

# T.A.A.F.E.

Towards Alpine Age-Friendly Environment

INTERREG  
Alpine Space Programme

WPT1 - WP Building TAAFE model, delivering TAAFE toolkit

TAAFE TOOLKIT

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## 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 optimise 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).

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## 1. About this document

This toolkit was developed as a part of TAAFE project, co-financed by the European Union via Interreg Alpine Space LEGAL CREDITS. With the consortium of municipalities, NGOs, universities and institutes from five European countries (Austria, France, Germany, Italy and Slovenia) the aim of the TAAFE project was to co-develop an age-friendly environment and to improve the delivery of services in the Alpine Space.

TAAFE toolkit describes the TAAFE model as it was built at the beginning of the TAAFE project and as it evolved during its implementation. It is answering two questions “how to do something ” and “why should we do it like that”. The toolkit is associated with two other documents: the TAAFE manual (which describes the implementation of the model in five pilot sites which was carried out during the TAAFE project and shows diversity of local implementations) and analytical report (which makes a link between the two, reflecting on the issues that arose from implementation and bringing gained knowledge into wider theoretical and research context). Part of the TAAFE toolkit are also TAAFE booklets, which, due to practical reasons, are prepared as separate documents, but are often referred to in this document and make for integrated conceptual text.

## 2. Introduction

TAAFE toolkit is primarily addressed to Alpine Space local communities and stakeholders who wish to explore new models to make their environments and communities more age friendly using participatory approach, but it also hopes to be of use and source of inspiration to wider Age Friendly community.

This toolkit contains 4 mains parts :

- 1) A first part describes the TAAFE model, it’s original inspiration from World Health Organization (WHO) Age-friendly cities and communities (AFCC) program, its specificities to the INTERREG Alpine space orientations (chapter 3) and an overview of its structure and core elements (chapter 4).
- 2) A second part describes the central issue of the model, ie. the need to work at local level in order to take the local specificities and ressources into account. Elements and steps of work at the local level are presented together with practical tips & tricks and a list of materials that can be used (chapter 5).
- 3) A third part describes the training which is needed to carry out implementation at local level. TAAFE model foresees training at a level above the local (at regional, national and international level), lead by an expert or group of experts in this field (chapter 6).

4) The fourth part contains two issues that concern both local and international level: one is use of technology (chapter 7), the other is adaptation of the model in time of crisis with the example from the time of covid-19 pandemic (chapter 8).

### 3. TAAFE model description

#### 3.1. The TAAFE model : source of inspiration and context of adaptation

The TAAFE model has been inspired by the World Health Organization's (WHO) Age-friendly cities and communities (AFCC) program officially launched in 2007 (WHO 2007). One should remember that such a program has been inspired by the "Vancouver Protocol" (WHO 2006) in line with the Ottawa Charter of 1986 on public health. Supported by the (Canadian) Government of British Columbia, this research protocol was used by collaborating cities in conducting a focus group (158 groups were organised, gathering 1485 persons ; 250 caregivers and 515 service providers were included in the consultations) research in 33 cities in all world regions that led to the WHO Global Age-Friendly Cities guide in 2007.

Next to this original step, the AFCC WHO program expanded at a global level through the WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities (GNAFCC) established in 2010. It aims to connect cities, communities and organisations worldwide with the common vision of making their community more adapted to the needs of older adults. Today, the Network includes 1114 cities and communities in 44 countries, covering over 262 million people worldwide (Source : <https://extranet.who.int/agefriendlyworld/who-network/>, consulted December 10th 2021).

At the European level,

*In 2008, to support this objective AGE [Platform] signed an agreement with WHO GNAFCC and since has actively promoted the WHO holistic approach which seeks to support longer and healthier lives through the promotion of age-friendly environments in its work and among EU institutions.*

*In 2010, as a member of the Steering Group of the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing (EIP-AHA) AGE managed to include the WHO concept of age-friendly environments among the key actions of the EIP-AHA. In the framework of the EIP-AHA, AGE committed to set up a thematic network on age-friendly environments and to build support for a*

*European Covenant on Demographic Change that will support the scaling up of age-friendly environments across the European Union (EU).*

*From February 2014 to January 2016, AGE coordinated a large consortium of 29 stakeholders composed of local and regional authorities and other stakeholders in the framework of the AFE-INNOVNET thematic network on age-friendly environments. This thematic network is now established as a legal entity under the name “European Covenant on Demographic Change”.*

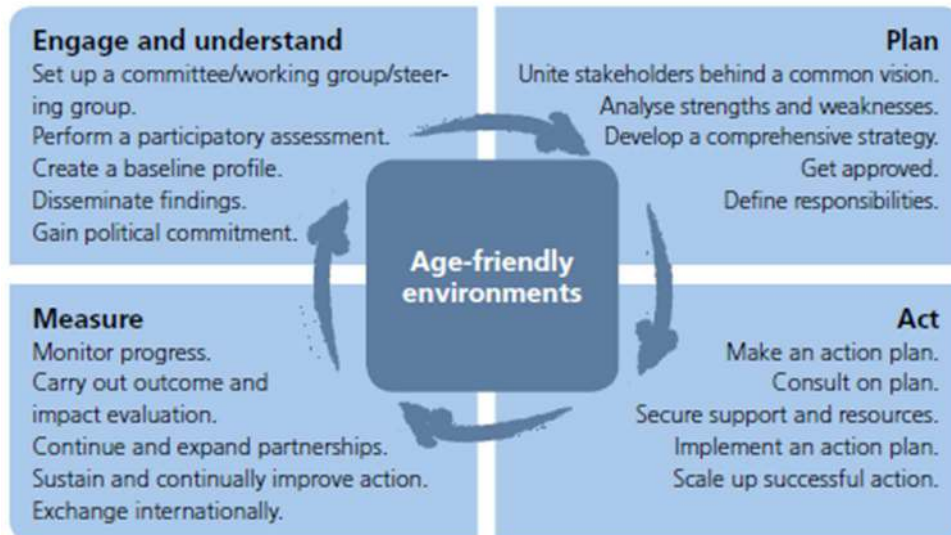
Source : Age-friendly world, <https://extranet.who.int/agefriendlyworld/network/age-platform-europe/>, consulted December 10th 2021.

At the European level, there are also national affiliated programs of WHO GNAFCC like the Slovenia Network on Age-Friendly Cities and Communities or the Francophone Network of Age-friendly cities in France. The first one is coordinated by the Anton Trstenjak Institute of Gerontology and Intergenerational Relations (one of the TAAFE project partners and authors of the toolkit); the second is Observer from the French partner.

Within the expansion at world and EU levels, the AFCC program has now developed from a research-oriented initial project into a general working program for different kinds of communities and localities to address demographic challenges of their ageing population. It nevertheless continues to navigate between the promotion of “active ageing” (“Active ageing is the process of optimising opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age” according to WHO 2002, 12) and “healthy ageing” (“Healthy Ageing as the process of developing and maintaining the functional ability that enables well-being in older age” according to WHO, 2015, p. 28 ; and from the similar source: “Functional ability comprises the health-related attributes that enable people to be and to do what they have reason to value”).

It also continues to promote a “bottom-up” perspective (even if it is presented as being “combined with a top down one”), based on older adults' participation, and suggests the accomplishment of 4 different steps during a 4-5 years process, as illustrated in the next figure.

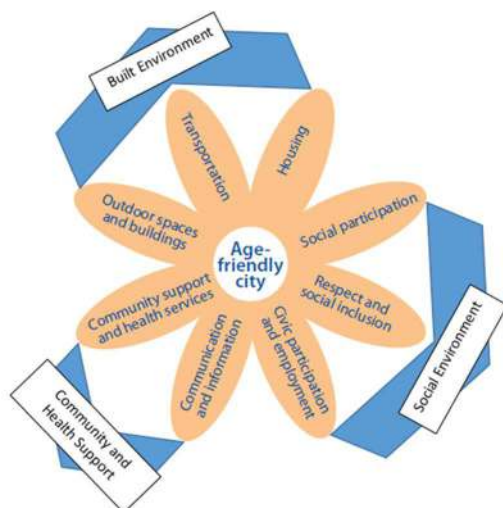
**Fig. 1** Cycle of continuous improvement



**Source :** WHO, *The Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities. Looking back over the last decade, looking forward to the next*, 2018, p.6.

And WHO still promotes a comprehensive perspective on ageing policies, by supporting the exploration of 8 domains, referring to different kinds of environment (see picture below).

**Fig. 2** The eight domains of WHO AFCC program



**Source :** Black K., Badana A.N.S., Hyer K. (2016) *Caregivers' Considerations on Age-friendly Community Features*. *Ann Gerontol Geriatric Res* 3(2): 10 (7). Available from: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313035642\\_Caregivers%27\\_Considerations\\_on\\_Age-friendly\\_Community\\_Features](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313035642_Caregivers%27_Considerations_on_Age-friendly_Community_Features) [accessed Jan 15 2020].



### 3.2. The TAAFE model: reasoning and its specificity

While there is abundance of theoretical knowledge on the topic of age friendly environment and participatory methods and novel tools are being constantly developed on the national and international level, their practical implementation at political and administration level is still severely lacking. The aim of the TAAFE model was therefore to facilitate the translation from theoretical knowledge and tools into practical skills at the local level.

Furthermore, even though exchange between different age-friendly local communities is recommended and appreciated, in reality there is a lack of possibilities for real exchange. Here again, TAAFE model gives some practical solutions and tools for such exchange, in coherence with the Interreg Alpine space reality.

Indeed, the Interreg Alpine space reality is threefold :

- It should be organised to address the **understanding of local stakeholders** with little or no knowledge of WHO program. In our case, while some national partners (like Slovenia) already had a large experience of the AFCC program, the rest of the partners have hardly heard about it. Even in France, even though there exists a French AFCC Network, the local partner in Marseille was not aware of such a network.
- Interreg Alpine space is a relatively short program, so the project should **downsize the WHO ambition** of working through 8 domains for 4 to 5 years. The adaptation here suggested to follow a 2 years time project and to complete a full cycle of process (see inside) by concentrating on 1 domain.
- Last but not least, the project refused a rhetoric discourse (“fighting against ageism”, according to the WHO's recent motto) but recognized **the value of each life**, including ageing ones. This has two concrete applications. **First**, the concern was not only about making older people’s voice heard, but also supporting their active (voluntary, not forced) role in actions to provide for not “active” but “responsible” older citizens. **Second**, the project also aimed to include the “hard to reach” older people, without giving a fixed definition of such a notion. To take them into consideration, the partners might have counted on older people themselves and on formal / informal caregivers.

What are the advantages of the TAAFE model?

1. TAAFE model was tested in the Alpine space environment. This international culturally and historically diverse, yet in many aspects similar, environment, offered an opportunity to compare international variation of co-production methods with older people (the socio-cultural aspect) for older people.

2. TAAFE model is a holistic model: it focuses on the whole process (from recruitment of people, to “co-assessment”, “co-decision”, “co-planning” and “co-implementation”), not only on the needs assessment, which often happens with other models. Furthermore, the principal aim of the model is for the process to flow in subsequent circles enabling the model to become a regular practice in local community;
3. TAAFE model insists on the concreteness of the process. By adding a special phase “priority choosing” the way towards concrete results is shortened, which motivates people to keep participating in the process.
4. Through the TAAFE innovation called “trio”, TAAFE model systematically involves older people in the process. For older people, the model offers an opportunity to be listened to and experience that their voices can produce a change at their local level, which is consolidated once they see the execution of the actions through their participation. In close relation with the research exploring the interest and limits of involving older people, it is also important to recognize that the TAAFE model might be a way to better understand the experiences of ageing (in their diversity), how to concretely fight against ageism etc (for further discussion see : Barnes, Taylor, 2009; Murtagh, 2014 ; Rémillard-Boilard, Buffel, Phillipson, 2017 ; Walker, 2007).
5. In TAAFE model, special attention is paid to the learning of skills and to the acquisition of know-how, so the people at local level are able to adapt the model to their needs and choose most appropriate tools for their situation. In this aspect a constant presence of methodological facilitator (in trio) is a precious resource.

The first version of our model was developed within TAAFE project. This draft version was presented at the project’s kick-off meeting in Treviso in December 2019, improved by input of partners and some international observers and then presented at the 1st Transnational workshop in Vienna in January 2020. It was also presented during the Poster Session (selected by a scientific committee) of the 6th REIACTIS International conference in Metz, Feb 2020 (<https://reiactis2020.sciencesconf.org/?forward-action=index&forward-controller=index&lang=en> ). However, the model was constantly adjusted, the biggest adaptations was driven by the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### 4. Overview of the TAAFE model (elements/structure)

TAAFE model aims to help municipalities and other local entities (for example institutions, enterprises, associations, etc.) to become more age friendly, using participatory approach and knowledge proposed by the WHO AFCC program.

It contains elements to work on local level, while training and exchanging of good practises makes it necessary to connect at a higher level (on regional, national or international level).

The main elements and characteristics of the TAAFE model are:

Organisational structure called **TAAFE trio** (trio) is a core element of TAAFE model and a driving force of work at local level. It is in charge of leading a Local Action Group and organising the implementation of TAAFE cycle. This group concretely represents the collective process of working together between different actors concerned by the action. It is a small group composed of three parts/roles: older person, methodological facilitator and administration employee of the local community - not as individuals but as representatives of their role at a community level. The involvement/representation of older people in the process defends their voice (while the model pays special attention to hard to reach ones), and older people normally know the local community and have their own rich network. The role of methodological facilitator gives methodological support, ensuring the quality of the work done by the trio and local action group. The role of administration employee is a bridge between older people and local administration and politics (thanks to him/her bottom-up and top-down approaches are implemented when appropriate). A TAAFE trio might count more than three people, since one to three persons of each role can be included in the trio.

**Local action group** (LAG) is a research-advisory-working group that helps TAAFE trio to implement the TAAFE cycle. Its role is especially enabling dissemination of information, setting of common goals, ensuring that the assigned tasks would reach a sufficient number of older persons and to protect against the individual, political or commercial interests outweighing the common good. The local action group has around 10 to 20 members, from municipality government, professionals and institutions, non-governmental organisations, interested older people. The aim is to assure a broad variety of interests and opinions and that enough active and creative people are involved. All genders, different political backgrounds and professional experiences should be represented.

**TAAFE cycle** starts from the WHO four phase circle (as described in Fig.1) and then tailors it in a more concrete way, including specific elements like celebration. Already in the first year, all four phases are carried out but on a smaller scale. The assessment of needs is carried out with a simplified desk and participatory research. It is focused on what people like and what they see as a challenge in their community, so it can concern all eight domains proposed by the WHO. But afterwards, instead of investing energy in a broad strategy, only one to three priority tasks are chosen for planning and implementation. These tasks must be carried out within more or less one year. Right after that, another circle of additional assessment of needs (if needed), priority-choosing, planning, implementation and evaluation starts. The aim of this process is building up a learning community which gains knowledge and skills with every new circle. With other words: the trio, the local action group and the people involved constantly increase their knowledge on age friendly communities, in the sense of better understanding of the real situation, resources and abilities on one hand; on the other

hand they know each other better, through each circle they learn how to cooperate and how to better involve older people. Due to all that, strategy can evolve at an appropriate time, not as an abstract “wish list”, but as a shared and realistic orientation for action.

Furthermore, the TAAFE age-friendly circle is more defined than sole steps proposed by the WHO. It follows the concrete steps: first, establishment of the TAAFE trio and local action group, followed by the needs assessment, the choice of priority task(s), the co-planning, the co-implementation and the celebration combined with the constant evaluation.

**TAAFE** model is built on three **principles**: participative, gradual/systematic and concrete.

*Participative* stands for constant attention to inclusion of older people (with special attention to hard to reach) and other stakeholders in all phases of the work. In practice that is mostly achieved through the TAAFE trio and LAG.

*Gradual/systematic* stands for step by step approach which is followed while implementing TAAFE age-friendly circle and training. Concrete steps are described under the TAAFE age-friendly circle and they take into account eight WHO domains and four developmental demographic tasks.

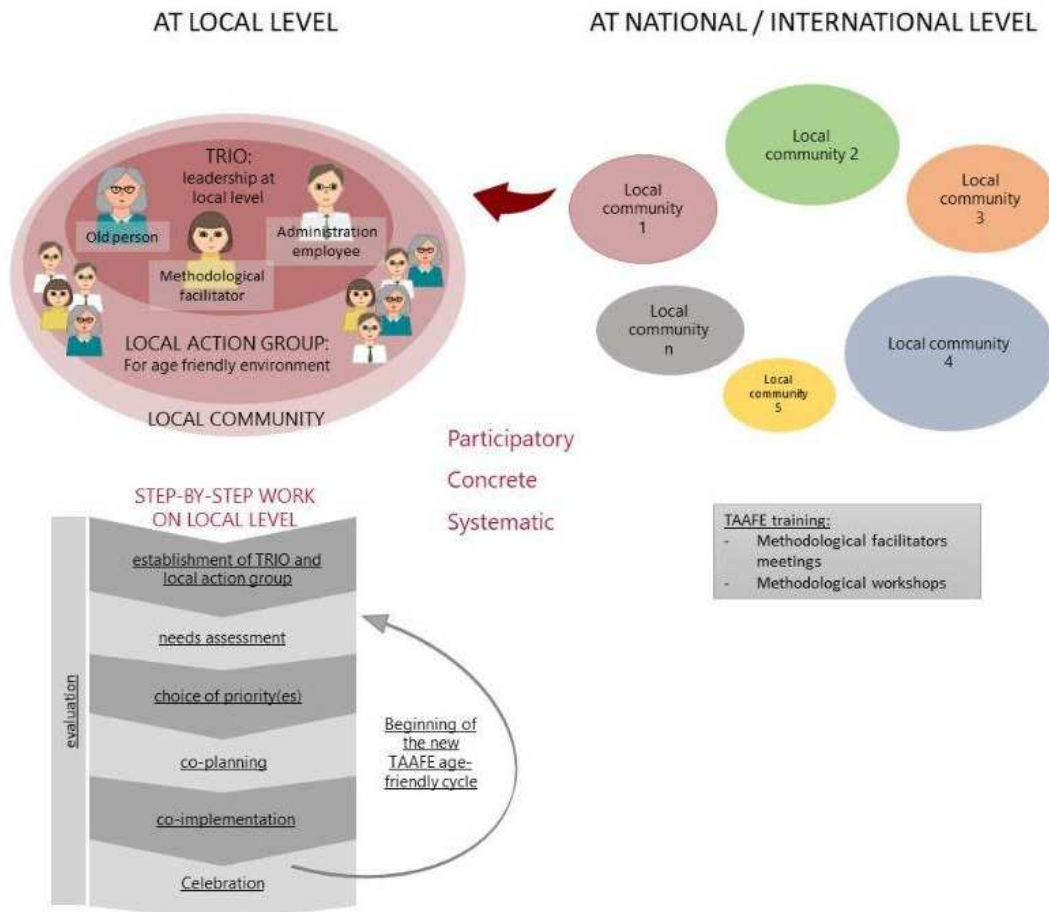
Finally, the importance of *concreteness* is emphasised, by working on concrete priority tasks.

**TAAFE training** aim is to provide knowledge and necessary skills to implement TAAFE model at local level. It is led by the experts with experience of AFCC and carried out on one level above (could be regional, national or international) so at least two local communities have to participate in the training. TAAFE training consist of methodological workshops and regular methodological facilitators meetings.

**Methodological workshops** are organised for TAAFE trios. Trios are taught some theoretical basic concepts, but most of all, step by step, they are taught know-how about how to establish and lead LAG, implement TAAFE cycles and follow the TAAFE principles.

Methodological workshops are positioned during the whole implementation of the first circle, ideally before the beginning of each new phase of the circle. After the end of the first circle, the follow up methodological workshops can be organised.

**Methodological facilitators meetings** are regular meetings for methodological facilitators, carried out every two or three weeks. Their aim is to support methodological facilitators in their role by giving them opportunity to exchange practises, solve problems, doubts and questions and to deepen a certain topic or aspect of work.



## 5. Implementation on the local level

### 5.1. Working TOGETHER – older people, municipality, professionals

Through the whole TAAFE age-friendly circle it is important to assure a broad participation of different stakeholders. This, as a result, increases the interconnectedness and trust in the local community as well as strengthens the positive behaviour of people and cooperation between them and the local institutions.

So who should participate?

- Municipal government and management by providing resources, reasonable organisation and focus on the benefit of all citizens.

- Professionals and institutions by providing methodological, theoretical and practical knowledge, services and material resources.
- Non-governmental organisations by providing social networks, contacts, the knowledge of real-life situations on the field and by opening new avenues that might later influence local government.
- Older people. The main feature and novelty of the world movement for age-friendly communities is the involvement of older people and their potential in all phases of the planning and realisation of age friendly environment. Therefore, the community starts to build development on the real needs, wishes and capabilities, and relies more on its own resources.

In the TAAFE model this structuring of stakeholders is implemented in the TAAFE trio, local action group and, throughout those two organisational structures, on a broader scale in all phases and actions when needed. How does it work ?

TAAFE trio (trio) is constituted at the beginning of the process. As described it has around three to six members and is composed of older people, municipality employee(s) and methodological facilitator(s). It is very important to choose appropriate people for it. You can find more information about that in booklet 1, worksheet 1.

Trio meets regularly, more or less every two weeks: more often when work is more intensive (usually at the beginning of every phase) and less often when things are running on their own. At meetings, trio members plan and monitor the process, discuss different dilemmas and questions, carry out concrete tasks (agreed on by the local action group for example) or sometimes dedicate time to study certain topics. Meetings are usually led by methodological facilitators, but also municipality employees or older persons can lead them; moreover the leadership can be also divided. The most important is that roles, aims and agenda of the meeting are clear and agreed upon, that there is a good atmosphere and good communication among members.

Trio also prepares meetings for the local action group (LAG). LAG meets usually at least once for each phase of the TAAFE cycle; most commonly at the end of one phase and before the beginning of another. That way, results of the previous phase can be presented and preparation of the next phase can be done. This enables members of the LAG to play an important role in the process, using their network of contacts, specific knowledge or other resources. Special attention should be given to the dialog between the members in these meetings, since good communication leads to common understanding of the situation and consensus on actions. It is very important that meetings are well prepared, with a clear agenda, objective and methods of work. Again, it is usually a methodological facilitator that leads meetings, but in part, also administration employees or older persons can help. The first meeting of the local action group is of big

importance, you can find more about it in the booklet “Towards an age-friendly community”, p. 25.

Trio and local action group reach out towards the broader community (towards more older people, hard to reach, experts etc.) in every phase of the TAAFE cycle. It can be done individually (through one to one conversation, personal letter etc) or in the form of workshops, lectures, events; in person or through communication channels (through local newspaper, website etc). It can be organised in a more or less participatory way: from frontal presentation to more active involvement in the process. Those decisions depend on time, resources and current objectives.

#### Tips and Tricks:

- Working together is not simple, it is not enough just to bring people together into the same room. If you do that, you might run risks . If people will not have a good experience working together, it might be impossible to convince them to work together in the middle or long-term process.
- A big part of the TAAFE process is done in small or middle sized groups, since group work is a privileged tool for performance/application of participation. That is why it is absolutely necessary to master some leading groups skills. Group leading skills can not be learned from books, but only through experience training. Still, here are some things you should pay attention to and some tricks you can use:
  - o It is important to be able to create a good, trustful atmosphere. You can do that by insisting on respect and equity among participants, by promoting good communication culture, by giving space to everyone to express themselves, by adopting a friendly and humble position with participants (not being an expert “above”, but being teacher and learner at the same time) and by arranging friendly environment (neat room where you can prepare something to drink or small snack).
  - o You should organise work in an efficient way: have a clear goal and methodology for each meeting, communicate your agenda and successfully manage time (it is important to finish on time), give very clear instructions, make sure people speak mostly on the subject (if necessary it is your role to remind them to come back to the topic) and help them to arrive to some conclusions at the end of the meeting.
  - o It can be useful to explicitly define group rules and dedicate some time to go through basic group communication rules at the very first meeting of the group: read them aloud, reason about them and comment on their importance. You can find an example of such rules in the TAAFE booklet Towards age friendly community. In the same booklet you can find an example of how those rules can be incorporated in the first meeting of a local action group (see page 28).

- At the end of each meeting it is very beneficial to take time for the feedback, giving the possibility to each participant to share a sentence about how he/she experienced the meeting, what he/she found interesting, what he/she missed.
- In-group social learning method is a very useful tool for working in a group. With the help of participants' experiences it helps to translate theory into practice and since it builds on the learning from moderated experience the learning outcome is bigger. At the same time the use of the method itself helps to promote a positive, trustful and connective environment which is helpful for cooperation. You can read more about the in-group social learning method in the article: In-group Social Learning as an Effective Method for Quality Care Empowerment (Ramovš *et al.* 2019)
- The local action group usually works on a voluntary basis, so questions like “how to invite members to participate”, “how to motivate them to stay in this long process?” might arise. Here are some tips from our experiences.
  - When you are inviting members: take time for them (get information about them, about what they do, visit them or call them and take time to listen to them), make recognition of their work and tell them why their contribution in the local action group is important and irreplaceable.
  - Avoid the traps:
    - competitiveness and division among members (by uniting members around common goal: “We are here to make our municipality more age friendly, each of us is precious”);
    - local action group turning into a platform to complain about the status quo (by having a clear goal of meetings, by helping members to stick to the topic and by insisting on communication culture);
    - to be misled by egoistic or partial interests (by asking questions, by asking different people - pay special attention to more quiet members, by studying and following existing knowledge on specific topics).
  - To keep people in this long process, nurture their motivation. To do that, you have to be aware of what motivates your concrete group members to join and stay in the local action group. Here are some common motivations, based on our experience: curiosity, prior trust building (towards leader or municipality or who invited them), intrinsic motivation to work for common good (for example in order to make community more age friendly for themselves and for future generations), because municipality is involved, spirit of the group, other participants, experience of being heard, personal approach, seeing results, the work is organised and systematic, desire of getting new connections, knowledge and possibilities, doors are always open so one can participate more or less (being informed but don't have a feeling of being obliged), recognition of participation, reward or award, gaining



something for association or institution that one belongs to etc. As we can see motivation is connected with personal interests and it is important to acknowledge that not all personal interests are bad. On the contrary, you have to take care of members and their interests as well (as long as they are not harmful, don't outweigh the common good or cause inequity...) otherwise you risk instrumental using and they will leave the process.

- Older people in the trio and local action group members in the TAAFE project participated as volunteers. It is right to also take into account the possibility to pay them for their participation. You have to be careful about "symbolic payment". If you pay them, pay them fully. Why? Participants do not do it for money, so if you give them some money you can on one hand devalue their willingness to participate for free and thus give something to the community, on the other hand you do not pay them as much as she/he would deserve for work done (so you again devalue their work). Still, it is very important to reward participants, even if they do not expect it. Money is not the only possible reward, you can do it with personal and/or public recognition of their work (article in the public paper, reception with the mayor, public event etc), you can reward them in other ways (with specific gift, voucher, offering lunch or dinner, money - making explicit it is not a payment but a symbolic reward etc) or with providing something for their professional or personal development (by organising free training for them, inviting special guest, providing equipment like for example tablets etc).

#### List of TAAFE materials:

- booklet 1, worksheet 1: Trio - a motor of the process TAAFE at local level
- booklet 1, worksheet 3: What is local action group and who to invite?
- booklet *Towards age friendly community*: Guidelines for group work (on the inner side of the front page), Basic group communication rules (on the inner side of the back page), Introductory meeting: What is local action group (LAG) for age-friendly community and what are its tasks? (p. 25)
- booklet 2, worksheet 6: July 1st afternoon work - group dynamic
- booklet 2, worksheet 7: July 1st afternoon work - (inclusion of older people in the needs assessment and) feedback of the day
- booklet 2, worksheet 8: July 2nd morning work - our trio and LAG: adaptation to local context

## 5.2. Working concretely and gradually

In the TAAFE model, a clear and concrete process is of great importance. Why? Older people and stakeholders want to see concrete results, otherwise they drop out, saying it is all just talk or empty political promises. Furthermore, only having something concrete to

work on, different stakeholders in the community can learn to participate and work together.

At the same time, the process needs to be done gradually, step by step. It is like when you are building a house: you can not do everything at the same time and you can not start with a roof, the same way you can not start for example with the implementation. Since every step is built on previous steps, the quality of the process depends on the quality of what was done before. Furthermore, not only all steps must be well and consequently done, people also need to be constantly informed about what was done, what we are doing and what is ahead of us. If the track of the whole is lost, things become confusing and motivation of participants to be actively involved fastly drops.

Let us look at the step by step implementation of the phases in the TAAFE cycle:

### **6.2.1. Establishment of trio and LAG**

See chapter 6.1. Working together

### **6.2.2. Needs assessment**

Needs assessment is carried out in combination of desk research and participatory research. In the TAAFE model, TAAFE trio carries out desk research at a beginning of the process, gathering demographic data about the community, listing existing stakeholders and activities, events, communication channels and other important issues regarding older people in the community (you can find more about the process in the booklet 1, worksheet 1). Desk research is followed by participatory research, which engages older people, carers and other important stakeholders. This part is done through the local action group. It is important to reach out to different groups of older people (active older people and those who are in need of care, just retired and those who are retired for a long time, those living in urban and rural areas when applicable etc); special attention should be paid to the hard to reach group of older people.

After needs and existing situations are assessed, results are presented, grouped based on the WHO or adapted domains and analysed. This can be prepared by the trio in advance or done directly at the meeting of a local action group or at an extended meeting with older people. If presentation and first analysis is done by the trio, it is important to obtain comments from the local action group or even from the broader community before the final grouping and analysis is carried out.

In the TAAFE model, the needs assessment phase is usually strongly connected with another phase: priority choosing. Trio can decide to present an analysis of the results and choose the priority at the same meeting.

The last step in this initial process is dissemination of results of the needs assessment (and presentation of the chosen priority, if it was done at the same time) to the broader community. That last step is also an opportunity to publicly thank people who participated in the needs assessment and invite more people to participate in the process.

## Tips and Tricks

- You can do a more or less complex participatory part of the needs assessment. In the TAAFE project we proposed a special method with the use of a booklet: *Towards age friendly community*. At the preparatory meeting of the local action group, all members receive the booklets (one for themselves and one or more for older people/stakeholders they plan to include in needs assessment). Before receiving the booklets, at the theoretical part of the meeting, different groups of older people and stakeholders are presented, so LAG members can think about different possibilities they have and consequently systematically include different groups of people in needs assessment. When they receive the booklet at the group meeting participants normally already share their idea about who they plan to include (you can read more about described methodology in the booklet *Towards age friendly community*, p. 33-37). The booklet itself is a practical tool. In the first part (p. 7 -24) people can find two questions and short instructions for the needs assessment with a lot of space for them to write down their observations and suggestions. We propose people take at least one week of time to observe their environment and put on paper their observations. Then they are invited to join a workshop (extended meeting for older citizens) where they report their observations. If they do not want or can not participate at the workshop, the person from LAG who gave them the booklet can do reporting for them. The workshop itself serves as a means to gather the results of needs assessment and at the same time offers an opportunity to invite and motivate the participating people to participate also in the next steps of the process.
- When you present the results of the needs assessment, it is advisable that you present also everything that already exists, that already functions well and is age friendly in the community, making it clear you are not starting from nothing. That is important for different reasons: firstly, it makes people proud and happy, which is a good motivation for the next steps (in opposite case you can find yourselves helpless before a mountain of problems); secondly, your work will be set up more realistically and it gives you an opportunity not only to think about what to start but also about what to maintain and further develop; thirdly, starting from the positive and already existing and going towards what still needs to be done is important for the group atmosphere and spirit (in opposite case there is a risk of developing complaining group that will not be productive in the long run).

### List of TAAFE materials:

- booklet 1, worksheet 1: ABC on aging in our municipality
- booklet *Towards age friendly community*
- booklet 2, worksheet 7: July 1st afternoon work - inclusion of older people in the needs assessment (and feedback of the day)

- booklet 2, worksheet 8: July 2nd morning work - gathering results of needs assessment and activating citizens for next phases of work

### 6.2.3. Choosing priority

In the TAAFE model, it is crucial to choose one to three concrete priorities that can bring about some results within more or less a year. Of course the choice of the priority(ies) has to take into account the results from the needs assessment. It is advisable that none of the chosen priorities from the needs assessment is forgotten; they can be structured in the form of a strategy or put on a waiting list, for the time when work on first priority(ies) will be finished.

Priorities itself can be chosen by the trio, by the local action group or at the extended meetings with a broader circle of people.

Different methodologies on how to choose priority can be implemented (clustering and quantifying needs assessment, voting, defining - possibly together - criterias and then choosing based on these criterias etc).

#### Tips and Tricks

- Pay attention to “what” you choose. First, reflect on whether this priority is relevant for older people, did it come from the needs assessment, from older people? Second, reflect if the chosen priority is really something that will increase the quality of life of older people. The increase in quality of life has to be concrete, measurable and visible to people. It is also important that priority is not chosen just for a ‘good show’ or because of some hidden agenda or an interest behind it, since that destroys methods’ credibility and people's trust in the long run. Finally, it is important to reflect who is most interested in this priority? Interest is connected to the motivation for participation, so you have to be mindful to choose something that is interesting for all parties (older people, municipality, stakeholders), if you want everyone to participate in the action. That is the easiest - fastest and most efficient way to work on the priority. Nevertheless, there are other options: If you choose something that will be of interest only to older people, your main work on the chosen priority will probably be advocacy (in order to convince the municipality and important stakeholders). On the other hand, if the chosen priority is introduced by the municipality, it will be harder to motivate people. In that case your role as a methodological facilitator will mostly be about how to include and actively involve people - even if you can not (due to different reasons chose what) you can use participatory method to solve how.
- Pay attention to how you formulate your priority. Do it in a way, so it can be a good orientation for your future planning and action. It should not be too broad and not too specific. You can try to formulate it as a vision or general goal, answering what do we want to achieve, for whom, and if needed adding general how. Furthermore, it is

important to harmonise the notions participating people have about the priority. This can be done prior to the priority choosing (for example with additional questions on how do people understand a certain domain) or afterwards (with the help of good formulation).

- Question your priority and its formulation. Formulate the first draft of priority(es), then formulate it better by posing more specific questions, for example: A) is it interesting for all parties (older people, municipality, professionals)? Is it relevant for old people? Will it increase the quality of their life? and B) What/who do we mean when we say .... (for example: »...older people« - do we mean independent older people or also those in need of long term care)? More specifically, what do we want to do (for example: Do we want to improve what already exists? Do we want to make more visible something that already exists? Do we want to connect already existing things? Do we want to start a new activity? In which relationship is it with existing reality?)
- To find most appropriate methodology you can use community toolbox website: <https://ctb.ku.edu/en> (under keywords: vision, general goal)

#### 6.2.4. Co-planning

Planning is an important step. If it is not done well, it can be disconcerting for the work process. It is also important that it really answers the chosen priority. Planning should be done together since implementation of the action will be normally carried out together as well. The main planning body can be the trio, the local action group or the extended group of older citizens (in this case, work in small groups is necessary). If planning is done by the trio, all other parts must be well-informed about the plan, with possibility to at least comment on it.

When it comes to planning, results play a special role. Having visible results is usually an explicit demand of older people and other stakeholders; at the same time, it is something that motivates both groups of people to participate in the process. In the TAAFE model, there are two types of results: 1. results in terms of chosen priority and 2. results in terms of the TAAFE process. Results in terms of the TAAFE process are directly linked to the TAAFE principles: together (or with other words: was the process carried out with the participation of relevant people and is the community more participative due to that?), systematically and concretely (or is our work more systematic and concrete due to the TAAFE model? are we achieving concrete goals we have set for a certain priority?), age friendly (are we becoming a learning community? did we become more age friendly during the process?). Both types of the results need short, middle and long-term planning.

During the planning process priority(s) should be divided into one or more actions and who will accomplish the action, when, how, using which resources etc, should be defined. The questions how will we guarantee sustainability and continuity of the taken actions should be also taken into consideration.

## Tips and Tricks.

- You can use different methods when specifying your priority in terms of results or specific objectives - for example SMART objective method. You can find many of those methods on the community toolbox website: <https://ctb.ku.edu/en> .
- When planning and implementing, extend your knowledge about the issue. For example: use the help of experts (also retired older people are important resource), bring together stakeholders already working in the field and ask them to share good practises, as a trio read some literature and share what you have found about the subject, ask your international partners if they have some good practises to share in this field.
- Here are a few more examples of objectives in terms of the TAAFE principles. *Goal together:* For the priority care provision, increase the participation of people that need long term care in the action phase, through family carers and care institutions. For different priorities, extend the participation of municipality offices in a way that more departments will be included in the TAAFE process. *Goal systematic:* In five year time make a plan with the local community to choose from different WHO domains in order to systematically raise awareness about different domains. Monitor every year what was done on each domain and where actions should be still taken. Enlarge the horizon of this year's priority by exploring how solutions can be found by acting on different WHO dimensions. *Goal concrete:* Here the results in terms of priority are situated. *Goal age-friendly:* Monitor the level of awareness, knowledge and change towards age-friendly community.
- Connect the results in terms of priority with the results in terms of TAAFE principle “together” or with other words: already when planning action, think about which specific group(s) you would like to involve in action and find some such specific objectives that will facilitate their participation.

### 6.2.5. Implementation and monitoring

As pointed out in WHO guidelines, the implementation phase is central in transforming a community into an age-friendly one . In the TAAFE model, it is of a great importance to include, as much as possible, different groups of older people and stakeholders in action, and to pay attention that responsibilities are divided across roles (meaning not all work is done either only by older people, only by municipality or only by methodological facilitator). For a successful mplementation it is important that an action is planned well. Another important thing in this phase is to take time for “doing” and time for “reflection”.

## Tips and Tricks

- Use the opportunity to include people into concrete work tasks or steps . As a trio, ask yourselves who could contribute and how? Some people do not like to participate in meetings, but will be happy to give a hand in practical work; that is often especially true for older males, husbands of volunteers (if the majority are female) or some other less involved groups. In order to involve more different people in the action, do not forget to use the help of a local action group.
- At the end of each planning meeting sum up what was said. Take time to check one more time, if it is clear, who is doing what, till when and what concretely needs to be done till the next meeting.
- With the people involved in the action, carry out regular monitoring and reflection. It is important that all included the action, report on what was done and that progress is regularly checked. You can do a short monitoring session each time you meet and/or now and then take a whole meeting for it. When doing the check up, try to balance efficiency and good mood, since both are equally important to keep people in the process. For the efficiency of the monitoring you can use questions like: “What was done on a certain action till now?”, for creating a good atmosphere use questions like “What was the best experience (in this period of time) for each of the participants?”.
- Document what is being done and report it regularly to the local action group, the local authority and the general public. Use reporting as an opportunity to invite and involve more people in action.
- During the implementation, take sometimes time with the trio alone, to monitor the situation and plan the next steps. Ask yourselves: Are we really going in the direction of our priority? Are we following our objectives? Do we need to re-plan our objectives because new things are arising while acting? Do we need re-planning and who will do it?  
It is of great importance that you, as a trio, are always a step before everyone else, asking yourselves: “When we are going to finish this step (or reach this one result) what will the next step be?”. That way, when the current step comes near its end, you will already be able to tell people what comes next. That gives clarity to the process, keeps momentum going and consequently helps you to keep people in the process.

### 6.2.6. Celebration

Celebration is very important. It increases motivation, it creates community. We live in a time of hurry, a time when “doing” and “being productive” are sometimes the only things that count. That mentality has a severe impact on individual health and on relationships, making it harder for us to foster a community. That is why it is even more

important to stop from now and then; to look back, to take time to be happy and proud of what was done - to celebrate.

Celebration is organised when an important task or phase is accomplished, when something concrete can be shown (for example when reaching a priority, but it can also be done when needs assessment is finished and priority is chosen). When the community is involved in the process for a longer time (for example working on the priority of age-friendliness), every year the same day can be chosen for celebration.

When planning a celebration, think about who to invite. Apart from all the people who participated in the process in one way or another, invite people who are deemed important by the community (municipality politicians, regional authorities, possible donors, stakeholders from this field etc) and broader community. Journalists are also important participants at these kinds of events. Celebration can be done on a smaller or on a larger scale; it can be only for people actively participating in the process, or, and that is more often the case, open to broader community.

Think well about the content of celebration: What do you want to communicate? And how? Usually it is important to tell the community what was done in an attractive way. Be innovative. Celebration can also be a good opportunity to present plans for the further work, next steps. Use this opportunity to engage and to get resources. You can also organise side events, workshop(s), invite special guests, but pay attention that those events only support and not overshadow the main content.

#### Tips and Tricks

- Organise the celebration around a special day (for example on the day of municipality, word day of older people, etc). You can also combine this celebration with another, already existing one, that has similar target audience and corresponding content - more people are likely to come and it can be enriching from more points of view.
- It usually works very well to include in the presentation people involved in action, especially older people themselves. Letting one or more of them narrate their good experience is one of the most convincing and attractive ways. It is very important though to really take time to prepare with older people, encourage and help them, otherwise the effect can be the opposite from the one wanted. If a person is not willing or able to do a presentation, you can still ask him/her to write about their experience and let someone else (a professional) read it.
- Plan time for informal exchange with and among participants and guests; take time for them during the celebration.

#### List of TAAFE materials:

- booklet 5: Looking at the results



### 6.2.7. Flexibility of the model - TAAFE process as a not linear process

Right after the description of all phases, it is important to add that the TAAFE process is not a linear process. It is characterised by the interconnectedness and circularity of the phases. Because of the interconnectedness of phases, sometimes we need to return to a previous phase (for example we can be already at the implementation phase, but due to new circumstances or troubles with the implementation itself we sometimes need to return to the planning phase or even the phase where we formulate the priority). On the other hand, it sometimes happens that we have to jump forward (for example we have to start with the pilot action in order to do proper planning). Furthermore transitions from one phase to another are often blurred, as we already saw in the description of the phases, and the end of one phase usually coincides with the preparation of the next one.

When talking about the circularity of the TAAFE process it is important to know that it is not linear either, meaning that the circle is not always done in the same order. For example: celebration can be done after needs assessment or after finishing one priority task next priority can begin without new needs assessment, on the other hand a small needs assessment can be done after choosing a priority in order to define it better.

### 5.3. Working systematically

Even though we said that the model is flexible and adaptable, it does not mean the process does not need to be systematic. The opposite. Population ageing brings many changes and challenges in many areas. Therefore, basic orientation is needed. The TAAFE model leans on the following two systematizations.

Demographic changes put us under four principle tasks. These tasks remind us of different target populations, their numerousness and their specific needs, when building an age-friendly community.

- Long-term care of sick, disabled and fragile old people: in Europe today there are on average 4% of the population with these needs, in the future they will be 10%.
- Healthy third-generation ageing: the retired generation in most of Europe now makes 20% of all population, but this figure will almost double in the future.
- Economic development, taking in consideration the ageing workforce: Europe's economic success is a prerequisite for healthy ageing and long-term care.
- Educating the entire population for the new solidarity between generations: solidarity between generations is essential for overcoming prejudices about old age, for better coexistence in everyday life and for better cooperation at work.

WHO's program Age-friendly communities suggests eight or nine areas of age-friendliness for concrete actions:

- outdoor spaces and buildings,
- transportation,
- housing,
- social participation,
- respect and social inclusion,
- civic participation and employment,
- communication and information,
- community support and health services,
- security.

A Methodological facilitator has to be well versed in these topics, but also TAAFE trio and LAG members have to have a basic knowledge and understanding of the tasks and fields. It is usually the methodological facilitator, with the help of literature or other materials, who familiarises the trio and LAG with those topics at the very beginning of the process and also makes sure that they are taken into account during the whole process. It is especially important that a needs assessment is done after obtaining this knowledge. Furthermore, a whole or a specific topic can be studied more in depth at the appropriate time in the trio process, in LAG or presented in the broader community. To obtain this in-depth knowledge lectures, workshops, articles, local newspapers and other means of communication could be used. Help of external experts is welcome. A good timing for obtaining in-depth knowledge about a certain task or domain is, for example, when choosing a priority task to work on or before planning the action for the concrete priority.

Tips and Tricks:

- The whole TAAFE process or chosen priority can be systematically supported by the articles that you publish in the local newspaper or on a website.
- Before needs assessment and while planning the priority you can use biblio education method: make everyone involved read a chosen content (you can do it also out loud at the meeting, asking everyone to read one paragraph) and invite them to underline what they find most interesting. Depending on the methodology you can also encourage them to share this interesting thing in the group.

- You can find an example of how to include above mentioned systematisation in needs assessment in the booklet *Towards age friendly community* in chapter: Notes - observations and suggestions (p. 7).

#### List of TAAFE materials:

- booklet *Towards age friendly community*: Background about age-friendly community (p. 47 - 62), Notes - observations and suggestions (p. 7).

## 6. How to support working at the local level? Theoretical and practical trainings

### 6.1. Brief description

The aim of theoretical and practical trainings carried out at regional, national or international level is:

- to provide knowledge and necessary skills to implement TAAFE model at local level
- to build a learning community between methodological facilitators and trio members, which prerequisite successful work at the local level.

#### Methodology:

The general methodological perspective always addresses both theoretical and practical exercises together. Of great importance is the process: not to give all knowledge at once and wait for the stakeholders to implement everything, but on the contrary, to give knowledge one step at a time and then offer sufficient time for implementation. More explicitly:

- Training follows step-by-step approach – learning, adapting, implementing the circle and experience sharing:
  - (a) trios learn theory and know-how,
  - (b) trios discuss and adapt learned contents to their local situation - partly done under supervision, partly individually,
  - (c) trios implement adapted content on their local level,
  - (d) trios share experience
- Training has theoretical and practical part and they intervene:
  - theoretical session is carried out in form of lectures accompanied with power-point, video presentations or handouts,
  - following each theoretical session is practical exercises or reflection accompanied with worksheets that help to transfer theory into practice,

- in-between the theoretical sessions there is a period of practical exercise carried out in the field (in the local environment),
- plenary experience sharing is prepared during the preparation meeting following instructions for experience sharing,
- after each plenary experience sharing, all the participants have an opportunity to ask questions and reflect and the trainer makes a bridge back to theoretical knowledge.
- For the experience exchange in-group social learning method is used.

#### Curricula theoretical part:

- Concept of age-friendly environment
- Eight domains of age-friendly community
- Four developmental areas for management of demographic changes
- Active ageing, from polysemic and international notion to a citizenship and local interest
- TAAFE model (WHO four step circle and its adaptations in TAAFE model, principles and basic elements)
- Participation of older people - older people as the main stakeholders in the age-friendly community
- Inclusion of hard to reach

#### Curricula practical part:

- Positive attitude towards older people
- Working in group (rules, principles, important elements)
- Composition of trio
- Composition of LAG and working with LAG
- Carrying out the needs assessment
- Choosing priority
- Planning
- Implementation
- Monitoring
- Celebration
- Sustainability and starting a new circle

TAAFE training consists of methodological workshops and regular methodological facilitators meetings.

## TAAFE project example

Usually, training is the role played by Affiliated programs of WHO AFCC like the Slovenian or French ones (see before) or as it particularly developed in Quebec (Paris et al., 2013). The TAAFE challenge was to create such a learning community by considering the Alpine Space as the common and shared environment. This great challenge suggested to integrate five<sup>1</sup> local cases from five different countries.

To meet this challenge, the TAAFE model (and the toolkit here) choose clear and general options :

1. The consortium of all the local trios should meet five times at the international methodology workshops.
2. Financially supported by the project, all the methodological facilitators (at least one from each trio) should meet regularly at the methodological facilitators meetings. These facilitators are considered as the main drivers of the TAAFE model and are in charge of producing the TAAFE learning community.

### 6.2. Methodological facilitators meetings for sharing and community building

Methodological facilitators meetings aim to build a learning community between methodological facilitators, by giving them a chance to share their experiences, knowledge, know-how and reflections. Furthermore, they are a space to gain new knowledge or deepen the existing experience with the help of the experts who lead the meetings and give regular input.

Methodological facilitators meetings are regular, every two or three weeks. They are around one and half hour long and are led by one or two leaders - experts. The most common structure of the meeting is that each methodological facilitator is first invited to present work done on the local level since the previous meeting; he/she is also invited to present eventual problems, doubts or questions. After each sharing, all participants are invited by the leader to comment on what they heard: they are specifically asked to comment if they found something interesting about what they heard or - when the problem was brought to light - to share similar situations from their own environment with experience on how they solved it. That gives participants ideas for possible solutions and enables the group to keep a good, constructive atmosphere. Meeting always finishes with a final feedback and agreement on the date of the next meeting.

Sometimes instead of general experience sharing, a specific topic is chosen for sharing experiences (for example: how we chose priority tasks in our municipality, how we plan to

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<sup>1</sup> At the start of the TAAFE project Switzerland was a 6th country member.

face the planning phase, how do we plan the celebration). Leaders can give methodological facilitators a topic in advance, so they can prepare themselves or present it directly at the meeting.

The third possibility for the meeting is biblioeducation, which means that all participants read the same article or other literature, which becomes a starting point of discussion and experience sharing. This is especially recommended at the beginning of the work, to acquire some theoretical basics and common working language, from terminology to values.

Methodological facilitators meetings are a powerful tool to build regional, national or international learning community because:

- They help participants to better know each other in a positive and supportive atmosphere created by the leaders, which consequently leads to the confidence between the participants.
- Due to that, participants are able to share their experience of successes and their difficulties working with the community.
- By participating, facilitators gain a feeling of being part of something bigger - TAAFE community, age friendly movement.
- During regular exchanges, methodological facilitators often include local and cultural aspects, enabling for the meetings to become a place for mixing local and transnational understandings of age-friendliness.

### **TAAFE project example**

In the TAAFE project, meetings for methodological facilitators took place every 2 to 3 weeks (except during August) for two years and a half, adding up to more than 30 online methodological facilitators meetings. Due to COVID -19, these online meetings had even greater importance for the project, since they were one of the few options to carry the work (the TAAFE process) forward. Next to these regular online meetings, local site visits by WP1 leaders have also been planned, to close the circle with the first methodological facilitators meeting that was carried face-to-face as part of the first international meeting. However, due to the COVID -19 restrictions the visits were not yet completely carried out at the time of writing.

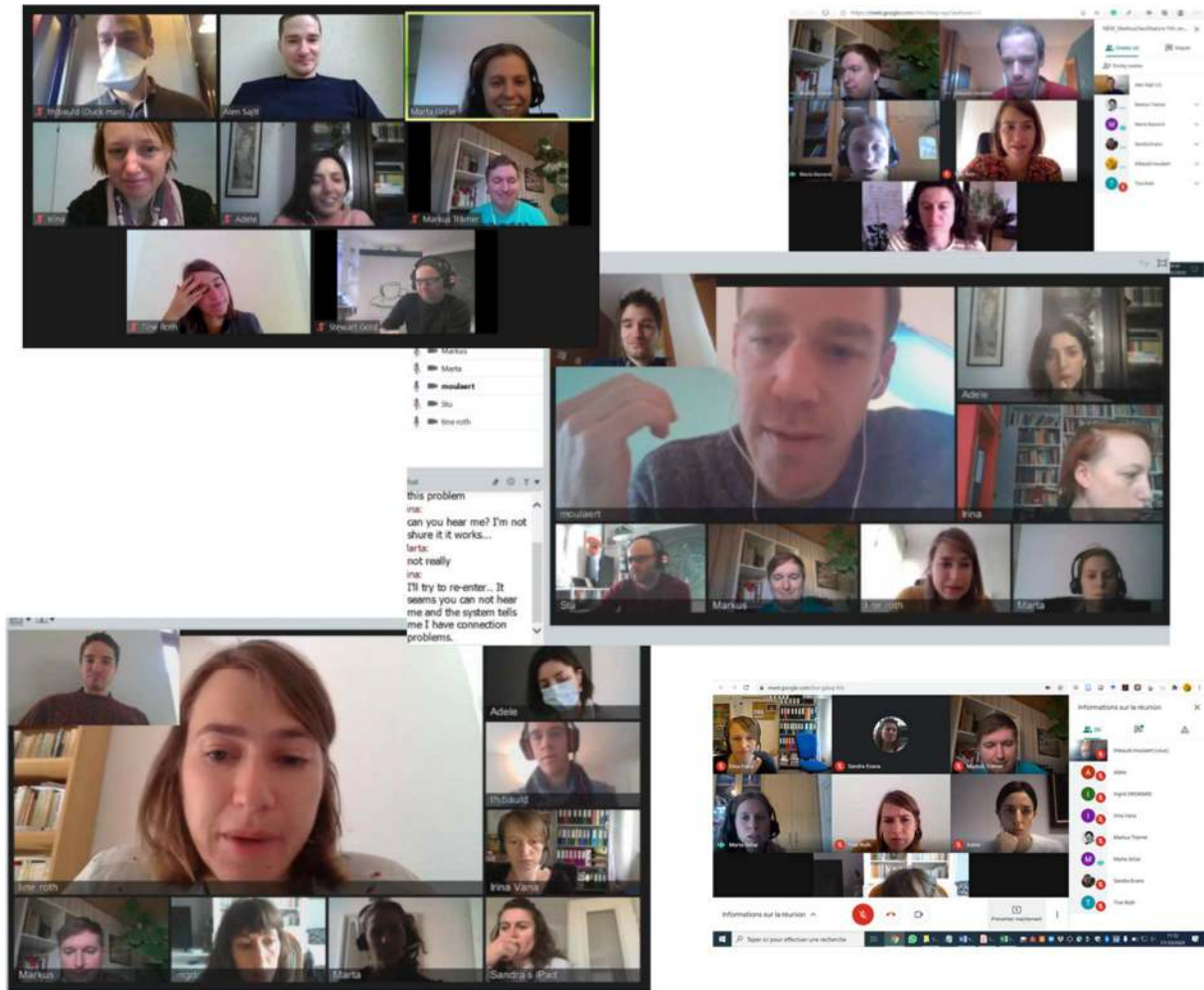


Fig 3. Screenshots of Methodological facilitators meetings, Source : TAAFE project, Pictures by TAAFE members

#### Tips and Tricks:

- In the TAAFE project we first met all the methodological facilitators face-to-face, sharing formal but also informal moments together. By doing so, closer relationships can be built among leaders and methodological facilitators. Even though online meetings save resources and time and are especially useful for long-distance meetings, it is important to also meet face-to-face, especially at the beginning of the work process to build trust among participants.
- Beside trust and respect, informal chatting or having fun from time to time is also an element that should not be overlooked.

List of TAAFE materials:

- booklet 4, worksheets for methodological facilitators meeting
- list of literature given to methodological facilitators at the beginning of the project

### 6.3. Methodological workshops

The aim of the methodological workshops is to enable trios to implement the TAAFE process at local level by:

- providing knowledge and know-how about the TAAFE process, it's principles and implementation;
- giving the opportunity to trio-s (and sometimes to older people, and to municipality employees) to exchange experiences;
- providing time and expert support to each trio to adapt methodology to their local case.

Methodological workshops are positioned during the whole implementation of the first circle, ideally before the beginning of each new phase of the circle. After the end of the first circle, follow up methodological workshops can be organised.

Tips and Tricks:

- During the workshops there must always be enough time for questions and discussion - after a short lecture, after presentation of experiences. People remember more from other participants' experiences, questions and answers than from the theoretical lecture itself.
- Exchange of experiences must be well structured. It is advisable to give trio-s precise guidelines and time to prepare the presentation (possibly in a preparatory meeting, before workshop). The content of the exchange must be well chosen; in line with the content of the workshop. Otherwise it can become confusing.
- For adaptation to local context, enough time must be reserved. It can be useful to give clear guidelines for that part as well. Furthermore, it is advisable that leaders are at the disposal of trios, to offer help, ideas, advice. When trios are working on their own adaptation, plenary sharing may be very beneficial, as it might give other trios further ideas.
- Time for informal exchange is very important.

List of TAAFE materials:



- booklet 2, worksheet 4: Preparation for presentation (preparatory meeting before workshop)
- booklet 3, worksheet 10: Preparation for presentation (preparatory meeting before workshop)
- booklet 2, worksheet 8: July 2nd morning work - our trio and LAG: adaptation to local context
- booklet 3 worksheet 12: Adaptation to local context (questions for afternoon discussion)
- booklet 4 worksheet 13: Adaptation to local context (questions for 18th June discussion)

### **TAAFE project example**

At transnational workshops, trios have been trained on how to implement the TAAFE model in their local environment: from awareness rising, engagement and recruitment of older people, relevant stakeholders with multi-sectoral perspective, to assessment of needs and resources, negotiation with stakeholders and choice of priority task, co-planning and co-implementation techniques.

Five international workshops hosted these trainings:

1. (The Vienna workshop) Presentation of the TAAFE model ; the WHO origins ; the TAAFE model specificities
2. (The Ljubljana workshop - online) Working with a Local Action Group (LAG) ; Organizing a LAG; Organizing an Extended meeting with older people ; Assessment of needs of older people ; Inclusion of older people in their assessment of needs ; How/what to contribute (dedicated training for older people and for municipalities employees separately)
3. (The Grenoble workshop - online) Power relations in Age-friendliness ; Choosing a priority tasks ; Adaptations to COVID context; Planning the actions
4. (The Tübingen workshop - online) Use of ICT in Covid context
5. (The second Ljubljana workshop - online<sup>2</sup>) Sustainability of TAAFE; Starting a new TAAFE cycle; Celebrating the actions and informing the community.

For each TAAFE workshop a methodological booklet was made, containing framework, target, description of the workshop with agenda of the workshop and the materials used at workshop.

### **List of TAAFE materials:**

- booklet 1

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<sup>2</sup> The change of place and order of workshops are due to COVID context.

- booklet 2
- booklet 3
- booklet 4
- booklet 5

#### 6.4. Language as a specificity of the international dimension

When the model is implemented in an international context, as it was in the case of the TAAFE project, the question of language becomes paramount. Let us look at some of the challenges this dimension brings and at some possible solutions:

**Terminology needs special attention** - it is through words that comes (mis)understanding. And understanding is of a great importance in community building. When translating and starting to use the first booklets (for stakeholders) in the TAAFE project, we saw that basic elements of TAAFE must not be translated literally, but reflected upon. Word “community” for example can have different connotations in English than in French or in German and it is important to acknowledge that<sup>3</sup>. Maybe there already exists a national standard translation as part of WHO GNAFFC program<sup>4</sup>, so it is important to verify it. On the other hand, when implementing something new, there are always new terms to be translated (for example a local action group). Again, if translated literally, you should check if the term is not already used in other contexts (if it does not already have another meaning in written or spoken language). Furthermore, there might exist another term that has the same or similar meaning as the one you want to translate; choosing it can facilitate its understanding. So to conclude, if on one hand translation of the terminology presents a difficulty and can act as a barrier, on the other hand, it can also be an opportunity to reflect more on the meaning of the terms, which can deepen an understanding of the concepts.

**Another challenge with language concerns the transnational workshops.** English skills are only required from methodological facilitators and municipality employees and not from older people of the trio, since that condition might discourage older persons to be part of the trio. The reality of the TAAFE project was that also municipality employees were not always confident in English. It might also happen that due to different levels of English knowledge, participants do not feel equal. To meet these challenges, we adapted the structure of international workshops. Here are some practical solutions we came up with:

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<sup>3</sup> We already mentioned that the central notion of “community”, essential for the understanding of the AFCC perspective, does not necessarily refer to a worldwide shared experience. We exemplified it with the French equivalent notion of “territoires” which, for ex., give much more place to professionals and expertise than to experience of place. For further discussions on “ageing and territoires” see Moulaert *et al.* (2018) and Scheider *et al.* (2017).

<sup>4</sup> Noticing that even if WHO GNAFFC has been self-critique about its mainly anglophone-driven existence (WHO, 2018, 18), their solution does not take into account the differences that (non)mastering language can bring.

- We asked each national group to decide at the beginning of the workshop who will translate. Since he/she was not a professional translator, we facilitated his/her job by giving handouts, preparing powerpoints with key words and written sentences, by stopping the presentations often enough that person could translate (especially in face-to-face meetings), by reminding people who translated to take some notes (especially in on-line meeting), by checking from time to time if translators can follow or not.
- To enable everyone to give his/her part in sharing experience, we organised preparatory meetings in national groups before or at the workshop. In these groups all members could share what they wanted to share in their own language later in plenary room and choose who will present it in English.
- After presentation(s) (done by leader or other participants), give again opportunity to national groups to have some time alone, so choose a person who can translate and gather comments or questions.
- Try to give time for translation also during plenary discussion at appropriate time (if its face to face, things can be translated almost simultaneously, if it's an on-line meeting, that can be done only after an appropriate interval of time).
- If the meeting is face-to-face, national groups sit together. It's advisable to use chairs, so participants can come closer to the translator during translations. If there will be more work to do in national groups, it might be good to have another room, so national groups don't disturb each other during work. At on line meetings you can use "breakout rooms" to enable translation.

#### List of TAAFE materials:

- booklet 2, worksheet 5: Welcome letter
- booklet 3, worksheet 11: Welcome letter

## 7. Specifics of working long distance / tips and tricks working long distance

In TAAFE project all meetings were supposed to be face-to-face, working long distance became constriction as a consequence of covid-19 pandemic. It is, though, not impossible to think of organizing on-line meetings as a choice, after putting pros and cons on the scale. In this chapter we will shortly present some elements that showed out as efficient - in general and some elements specific for international workshops.

### Workshops

In general there are two possibilities of long-distance workshop training: trios meet in physical presence and connect to the workshop together or all trio members connect separately. For the latest, a tool "**breakout rooms**" is needed to enable each trio to work on its own during those dedicated sessions.

**Welcome letter** is a letter that each participant receives before the start of the workshop. It is used to facilitate organisational aspects sparing some time (since on-line workshops require shorter timing), as an ice breaker to create a more welcoming atmosphere, and, in case its an international workshop, it is also useful to overcome language barriers. It can be done in a way that every participant reads it on his/her own but, especially if done at international level, it is even better that trios read it together right before the official beginning. You can find two examples of welcome letter from TAAFE project in booklets 2 and 3.

Trying to find alternatives to classical face-to-face informal time, in TAAFE project we decided to make a **social media group**. It's advisable that one of the leaders take the role of the moderator and actively writes in the group. Leaders can also encourage people to participate in the group by giving them specific tasks at videoconferences (for example to post feedback or what they eat for lunch or a photo from their break ...).

To spare some time and to facilitate plenary discussions or as its alternative, especially in an international context, you can use **google document**, where each trio write what they've discussed during a session dedicated to them, and each trio can read what all the others wrote. In TAAFE project we used that for example for feedback and for discussion about videos.

#### List of TAAFE materials:

- booklet 2, worksheet 5: Welcome letter
- booklet 3, worksheet 11: Welcome letter
- booklet 2, worksheet 7: July 1st afternoon work - (inclusion of older people in the needs assessment and) feedback of the day

#### 8. An example of adaptation: facing the covid-19 crisis

During TAAFE project we had to face consequences of pandemic covid-19: for months it was impossible to meet face to face (sometimes you could not meet at all, sometimes just groups were prohibited to meet), consequently digital world suddenly gained bigger importance than ever; situation and guidelines kept changing; general apathy, fear and sometimes confusion were present in society, making elderly more vulnerable in many aspects. All that was a big challenge for TAAFE model, since it is based on face-to-face group meetings.

In general it showed that trio and methodological facilitators meetings are a driving force, a milestone in times when quick adaptations are needed. Trio gained more importance than planned, taking over also some functions that the local action group should have had. Since it is a small operative structure, with good connections, it functioned

very well also in critical times. Similarly, learning community of methodological facilitators gained more importance, becoming a place to not only share ideas but also get energy to search for new solutions, to continue.

A great part of meetings on international and national level had to be transferred to virtual reality. Despite difficulties and limitations, it also brought some advantages and some creative solutions were found. Leaders and methodological facilitators were aware that it was of a great importance not to lose older people that didn't use technology before. In part, that led to result, that some of older people were taught to use technology in order they could participate. More about technology in chapter 6.5.

On the other hand, especially at the local level, group meetings had to be replaced sometimes by one-to-one meetings. In that sense individual approaches became of great importance, patiently gaining participation of older people, one by one.

Saying that, some questions arose in our learning community of trios and methodological facilitators. How to transfer information and allow dialogue between trio, local action group / discussion groups / other groups when there are not as many meetings as predicted and trio has a stronger role? If working one to one, how to gain the spirit of the group? How to conserve a sense of physical concreteness when virtual working is prevalent? Are there other solutions than virtual work in order to include also who does not use technology? Here are some solutions we came up with:

- Broadening the trio, so others can join.
- Virtual meeting with a broader trio/local action group.
- Trio individually gathers information and returns it back to the group. Some examples:
  - Telephone everybody – asking them the same question(s), tell them you'll call also others and will send them feedback. Then summarize everything: in a semantic map for example. Send it to everyone. Asking them to complete, to add, to give feedback or give them another question.
  - Send templates to everyone. Ask if they would be willing to talk in pairs about questions. Then talk with one of the pair to gather results and send feedback to all pairs.
  - In trio elaborate suggestions and ask people to send it back to you, completing it, commenting on it.
  - Pass the work. Prepare a suggestion (a semantic scheme or questionnaire for example) and send it to one person, when he/she complete it, bring the same paper to another person and so on.

Last but not least, we learned that in times of crisis the intrinsic motivation to work for common good, that many participants in such a process have, becomes even stronger. So it's important to use that intrinsic motivation to improve the situation in times

of crisis remembering that during those times work on age friendliness is needed most.

## 9. Appendix - tools and materials

- Booklet for trios 1 (worksheet 1 - 3)
- Booklet for trios 2 (worksheet 4 - 8)
- Booklet for trios 3 (worksheet 9 - 11)
- Booklet for trios 4 (worksheet 4 - 8)
- Booklet for trios 5 (worksheet 4 - 8)
- booklet for the stakeholders: *Towards age friendly community.*

## 10. References

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