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Towards Alpine Age-Friendly Environment

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WP 4 - Development of the TAAFE Strategy for an age-friendly AS

TAAFE Strategy on the development of age-friendly environments in the AS

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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 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).

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TAAFE Strategy on the development of age-friendly environments in the Alpine Space

Making the TAAFE model on
participatory governance sustainable
and scalable

Executive Summary

The TAAFE project was set up with the aim to improve the situation of older adults through the co-development of measures that support an age-friendly environment (AFE) and improved service provision in the Alpine Space (AS). This was done through the implementation of a specific participative framework - the TAAFE model - in different pilot regions in the AS. Thus, the TAAFE process focuses on the active involvement of older people in the development of age-friendly services and initiatives, starts on the community level and develops age-friendly solutions in close cooperation with policy makers from the community.

Based on the exchange and the experiences gathered in the TAAFE pilots in five EU countries the strategy at hand was developed with the aim of presenting an assessment of prerequisites for the scalability of the TAAFE model. The sustainability of the launched services and processes and of the TAAFE model at the local level and its extension to the regional level were core objectives of the TAAFE project. The strategy at hand outlines experiences of the TAAFE project and reflects on what these lessons learned tell us about upscaling opportunities of co-design processes with older adults and about how results of the related activities can be adapted to support more and/or other communities and social groups.

The report begins by outlining the premise and vision of AFE, building on the WHO concept as the major reference framework, and continues with some theory and practice of upscaling processes. Second, we present internal and external factors that we have experienced in implementing the TAAFE model in the different AS regional contexts. We build on lessons learned from TAAFE to assess strength, threats, challenges and opportunities throughout the implementation of the participatory governance model of TAAFE. Last, we present strategic directions and action areas for broader integration of co-creation methods to embed age-friendly principles and mission statements at all policy levels and in communities. The fields of action relate in particular to the following areas of intervention:

- Finding (critical) allies through Communication, Networking & Dialogue
- New perspectives on ageing and self-advocacy of older people
- Integrated top-down und bottom-up approach
- Digitalisation for social inclusion
- Setting actions to sustain achievements

The selected areas of action for advancing and up-scaling the TAAFE model of participatory governance for an age-friendlier AS do not claim to be complete, but reflect priority issues that crystallised in the experiences of the TAAFE project.

Introduction

The challenge of an aging society is seen as one of the most urgent European challenges. In early 2018 there were 101.1 million older people (aged 65 years or more) living in the 28 EU countries, which is almost one fifth (19.7 %) of the total population (Eurostat 2019:8). The number of people over 60 is expected to increase by about two million people per year in the coming decades (European Commission 2012). The increasing aging of the population and the growing number of isolated older people therefore require new approaches and political commitment. Shaping the local environment as the immediate social environment of older people is of paramount importance in this context (WHO 2021), as is the involvement of all stakeholders at all political levels and the direct participation of citizens to address these challenges. Actions to create a better age-friendly environment (AFE) have become a strong movement in Europe and worldwide, with more and more cities and towns, local authorities and regional governments participating (WHO/European Commission 2017: 2).

In this regard, the TAAFE project ¹builds on age-friendliness in the Alpine Space (AS), based on the WHO AFE concept, and focuses on common challenges in Austria, France, Germany, Italy and Slovenia for the development of AFE and formulates concrete recommendations focusing in particular on synergies and perspectives arising from possible cross-regional, international and intersectional collaborations and partnership. The TAAFE model makes visible the possibilities of participation and engagement in the creation of an AFE and promotes the transparency of the benefits of an active civil society through the use of a participatory framework - the TAAFE model. Thus, it provides some practical solutions and tools for such exchange that are in line with the reality of Interreg AFE. The TAAFE Trio – consisting of at least one representative of the three groups administration, older adults and methodological facilitators - is a core element of the TAAFE model and a driving force of the work at the local level. It is responsible for leading a local action group and organizing the implementation of the TAAFE cycle. Specifically, this group represents the collective process of collaboration between the different actors affected by the action.

Building on this, the TAAFE project has tested the effectiveness of the TAAFE model in supporting municipalities and local authorities in creating new or improving existing services for older adults and communities through a participatory approach focused on co-design, in order to develop AFE in the Alpine region.

The strategy aims to explore the preconditions and barriers for the application of participatory models for the development of AFE in the AS. It also aims to give recommendations for its implementation by suggesting concrete fields of action and concrete actions for increasing the impact of the methods and approaches developed and benefitting more people.

¹ For further information: <https://www.alpine-space.org/projects/taafe/en/home>

The strategy draws on the experiences, success factors and conclusions from the implementation of the TAAFE model in five different alpine areas/contexts in Treviso, Italy; Mössingen, Germany; Feldbach, Austria; Marseille, France; and Žiri, Slovenia. The impact of the TAAFE project still remains to be seen also in terms of an effective transfer of the TAAFE model to other regions or contexts and in the exploration of collaboration opportunities with new stakeholders or existing legal and policy frameworks to realise the vision of an age-friendly AS.

Background of the TAAFE Strategy

The TAAFE project understands itself as one component in a global effort to create environments, which foster healthy and active aging throughout the life course. These environments shall enable older adults to live as self-determined and autonomously as they wish, quite in the sense of the slogan “Nothing about us without us”. Previous developments and also future forecasts are conforming: Europe is aging and it will continue aging. Accordingly, in the area of long-term care, for instance, bottlenecks in the provision of formal and informal care could lead to challenges that need to be addressed (AGE Platform Euro n.da). However, it is not only about aging, statistics from WHO show that the gap between life expectancy and healthy life expectancy at age 60 is increasing (WHO 2020a). In this context, the following chapter presents international as well as European strategies and measures that attempt to address the above challenges, and in this context also emphasizes and demonstrates the importance of up-scaling innovative tools at the regional level.

The Vision of Age-Friendly Environments

In order to find sustainable solutions to tackle the challenges that come along with an aging society, the United Nations General Assembly has declared 2021-2030 as the Decade of Healthy Aging. One of the central action is to ensure that communities foster the abilities of older people. Previously, the WHO has already developed, among others, the concept of sustainable AFE, which takes an integrative approach to optimize the social and physical environment and promote active, healthy aging and participation in society.

According to the WHO (2020b) AFE “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”.

AFE is based on the assumption that older people are not just a vulnerable group with health limitations, but are participants who – if barriers to participation in social and cultural life are actively removed through the implementation of AFE – shape their environment as active agents. This approach emphasizes self-determination in old-age and enables to value the positive input each member of society can contribute to the development of AFE.

The WHO AFE program proposes eight areas of age-friendliness for concrete action²: Outdoor environment, transport and mobility, housing; social participation, social inclusion and non-discrimination, civic engagement and employment; communication and information, community and health services (WHO/European Commission 2017: 1).

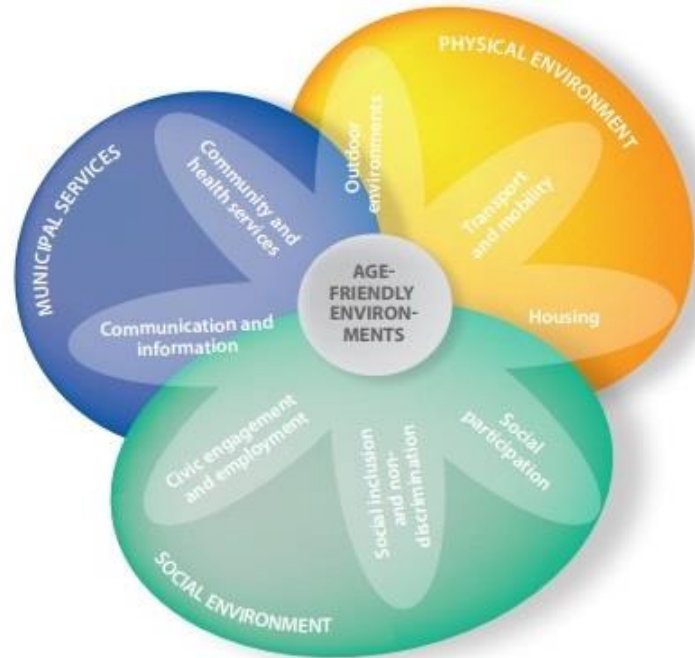


Figure 1: WHO, Eight areas of age-friendliness for concrete action

According to AGE Platform Europe (n.db), AFE are a key component in promoting longer healthy life years and thus the ability to live independently for longer. By designing the environment so that all people can access and participate in all activities, people will be able to contribute longer to their community and to the labour market while improving their well-being. Therefore, promoting AFE is seen as the most sustainable and inclusive way to transform the demographic challenge into an economic and social opportunity that benefits the whole society.

The development of AFE aims at structural changes in society, by optimizing the social and physical environments in order to enable active, healthy ageing and participation of older people of diverse backgrounds in society. The creation of AFE means “*adapting our everyday living environment to the needs of the ageing population in order to empower people to age in better physical and mental health, promote their social inclusion and active participation, support them, maintain their autonomy and a good quality of life in their old age*” (AGE Platform Europe n.dc).

In order to expand activities to create AFE, Thiago Herick de Sa, technical officer for AFE at WHO, emphasizes the development of strategies to determine effective action to foster AFE (Herick de Sa 2022). The WHO strategies provide important guidance for the EU strategy Accordingly, the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing (EIP on AHA) was launched in 2010 to initiate the development of European age-friendly networks. The goal of the EIP AHA is to enable citizens to live longer, independent lives in good health. It aims to enable EU citizens to live healthy, active and independent lives in old age, improve the sustainability and efficiency of social and healthcare systems, develop EU and global markets

² (WHO 2017: 1)

for innovative products and services, and create new opportunities for businesses (EIP on AHA 2022). In this regard, the European policy framework “Health 2020”, for instance, support action across government and society for health and well-being and a life-course approach. Healthy and active ageing, which starts at birth, is a policy priority as well as a major research priority. The strategy proposes four priority areas for policy action based on the WHO strategies and action plans at the regional levels and global level (WHO 2013).

Nevertheless, many solutions to promote active and healthy aging have been developed as pilot projects across the EU, but remain isolated and are not scaled up, even in their own country. This means that their impact on addressing the demographic challenge in Europe is limited (AGE Platform Europe n.dd).

Up-scaling Processes in TAAFE

The idea of “scaling up” social innovations refers to the ambition of making methods and co-created services that advance the development of AFE accessible to a broader community and/or new groups in society, who will equally profit from the developed innovations and methods targeting the older generation and institutional change that comes with it. This can be done in many different way and involved diverse stakeholders (Vana 2018: 5).

In the context of health and social service innovations the ExpandNet/WHO defines up-scaling more concretely as the “effort to increase the impact of [...] service innovations [...] so as to benefit more people and to foster policy and programme development on a lasting basis” (Simmons et. al 2007: viii). Hence, scaling health and social service related innovations also implies the challenge to address policy implementation and lasting social change. Up-scaling is not a linear, but rather a "circular" "adaptive" or "evolutionary" process (Vana et al. 2018), which is shaped by the institutional, cultural and normative environments innovations are embedded in (Holtgrewe and Millard 2018: 71). In order to create societal change and to determine scaling opportunities in different contexts it is therefore important to first know what created the problem, innovations aim to change and to explore the “initial starting conditions, existing competences and resources, obstacles and opportunities” (Westley et.al. 2014: 24) that the social innovation faces in different contexts.

The TAAFE project enabled up-scaling by constantly reflecting on the implementation process of the five local pilots (see Deliverable 2³ and 3⁴) as well as theoretically, by doing literature reviews and by conducting expert interviews and involving different relevant stakeholders and decision makers in thematic policy dialogues. Building scaling processes as negotiation processes, as we have done during the implementation of TAAFE, constantly involving old and

³ Available at: <https://www.alpine-space.org/projects/taafe/en/results/deployment-of-the-taafe-model-in-the-alpine-space-pilot-areas>

⁴ Available at: https://www.alpine-space.org/projects/taafe/deliverables/d.t3.3.1_baseline-evaluation_joint-report_final.pdf

new actors in the scaling process, allows engaging several different actors with different skills, knowledge, and background and to develop a more encompassing view of the problem. The participation of relevant key-players is considered as the first and most important step to start up-scaling processes (WHO 2010). The strategy at hand is an outcome of the up-scaling activities undertaken by the TAAFE consortium.

How Sustainability was Envisioned and Reached in TAAFE

Enabling new cooperation within municipalities or regions was a major factor for reaching sustainability in the TAAFE project. For the first time, it brought organizations or players into dialogue, which had never worked together before. By doing so, it released creative force of new synergies, which prevailed also after the project. At the same time, by finding solutions for very concrete challenges (e.g. digital autonomy), the activities created spill-over effects to other pending issues, which suddenly came into appearance (e.g. lack of intergenerational dialogue). Building contacts, listening and animating people to participate was a first prerequisite for sustainability. The personal engagement of people and their feeling of doing something reasonable and good, was then very important for sustaining achievements. The pilots also demonstrate that adopting an AFE approach and/or a participatory perspective does not necessarily require revolutionary or high-impact initiatives, but can be done gradually, in small, but well-defined activities, which can then have a substantial impact on the community level. It requires however an investment in the broader community and a strong commitment from all sides⁵.

In order to ensure the sustainability of the project and its results, and to raise awareness about the knowledge of co-creation of AFE, key regional and local cooperation partners signed a Memorandum of Understanding⁶, expressing their desire for further cooperation and exchange with regional, national and supranational partners involved in the TAAFE process.

Common challenges for sustainability however remain, as a lack of long-term funding or the risk of losing individual allies through personnel changes in administrative bodies.

Underneath we give some concrete examples of how TAAFE pilot sites achieved to transform the TAAFE approach into a sustainable and/or scalable model for seniors' participation in the design of services and solutions.

⁵ See policy report Italy, <https://www.alpine-space.org/projects/taafe/en/results/development-of-the-taafe-strategy-for-an-agefriendly-as>

⁶ See: <https://www.alpine-space.org/projects/taafe/en/home>

Table 1, Examples of effective sustainability in TAAFE

	SOME FIRST EVIDENCE FOR SUSTAINABILITY OF TAAFE PILOTS	FACTORS ON WHICH SUSTAINABILITY DEPENDS
ITALY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The municipality of Treviso intends to give continuity to main activities developed in TAAFE (concretely, support with digital tools by school students to older adults). • The Trio will be kept alive as a tool for dialogue and interaction with the community. • The municipality obtained funding from the Veneto Region to launch a similar initiative with neighbouring municipalities that showed interest in the model – through the participation in policy meetings of WP4 - and in the developed service for digital support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treviso Municipality capacity to value senior citizens' associations' contribution and support them. • The availability and willingness of senior citizens' associations' president to continue collaborating. • The possibility for the administrative employees and methodological facilitators to have resources allocated to this specific task. • The openness of schools to see the experience at seniors' clubs as educational, formative and enriching for the students. • The ability of Local Action Group members to continue working in a participative and dialogue-oriented manner.
GERMANY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A permanent job was creation to maintain the dynamic of TAAFE, "the Seniors' Representative". • Working groups continue to work even after the end of the project. • The Local Action Group continues to work as far as possible. • Interest in continuing the TAAFE model exists on all sides. • A new "housing" theme was launched - continuation planned. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The creation of jobs (as the "the Seniors' Representative") shows the political will of the municipality and the administration and awareness of the importance of the issue within the municipality's administration. • Participation structure (the TAAFE model) was very well received. The agile and dynamic participation structures were perceived as open and transparent.

- An active participation of many citizens and the administration enabled the successful implementation of goals and results.
- Active participants were personally and attentively accompanied. The feeling of caring was conveyed.
- Awareness exists in the administration that the voluntary office needs full-time service.

FRANCE

- The main activities launched (digital support for older people in the form of a numeric cafe) will be pursued after the project ends by social centres involved in the project.
- Financial support will be given to help to provide equipment for the elderly.
- A cooperation between associations has been initiated in order to provide training for volunteers.

SLOVENIA

- The Local Action Group will remain as the municipality and the stakeholders are very interested in future meetings (2 or 3 times a year).
- The future of the Trio is uncertain but they will most likely continue meeting, but less frequently.
- The Municipality of Žiri is a member of the age-friendly network and will continue with age-friendly initiatives

AUSTRIA

- The priority action developed by the Austrian Trio („active together“) will be included as a model in the strategy of the municipality “age-appropriate Feldbach”.
- The offer of guided group walks – offered by Local Action Group members – will continue.

Mapping Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats of the TAAFE model

The implementation of the TAAFE model in five European pilot sites, along with a continuous well-structured internal and external transnational reflection process allowed to collect a broad repertoire of experiences and lessons learned. This chapter assesses common strength, challenges, opportunities and threats that were identified along the process. For the analysis, we refer to TAAFE outputs of WP4⁷.

Strengths

- Dialogue-oriented approach
- promoting a participatory culture
- Peer-learning process with municipalities
- Leveraging existing resources to meet the current challenge of digitization
- Strengthening of volunteer networks

- The dialogue-oriented approach embodied in the TAAFE model, which aims to bring different regional and local actors from different sectors (city administration, political actors and citizens) into conversation with each other, enabled actors who had never worked together before to start talking to each other. Often, it was the first time that political actors and city administrators had engaged in conversation with senior groups through TAAFE. Creating a dialogue usually builds trust, which in turn has a very large impact on the sustainable development of the participation structure and the achievement of AFE goals.
- The participatory structures support the sustainable consolidation of the TAAFE model. The project empowers citizens to engage with AFE. This also raises general awareness of the opportunities for participation and engagement in creating an AFE, promotes transparency of the benefits of an active civil society, and encourages the sharing of best practices.
- The peer learning process with municipalities brought mutual benefit for all involved parties. Much attention has been paid to the role of the municipalities as the main actor in the development of an AFE, allowing both the community itself and community activists to grow from the experience of negotiating the process.
- One of the main achievements of TAAFE in France is to create a common understanding of the challenges related to the digital environment and older people and to initiate new synergies. Accordingly, it is important to work out what can be problematic/challenging in relation to digitalization and older people and

⁷ As background documents we refer mainly to TAAFE regional policy reports (FR, GE, IT, AT, SI), TAAFE policy meetings (FR, GE, IT, AT, SI), Report on age friendliness in the Alpine Space and TAAFE policy brief: <https://www.alpine-space.org/projects/taafe/en/results/development-of-the-taafe-strategy-for-an-agefriendly-as>

what can be done concretely to address the challenges related to the digital environment.

- In Slovenia, the project has also contributed to the development of a good volunteer network for work with the elderly, through the training of volunteers. The training of volunteers also includes training for accompaniment, i.e. regular individual visits to elderly isolated people in the community. In addition, a long-term care coordinator has been appointed in nursing homes to liaise between the home and the community.

Challenges

- Collaboration across policy levels, sectors and stakeholder groups
- Self-representation of older people
- Increase digital autonomy of older people
- Equal access to information and reactivate the increasingly isolated people

- Wherever the TAAFE model has been implemented, we have found a lack of stable collaboration, communication and exchange between municipalities on the one hand and between policy makers of different levels and sectors and between different stakeholders on the other hand. We saw mainly unstable and fragmented exchange in terms of collaboration between different actors who are actually working for the same or similar goals. Building bridges across areas of competence and enabling communication channels and cultures seems essential. In federal states like Germany, it is also important to reach out to the relevant key actors not only at the local level, but also at the regional and (federal) state level, i.e., to be aware of the vertical and horizontal distribution of responsibilities.
- The possibility of self-representation of older people at regional and local level is rarely realized and represents a challenge. Often, there is talk about seniors, without asking or involving them directly. Here it is necessary to create infrastructures or tools that enable self-advocacy and thus participation of seniors at the regional and local level.
- Engaging older citizens in the digital age without losing them on the way has proven to be a major challenge at TAAFE. Some older people bypass technological devices or put them aside. One possible step toward age-friendliness and accessibility of digital tools here would be co-design or participatory design, i.e., developing digital tools and services together with older people to adapt devices and services to their needs. However, in addition to the issues of usability, it is also important to improve the dismissive attitude towards new technologies. In most cases, it is helpful for digitally excluded people to be accompanied by third parties (relatives, volunteers, professionals, etc.). Regardless of whether people are hesitant, resistant to digitization, or lack the skills to use digital opportunities, they benefit from a companion, guidance, and the bonding that comes with it. An

integrative digitization strategy for seniors should therefore address seniors' specific difficulties in order to satisfy their relationship with digital technology.

- Equal access to information is also a challenge. For example, some older people do not follow e-media, or search for service listings using search engines. However, in the digital age, there is an increasing lack of printed information on everything from news to service listings. When these are available in printed form, they are often not written in a way that is understandable and readable for older people. Good practices are, for example, that municipalities solve this problem through special editions of the municipal newspapers and through a special telephone number (contact person in the municipal administration) for citizens' inquiries and requests. However, it is often a challenge to find a way to ensure that all relevant information reaches the elderly. Here, the question of how to ensure more equal access to information must be brought to the fore urgently in the future development of an AFE.
- A very critical issue is the inclusion of older citizens who belong to the larger group of "hard to reach" people, i.e., people who are very isolated/live in isolation. Here, the COVID-19 pandemic, with its accompanying lockdowns, has left many older people even more isolated. The most important measures at the local level must be to reactivate the increasingly isolated people and to carry out prevention work so that isolation and thus hard-to-reach people do not occur in the first place.

Opportunities

- Orientation along International and European frameworks and strategies
- Growing importance of „Silver economy“
- Expansion of "Caring Communities" concept
- New awareness through COVID-19 pandemic
- New organisation of care and well aging due to demographic change

- Existing international and European frameworks and strategies, such as the WHO “Health for All” Strategy and the European Health 2020 Framework are useful to initiate dialogue in a more specific context. These strategies, which retain concepts, help to structure, guide and steer the complex dialogue between different actors and their perspectives. In addition, they are suitable for shaping (one's own) environment together, i.e., with the help of a participatory approach.
- As forecasts show that the population in Europe will live longer and there will be more older people, the importance of the silver economy⁸ will increase and become a driver of the economy. This means that older people will lead the economy and therefore

⁸ The silver economy includes all those economic activities, products and services designed to meet the needs of people over 50.

more and more companies will address the needs of older people and create innovations that older people can use and that can satisfy their needs.

- The concept of "Caring Communities" as well as local activities targeting older citizens in general, can contribute to a higher social participation of vulnerable groups and thus be seen as an opportunity. The approach is also mentioned and recognized by the WHO Healthy Aging Strategy and can be considered as a possible initiative to support the implementation of AFE. In addition, the concept allows communities to organize themselves with the help of volunteers, which could relieve caregivers from social services. Here, it is possible to work with companies that specialize in training nursing home staff to provide training for volunteers.
- Every crisis also bears potential for change by making existing inequalities or problems more visible. Thus, the COVID-19 pandemic has made us realise how important it is to own and be able to routinely use digital tools, also for social contacts. The pandemic raised awareness for how the digital divide affects older adults and their capacity to fully participate in society. At the same time, this awareness can trigger social innovations that address these challenges.
- Demographic change and accompanying societal changes are increasing the pressure on healthcare systems and require new ways of delivering healthcare. This holds the potential for new and innovative ways of organizing care and aging well.

Threats

- Socioeconomic inequality
- Digital gap
- Insecure and insufficient financial support
- Pandemic

- Though people's life expectancy is rising steadily, it is unevenly distributed, also with regard to the possibility of active aging. Life expectancy and active aging thus correlate with a person's level of education and income and are thus positively or negatively influenced by education and income.
- Although some older people use social media to stay in touch with their relatives and friends, the digital divide among older people is growing. In Austria, for example, 32% of those over 65 have never used the Internet (Statistik Austria 2021). Especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, this divide limited their ability to communicate and participate.
- Projects aimed at developing AFE often have to cope with uncertain, short-term and/or insufficient financial support, which often also depends on the personal commitment of a few active individuals. The long-term nature of AFE development requires long-term offers of funding and development of projects. At the local level, it would therefore also be important to have a uniform framework for federal funding.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has deepened and intensified the differences between younger and older generations, but also between people from different social

backgrounds. In addition, the pandemic's restrictions on personal contact have increased isolation and, in some cases, brought the voluntary activities of the older generation to a standstill.

Action Fields for Sustainability and Up-scaling of Participatory Models for Age-Friendliness

Taking into consideration our stated TAAFE objectives and vision, we now try to formulate specific actions within broader areas of action that resulted as priorities in former analysis of the TAAFE project, and are intended to be practical and realistic, but do not claim to be exhaustive. As said before, the actions build upon the assessment of strength, challenges, opportunities and threats of the TAAFE model and aim to use strength and overcome challenges to cope with external threats and exploit opportunities to pave the way for an age-friendly AS.



Area I: Finding (critical) allies through Communication, Networking & Dialogue:

Action 1:

Sensitize and inform policy and decision-makers about the WHO-AFE perspective

The WHO notion of AFE is not yet sufficiently known by policy makers or integrated into political strategies or operational approaches, especially on the local level. Targeted communication and information on goals, results and opportunities of the AFE approach is needed to increase stimulus for political action.

Specific action	Description
Targeted communication on WHO-AFE in the local context	Identify knowledge gaps on the level of local policy makers and react with tailored offers for information or awareness raising on AFE. It can be useful to define partial goals for awareness raising and sensitization on AFE.
Use the dialogue of a concrete implementation case to reinforce dialogue on broader political frameworks or goals	The TAAFE TRIO initiated a multi-stakeholder dialogue in each pilot region on AFE adoption in local policy planning and community building. The WHO concept of AFE should be used to structure the complex

	dialogue between the different actors, their perspectives and interests.
Putting the cart before the horse	TAAFE delivered very concrete small-scale outputs/products that were relevant for AFE development in the local context. It was possible to attract attention of local policy makers for the broader AFE concept through a continuous good communication of important achievements in the process.
Get (volunteer) associations on board to sustain products and processes	Volunteer and other local associations mostly have deep knowledge on the dynamics, actors and specificities of a region/area. Having them on board is key in order to convey the adoption of a participation model, to intercept ideas and find solutions, and more generally, to sustain the creation of familiarity and awareness on the AFE perspective.

Action 2:

Encourage policy makers to adopt AFE models and bring them to life

Interest, appreciation and uptake of invested efforts by political stakeholders is of utmost importance for the sustainability of the model. For participants in local action groups it was essential that their invested time, work and efforts were recognized, acknowledged and had some lasting effects. Municipalities have to assume their role in making civic engagement relevant.

Specific action	Description
Include TAAFE methodology in local policy development plans	Policy makers should integrate the TAAFE methodology into local development plans as a systematized tool for sustaining a stakeholder dialogue on AFE. A first step would be the recognition of the innovation of the TAAFE model by decision makers. A major achievement is the integration of the AFE approach on a programmatic level in regional policy programmes.

<p>Encourage municipalities to provide a clear framework for the development of AFE-inspired local policies</p>	<p>To reach AFE goals, municipalities must at least provide a framework within which stakeholders can operate, be active and creative. Such a framework should also provide a vision and give directions towards AFE in the local context.</p>
<p>Deliver arguments for cost-benefit rationale to promote long-term funding for participatory structures</p>	<p>Municipalities are more eager to support the realization of AFE and TAAFE-inspired initiatives, if the cost-benefit rationale is clear. Outcomes, impacts and benefits must be made very transparent and traceable. The municipality can then provide incentives for formal and informal organizations through funding, calls for proposals and by being a role model for participatory service creation.</p>
<p>Create a formal AFE network</p>	<p>A formal local/regional network for AFE could bundle forces to lobby for programmatic emphasis on AFE on the national level. It could create the conditions for a more fluid exchange of good practices, to experiment with transversal planning in different areas that share similar challenges and to explore diversity of the topic. Joint reflection beyond local differences could enable upscaling opportunities.</p>



AREA II: New perspectives on ageing and self-advocacy of older people

In the sense of the slogan of the Age Platform Europe “Nothing about us, without us”, Ageing must be recognized in public opinion as an opportunity and embedded in a discourse on intergenerational fairness and a combat against age discrimination. Political authorities, as well as administrative staff must reflect this position. Older people’s rights must be consolidated through social inclusion, participation and self-advocacy.

Specific action	Description
Show examples of resilience, strength and contributions of older people to overcome one-way association of seniors as fragile persons	The perception of the older person needs to be emancipated from a passive/victimization rhetoric. As in the TAAFE project, visibility and room in public spaces shall be given to diverse voices, images and actions of older persons.
Avoid Tokenism	The inclusion of older people should be more than tokenism, i.e., the inclusion of older people only for symbolic or superficial reasons. Thus, the goal of including older people or giving them the opportunity to participate should not be based on the appearance of social inclusion and diversity. Rather, older people should be given the opportunity to represent themselves and be active players in the whole processes and not be used as a token.
Create spaces of resonance and representation of older adults	In general, resonance means listening rather than explaining the world, and representation means enabling co-determination. In this context, public spaces of resonance and representation empower older people in their role as active members of the community. They enable a role change in which older people become acting, caring, and concerned people in the community who not only need help but also give help. It is important that social diversity is represented in the resonance spaces.
Handle retirement age "fluidly"	The cohort of “older adults” are not a homogeneous group, but the probably most

	diverse age group. The heterogeneity of aging must be reflected in the way older adults are portrayed and addressed in society.
Creating opportunities without creating an over-responsibility of the individual	The image of the "active elderly" also creates an expectation. It is important to give the elderly space to get involved in the way they want to.

↕ Area III: Integrated top-down und bottom-up approach

Participation within the TAAFE model is conceived as an integration of a bottom-up approach, giving an active role to citizens in decision-making logics of community life, and a top-down one, recognizing the role of local authorities as decision makers. This approach requires a strong citizen involvement and engagement, in all its complexities related to practices of civic participation and a concrete commitment of policy-makers, who must be open to negotiating their decision-making power. This transversal approach can therefore enable the improvement of already existing services by identifying the needs of seniors by seniors and by integrating the internal functioning of existing structures.

Specific action	Description
Build on what already exists	It is important to use a dialogue-oriented approach with existing structures and institutions, as this creates trust and thus a sustainable development of participation structures as well as the exchange of good practices.
Give recognition to expertise of older persons	Giving older persons an "expert" status within a participatory process, gives recognition to their expertise and the possibility to play an active role in community life.
Insist in a strong role of municipalities	Strongly involve municipalities in co-creation methods so that they are forced to increase their efforts to act together with civil society.
Consciously involve younger people	For the sake of intergenerational dialogue, rely on the cooperation with the younger generation. Everybody will profit from

	intergenerational learning und mutual understanding.
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Area IV: Digitalisation for social inclusion

Digital autonomy of older adults was a major topic in the TAAFE project, and the priority issue for the French pilot site. Making digitization age-friendly has yet become more relevant in the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, we want to mention it here explicitly as one possible application area to implement participatory actions with older persons, although the topic encompasses a wide spectrum of activities (amongst others the dematerialisation of services). There is a certain field of tension, because the economy forces people to be a part of digitalisation and the handling of digital tools is no longer a choice, but a requirement. Older people must be included and have a say in the design of digital solutions. Digital empowerment can be a strong tool for empowerment of older adults in general and their full participation in community and social life.

Specific action	Description
Focus on the relationship older people build with and in the digital environment	In order to mediate fear/aversion of contact of older people with digital tools, it helps to strengthen the role of the “intermediary”, persons of confidence who accompany them when they immerse in the world of digital technology.
Promoting access to digital services through an intergenerational approach	In order to support older populations with regard to digital tools and their use, an intergenerational approach can be taken that allows the younger population, who have grown up in and are familiar with a digital world, to support the elderly. TAAFE has shown that organized collaboration between senior centre representatives and high school students can be helpful and educational (see the Italian TAAFE pilot) and at the same time enable mutual understanding through intergenerational dialogue.

<p>Usability with the help of a participatory approach</p>	<p>User-friendly instructions, video tutorials, or personal desk support can be good tools to ensure that older people understand and use digital devices. In TAAFE such services/products were the result of an authentic dialogue developed on the specific needs, desires, and capabilities of the developers and the target audience. Thus, usability illustrates the journey from the idea to the realization, highlighting the participatory process as the foundation, based on direct dialogue and collaboration between older adults and trainers.</p>
<p>Administrative staff needs to better tailor services to meet the needs of seniors</p>	<p>In order to understand the needs of older people, it is important to strengthen the ability of administrative staff to listen and recognize the needs that older adults actually have. In TAAFE, this proved to be fundamental in co-creating a solution and a key step in implementing something accessible and useful.</p>

 **AREA V: Setting actions to sustain achievements**

The TAAFE project set a precedent in each pilot region to achieve concrete results for AFE by implementing co-creation processes with administration and the public. The challenges are to sustain results or processes, to stabilize networks of engaged actors, and to enable institutionalization of the participatory governance method. The method and topics will continuously be adapted according to actual needs for the improvement of existing services, but sustainability is reached through the maintenance of activation and engagement of actors.

Specific action	Description
<p>Train your cooperation partners</p>	<p>In order to sustain results, your cooperation partners from policy and administration need to step in to distribute information and knowledge on the topic of AFE. One way of having a strong multiplier effect is by offering training to service coordinators and</p>

	professionals, such as social workers and administrative employees.
Quality assurance through expert panels	A participatory governance process (like in TAAFE) could be accompanied by a multi-stakeholder expert panel or Advisory Board, which gives feedback, assures quality and advances the critical debate on AFE topics through their own networks.
Use communication to transfer the TAAFE model to other communities or other publics	Once the TAAFE model is implemented successfully in one area, knowledge shall be transferred strategically through targeted information and exchange of learnings, primarily oriented towards institutional contacts. Established formal channels of policy exchange or discussion forums are a good starting point. Of course, also association that operate across communities or regions are good multipliers.

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