



Age Friendly City Project Key competences of Age Friendly professional

Partners' findings - March 2023



Co-funded by
the European Union

ERASMUS+ GA n° 2022-1-ES01-KA220-VET-000085664

This document reflects only the author's view and the National Agency, and the European Commission are not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

INDEX

SOMMARIO

Introduction.....	2
In-depth interviews and case studies.....	2
Participants	2
Main outcomes.....	4
Capacity Building	5
Next steps	6



INTRODUCTION

Longer life expectancy is a cause for celebration. However, this new reality, and the current socio-economic situation, also brings new challenges for age-friendly cities as well as for education systems in the coming years. In this context, VET stakeholders agree that new professional profiles and skills are needed to meet the challenges of longevity and demographic transition.

Therefore, the AGE-FRIENDLY TOOLKIT project aims to define a training curriculum for the new profile “Professional of reference for inclusive ageing in age-friendly cities” through an open and broad exchange of views among stakeholders on ageing. The project will develop a set of open educational resources proposed in the vocational education and training systems and remain freely available online.

The main objective of the AGE-FRIENDLY TOOLKIT project is to define a training curriculum for the new figure “Professional of reference for inclusive ageing in age-friendly cities”. Partners have agreed to define the figure as “a professional with specific knowledge, skills and competencies in the development of age-friendly environments in the context of longevity and demographic transition in European countries.”

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS AND CASE STUDIES

This report is based on the first activity of the project. This activity consisted of developing a basic document describing a set of cross-cutting issues for age-friendly cities, facilitating the exchange of opinions among stakeholders around the new professional figure “Reference Professional for inclusive ageing in age-friendly cities”.

Each partner interviewed experts in participant countries, from January to March 2023. These interviews aimed to gain initial insights into a new professional profile by identifying the knowledge and skills required to perform successfully in age-friendly cities. Second, a short desk study was performed by partner AFEdeMy to gain insights into other related areas regarding necessary skills and knowledge in promoting age-friendly environments.

PARTICIPANTS

In total 31 in-depth interviews were performed (figure 1.). In The Netherlands and Italy seven in-depth interviews each were performed. Spain conducted twelve in-depth interviews and Denmark five. The interviews were conducted with participants covering various expertise and experiences regarding the eight domains of the age-friendly cities framework.



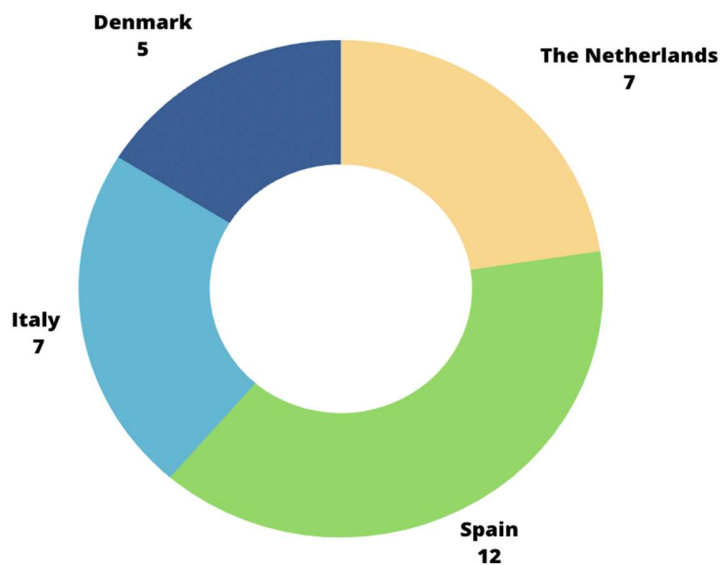


FIGURE 1: INTERVIEWS PER COUNTRY

The figure 2 shows the distribution good practice cases considered in the first stage of the AFC-TOOLKIT project, distributed in the 8 WHO domains.

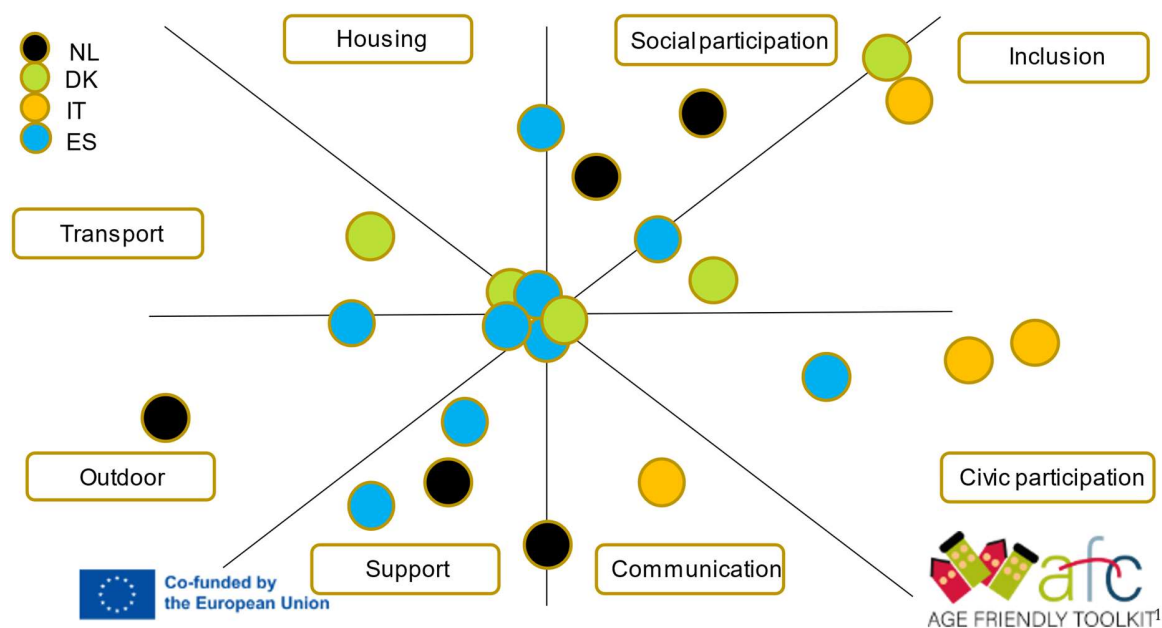


FIGURE 2: INTERVIEWS PER COUNTRY, PER WHO DOMAIN

A total of 31 experts with the following profiles were interviewed in the first phase of the project::

- Advocacy expert
- Cohousing expert
- Business mentor.
- Consultant in AFC environments
- Head of Municipality Social Services
- Occupational therapist



- Physical trainer
- Representative of Older's People Organization
- Policy advisor for the municipality
- National coordinator of AFC network
- Social worker
- Social programs coordinator
- Volunteer at the municipality

MAIN OUTCOMES

In the next sections we will provide a first glimpse of the main outcomes. A more elaborate analysis can be found in the international report which can be found [here](#). From the interviews with a wide variety of stakeholders we have found that the professional who wants to promote and develop age-friendly environments needs to possess knowledge, skills and attitudes on three levels. First, the professional needs to know how to develop communities and work with diverse groups of people and stakeholders. For this the professional needs to:

- Be able to raise awareness on the local community's priorities;
- Be able to promote age-friendly environments through networking and working with various stakeholders;
- Be able to mobilise the necessary resources to implement age-friendly environments.

Second, the professional needs to be able to work using a person-centred approach which means that the AFC professional can focus care and support on the needs of the individual. Hereby ensuring that people's preferences, needs and values guide decisions, and providing respectful and responsive care and support to citizens. For this the professional needs to:

- Be able to listen actively and with empathy;
- Be able to analyse the needs of older adults;
- Be able to provide care and support based on the needs of older adults.

Third, the AFC professional needs to understand the Age-Friendly Cities framework and obtain skills, knowledge and attitudes specific to implementing and developing the eight domains of this framework. For this the professional needs to:

- Understand and know the eight domains of the Age-Friendly Cities framework
- Be able to design and implement actions to develop and promote the eight domains of the Age-Friendly Cities framework.

The figure below gives an overview of the three levels the AFC professional will need to obtain knowledge, skills and attitudes. A more elaborate analysis and more specific skills, knowledge and attitudes can be found in the international report.



The age-friendly professional

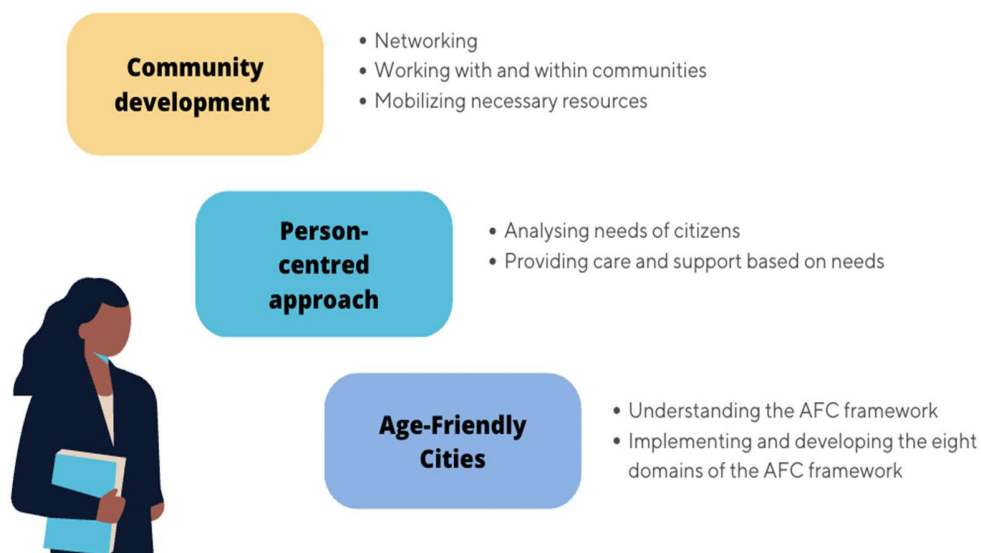


FIGURE 3: THE AGE-FRIENDLY PROFESSIONAL

CAPACITY BUILDING

The findings of the first stage of the AFC-Toolkit project are in line with the capacity building criteria defined by the WHO¹, which considers that

“The development and implementation of an AFCC programme often require that staff and practitioners change their work habits, develop new or refine processes and view government business and activities differently.”

In this document, the WHO recognises the following capabilities required for staff and practitioners:

- **A good negotiator can assess the core requirements** for all sides and determine which elements can be negotiated, can prioritize the requirements of each side and can enter discussions knowing how to manage conversations and reach agreement on mutually agreed priorities.
- **An excellent listener spends more time listening to work colleagues**, partners or potential partners than speaking, as they know that understanding the partner’s position is critical.
- **A good facilitator can help colleagues and partners** to express their views and positions, can identify consensus or disagreement and help find solutions.
- **A good innovator values innovation and is prepared to try new approaches** and take risks by questioning the status quo, observing, experimenting and networking.

¹ WHO, 2023. [National programmes for age-friendly cities and communities; a guide.](#)



- **A good “intrapreneur” (inside entrepreneur) exercises initiative** and pursues opportunities, strategically assesses the political environment and sees how best to take advantage of opportunities as they arise, with an entrepreneurial spirit.
- **An excellent communicator** has strong verbal, written and non-written communication skills.
- **A person who is good at building and maintaining relationships** demonstrates the importance of doing so with the team and other sectors.
- **A “systems thinker” demonstrates a holistic** approach to the analysis of a system’s constituent parts, interrelations and how systems work over time and within larger systems.
- **A respectful person values diversity and recognizes** the importance of drawing on a wide range of skills.
- **Someone who can compromise recognizes** that there is no point in being rigid in a collaboration.
- **A person with strong political acumen is conscious** of the politics within and between agencies and the political environment of the government.

NEXT STEPS

In the next phase of this project international thematic workshops will be organised to further elaborate the professional profile. In addition, in these workshops partners will present a first draft of a potential training programme for the age-friendly professional.

