# WP2A4 Validation and dissemination of results – International Report

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AGE FRIENDLY TOOLKIT

# INTRODUCTION

## OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this activity are to validate the results with external experts and to disseminate the results at national and international levels in each participant country. Each partner will organise an expert group to validate the training CV. As a result, a final validation report will be drafted in English with the results obtained in participant countries. The training CV will be adapted to the inputs gathered in this process. Finally, the AGE Platform will validate this international report.

A newsletter and an informative booklet will be available in English and national languages.

### TEMPLATE TO VALIDATE THE TRAINING CV IN PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES. QUESTIONS FOR THE GROUP OF EXPERTS

The training CV will be translated and delivered to a group of experts before organising an expert group in which partners will debate the following questions:

1. Do you think that the content included in the training CV is appropriate for a new professional profile in age-friendly cities and communities?
2. Do you consider the AFC-TOOLKIT Training CV as a tool of reference for the development of training materials that will be freely available on the internet?
3. What do you think about the implementation of the proposed Training CV in in your country's educational systems addressed to teachers and students, professionals, employed and unemployed workers, volunteers, older persons, etc.
4. Would you like to propose any recommendations about the objectives, contents, materials, platforms, target groups, training methodology, etc., for the future development of the AFC Toolkit project?

### RESULTS

In this section of the report you will find a summary of the results of the validation workshops from each country.

### The Netherlands

**Participants**

In The Netherlands, 5 experts participated in the online workshop, 2 experts participated through an online survey. Experts were policymakers, researchers, social workers, and community nurses.

**Summary of the workshop**
**Q1. Do you consider that the content included in the training curriculum is suitable for a new professional profile in age-friendly cities and communities?**
All participants complimented the consortium on the extensive curriculum that was already developed in such a short time span. The feedback and comments that were made in the workshop can be found under Q4.

**Q2. Do you consider that the AFC-TOOLKIT Training Curriculum can be a reference tool for the development of training materials that will be available for free on the Internet?**

**Q3. Do you consider important to implement the AFC-Toolkit training curriculum in the education and vocational training systems in The Netherlands? – Upper Secondary Education, Intermediate Vocational Training, Higher Vocational Training, Education for Workers, Life-long Learning...**

In the Dutch workshop it was highlighted that higher education programs such as Gerontology often do not have enough students as the topic is not very popular in The Netherlands. For AFC Toolkit we must thus take into account how we promote the program so that people will be interested and we reach the right stakeholders.

**Q4. Would you like to recommend or add anything regarding the objectives, content, materials, platforms, target groups, training methodology, etc., for the future development of the Training CV project?**

There were some comments, however, from the participants about improving the curriculum even further. First, participants emphasised the need for
need for incorporating educational materials related to teaching participants essential skills and recommended incorporating self-evaluation tests. It was also stressed that the curriculum should include materials to support professionals in raising awareness of attitudes and caution them against excessive servitude that limits opportunities for older individuals.
Regarding the last module, it was stressed that it might be too extensive to add one complete module about dementia as it is complex and normal ageing should be discussed as well. All participants agreed that digitalisation should be included across all modules and that the curriculum should also include the transfer of skills related to stakeholder analysis and collaboration in the training. Participants emphasised their appreciation for the fact that the curriculum includes modules on ageism and raising awareness on this issue. Experts

The workshop discussions also delved into motivations for participating in the Age-Friendly City program and raised questions about the broader context, emphasising the significance of small modules within a broader framework and their connection to the environment. Experts also highlighted the need to identify the target audience more in order to promote the learning materials effectively. Experts also mentioned that the curriculum could also put more emphasis on raising awareness of the need for age-friendly environments and teach professionals how they can lobby for such environments.

The need to make the program attractive, understand the diverse motivations of potential participants and include older people in promotion for increased self-confidence were emphasised. "Cafe Max" was mentioned as a platform to bring professionals and seniors together. Concerns about the lack of information on creating age-friendly work environments and the potential dismissal of volunteers and experts appreciated that the curriculum focuses on this issue.

The workshop concluded with good practices, such as Kearn Welzijn's effective approach to connecting with people and Land van Cuijk's success in promoting the self-governance of volunteers in small communities.

## *Spain*

On January 23, 2024, CEOMA and Edad Dorada Mensajeros de la Paz presented a proposal for a training curriculum for the aforementioned professional profile, assessing its suitability to the current situation and its potential implementation in Secondary Education programs, Middle and Higher Vocational Training, and Life-long Learning for Workers.

### Participants
25 individuals from the most representative organisations in the sector, such as the Network of Age-Friendly Cities (IMSERSO), Social Services of the City of Madrid, HelpAge Spain, Catalan Federation of Older People's Organizations (FATEC), Nagusilan, Pilares Foundation, SAMUR-Civil Protection of Madrid, and other professionals interested in the development of age-friendly environments participated on the seminar.

### Summary
Participants expressed great satisfaction with this initiative, highlighting the need for these resources for organisations and Spanish society as a whole.

### Q1. Do you consider that the content included in the training curriculum is suitable for a new professional profile in age-friendly cities and communities?
The participants strongly agree with the topics included in the training curriculum proposal.
- An expert has considered the following: *"The content is suitable and very comprehensive. I would like to undergo training! I appreciate many aspects of the training curriculum. I would emphasise certain aspects more (AICP, intergenerationality, participation...), but I understand that many topics need to be addressed."*
- An expert has pointed out: *"Regarding the cross-cutting themes, there is a reference to the Person-Centered Approach, but it would be necessary to include the Comprehensive and Person-Centered Care Model that encompasses it, as well as the Person-Centered Planning (PCP), which is also a part of it, and originates in the field of intellectual disabilities."*

### Q2. Do you consider that the AFC-TOOLKIT Training Curriculum can be a reference tool for the development of training materials that will be available for free on the Internet?
It is deemed highly necessary, without standardising, that concepts should be homogenised so that everyone understands what is being discussed when a specific term is used. In the field of training, the importance of the training curriculum leading to a standardised and official certification has been emphasised. Also, concerns arose regarding the duration of the training, suggesting the possibility of dividing it into levels based on the person taking it.

### Q3. Do you consider important to implement the AFC-Toolkit training curriculum in the education and vocational training systems in Spain? – Upper Secondary Education, Intermediate Vocational Training, Higher Vocational Training, Education for Workers, Life-long Learning...
An expert has commented as follows: *"I have only one question: What for, for whom? A training curriculum is intended to educate a professional needed in society, a professional profile that is clearly defined and whose role, functions, salary, etc., are outlined in the corresponding job regulations. But if there is no professional with the name 'reference professional...' and that would be hired as such...where would someone with this profile work? And the training...should it require some prior knowledge or not? And if it does, what kind of knowledge?"*

**Q4. Would you like to recommend or add anything regarding the objectives, content, materials, platforms, target groups, training methodology, etc., for the future development of the Training CV project?**

It will be important to have practical training that enhances reflection and teamwork to help understand and think of the older population.

Following the definitions of the World Health Organization (WHO), they are not just age-friendly cities but also age-friendly communities. Such cities and communities should consider a gender and intersectional perspective to address the diverse realities of the population. The need to reach every spectrum of society was emphasised, considering differences such as race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and economic position, among others. Therefore, it would be interesting to explain different methods of contact with these parts of society, always taking differences into account.

Furthermore, it was emphasised that the participation of older people should not be 'allowed', as it is a right, advocating for active and diverse participation at all times, transforming the approach from working for older people to working with them.

A participant expressed the following: "*Saying 'Allow' seems conceptually confusing when talking about 'allowing' something that constitutes an essential right of people, such as participating.*"

## *Italy*

On January 26th, 2024, a seminar was held by ANS with invited participants for the purpose of validating and disseminating the above curriculum.

The meeting was attended by professionals with different backgrounds, representing both public and private institutions and universities in the social field.

Following people took part to the event:

- Loredana Ligabue – CAR.ER. ETS
- Federico Boccaletti – Officina delle competenze
- Rossana Cattabriga – AUSL Modena
- Sabrina Tellini – Unione delle Terre d'Argine
- Elena Luppi – Università di Bologna
- Sara Beccati and Licia Boccaletti | ANS (facilitators)

On the specific, the meeting was attended by the secretary and representative of the Emilia-Romagna network of caregivers, a representative of the association for the recognition and certification of skills, a representative of the public health services, a representative of the local municipalities, and a university lecturer from the Faculty of Education.

Generally speaking, the participants appreciate the curriculum and contents and they consider it fit for the purpose.

It was underlined to focus on professional posture in relation to working with older persons, so maybe the sequence of modules could be changed, starting from an anti-stereotypical approach to thinking about a city and supporting a change of mindset.

## Topics to add

**Loneliness**: contents a specific focus on the issue of loneliness of older persons (which would also connect to the activities already implemented at the local level in the UtA Area). To be included and transversal to the others.

**ICT**: highlight how technologies can support – e.g., how the ICT tools might be used to collect data that can support the development of AFT-related strategies (information about the presence of older persons living in the different neighbourhoods can support decision-making in urban planning.

**Digital-divide**: how it can impact on inclusion of older persons.

**Networking**: creating networks among different stakeholders to reach the AFT goals.

**Security and safety**: Maybe this can be discussed in relation to the accessibility of public spaces, with examples and the issue, i.e., with the local police. Inclusion and safety should be inter-connected.

**Emergencies**: supporting older persons in catastrophes such as earthquakes or flooding.

**Intergenerational approach**

**Mobility**: considered in terms of accessibility and integration with other services (for example, how to reach health care or social care services or spaces for cultural events).

## Methodologies to use

Include in the piloting of the training a **project-work approach** to apply the general principles to the specificities of local contexts.

Include a methodological framework such as for example, **design-thinking** or **perspective-taking**. Considering the needs of older persons in organising places and timing when organising events.

## Wished impact

**More adequate policies**: Technology can play an important role in providing information to policy-makers also in relation to the current availability of services such as pharmacies or community centres, or grocery stores. Areas lacking local grocery stores can be supported by incentivising the opening of new shops but also by thinking about different solutions such as ambulant shops. Availabilities of 3D printers could also be a useful support.

**Rising awareness**: raising awareness among the general community of citizens, taking care of their neighbours in order to promote social inclusion in terms of "good neighbourhood."

**Promotion of accessibility**: In the municipality, there is an officer dedicated to accessibility of spaces, who is developing a plan to make the city more accessible. These kinds of professionals should be involved as targets of awareness rising. This is especially relevant for new areas of development within the cities so that AFT principles can be taken into account.

## Good practices

The plan developed by Emilia Romagna Region following the Madrid Conference in 2002

https://sociale.regione.emilia-romagna.it/anziani/par/documenti/piano-di-azione-per-la-comunita-regionale-en.pdf

## Beneficiaries of the training

Besides those already included it is mentioned:

- Community nurses
- Third sectors – volunteers not working specifically with older persons
- Architects
- Educators working in life-long-learning
- Organisation of cultural events

In conclusion, the proposed training curriculum was appreciated and participants considered it relevant to the Italian context and specifically to the territorial context of Emilia-Romagna. Attention should be paid to the sequence of modules that could impact the processing of the proposed topics.

Participants pointed out the need to enrich the structure of the project through significant topics such as the further use of ICT tools, the issue of loneliness, safety and mobility, considered fundamental to promote the inclusion of the elderly, the valorisation of networking, intergenerational ties and emergency management.

Numerous categories of people could benefit from the project, and it is emphasised that the possible impact of the project could be greater and more effective by raising awareness in the community by gathering information on the reality of the context, which could then be used by policymakers and by involving and enhancing the actions already undertaken in the area.

## Denmark

On February 1, 2024, a seminar was held by SOSU with invited participants for the purpose of validating and disseminating the above curriculum.

Representatives from a wide range of the project's target groups were invited. Five participants accepted the invitation. The two participants at the meeting were heads of the secretariat of the People's Movement for a Demes-friendly Denmark, whose work is aimed at civil society. She does not deal directly with education but collaborates with various agencies and organisations and can support training. In addition, a head of education from SOSU, who is in the Main Course Department (Social and Health Helper and Social and Health Assistant Education), participated. She has many years of experience as an area manager in the elderly area under municipal auspices.

Participants praised the thoroughness of the project in preparing the training plan and were curious to know more about its content.

**Q1. Do you consider that the content included in the training curriculum is suitable for a new professional profile in age-friendly cities and communities?**

The participants expressed that the content of the curriculum appears to be in line with the competencies described for the new profile in order to support the development of age-friendly

cities. In Denmark, we have not employed profiles like this, and the participants do not find it realistic that this will happen. Therefore, the education is recommended to be offered as a course as a supplement to a basic education.

**Q2. Do you consider that the AFC-TOOLKIT Training Curriculum can be a reference tool for the development of training materials that will be available for free on the Internet?**

The training curriculum seems to have worked out well. It has been possible to get different people's perspectives on the plan.

**Q3. How can the training plan be transferred to the Danish education systems?**

The participants do not see the curriculum as feasible as an education for a professional profile in a Danish context but more as a course with modules that can be taken independently of each other and as a supplement according to need and interest.

The head of training indicated that she could not see it integrated into the main training courses as the Social and Health Helper/Assistant training. The education includes integrated teaching in dementia, social participation, citizen involvement and community support. As a social and health care assistant and assistant, you work with the individual - and not specifically - and only on developing age-friendly environments. They will be able to support initiatives. Since the target group for the education plan is so broad, she will assess that the content of the course will be at a level that is too low compared to the health professional education.

The participants saw the training plan as relevant in relation to politicians and employees, e.g. in the Technical and Environmental departments in the municipalities. They will clearly benefit from knowledge about dementia, but not on a deeper theoretical level, such as knowledge of Tom Kidwood's theory or treatment methods. Knowledge of the 8 domains will qualify them in urban and environmental planning. The course - or parts of the modules - could perhaps advantageously be taken as an AMU course without or at a low cost to the employer.

The head of the secretariat also saw it as a possible course for NGOs / volunteers / relatives who are involved in various projects in the municipalities within urban and environmental planning.

A common knowledge in the municipalities about the 8 domains and dementia will also contribute to a better collaboration and a higher degree of citizen/employee involvement in different projects.

In Denmark, age-friendly cities are not talked about as much as they were a few years ago. Today, the dementia-friendly society is on the agenda, but it also supports an age-friendly society. In autumn 2023, municipalities have been offered the opportunity to apply for funding to develop age-friendly cities. Unfortunately, there is experience that pool funds often have to be applied for within a very short deadline, which often means that some municipalities get started late with the search.

**P4. Would you like to recommend or add anything regarding the objectives, content, materials, platforms, target groups, training methodology, etc., for the future development of the Training CV project?**

The participants lack clarity in the scope of the modules.

Participants recommend that the course does not exceed a total duration of 2-3 days.

For relatives and volunteers, they have experience that it should be a course of only one day's duration.

The training should be considered as a course where modules can be taken independently of each other.

The content of the course must not be heavy theory but many practical examples and exercises with reflections on the context in which it is to be used.

The target audience is very wide. It makes it difficult to develop the materials if everyone's prerequisites and objectives are to be met. So, a differentiation will be necessary. It is important to have clarity in who the target group is.

In conclusion, the evaluation of the training curriculum reveals that it is well-structured, but participants do not see it as suitable for a professional education in a Danish context. Instead, they suggest breaking it down into modules that can be taken independently as needed. Concerns arise about integrating it into existing training programs, especially within social and health education, due to the broad nature of the target audience.

However, participants see potential applications in municipal departments such as Technical and Environmental, as well as for NGOs, volunteers, and relatives involved in urban and environmental planning. Recommendations include a clear module scope, a total duration of 2-3 days, and a focus on practical examples over heavy theory. Differentiation for the diverse target audience is crucial, and a clear definition of the target group is encouraged for the future development of the training plan.

## CONCLUSION

The AFC TOOLKIT proposal has an experimental nature but with the aspiration to be able to answer the following questions once the second phase of content development and piloting is concluded: Duration of the curriculum; Access requirements; What will I learn and do?; Training plan: When completing my studies, what can I do?; What are the professional opportunities?
For all participants, it is crucial that the new profile be officially recognised for it to be considered in training proposals within education and training systems.