

T.A.A.F.E.

Towards Alpine Age-Friendly Environment

INTERREG
Alpine Space Programme

WP 4

Policy brief on the T.A.A.F.E. as Strategy

T.A.A.F.E.- Policy Measures supporting the co-creation of age-friendly environments in the Alpine Space

DELIVERABLE
D.T4.3.2

CREATED
2021-10-19

VERSION
1.2.

AUTHOR
Katharina Handler
Marina Lindorfer
Irina Vana

CONTRIBUTED
Adele De Stefani
Sandra Evans
Tine Roth
Stewart Gold
Ursula Holtgrewe
Thibault Moulart

STAND
2021-10-19



Interreg
Alpine Space



European Regional Development Fund

T.A.A.F.E.

Towards Alpine Age-Friendly Environment

INTERREG
Alpine Space Programme

Ana Ramvoš
Alen Sajtl

AT A GLANCE

A growing ageing population and increasing number of isolated older adults demand new approaches and political commitment. Therefore, the WHO developed the concept of sustainable age-friendly environments (AFE), using an integrative approach to optimize the social and physical environments and promote active, healthy ageing and participation in society. The T.A.A.F.E. project uses this concept to build a participatory framework - T.A.A.F.E. model - for developing an age-friendly environment and an improved delivery of services in the Alpine Space (AS).

DISCLAIMER

All rights reserved

The document is proprietary of the T.A.A.F.E. consortium members. No copying, distributing, in any form or by any means, is allowed without the prior written agreement of the owner of the property rights.

Responsibility

This document reflects only the authors' view. The European Community is not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained herein.

Timeliness of the information in the document

The information in this document is subject to change without notice.

Key Messages

The T.A.A.F.E. project provides evidence for the importance of participatory governance for the development of age-friendly communities. As the WHO underlines, **age-friendly cities and communities allow all people to maximize their abilities across the life-course. The involvement of older people enables them to contribute to the development of a more inclusive society** and at the same time might positively change visions of age.

Building on this, we argue that Europe needs more active engagement of older people on all levels. Older adults have plenty to give to our societies and shall have the opportunity to contribute with their skills and experience to the development of our societies, social life and environment.

A more positive impact of media and public appearances on the situation of older people shall be achieved by raising awareness for the topic of age-friendly environments (AFE) or aging on the one hand, and by launching an intergenerational dialogue in society on notions of age, growing older and age in general on the other hand. In addition, political agendas shall foresee the implementation of multi-generational approaches with the aim to co-create with all stakeholders positive visions of how we want to live together in our communities.

On the policy level we recommend using the concept of age-friendly environments for mainstreaming age-related issues. This consists of:

1. The endorsement of guidelines and self-representation boards for participatory governance structures aiming at a greater involvement and stronger role of older people in the EU Member States.
2. Coordinated European strategy and actions to support the creation of a positive mind-set within its populations towards ageing and raise awareness for requirements and benefits of age-friendly environments
3. Mainstreaming age related issues by strategically considering and integrating ageing issues into all relevant policy fields on all levels with the aim of creating and exploring synergies across policy fields and communities.
4. Broadening the concept of democratic participation to its social and economic dimensions, in order to really acknowledge the need of older people and their carers for secure livelihoods and high standard care provision.
5. Addressing the challenge of establishing a “Union of Equality”
6. Introducing a focus on age-friendly environments in the Urban Agenda for the EU as well as on the EU Rural Development policy by supporting the development of strong intergenerational neighborhood structures.

Introduction

“Age-friendly environments are better places in which to grow, live, work, play and age. They are created by removing physical and social barriers and implementing policies, systems, services, products and technologies to promote health and build and maintain physical and mental capacity throughout the life course” (WHO 2020)

Initiatives promoting age-friendly environments are mostly local because they are necessarily linked to the everyday life experiences of residents. In doing so, they are most successful when building on the expertise of older citizens, involving them in the development of age friendly solutions in the different sectors of society, because older people know best what they want and need.

Building age-friendly environments is promoted on the European and international level as an answer to the challenges of aging societies. It is an approach to keep people involved throughout their lifetime and to value the diverse skills they bring into society. Policy interventions at all levels that reflect a life course approach may be supportive to reach this aim. As all countries in the Alpine Space confront similar challenges in connection to ageing, age-friendly environments are a topic we need to exchange on in a wider scope. On the one hand public authorities of different levels need to evaluate how they can contribute to the agenda, and the other hand the topic needs to be anchored in a social dialogue in the form of an open exchange between generations.

Following the ideals of age-friendly environments, the recommendations below focus on the support required from the different stakeholders, involving the European level, national and regional governments, local authorities, civil society, and the private sector to move closer to the goal of building a sustainable age-friendly environment in the Alpine Space.

Methodology

The here presented recommendations are a product of collective knowledge production within the wider T.A.A.F.E. stakeholder community.

The recommendations are rooted in conclusions drawn from the report D4.1 Age friendliness in the Alpine Space (2020), expert opinions reported therein, and the feedback provided by stakeholders involved in the ongoing T.A.A.F.E. policy dialogue. **The report suggests as an important next step in the implementation of an agenda for age-friendly environments a multi-stakeholders process of “listening”, “learning”, “visioning” and through that the description of new pathways to more cohesive societies.** In concrete terms, these pathways towards age-friendly communities in the Alpine Space have to be developed in the following policy key areas:

- awareness raising
- a stronger dialogue, exchange and coordination within, between and across municipalities as well as between policy makers of different sectors
- development of participatory governance structures supporting the engagement of older residents
- as well as the development of frameworks and the provision of resources for mainstreaming issues related to age and intergenerational strategies.

The WHO Age-friendly Cities framework deals with eight interconnected domains to foster age-friendly environments involving community and health care, transportation, housing, social participation, outdoor spaces and buildings, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment and communication and information. (<https://extranet.who.int/agefriendlyworld/age-friendly-cities-framework/>).

In an international online workshop of the T.A.A.F.E. community, the participating experts formulated concrete measures to overcome challenges connected to these domains. They aim at providing guidance what regards the above mentioned three areas of action. A special focus was drawn on to the issues of (a) healthy living, (b) diversity of older people and (c) built environment, transportation, and accessibility. Other domains, such as social participation, communication and information and civic participation, were dealt with as crosscutting issues.

Policy recommendations

1. Endorsement of guidelines and self-representation boards for participatory governance structures aiming at a greater involvement and stronger role of older people in the EU Member States

- Enable active engagement of older people through measures, actions or activities that support their active participation in community/public/social life (including activities aimed at physical and mental engagement).
- Enable intergenerational (all citizens) encounters or meetings that put social togetherness, management of commons and development of joint visions in the centre. By doing so, they help to provoke a change in mentally or positive mindset towards ageing within society.
- Representation or integration of older people's interests (ensuring diversity of representatives) in all political decision-making processes regarding issues that are of their concern.

2. Coordinated European strategy and actions to support the creation of a positive mindset within its populations towards ageing and raise awareness for requirements and benefits of age-friendly environments

- Provide resources for anchoring and administering training opportunities and offers for the sensibilisation on age-related matters, more specifically (a) intergenerational training for employees of service providers, (b) pre-retirement training for older workers and (c) area-wide and systemic training and support measures for informal carers.
- Launch a European media campaign, which aims at promoting intergenerational dialogue by educating the general public, combating negative stereotypes regarding age and emphasising positive role models of older citizens and their contributions to society, as well as addressing older people's health needs, including sexual health needs.
- Elimination of all technological barriers that deny older people to have access to relevant information through (a) equipping older adults with necessary digital skills to navigate in online service portals (b) training of public administration staff to equip them with knowledge of how to better match the "design of information" with user needs – including specific information strategies targeted at women (c) maintain sufficient and qualitative face to face support or guidance for those people, who lack skills to handle online tools.

3. Mainstreaming age related issues by strategically considering and integrating ageing issues into all relevant policy fields on all levels with the aim of creating and exploring synergies across policy fields and communities.

- Following the UNECE Road Maps for Mainstreaming Ageing T.A.A.F.E. suggests to strategically consider and integrate ageing issues into all relevant policy fields on all levels. This will help to better coordinate age related agendas across policy levels and different policy sectors on the municipal level.
- Networking actions supporting topic related knowledge exchange across municipalities including associations of municipalities, will also advance mainstreaming of ageing issues and support peer-learning processes. This would entail the creation of frameworks for the support of the exchange of information on the level of service provision between the health sector and other social services.

4. Broadening the concept of democratic participation to its social and economic dimensions, in order to really acknowledge the need of older people and their carers for secure livelihoods and high standard care provision.

5. **Addressing the challenge of establishing a “Union of Equality” and following the call of AGE platform Europe for implementing an Age Equality Strategy, the following elements are seen as an important element:**

- Many regulations on accessibility have been passed. What would be useful is a system for monitoring the implementation of existing laws on accessibility that guarantee equal access to social services for older people in all European countries.
- In addition, the implementation of a long-term health and disability act on an European level is advised. As part of this It is especially advised to include regulations that acknowledge the diversity of older people, focusing also on the fluid sexual orientations of older people in care situations, mental health, physical health, and addictions (sedatives, hypnotics, gambling) and their prevention.

6. **Introduce a focus on age-friendly environments in the Urban Agenda for the EU as well as on the EU Rural Development policy by supporting the development of strong intergenerational neighbourhood structures.** This refers to new age-friendly concepts of town planning including public housing and accessible services and transport and would allow to sustain rural infrastructure and to prevent urbanisation. It also refers to the need of municipalities to invest in bigger, structurally relevant investments at the local level, without financial restrictions.

On the local level this includes:

- The evaluation and improvement of existing structures for the adaptation of houses according older peoples’ needs and shared housing to allow older people to age in place – including concepts for financing necessary changes.
- the development of guidelines for age-friendly adaptations of the build environment according to the existing infrastructures and buildings (especially in old towns).
- the adaptation of concepts and regulations fostering affordable rents in the city centers to provide for important infrastructure in the close neighbourhood. This could include solutions for a better inclusion of homes for elderly in the neighbourhood avoiding the isolation of older people living there and providing accessibility to shops, health care centers and pharmacies
- in line with the aims of a just and green transition it is underlined that older people profit especially from the development of barrier free public transport, which is often not easily accessible in rural areas. A higher frequency of public transport and affordable transport are seen as primary goals to overcome the challenges to limited mobility of older people. Not only public transport, but a variety of different forms of transport, can support the ambition of sustaining mobility in old age, such as voluntary taxi services for older people, Auto stopper pick up stations and car sharing opportunities and platforms, which can supplement public transport systems

References

WHO 2020: Decade of healthy aging 2020-2030; dl. https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/decade-of-healthy-ageing/final-decade-proposal/decade-proposal-final-apr2020-en.pdf?sfvrsn=b4b75ebc_25&download=true

Unicef 2021: Mainstreaming Ageing, dl.
<https://unece.org/population/ageing/mainstreaming-ageing>

Age platform Europe (April 2021). Toward an EU Age Equality Strategy: Delivering equal rights at all ages. https://age-platform.eu/sites/default/files/AgeEqualityStrategy_FINAL.pdf