

# The Development of the PET@home Toolkit using the refined Experience-Based Co- Design Method (EBCD+)

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## Introduction

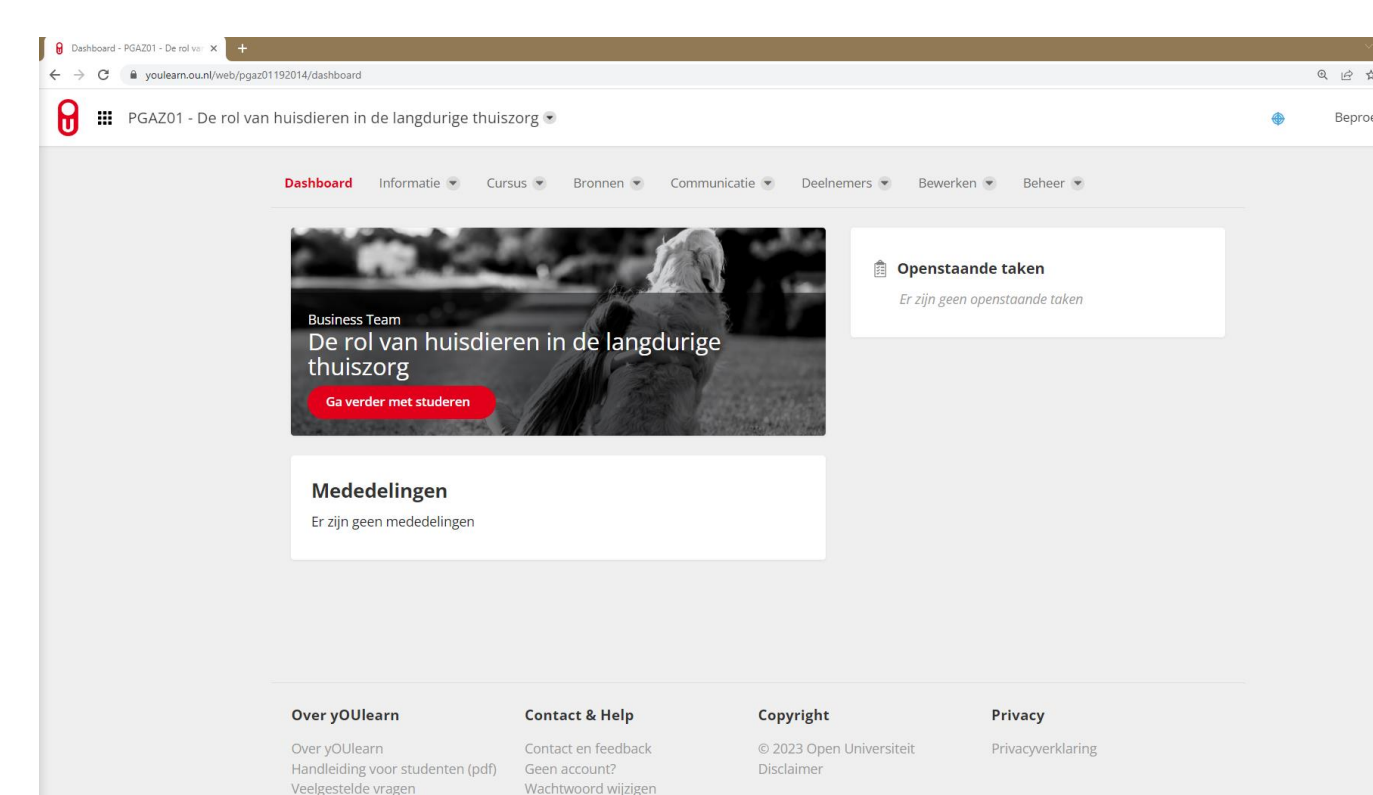
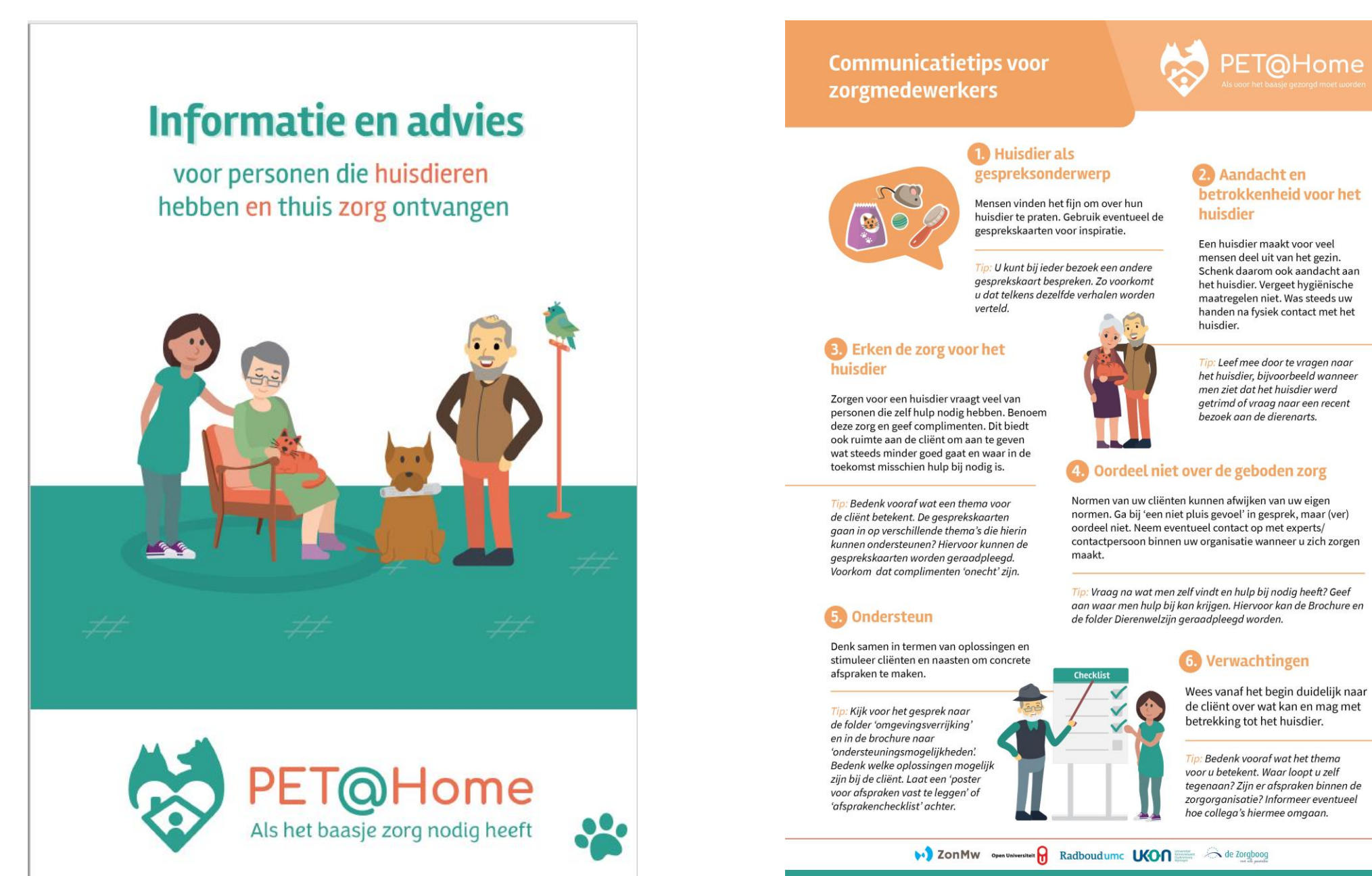
The relevance of pets in long-term home care is increasingly recognized due to their positive effects on health outcomes in clients, and the growing numbers of pet-owning clients receiving long-term care at home (LTCH). In the Netherlands, there is a lack of supportive materials concerning pet-related issues in LTCH. The aim of this project was to develop materials to support care for LTCH-clients with pets. Using a participatory research approach, LTCH-clients with pets, family caregivers, and professional caregivers collaborated using the Experience-Based Co-Design (EBCD) method that we fine-tuned for frail clients (EBCD+) to create the PET@Home Toolkit.

## Methods

The project started with a literature review on the roles of pets for older adults. To determine if similar roles were also relevant in LTCH, individual interviews were conducted with LTCH-clients, family caregivers, and professional caregivers. Thereafter, the original EBCD-method was used including group interviews with (1) LTCH-clients and family, (2) professional caregivers (3) mixed groups of (1) and (2). Participants could participate in multiple phases. Professional caregivers preferred online and weekday meetings and LTCH-clients and family caregivers preferred in person and weekend meetings. Therefore, we organized additional interviews, and separate online and in-person groups. Hence, the EBCD+ method included a review, complementary interviews, the original EBCD-method and continuous refinement and testing of instruments..

## Main results until now

The review and complementary interviews revealed similar roles related to pets in LTCH (e.g. Relational Aspects, Physical Health, and Social Aspects) to those as in the review on older adults. Based on the results, preliminary tools were developed, e.g., an information brochure. Furthermore, we conducted 14 semi-structured interviews, 6 focus groups, a psychology students workshop, and 4 online meetings with experts in human-animal interaction, education, and animal interest organizations (e.g., a veterinarian). It resulted in the Toolkit with different instruments, e.g., information brochure, e-learning module, and infographic.



## Discussion

We successfully used the EBCD+ method to develop an extensive and practically applicable Toolkit to support caregivers and their pet-owning LTCH-clients. The PET@home Toolkit will be available via the University Knowledge network for Older adult care Nijmegen ([www.ukonnetwerk.nl](http://www.ukonnetwerk.nl)).

