

Inclusive ageing: Tackling loneliness among older migrants through participation and co-creation

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Leyden Academy
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Inhoud

Older migrants in the Netherlands

Loneliness among older migrants

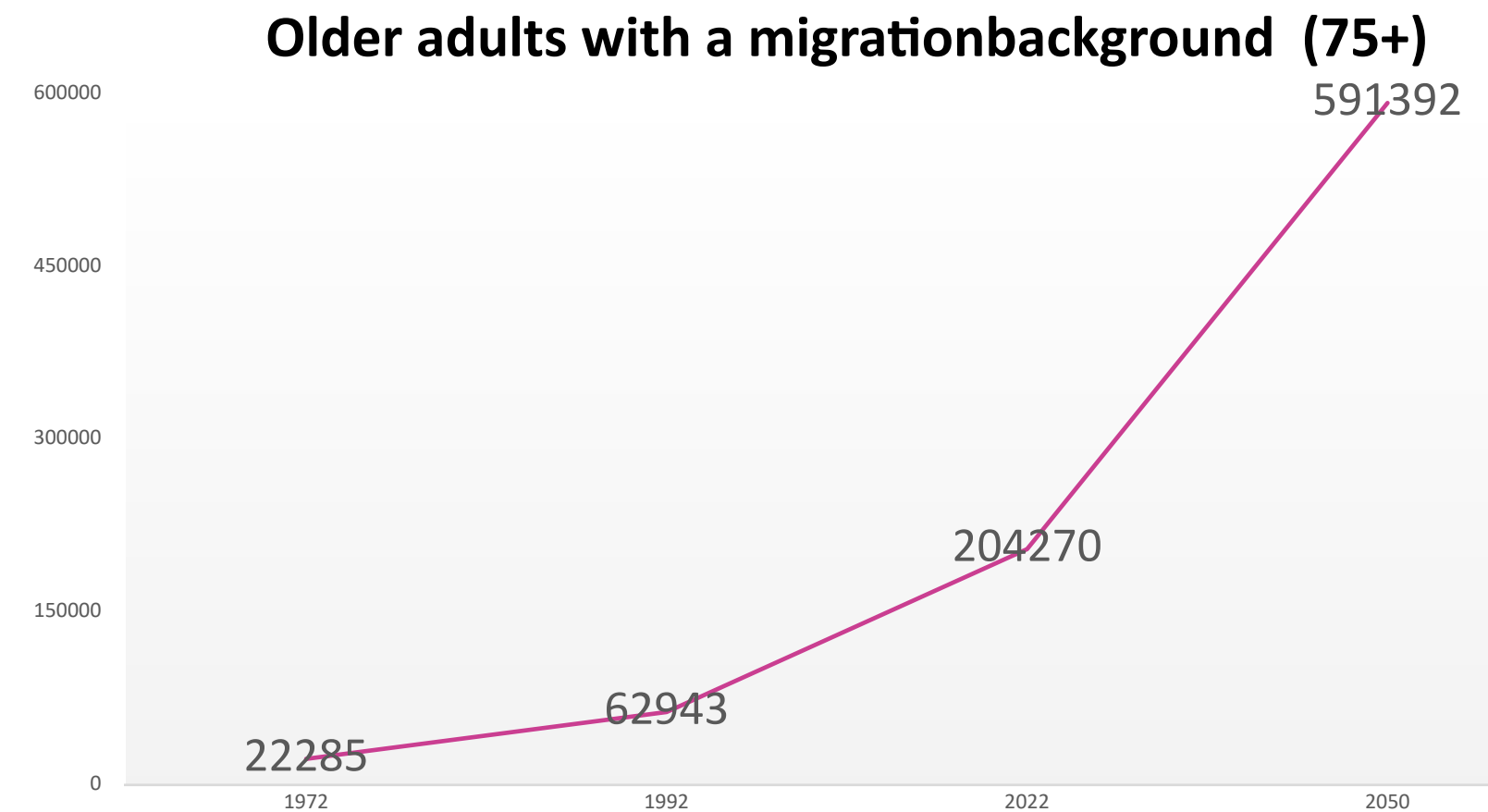
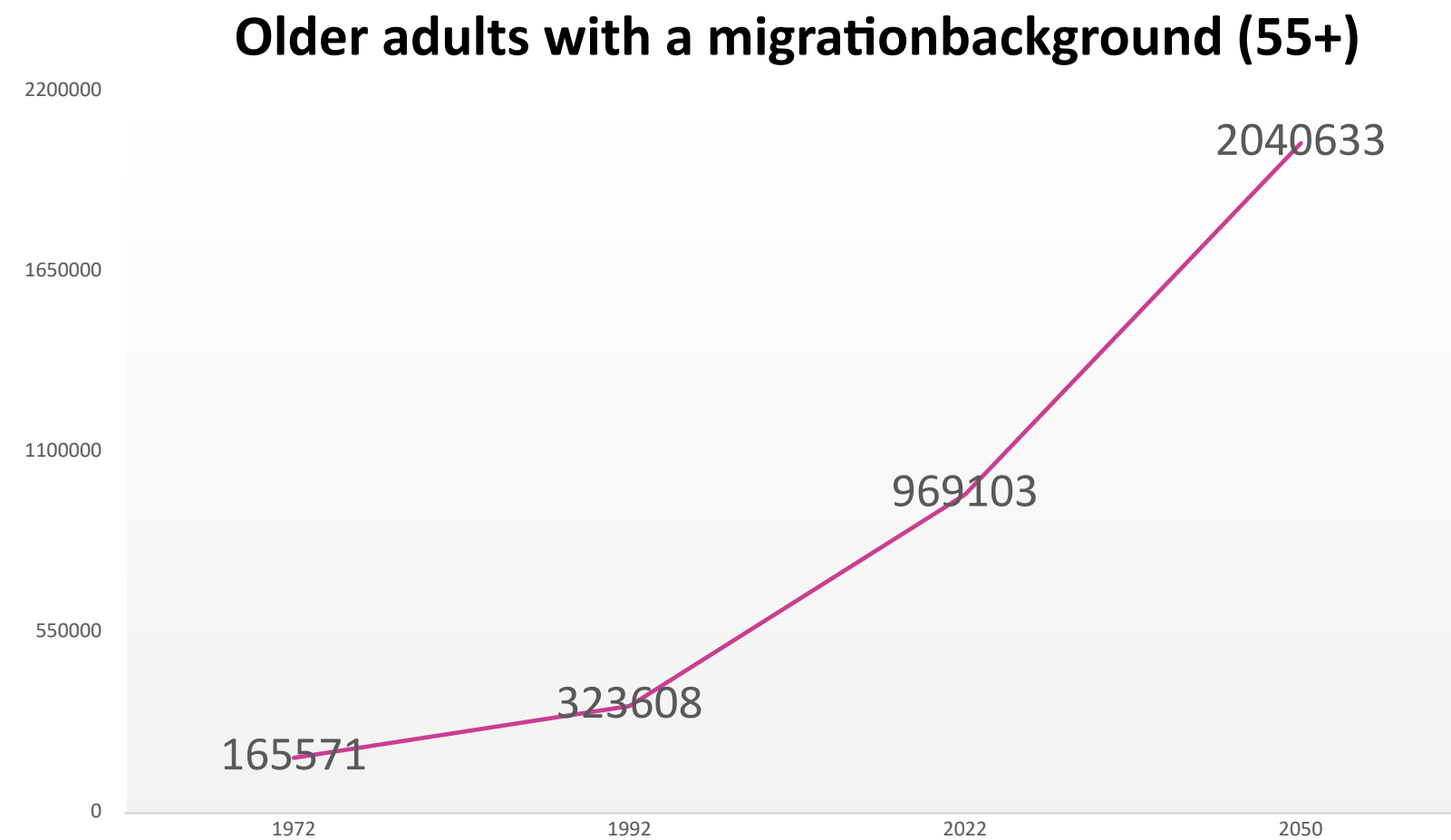
Together against Loneliness

Co-creation

Impact



Older migrants in the Netherlands

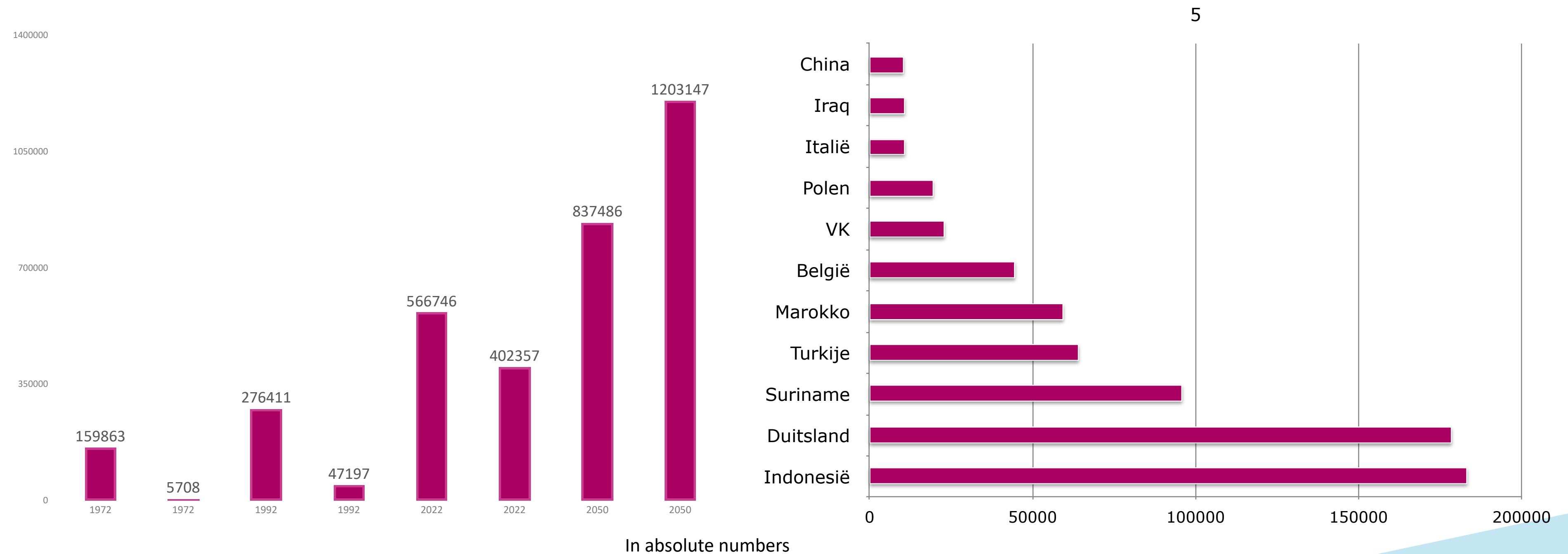


- **First and second generation**
- **Younger old**
- **Health and healthcare, poverty, living arrangements**

Source: Statistics Netherlands, 2025



Older migrants in the Netherlands



- Differences between and within groups

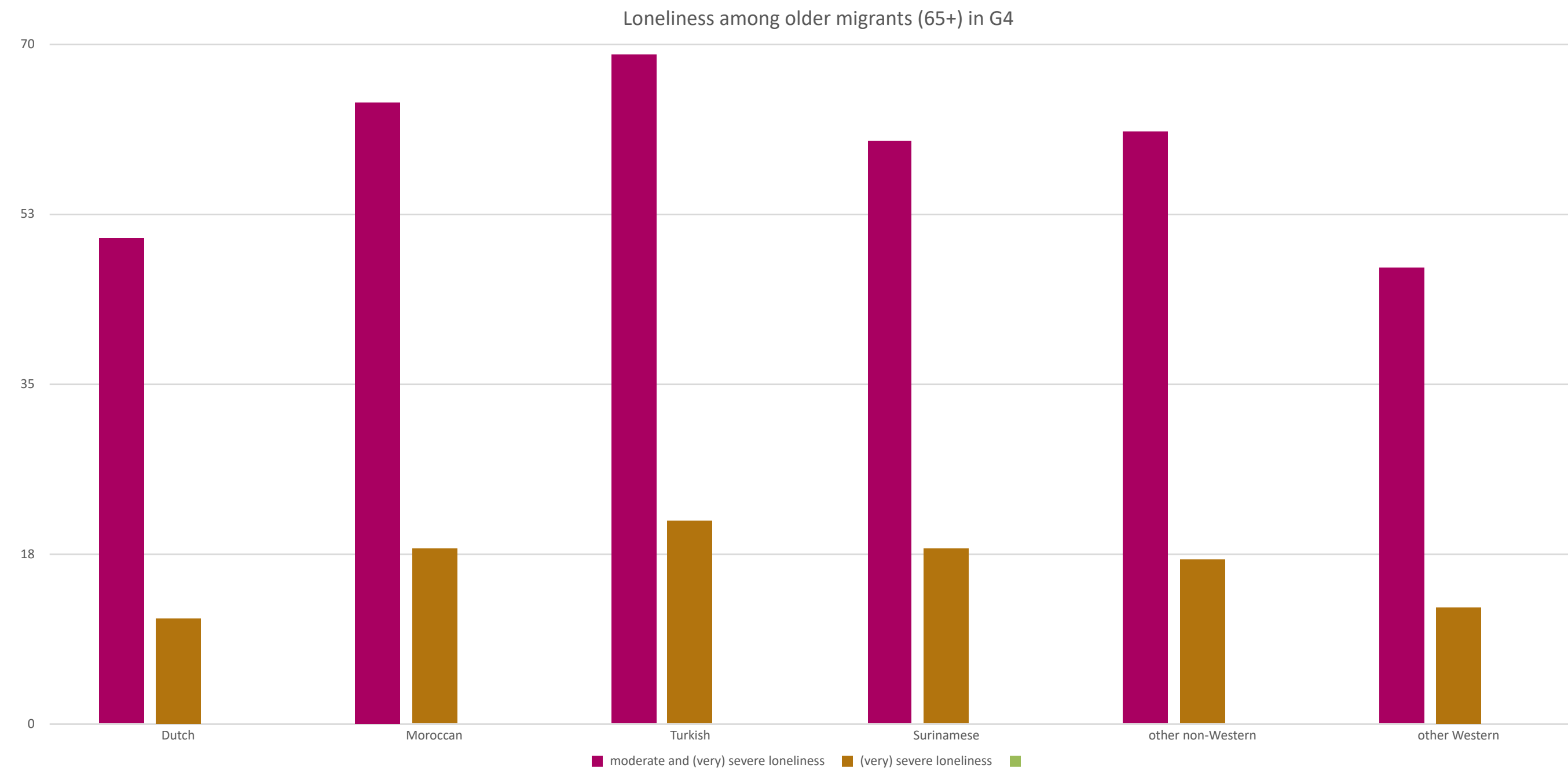
Loneliness among older migrants in the Netherlands

Main sources of scientific knowledge

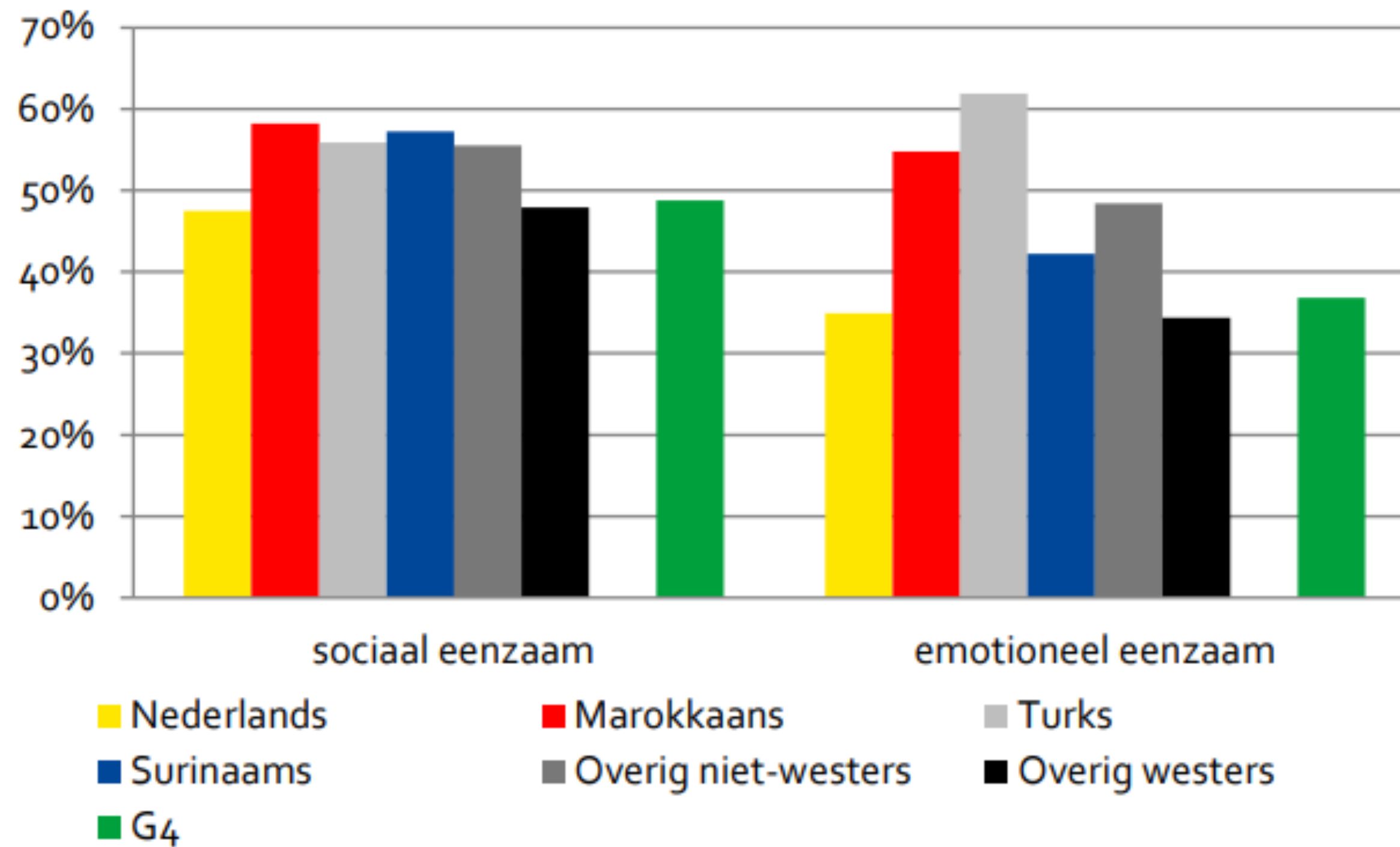
- GGD Health Monitor (2012,2016): Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, Antillean, other non-western, other Western, Dutch
- LASA (2013-2014): Turkish, Moroccan
- SYMBOL (2010-2013): Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, Dutch
- Stem van Oudere Migranten (2011-2012): Turkish, Moroccan
- NSN (2017, 2019): Syrian



Loneliness among older migrants in the Netherlands



Loneliness among older migrants in the Netherlands



Risk factors of loneliness

General:

- Poor health
- Low SES
- Low satisfaction with social relationships
- Low sense of control

(ten Kate et al., 2020; van Tilburg & Fokkema, 2020)

Migrant-specific:

- Insufficient proficiency of the Dutch language (Klok et al., 2017; Pot et al., 2020)
- Experiences of discrimination (Visser & El Fakiri, 2016)
- Transnational behaviour (Klok et al., 2017)
- Culturally formed expectations (Fokkema, 2023).

→ Cultural and linguistic distance rather than origin country as such (de Jong-Gierveld et al., 2015)



Protective factors of loneliness

- Co-residence (ten Kate et al., 2021)
- Frequent contact with children (van Tilburg & Fokkema, 2020)
- Marriage (van Tilburg & Fokkema, 2020)
- Being embedded in one's own group or in society at large (Klok et al., 2017)



Approaches to reducing loneliness



Approaches to reducing loneliness

- General interventions cannot reach older migrants
 - Feelings of loneliness among older migrants are poorly recognised by professionals
 - Not fitting their needs and wishes, and cultural background
- Few interventions targeting older migrants
- Interventions vs initiatives
- Often bottom-up
(Conkova et al., 2024; van de Maat et al., 2020; Verhage et al., 2021)



Together against Loneliness

- Intervention together with older migrants
- Pilot in 2021 with Al Amal
- Implementation country-wide sinds 2023, 11 cities
- A collaboration with fondation RCOAK

INTERVENTIEHANDLEIDING

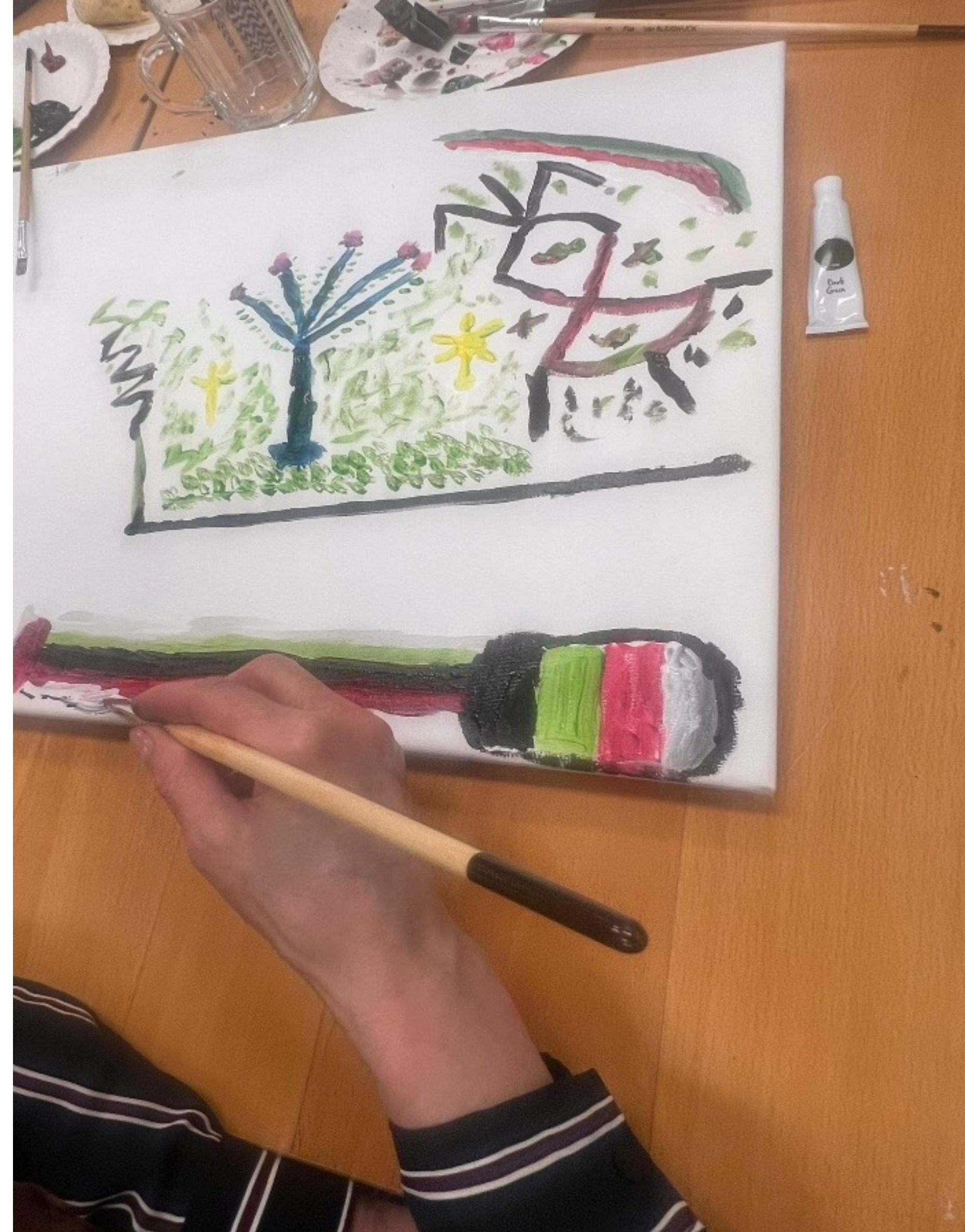


Samen tegen Eenzaamheid
Met oudere migranten

Together against Loneliness

Goal: to reduce social and emotional loneliness, and thereby increase wellbeing

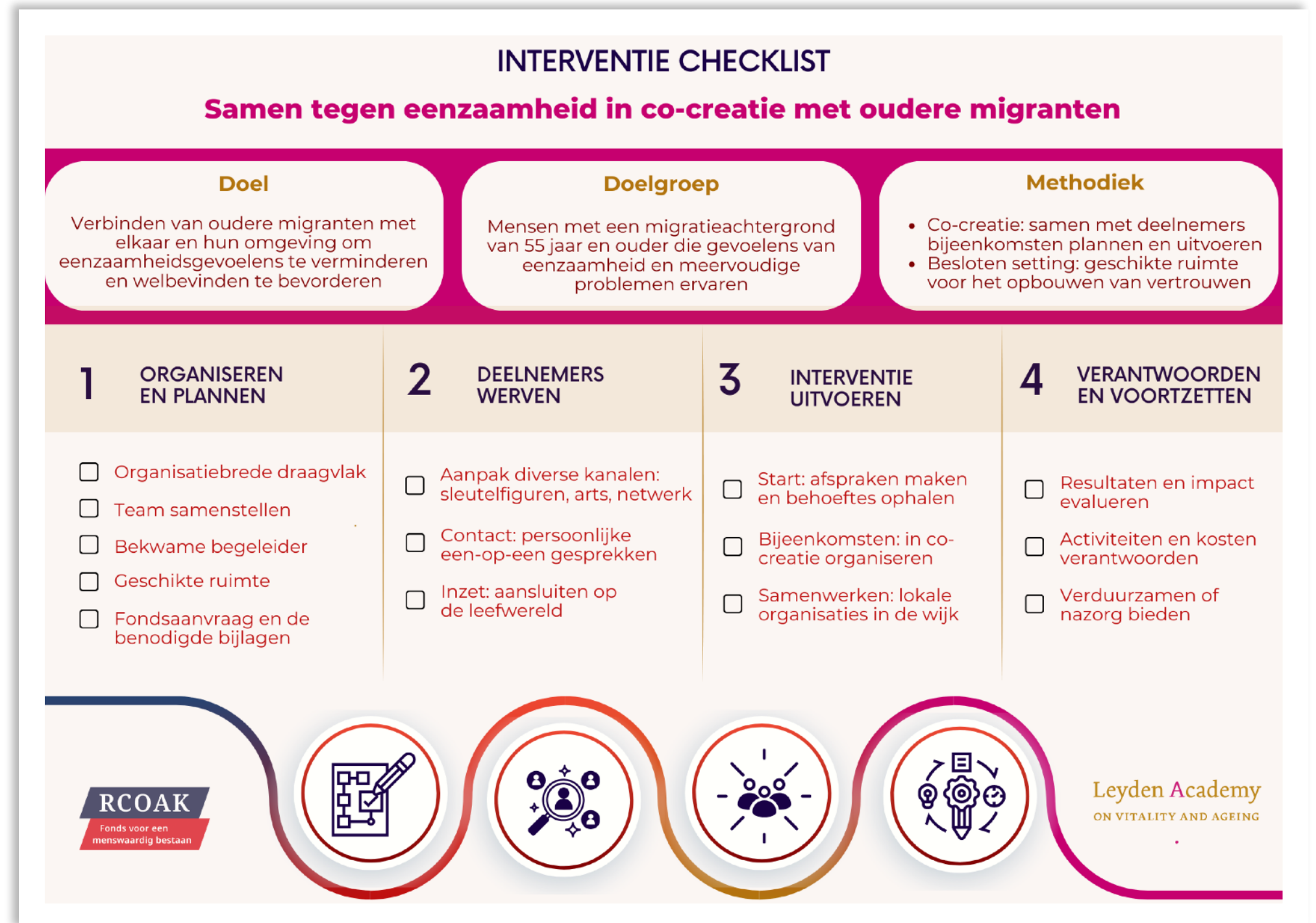
- Sub-goal: to connect older migrants with each other and their direct environment.
- Target group: lonely or isolated older migrants (often experiencing multifacted problems)
- Method: Through the organisation of at least 10 events in co-creation in a 'closed' group



Together against Loneliness

4 fases:

- Preparation and financiering
- Recruitment of participants
- Organisation of activities
- Closing and sustainability



Together against loneliness

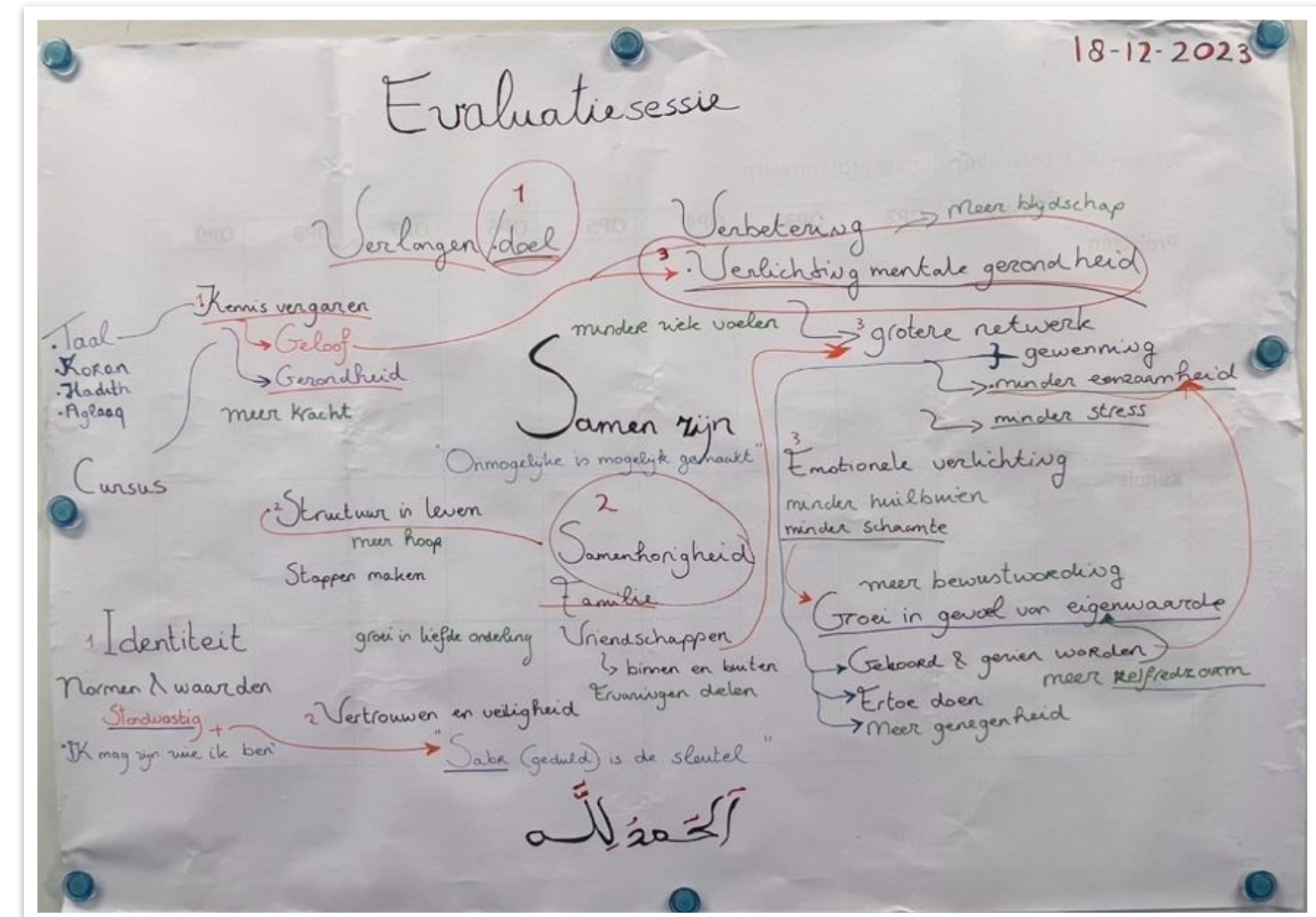
Participatory research

Goals

- Process and impact evaluation, success elements

Methods:

- Participative observations (#72)
- Informal talks (#75)
- Most significant change (#9)



Together against Loneliness

Numbers

43 groups

More than 300 older migrants

More than 350 activities

Around 50 volunteers

28 organisations

Achtergrond	Aantal groepen	Mannen	Vrouwen	Gemengd
Arabischsprekende	16	4	12	0
Turkse	2	0	1	1
Filipijnse	2	0	2	0
Afrikaanse	1	0	0	1
Bulgaarse	1	0	1	0
Poolse	1	0	0	1
Nederlands-Indische	1	0	0	1
Spaans- en Papiamentstaligge	1	0	1	0
Surinaamse	1	0	0	1
Totaal	26	4	17	5



Success elements

Conditions

1. Financial resources
2. Appropriate space / closed and trusted setting
3. Competent groupleader(s)
 - Skills and roles
4. Organisation

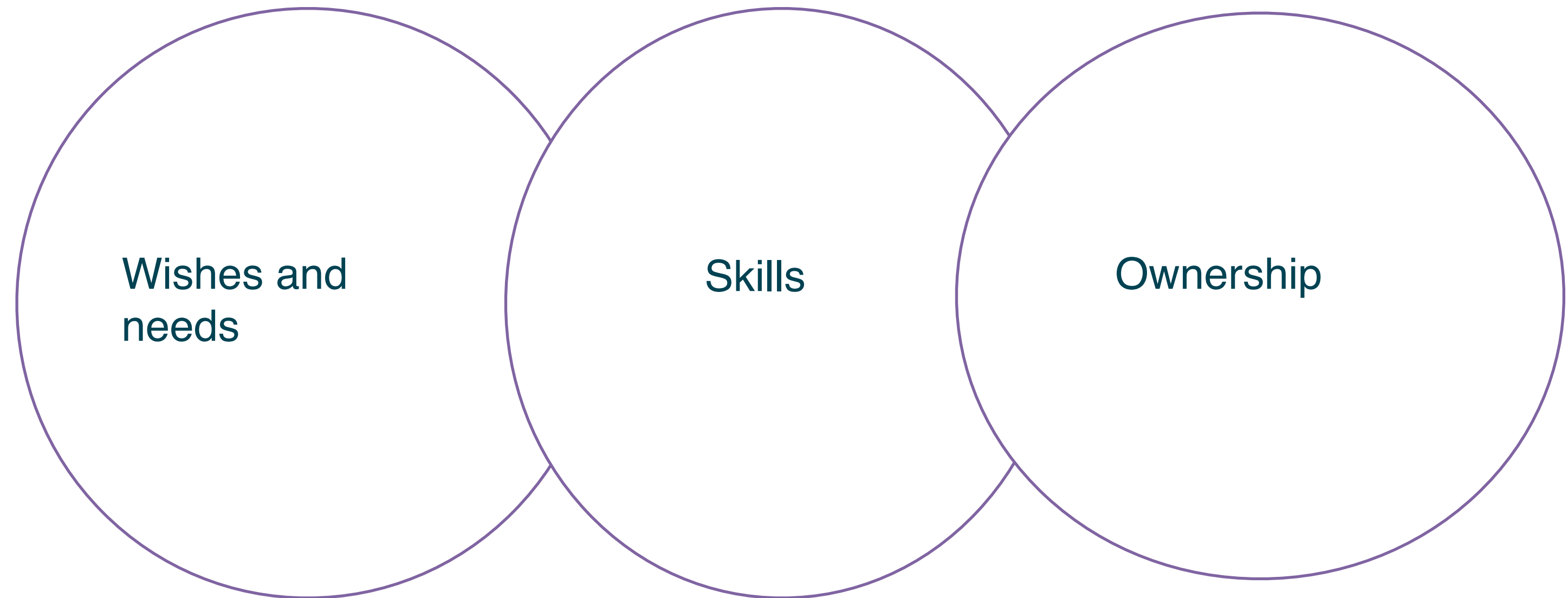
“I believe in trying and having patience. If it doesn't work the first time, it will work the fourth time.”
(Groupleader Rotterdam)



Success elements

Effective elements:

Co-creation



Impact

What does participating means to older migrants?

1. Feeling at home and belonging together
2. Being there for each other
3. Connection with the neighbourhood
4. Personal development and growth
5. Overall well-being and satisfaction

“I have found a friend and I am no longer lonely. If I need we call, sometimes we laugh, sometimes we cry” (Participant den Bosch)

“We have become one big family”
(Participant Rotterdam)

“I feel at home here. The atmosphere is like at home, the food is like the home, the talks are like at home. I find recognition in the group.” (Participant Amersfoort)



Thank you!

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