



Annual Activity report 2024 ILC-Netherlands

International Longevity Centre the Netherlands (ILC-NL) is an independent movement with the goal to let people think about healthy and active ageing, with a greater freedom of choice and self-reliance. The benefits of vitality amongst older people should be encouraged while vulnerability and dependence be postponed for as long as possible.

PARTNERS

ILC-NL is a member of ILC Global Alliance, an international federation of centres for active and healthy aging. ILC-NL is represented by Leyden Academy on Vitality and Ageing, and closely collaborates with Vereniging Aegon, Jo Visser foundation and Leiden University Medical Centre (LUMC), amongst others.

Leyden Academy on Vitality and Ageing

Leyden Academy is a research institute with the mission to improve the quality of life of older people. We co-create knowledge about ageing and vitality with older people and other relevant stakeholders, and make it accessible to policymakers, healthcare professionals and the public. Core themes include:

- vitality
- personal well-being
- inclusive society
- cultural diversity
- gender and the course of life
- care, aesthetics and art

Vereniging Aegon

Vereniging Aegon is shareholder of Aegon N.V. and represents its interests as well as that of associated companies, insured persons, employees, and other shareholders and partners. Vereniging Aegon contributes to the well-being and vitality of older people. Since 2007 it supports Leyden Academy.

Jo Visser foundation

This foundation is committed to dignified care for vulnerable older people who are permanently dependent upon care. Values such as belonging, solidarity, intergenerational encounters and community building play a leading role.

LUMC

LUMC is a leading university medical centre for research, education, and patient care with a strong scientific orientation. The master's programme Health, Ageing & Society (formerly known as Vitality & Ageing, developed by Leyden Academy) is part of their education program.

PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Leyden Academy and ILC-NL, together with other partners, are involved in multiple research projects and activities, such as:

Honours Class

The Honours Class Innovating Health and Well-being is an extracurricular course for talented master students, focusing on complex social and scientific subjects. The theme for this edition, which runs from November 2024 to February 2025, is about making impact: bridging research and society for inclusive health and wellbeing.

Age-friendly cities in the Netherlands

We are getting older and more diverse, and that brings challenges. We cannot solve these challenges through healthcare alone. We also need municipalities, schools, companies, housing associations and older people themselves to achieve an age-friendly society. The Dutch Council for Medical Research (ZonMw) granted us a meta-study to synthesize and share knowledge developed in 110 local care and support networks for older people throughout the country. The local networks were

composed of healthcare and welfare professionals, and sometimes also older people and organizations such as municipalities, housing corporations, social entrepreneurs, artists, and architects. Action researchers used artistic and participatory methods considering the question 'How do you work together with different parties such as healthcare, welfare, housing, public space, volunteers and older people themselves?' The aim was to provide the professionals in the networks with tools to look at their own practice with an investigative view and to further develop the collaboration between care, support, and welfare in the neighborhood.

[Read the research article.](#)

Training programme on friendships for the wellbeing of older people

The European FRIEND project, funded by the Erasmus+ program, involves a partnership comprising the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Poland. It aims to develop a twofold training program:

1. An experiential training programme designed to enhance the social skills of older adults to prevent and/or reduce the risk of social isolation and loneliness. By promoting social inclusion and the participation of older people, the project aims to improve their overall wellbeing.
2. A training dedicated to professionals and interested volunteers, enabling them to implement the FRIEND programme and acquire the necessary knowledge and skills.

[Click here for more information.](#)

Photo-voice in involving vulnerable elderly people in research and policy

Vital elderly people in the third phase of life are often expected to remain socially active and care for the 'oldest old'. But what if older people live in vulnerable situations, face insecurity, and have no access to resources or social networks? How can policymakers and researchers reach this vulnerable group and involve

them in meaningful participation? Reaching older people in vulnerable situations requires a different approach. By choosing photo-voice for example, elderly people in vulnerable situations can be given the space to make their voices heard and work together to improve their living conditions.

Our photo-voice project showed several key factors:

1. The fact that the researchers knew the neighborhood, culture and language ensured that doors that were closed to anonymous research remained, now opened. Taking time for 'normal' conversations was crucial for building trust.
2. By first creating space for conversation and attuning to the living environment of the residents, the elderly felt heard and seen.
3. Empathy and letting go of your own working methods.

[Click here for more information.](#)

Art, an indispensable part in healthcare

White paper

Much more attention needs to be paid to the positive effects of the use of art in healthcare. Art makes people feel better and helps them to better cope with their illness. Art can also mean a lot in the social domain and prevention, and in shortening hospital admissions. More than two hundred researchers, administrators, policy makers, healthcare workers, artists, teachers, experts, and other stakeholders have participated in a broad study by Arts in Health the Netherlands. Together they outline how art can contribute to the transition in healthcare and how the field can be further strengthened.

Click here for the [white paper 'Arts in Health in the Netherlands – A national agenda'](#).

Event

Contact is something special. Really in contact with another person, with yourself, with your work, with your



environment... then you know you're alive. Real contact is also rare, especially in places where work pressure is high and the need for it is so strong. In healthcare, for example.

For the third year we organised an Arts & Health event, this year together with The Care Lab at The University of Manchester. About eighty participants – from healthcare professionals to reaches, and from artists to elderly people - looked for ways to strengthen contact through dance, song, theatre, meditation, visual arts, rituals, stories, and conversation. It showed the connection between aesthetics and care, as well as the power between care and art. [Read more.](#)

Story-based learning through dialogue

In the project 'Caring stories' we developed a narrative-based adult education for healthcare professionals in the Netherlands and in Spain. We trained nursing assistants and welfare professionals in person-centered care through listening, interpretation and understanding of stories of older adults. This will assist in the attunement to the mutuality of a caring relationship and provides better person-centered care. This project was made possible by the Erasmus+ program. [Check out the online platform.](#)

The future of diagnostics

In the Spark workshop 'The future of diagnostics, about personalized prevention', international experts discussed the possibilities and effects of applications to enable personalized prevention for health-conscious patients and citizens. Wearable sensors, metabolomic biomarkers for seniors and AI – for measuring bodily functions – provide an increasing data flow and potential healthcare cost savings. The workshop was initiated by the DusraVoila consortium, which stands for Dutch Society of Research on Aging & Vitality Oriented Innovations for the Life course of the Aging Society.

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