

ZoutZorg: Helping ZuidZorg Extra create awareness on dangers of elevated salt consumption

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ABSTRACT

High blood pressure is a big problem amongst the world's population. While there are many causes to this, one of them is very preventable. Do you know how much salt you are eating each day? This should be less than 6 grams of salt per day. With the world's average being closer to 10 grams each day, there is a big lack of awareness of the effects this can have on the health of any person, even more so amongst the elderly population.

The aim is to create awareness on all fronts of salt consumption, not to force anyone to stop eating the way they want to, but to allow elderly to consciously make lifestyle decisions that could improve their health. This is achieved by providing a travelling center that revolves around preparation of healthy food and providing a platform for contributors to meaningfully innovate in that field.

Author Keywords

Malnutrition; Ageing population; physical activity; social design;

INTRODUCTION

This is a report for the TU/e elective: "Activating your Innovation Radar", by Bas Bakx, Mayra Goevaerts, Toussaint Jongen and Tom van Rooij. It outlines an attempt at creating a service that reduces salt intake, creates awareness about the dangers of salt, especially amongst elderly, and how to keep track of it and prevent future problems caused by a high intake of salt.

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BACKGROUND

In the Netherlands 31.4% of all people have an elevated blood pressure. For Dutch citizens over 70 years old, this number even rises to 70% [1]. The consequences of this are enormous, potentially costing society up to 2.2 Billion euros per year in care costs [2]. Furthermore, worldwide, high blood pressure is the leading cause of death. Cardiovascular diseases are devastating and can have a number of causes, both outside of and inside of our control [3].

High blood pressure and consumption of more than the recommended dose of 5 to 6 grams of salt per day are firmly related [3,4,5], making it target of countless of health initiatives [6]. What a lot of these initiatives seem to miss however, is the influence old habits can have on people. With advancing techniques over the past century of refrigeration, freezing, dry freezing, logistics and nutritional advancements, salt has become less valued for its ability to preserve food. While this allows for decreased salt in meals all-around, a taste for salt definitely stuck around in the population, causing an average consumption of 8.6 to 9.5 grams of salt each day [7], almost twice the daily recommended dose.

Even though there is increased attention for salt intake among the general population, there still are many problems with keeping track of it. The average recommended dose of salt is far from common knowledge and packaging providing salt contents in terms of "sodium" or "natrium" would require a calculator to conveniently track. Especially amongst elderly that oftentimes have trouble reading nutritional value on packaging at all, keeping track of salt has become a nearly impossible feat.

All of these causes and symptoms can be perceived in the elderly population. They have increased chances of cardiovascular disease [1], they have a harder time keeping track of their salt intake as well as a habitual preference for salt. Medication against high blood pressure can even inhibit the perception of taste [8], potentially causing a negative feedback loop by encouraging even more salt

consumption. Many of the aforementioned health initiatives fail to take all these factors into account, the elderly population has many unique influences that require special and focused attention to be addressed.

This leads us to the proposed challenge of this elective, which reads as follows:

“Marieke is retired a few years ago and lives alone. Her children visit her regularly and together they cook delicious meals. She also visit ZuidZorg Extra meet & greet center regularly where she enjoys meals and coffee and tea with others. She loves to eat, especially those with a lot of salts. She was warned by her family doctor about her high blood pressure.”

CHALLENGE

The challenge tackled in this elective makes mention of “ZuidZorg Extra”. ZuidZorg Extra is an extension of ZuidZorg, which is an organisation that provides healthcare to elderly, both at home and at central locations, but specifically in the southern regions of the Netherlands. ZuidZorg Extra builds on this by providing extra services for a fee, like a ‘Meet & Greet’-center where elderly can come together, go on trips and participate in other activities.

ZuidZorg extra is a great way to approach a big group of active elderly. It also has great connections in all fields relating to care for the elderly, like specialized food, related logistics and dietary knowledge.

Despite the excellent connections ZuidZorg provides, the challenge remains a hard one. The social situations elderly can be in are both big in number and complex for us as outsiders to comprehend. The aim is to provide aid in a very real and dangerous problem, but also respect the autonomy anyone retains despite their age. In this light, the solution is not to tell anyone what to do, but rather; to create awareness and tools to track (high) salt consumption. In this way the aim is to make it possible or at least easier to be conscious about how much salt a person is ingesting and what problems it may cause.

RELATED WORK

As described in the introduction of this paper, high blood pressure is a big problem amongst the world's population. Literature research was performed to gather information about existing products and services available for our target group. which aim to tackle the same or a relatively similar problem.

Services at ZuidZorg Extra

ZuidZorg (Extra) has two services which relate to the eating behavior of elderly who are member of ZuidZorg;

1. A diet and meal delivery service [9]: As part of the ‘Hulp Thuis’ (English translation: Support at home), another extension at Zuidzorg, ZuidZorg offers elderly a specialized dietservice. Elderly can

order special meals conform their diet, including low sodium (low salt) meals. The meals can be supplied as chilled fresh or frozen. Secondly Zuidzorg has an extension called ‘Dieet’ (English translation: Diet), which offers elderly dietary advice.

2. Social eating activities at Zuidzorg’s ‘Meet and Greet’-centre [10]: Zuidzorg ‘Extra’ organises several activities at their ‘Meet and Greet’-centre which contribute to social eating behavior of elderly. Examples are: ‘Taarten voor taarten’ (bakery activities for old ladies), a cooking club, ‘Aan tafel!’ (eating together with other members of ZuidZorg at the ‘Meet and Greet’-centre) and ‘Mannen onder de Pannen’ (cooking club only for elderly men). The activities do not especially focus on eating healthy, but take it into account.

Applications and online tests

A number of applications exist which enable the tracking of nutrients, for example by using a eating diary [11,12] (Figure 1), and giving healthy eating recipes [13,14]. Specifically focused on salt intake there are several online tests which aim to provide personal insights in daily salt intake and give information about salt [14,15,16,17].



Figure 1. Voedingscentrum application

Campaigns

In 2014 GOED, a not-for-profit trade association who works among other things to increase the consumption of omega-3s around the world [18]. The omega-3 sector had experienced something of a decline before the campaign started, but with the integrated marketing campaign the sales increased significantly [19]. GOED used a method which is very similar what our concept aims to do: create awareness. CASH, Consensus Action on Salt & Health, is a

group concerned with salt and its effects on health [20], a similar organisation as GOED. CASH has published several papers about the relationship of salt reduction to blood pressure, stroke and ischaemic heart disease mortality [21].



Figure 2. Mamma Salt shaker

Products

A number of products have been designed which specifically focus on tackling (over)dosing of salt on food. An example is Mamma [22] (Figure 2), a salt dispenser which has an integrated spoon-like lip with markings that lets you know how much salt you are going to sprinkle on the food. A similar device is a 'weighing spoon' [23], which can for example be used to weigh salt.



Figure 3. Zoutzorg logo

CONCEPT

As our challenge described, the aim is to create awareness about the salt intake of elderly. ZoutZorg (Figure 3) was created as a new (concept) extension of ZuidZorg Extra. ZoutZorg provides services through BEB to create

awareness about the salt intake of elderly and to help the elderly reducing their salt intake when necessary.

BEB

The "Bewust Eten Bus" (BEB) (English translation: "Food Awareness Bus") is a concept of a food truck (Figure 4) which would be owned by ZuidZorg Extra. This food truck is the core of the concept as it forms a hub for (new) products and services. BEB is a meet and eat touchpoint. It is designed to be placed on local markets and events to get in touch with elderly and their families. People can buy healthy Dutch food at the truck such as hotchpot which can be prepared by some elderly volunteers in the food truck. Apart from the food people can buy at the truck, they can also get more information about healthy food with a focus on the salt intake in this case. Several tools can be provided through BEB to help the elderly with their salt intake. These tools can be provided by external parties such as companies and universities. In this way, the tools can be distributed and loaned out to the elderly while the stakeholders create valuable feedback which can help them with their research. Four tools were designed, as examples of possible tools displayed in the food truck: a scanner, a smart salt dispenser, salt labeling and a salt calculation card.



Figure 4. BEB

Scanner

The scanner (Figure 5) enables the user to scan products in the supermarket. When scanned, the device provides valuable information about the products. In an easy way, it shows for example how much salt a product contains, in a big font size, to make it easier to read for the elderly. It can be imagined that this scanner can also be an app for a smartphone, but it can also be changed according to the desire of the user, for example calories or sugar.

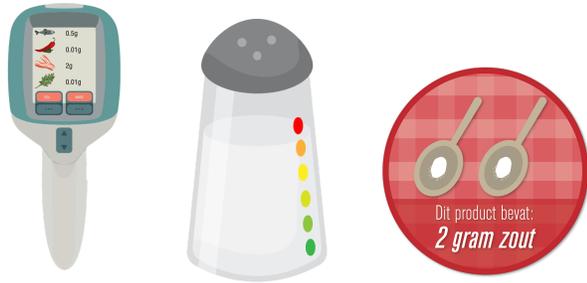


Figure 5. The scanner (left), the smart salt dispenser (middle) and the salt labeling (right)

Smart salt dispenser

The smart salt dispenser (Figure 5) keeps track on how much salt the user puts in their meals. Instead of shaking, the salt dispenser uses a rotating motion in order to distribute small steady doses of salt with each click. The dispenser uses LEDs to indicate how much salt the user already took in contrast of the recommended daily intake of salt. The indicator is green when the user uses just a bit of salt. When the user starts to use more, the indicator will turn red. The salt dispenser will not block the salt distribution. It aims to create awareness on the amount of salt being used.

Salt labeling

A new salt label (Figure 5) can be applied on food products in stores and aims to give a better understanding on how much salt is actually in a product by translating the unit “grams salt” into units that elderly are familiar with, such as “half teaspoon salt”. The idea is that people find it easier to imagine how much salt a teaspoon contains rather than how much a gram of salt is.



Figure 6. The salt calculation card

Salt calculation card

The salt calculation card (Figure 6) is physical credit card-sized card to fit in wallets. It is inspired by the mathematics cheat cards. Products often do not provide a label which shows how much salt is in the product, it only shows how much sodium is in the product. The amount of

salt is not the same as the amount of sodium as sodium is just a substance of salt. The salt calculation card provides a conversion table to convert the unit “gram sodium” in “gram salt” and the other way around. In this way, the users can keep track of how much salt is in products and how much salt they consume. The card also provides a feature where the user can tick boxes with a pen to keep track of their salt consumption throughout the day. Each tick would be a part of the total amount of salt the user may use throughout the day.

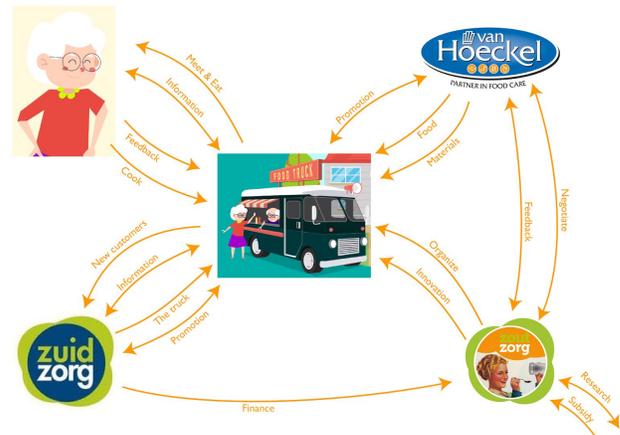


Figure 7. Stakeholders relations

Business approach

The concept relies on several stakeholders. Of course, BEB will be in the center of the concept as it will be the link between the multiple stakeholders. The main stakeholders for BEB will be the elderly, ZoutZorg, ZuidZorg Extra and Van Hoeckel. Illustration 7 illustrates the relations between the stakeholders.

Elderly

The elderly will contribute to the concept on two aspects. BEB is an Meet & Eat point where elderly can get information about healthy food, more particularly about salt intake. This can also function as a promotion for other stakeholders for showing that they are actively busy with innovating to improve the healthy lifestyle of elderly.

Some elderly can also volunteer to cook in BEB. These volunteers can sign themselves up via ZuidZorg Extra. The volunteers can experience trips to markets and events as an activity, cook together and meet new people: elderly, families and young people. They might also find people willing to become a member at ZuidZorg Extra where they can meet them during other activities.

ZuidZorg Extra

ZuidZorg Extra will be the owner of the food truck. Through BEB, ZuidZorg Extra can make promotion to attract new customers. Having the elderly volunteers telling

stories about their experiences of ZuidZorg Extra might be the perfect promotion.

Van Hoeckel

Van Hoeckel is also introduced as a stakeholder. In the concept of BEB, van Hoeckel will contribute in providing ingredients or even food packages to be sold in the food truck. Van Hoeckel might also contribute in providing kitchen equipment for the food truck. In return, van Hoeckel gets promotion the food that is being sold at BEB and valuable feedback on their sold products. This feedback can help them to improve their products to better fit the needs of the market.

ZoutZorg

ZoutZorg will be a department of ZuidZorg Extra who arranges and organizes BEB. They create a touchpoint for stakeholders such as universities and van Hoeckel. ZoutZorg will take care of the new innovations that will be distributed through BEB and gather the feedback to be returned to the stakeholders.

Other stakeholders

Having some elderly also involved as volunteers within the cooking process at BEB, creates opportunities to receive funding from the government and insurance companies. These fundings help BEB to become a feasible concept as the stakeholders have to invest less money in the realization of BEB.

External stakeholders like universities are also part of the business model as BEB can contribute to research as it can become a link between the researchers and the elderly. BEB can collect data by providing a platform to distribute tools and enquêtes to the users.

USER EVALUATION

To find out how to place the concept in the market and where the interests are, some user evaluations have been done. It started with a visit to the Meet & Greet Center in Veldhoven. When the concept was clear, a questionnaire with some basic questions was created. The elderly people could fill these in at the ZuidZorg Extra locations in Eindhoven and Veldhoven. To get more in depth information some interviews took place with elderly people and clients of ZuidZorg Extra.

Visits

At the very beginning, a visit had been paid to the ZuidZorg Extra Meet & Greet Center in Veldhoven, to get some basic insights from the elderly people about their daily activities and how they paid attention to their health.

Questionnaire

The first part of the questionnaire introduced ZoutZorg as a service of ZuidZorg and asked questions about the elderly in general; age, living situation, activities and how and where they do their groceries. But also some questions

about their health, specified to salt intakes and if they were having high blood pressure.

The second part introduced Marieke, to present them a persona they could understand and compare themselves with. Also, the ZoutZorg Foodtruck “BEB” is presented here and what this truck could mean for elderly people.

The third and last part shows them the ZoutZorg Scanner, one of the services this truck could provide them, next to the food and cooking experience. Questions about the scanner were about if they would like to use such a product or even technology in general and what they thought were the benefits of this.

Next to all the closed questions, every part also has the option to give some personal feedback or information that might be useful. Also, the questionnaire had some images to understand the concept better. The results of the questionnaire can be found in the Findings and Discussion chapter.

In depth interviews

Questionnaires normally give a real simple indication about how people think. To get a better idea of how elderly people thought about the concepts, a small group of elderly people was interviewed at ZuidZorg Extra Meet & Greet in Veldhoven. First questions were asked about their daily life and activities, but also how they thought about food and the information on packages. Then ZoutZorg was brought in by showing pictures of the truck and the services it could provide. With each picture a small story was told and questions could be asked if something was not clear.

ZuidZorg Extra

Next to the elderly, the clients Hubert Cornelis and Monica van der Meer from ZuidZorg Extra were interviewed, to get more insights in what ZuidZorg already does for the elderly and what their thoughts were on the ZoutZorg concept.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

Questionnaire

In total 68 elderly people filled in the questionnaire, of which fifteen were male. All of the them are still living on their own, but only twenty-one still live together with a partner. Looking more to the relevant answers, twenty-two elderly suffer from high blood pressure, and twenty-one of them also pay attention to their salt intake, most of them also take medicine to help them keep their condition stable. In total fifty-three elderly pay attention to their salt intake, so it seems rather important for them to pay attention to this, however they are not that interested in getting more information about how to keep an eye on this.

Answers about the ZoutZorg service were less promising than expected. Only eleven elderly people liked the idea of this service, fourteen would actually pay a visit to the truck

and only three would like to cook as a volunteer for other people.

For the scanner the results look a bit more promising. Twenty-six elderly do find it difficult to read the ingredients on packages. Although only fifteen elderly would like to use a technical product, at least twenty-five would use this if their health could benefit from this. To use the scanner, only 19 people were really interested of using this.

Interview elderly

The outcomes of the interview with the elderly were quite positive. Most of the interviewees admitted to have problems to read packages and would like to see clearer information about this. They all prefer fresh food, in fact, they weren't optimistic about these food services that are being delivered. In general, most of the elderly thought a service like ZoutZorg could be interesting and they were willing to try out some of the products it would offer.

Comparing the answers of the questionnaires and the interviews with the elderly, it is fair to say that elderly like the idea and service, but really need to be informed properly. When they can see the examples and hear the story behind it, much more of them are interested than when just filling in some paperwork. They really need to see the image in order to understand the benefits. It might even work the best when the service is just presented and they can experience it.

Interview ZuidZorg Extra

When interviewing clients at ZuidZorg Extra, the main focus was on how many elderly got food from a service like van Hoeckel but also what they thought about the ZoutZorg concept. Next to a meal delivery service, that is being used by 1500 elderly, there is also a group of 100 elderly that gets their groceries delivered at home. Their thoughts about the food truck were very enthusiastic, Hubert even mentioned he could really see this happening. Especially because this was the easiest to accomplish and not that expensive as, for example, a scanning device.

CONCLUSION

A big percentage of elderly in the netherlands have an elevated blood pressure, which can be the cause of many conditions including cardiovascular diseases. Many problems could be alleviated by reducing this salt intake and creating awareness about the importance thereof. It is important to also encourage elderly to consider their intake before they get problems related to high blood pressure.

To reach the proposed solutions outlined in this report many concepts were proposed and subsequently developed into a central meeting place for elderly that revolves around preparation of healthy food and providing a platform for contributors to meaningfully innovate in that field. Multiple concepts that aim to alter the lifestyle of elderly already exist, but oftentimes they fail at causing actual lifestyle

change. Where the meeting place differentiates itself is in the openness of it. While it certainly is a place where lifestyle change has to be inspired, it also is a gathering place that can be experienced in a very duty free and open way.

The Bewust Eten Bus (BEB) does not actively force visitors to alter their eating habits, but instead notifies them of potential benefits and teaches them the least intrusive ways of keeping track of nutrition. BEB treats participants as the individuals they are and allows them to find out for themselves how to take steps towards a healthier future in a way that respects their strengths and weaknesses.

What remains to be found is how elderly at ZuidZorg extra pick up volunteering and participating with the BEB. The level of difficulty in involving other companies to innovate around the BEB is also hard to predict but will become easier and wider as more partners are contracted.

FUTURE STEPS

Hubert Cornelis, Social innovator at ZuidZorg Extra was so enthusiastic about the ZoutZorg concept that he actually started working out all the details of the food truck. A business model from the view of ZuidZorg Extra has been created and discussions are taking place internally to bring the BEB on the road, into the life of many elderly and volunteers.

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Meet Marieke



Personal

Age: 73
Gender: Female
Location: Veldhoven
Marital status: Divorced
Living situation: Living alone
Family: 1 Daughter
2 grandchildren

Finance

Job status: Retired
Former job: Retail professional
Income: ± € 700,- p/m

Interests

Cooking: With family, sometimes alone. Fresh food is a must
Crafts: Crochet, knitting. At home or at ZuidZorg extra
Vitality: Biking to ZuidZorg extra, doing her own shopping

Health

Blood pressure: On the high side, needs to be controlled
Nutrition: Not malnourished, but loves salt too much

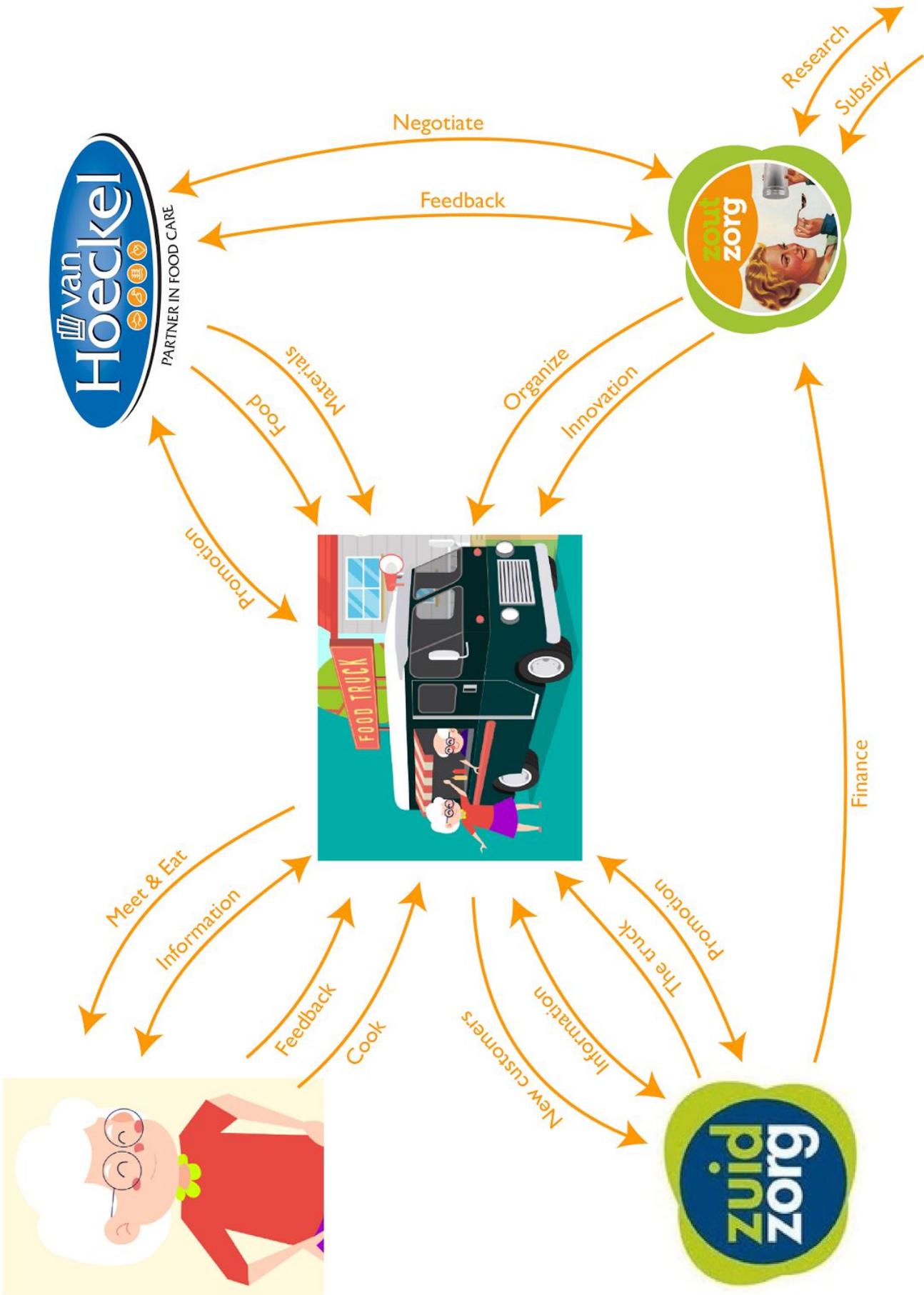
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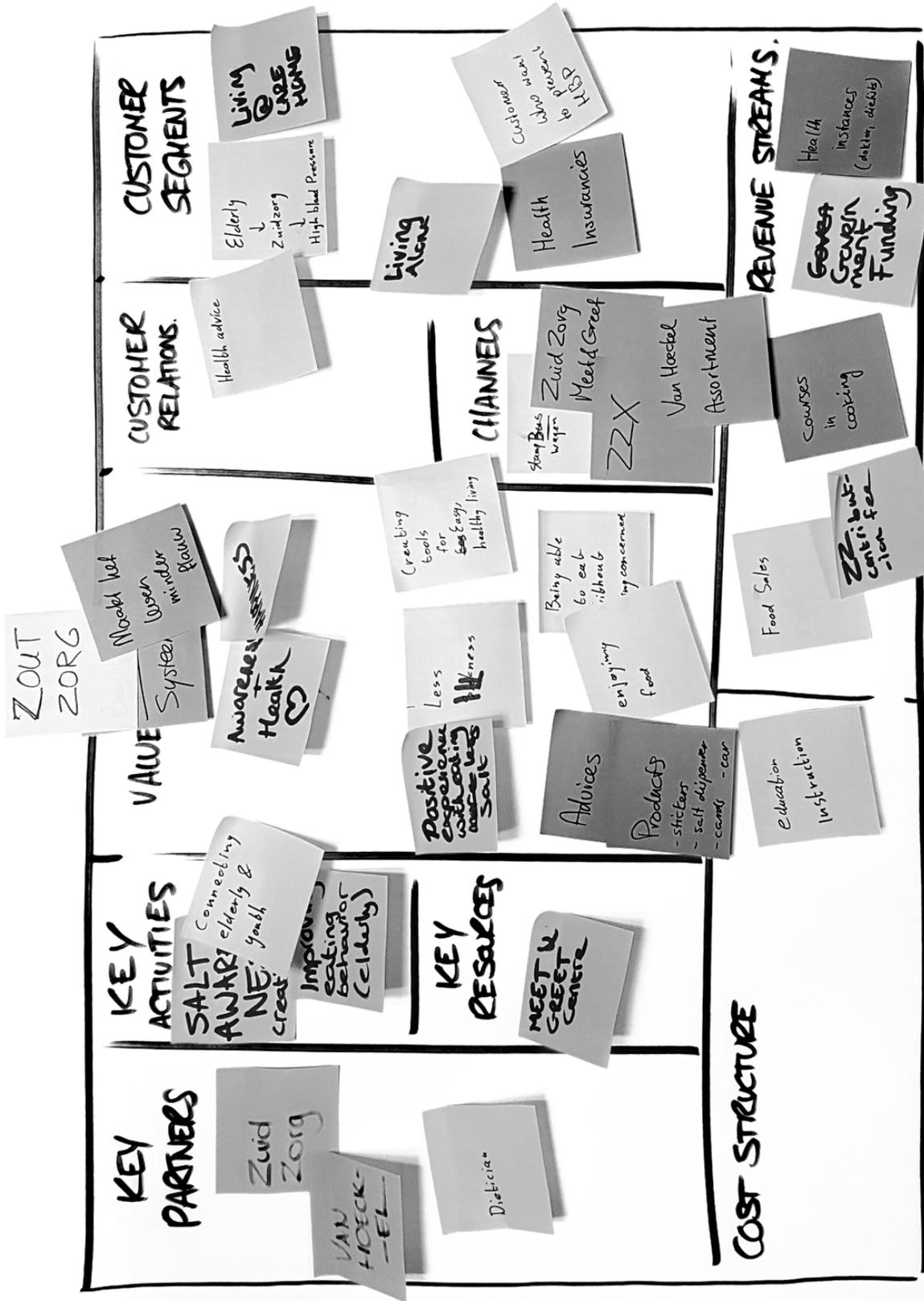
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Talks directly with ZuidZorg





THE BUSINESS MODEL CANVAS.



ZoutZorg is een onderdeel van ZuidZorg Extra en biedt een service aan die ouderen helpt op hun gezondheid te letten. Door het invullen van deze vragenlijst kunnen wij uitvinden waar vraag naar is en onze service hierop aanpassen. Deze enquête is anoniem en met de informatie wordt vertrouwelijk omgegaan.

Kruist u graag bij elke vraag het bolletje aan dat van toepassing is en in de kaders kunt u zelf iets opschrijven. Als u een vraag niet wenst in te vullen is dit prima.

1. Wat is uw leeftijd?

- jaar

2. Wat is uw geslacht

- Man
- Vrouw

3. Woont u zelfstandig?

- Ja
- Nee

4. Woont u alleen?

- Ja
- Nee, met partner.

5. Hoe vaak per week bezoekt u ZuidZorg Extra Meet & Greet?

- Minder dan 1 dag per week
- 1 dag per week
- 2 dagen per week
- 3 dagen per week
- Meer dan 4 dagen per week

6. Doet u uw eigen boodschappen?

- Ja
- Nee

7. Waar doet u uw eigen boodschappen?

- Supermarkt
- Winkelkar
- Markt
- Deze worden bezorgd

8. Vindt u de etiketten/ingrediënten goed leesbaar op verpakkingen?

- Ja
- Nee

9. Kookt u zelf uw eigen avondeten?

- Ja
- Nee

10. Heeft u last van hoge bloeddruk?

- Ja
- Nee

11. Wat doet u zelf tegen uw hoge bloeddruk?

12. Let u op uw zoutinname?

- Ja
- Nee

13. Zou u meer informatie of hulp willen om uw zoutinname te verminderen?

- Ja
- Nee

14. Maakt u gebruik van een mobiele telefoon?

- Ja
- Nee

15. Heeft u eventuele aanvullende opmerkingen of vragen?

Dit is Marieke, een oudere vrouw van 81 jaar die breit in haar vrije tijd en regelmatig ZuidZorg Extra Meet en Greet locatie bezoekt. Marieke heeft last van hoge bloeddruk en de dokter adviseert haar op haar zout inname te letten. Zoutzorg helpt haar hiermee door verschillende opties aan te bieden waar Marieke gebruik van kan maken.

Een onderdeel van ZoutZorg is de rijdende eetkraam die rondrijdt, net als de melkboer van vroeger. Eén keer per week komt deze kraam bij ZuidZorg Extra langs en hij staat ook op de lokale markt. Bij deze eetkraam kunt u eten, gerechten delen, maar ook samen koken en informatie over ZoutZorg verkrijgen.



1. Zou u een dienst als ZoutZorg prettig vinden?

- Ja
- Nee

2. Zou u de eetkraam bezoeken?

- Ja
- Nee

3. Zou u al vrijwilliger willen koken voor anderen in de eetkraam?

- Ja
- Nee

4. Heeft u eventuele aanvullende opmerkingen of vragen?

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Eén van de producten die ZoutZorg levert, is de Zout Scanner, welke gebruikt kan worden tijdens het boodschappen doen. Wanneer een artikel met deze scanner gescand wordt, weergeeft het scherm meteen hoeveel zout dit product bevat.

Zo is het voor Marieke makkelijker om producten te vergelijken en bewust te selecteren. Deze scanner kan geleend worden bij de ZoutZorg eetkraam.



1. Zou u een technisch product willen gebruiken?

- Ja
- Nee

2. Zou u een technisch product willen gebruiken als u hierdoor gezonder kunt leven?

- Ja
- Nee

3. Heeft u moeite met het lezen van de ingrediënten

- Ja
- Nee

4. Ziet u voordelen in het gebruik van deze scanner?

- Ja
- Nee

5. Zou u deze scanner willen uitproberen tijdens het boodschappen doen?

- Ja
- Nee

6. Heeft u eventuele aanvullende opmerkingen of vragen?

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