



# Social Farming for the Elderly

## Module 1.2 Needs and challenges of elderly people



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ASSOCIAÇÃO DE DESENVOLVIMENTO  
RURAL INTEGRADO DAS SERRAS DO  
MONTEMURO, ARADA E GRALHEIRA



**BIOTEHNIŠKI  
CENTER NAKLO**



**Eberswalde University  
for Sustainable  
Development**



**HOF UND  
LEBEN**



**SOUTH KERRY DEVELOPMENT  
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# Module outline

## Introduction

**In this module, participants will learn about the needs of older people, the challenges they face and do a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) of rural areas. It helps to understand how older people feel and this knowledge helps to understand their needs.**

## Learning objectives

**After reading the presentation, learners will have a clear idea of the needs of older people. Learners will better understand the challenges faced by older people in rural areas and use a SWOT analysis to identify what opportunities rural areas can offer to older people. Learners will better understand what old age means and what challenges older people face, especially in rural areas, and they will develop a sense of this age group.**



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“

**The charm and richness of an elderly person is not what they do, but what they are and how they are.**

**Jože Ramovš**



# 1 The needs of older people



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# Question

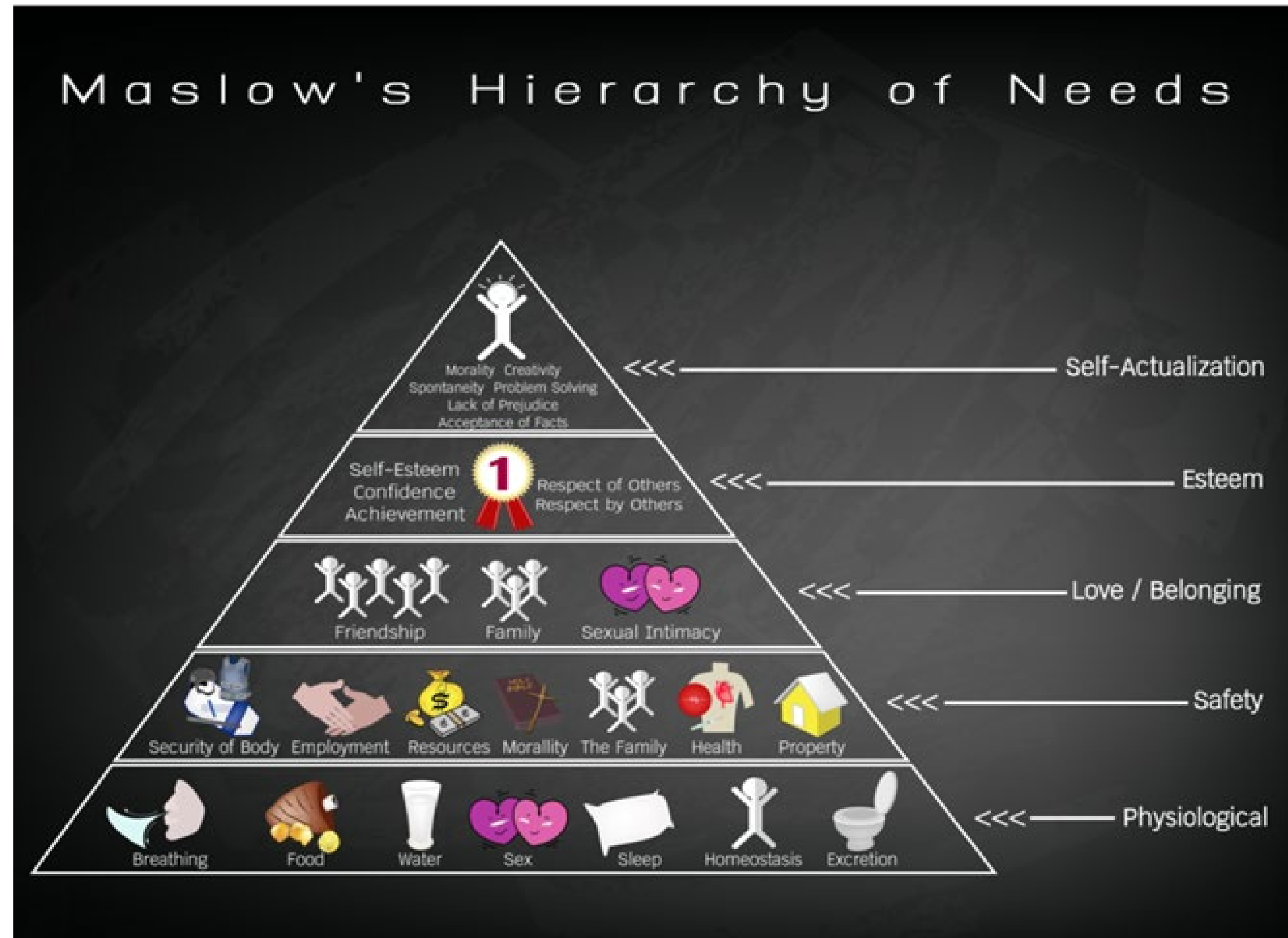
**How would you like to  
live when you are old?**



# What are the needs of the elderly?

As Maslow foresaw in his pyramid system “The Hierarchy of Needs”, when he described human basic needs on 5 levels, the basic needs must be met first in order to feel the higher needs.

(Thais, 2019)

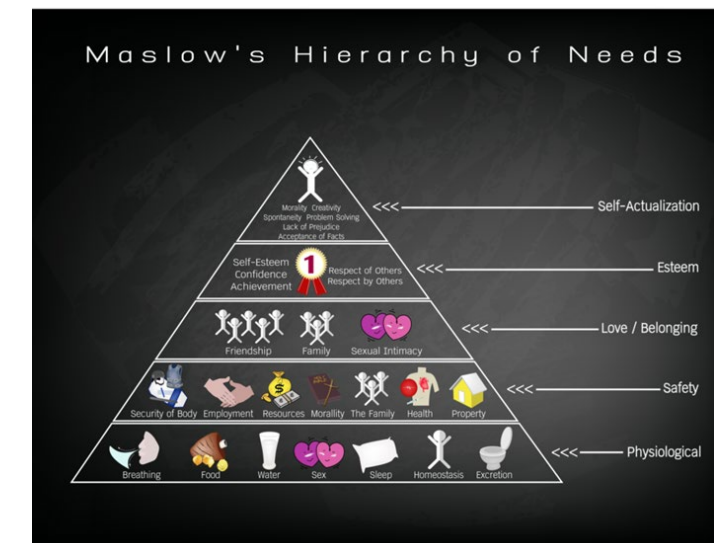


Source: <https://mylove4learning.com/maslows-hierarchy-of-needs-in-education-strategies-for-elearning/>

# Maslow's hierarchy of needs

- **Physiological needs** (food, water, oxygen, rest, sex, exercise, etc.)
- **Safety needs** (personal security, financial security, health etc.)
- **The need to belong and to be loved** (expressing affection, accepting and expressing love, trusting others, etc.)
- **The need for esteem, respect** (to receive attention, respect, importance, fame, etc. from others)
- **Cognitive needs** (needs for knowledge, understanding, exploration, curiosity, etc.)
- **Aesthetic needs** (needs for beauty, symmetry, art)
- **Self-actualisation** (the need to fulfil potential - to become what one can become)

(Macuh, 2020)



Source: <https://mylove4learning.com/maslows-hierarchy-of-needs-in-education-strategies-for-elearning/>





# Needs of the elderly

- **Basic needs (according to Maslow) are the starting point of individual needs. If we focus on the elderly, we can highlight needs such as:**
- **The need for security (economic security, residential security, staying as long as possible in the home)**
- **The need to maintain health (independence to look after oneself, positivity, a good immune system, vitality, independence,)**
- **Maintaining social contacts (communication between peers and family members, sharing life experiences)**
- **Self-acceptance is important, and this helps to form new values (new stage of life, acceptance of ageing, positive attitude towards oneself, positive outlook on life,...)**
- **Influence of their living environment: intergenerational contacts, participation in social contacts, participation in organisations, participation in events, accessibility of shops, mobility,**
- **Spiritual and religious needs**

**(According to Ramovš, J. (2003). Kakovostna starost: socialna gerontologija in gerantogogika. Cited in Macuh, 2020)**



# Example from Canada

**We should certainly be committed to ensuring that the elderly can grow old as comfortably as possible. One example of research into the needs of the elderly can be found in Canada, where the Healthy Aging and Wellness Working Group of the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Committee of Officials (Seniors), has produced a guide aimed at developing age-friendly rural and remote communities.**

**The Initiative has two main objectives:**

- 1. To increase awareness of what seniors need to maintain active, healthy and productive lives within their communities by identifying indicators of age-friendly rural or remote communities;**
- 2. To produce a practical guide that rural and remote communities across Canada can use to identify common barriers, and to foster dialogue and action that supports the development of age-friendly communities. (Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors, 2006)**

**([https://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/alt-formats/pdf/publications/public/healthy-sante/age\\_friendly\\_rural/AFRRRC\\_en.pdf](https://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/alt-formats/pdf/publications/public/healthy-sante/age_friendly_rural/AFRRRC_en.pdf))**



A photograph of an elderly woman with short, curly white hair, smiling and sitting on a wooden bench in a garden. She is wearing a light blue zip-up hoodie over a patterned top and blue jeans. The garden features a dark brown wooden fence with climbing plants, including green leaves and red flowers. Several potted plants with white, red, and blue flowers are on the ground. The ground is paved with grey stones.

## 2 The challenges for older people in rural areas



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# From social isolation to high quality social connections

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), social isolation and loneliness are important, but often neglected, social determinants of health across all ages, including for older people. High-quality social connections are essential to our mental and physical health and our well-being.

(<https://www.who.int/activities/reducing-social-isolation-and-loneliness-among-older-people>)



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# Challenges for older people in rural areas

- Isolation (distance of villages from towns, a factor that increases mortality)
- Loneliness (loss of a partner, it is no longer a tradition for several generations to live together,
- Poverty (low income, high cost of living,
- Lack of contact (intergenerational, distance from relatives (urban life)
- Lack of activities

(Zazvonil M., 2016, European Parliament 2020, Krause S.,2022)





A photograph of a park with large trees and people sitting on benches. The scene is peaceful, with sunlight filtering through the leaves. In the foreground, two people are sitting on a bench on the left, and another person is sitting on a bench further back on the right. The grass is green, and the trees have some autumn-colored leaves.

# Challenges for older people in rural areas

- Distance between health and other facilities (most health facilities are in cities)
- Digitalisation (lack of knowledge of digital tools, learning, poor internet connection)
- Transport links (dependence on transport, poor links to the city)
- Dependence on others

(Zazvonil M., 2016, European Parliament 2020, Krause S.,2022)



# What is actual poverty?

Each country defines poverty according to its own standard.

We usually measure actual poverty by whether we lack the necessities of life.

The World Health Organisation and the Organisations for Economic Co-operation and Development have developed guidelines that identify five central dimensions of poverty and health that reflect reduced human capabilities:

- economic (work, income, livelihoods)
- human (health, education, how big is family)
- medical health (diseases of the elderly, disability, injuries)
- protective (insecurity, risk, vulnerability)

(Batas, 2004)

# Challenges in rural areas

- **The need for intergenerational cooperation: people need companionship, they need company, friends, family, to whom they can confide feelings or pass on knowledge/life experiences.**
- **Peer-to-peer socializing: not enough institutions/centres/spaces to offer such forms of socialising, including intergenerational socializing.**
- **Participation in activities: it has been shown that people living in rural areas are less likely to participate in activities than people living in urban areas (excuses such as usually saying they are "too old" for something like this, etc.)**

**Evidence that any type of activity has a positive impact on the health and mindset of older people.**

**(UNECE, 2017; European Commission, 2021)**

# Challenges in rural areas

- **Technology:** is advancing very fast and the elderly are struggling to keep up, especially less educated people or people who cannot afford smartphones and other digital devices.
- **Digital competencies:** encourage people to engage in lifelong learning in their working lives. The European Commission has set a target for at least 80% of the population to acquire basic digital skills.
- **Transport:** awareness of the importance of public transport, possibility of co-financing. Problem in rural areas due to distance from town and population density.

**(UNECE, 2017; European Commission, 2021)**



# Challenges in rural areas

- Dependence on others: a major concern for the elderly and a reason for the decline in their self-esteem.
- Family role: helping your parents/grandparents, (problems: distance, jobs, commitments etc.).
- Role of organisations: to provide different forms of support and care for the elderly, such as retirement homes, sheltered housing, different forms of home help (health, social care) volunteering, etc. (UNECE, 2017; European Commission, 2021)

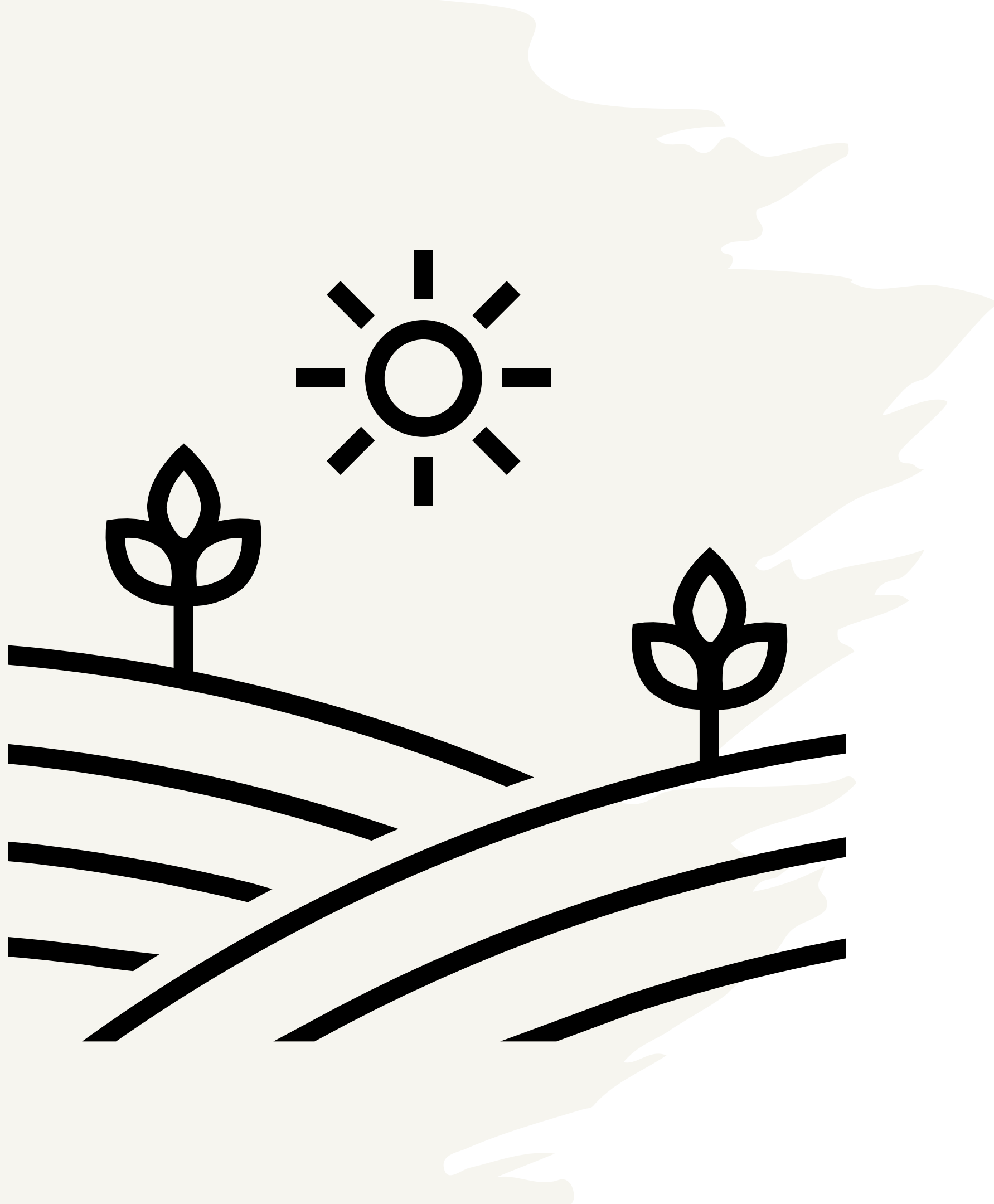
Awareness that old age brings with it many burdens which we can try to alleviate through various additional activities to ensure a better old age for the elderly.

A group of approximately ten older people, mostly women, are standing in a line on a grassy field, singing from black songbooks. They are dressed in casual outdoor clothing like jackets and sweaters. In the foreground, a man in a grey jacket and jeans is seen from the side, playing a keyboard on a stand. The background shows a rural landscape with trees and a wooden structure. A large green semi-transparent box with white text is overlaid in the center of the image.

### 3 SWOT analysis for older people living in rural areas



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# What is a SWOT analysis?

SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis is a framework used to evaluate your farm business. It is usually used to analyse your business to see if a new offering would suit your current environment.

**Strengths** describe what an organization excels at and what separates it from the competition: a strong brand, loyal customer base, a strong balance sheet, unique technology, and so on.

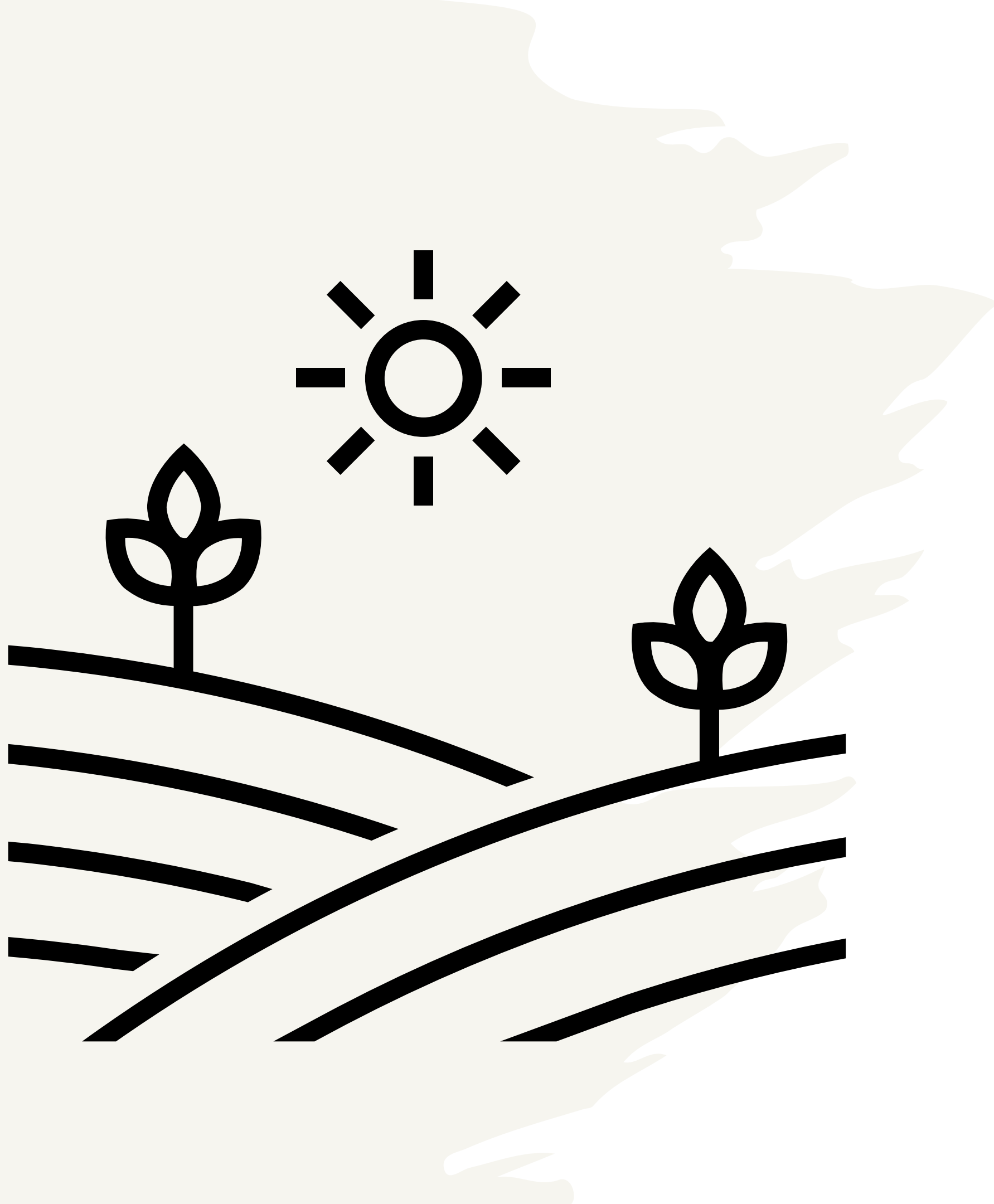
**Weaknesses** stop an organization from performing at its optimum level. They are areas where the business needs to improve to remain competitive such as branding, cash flow, supply chain.

**Opportunities** refer to favorable external factors that could give an organisation a competitive advantage. For example, if a country is offering grand aid, support systems for elderly people, increased awareness of social farming in the media.

**Threats** refer to factors that have the potential to harm an organization. For example, ageing population is decreasing.



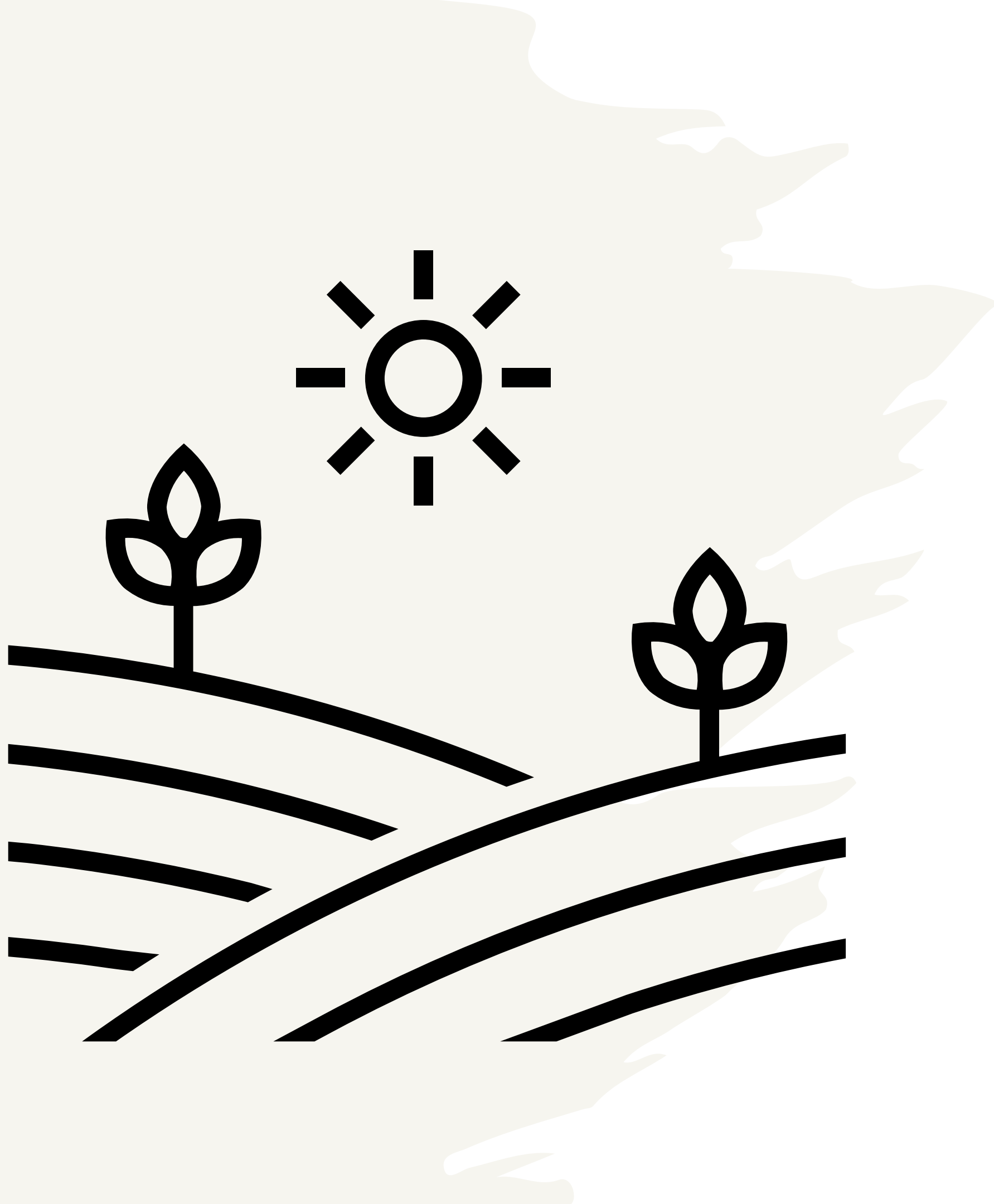




## SWOT analysis: STRENGTHS

- Favourable natural conditions
- Attractive landscape
- Untouched and clean nature
- Less environmental stress
- Greater solidarity between people
- Beneficial effects on health
- Energy boost
- Community involvement
- Integration with other rural residents (from farms or local dwellings etc.)
- Possibility of better rehabilitation
- Important contact with nature (gardening, care of animals)

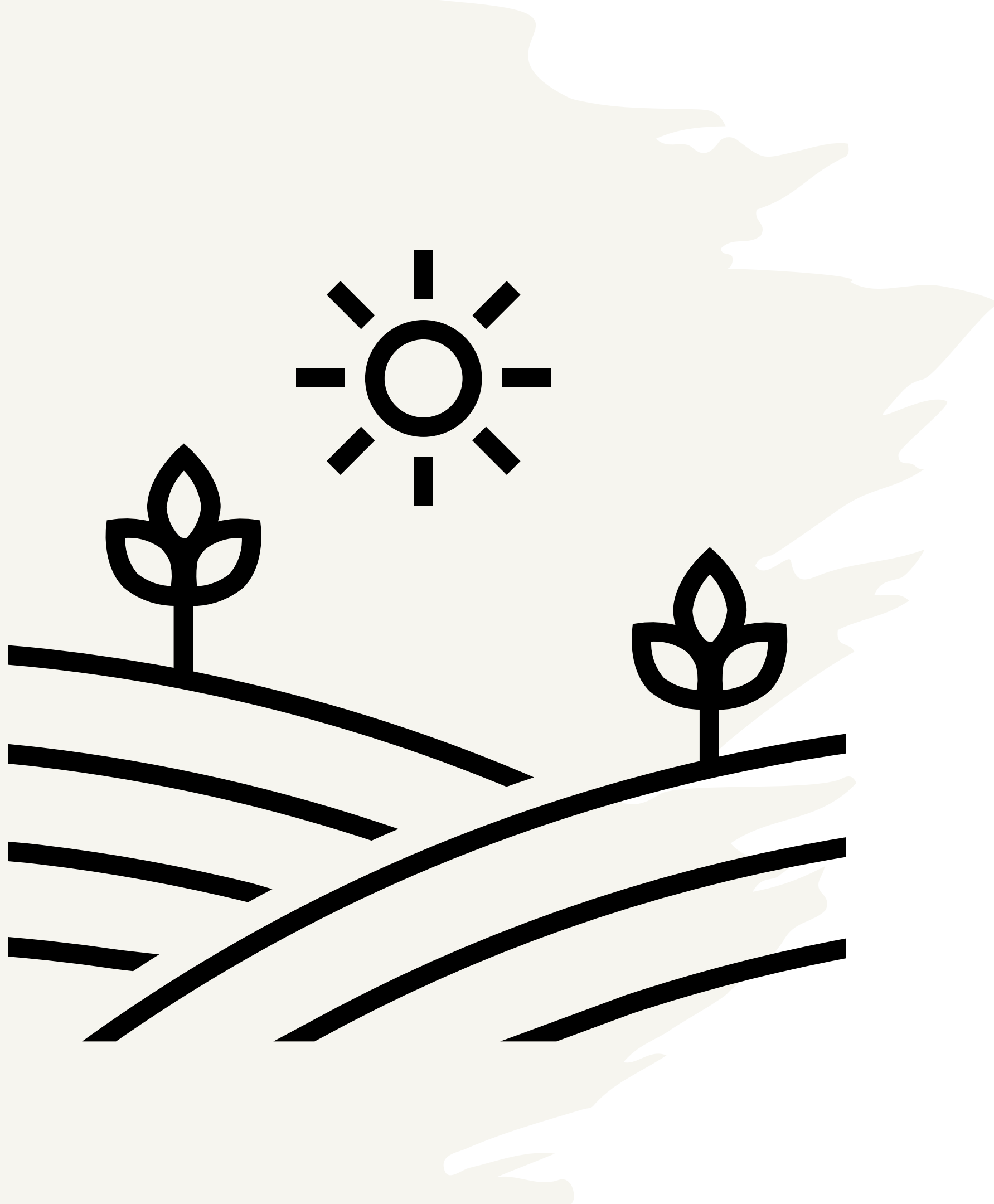




## SWOT analysis: WEAKNESSES

- Disadvantageous demographic indicators, fragmentation of settlements
- Poor infrastructure and rural amenities (telecommunications, electricity, water supply...)
- Lack of knowledge (digital)
- Lack of adaptability of infrastructure for the elderly (access for the disabled in public areas)
- Poor public transport (reliability and frequency, cost of public transport)
- Less involvement in social activities (overcoming longer distances)
- more social events in the city
- Poor health services



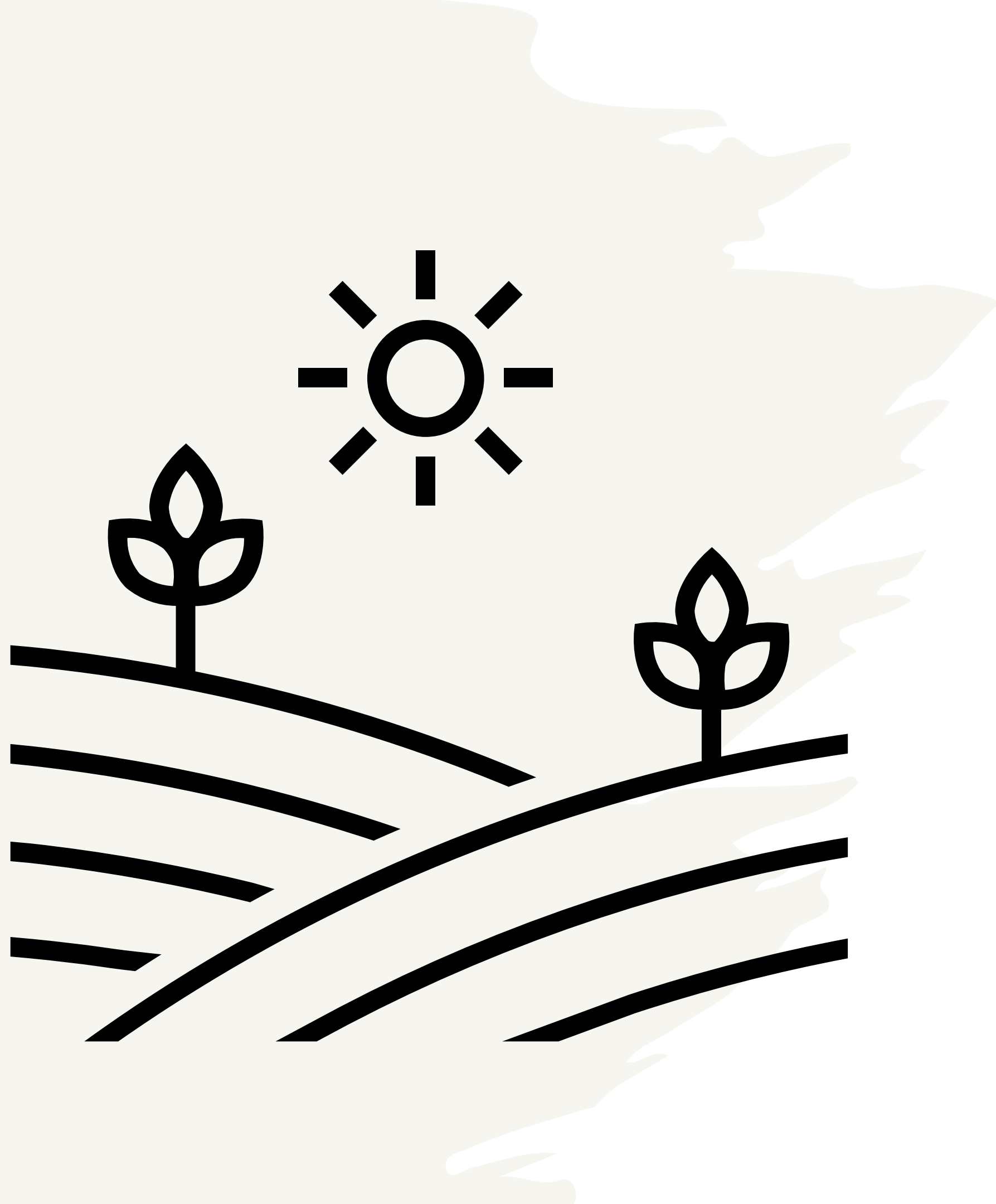


## SWOT analysis: OPPORTUNITIES

- Positive effects on health
- Reduction of illnesses
- Promotion of interconnection
- Organisation and promotion of workshops to attract older people,
- Intergenerational interconnection (socialising on different occasions)
- Spending old age in a peaceful environment
- Promotion of solidarity/volunteering
- Work on the farm, opportunity to be active in nature
- Creation of additional activities or activities
- Adaptation of activities in the garden



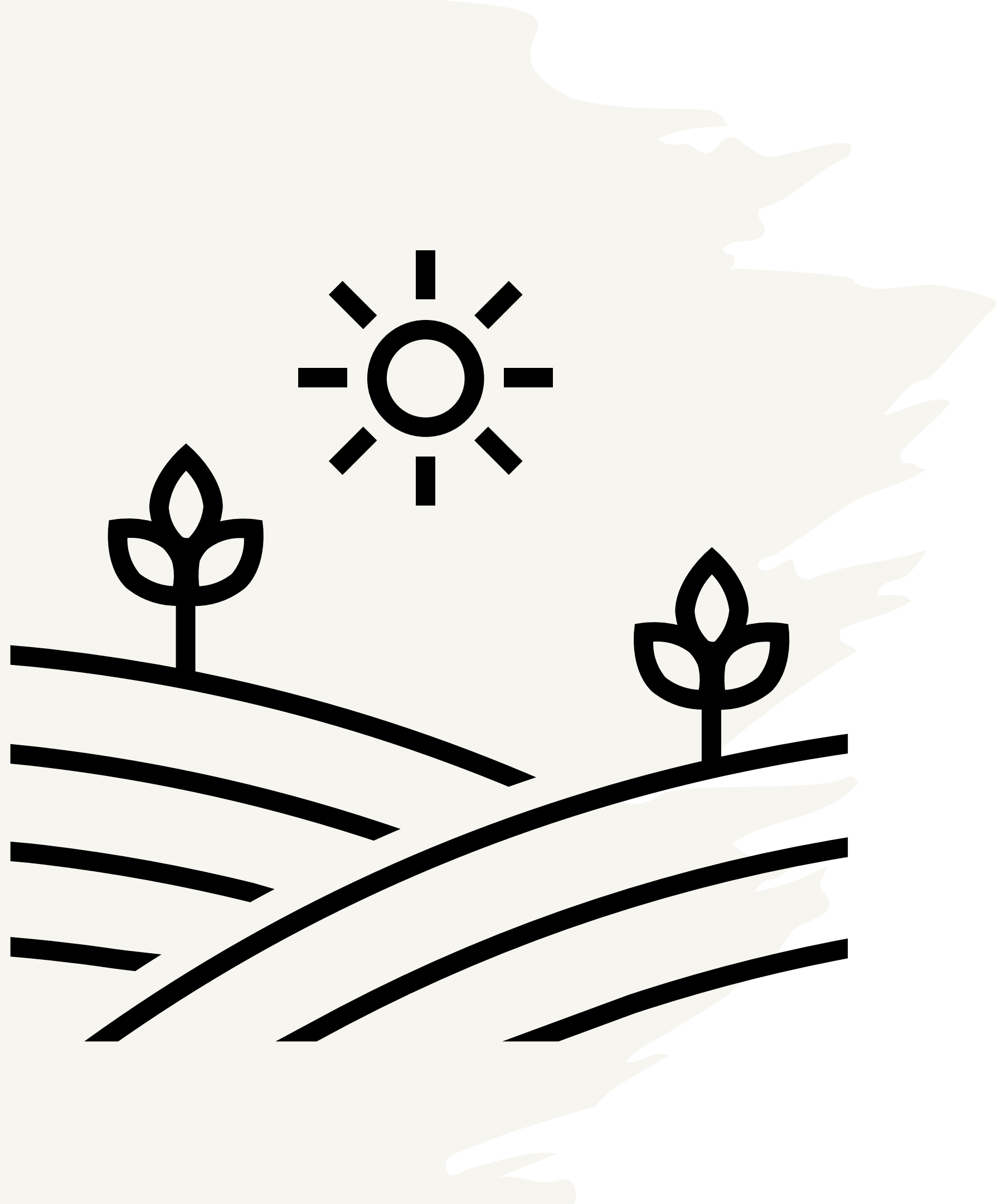




## SWOT analysis: THREATS

- The elderly as a risk group for various diseases
- Pandemics (following professional guidelines)
- Inability to participate due to illness or injury
- Access to medical care locally
- Distance from relatives
- Young people moving away from rural areas (feelings of loneliness and isolation)





## SWOT analysis: Summary

Social farming benefits older people within our community, encouraging an active lifestyle with access to nature and the environment. The health benefits of being around others and engaging in meaningful activities are more beneficial than living a sedentary lifestyle where you have little to no engagements with others.

It gives people purpose and a sense of pride in their achievements, but challenges such as transport options and access to good healthcare still remain. Older people can also be at risk from ailments especially as they get more fragile and must plan their social interactions carefully.

Overall, social farming aids in the capacity of the elderly in the community to live a more substantial life, remain active and socialise regularly.



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