON VITALITY AND AGEING

