



ICT for Ageing Well : Getting older users involved



The experience of AGE Platform Europe

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i-Age e-inclusion in ageing Europe
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AGE Platform Europe

Voicing the needs and concerns of older people in Europe

- ❖ **Bringing older people's point of view in the European policies' debates**, regarding the most important dossiers for people aged 50+, such as social protection and pension reforms, anti-discrimination, employment, social inclusion, ICT, health, research, accessible mobility and build environment,
 - **150 Members** from all over Europe
 - **14 Task Forces** (Accessibility of build environment, transport and ICT, Healthy Ageing, Dignified Ageing, Consumer's rights, ...)
- ❖ **Raising awareness on the users' needs and wishes**, on the principle and practice of users' involvement, in order to add value to the European research, to industrial production, to the service provision and policy-making.
 - **Involvement in EU projects** (Advisory Boards, User Fora, pilot visits, ...)
 - **@ Policy level** (EU lobbying, campaigns, e.g. solidarity between generations, age-friendly environments, European Parliament Intergroup on Ageing, ...)
- ❖ **Pooling with other European NGOs and stakeholders**: facing the challenges brought by the demographic change by working together and by sharing the rationale that nothing can be done without the involvement and consent of those the action is addressed to (*"nothing for us without us"*).

Older people: past & future challenges

Who is old?

- No surprise! We age since we are born
- Older persons are not a uniform target group but individuals with diverse needs, wishes and expectations

“Older people are a totally **heterogeneous group** and that is a vital point to learn. You have those who continue to decide on their daily living and those who at the same age have given up. You have those who will grasp the tele-control and flick through the channels and those who leave it in the drawer preferring to push the button”.

Angela Cluzel, AGE Expert on the occasion of the AALIANCE Final Conference, Malaga, March 2010

- “*When I'm 64*”: different ages, different needs... changing in time and space (older people in 1964 had some different priorities and wishes than older people now) > importance of a comprehensive approach

Is there an ideal user?

Lessons learnt

- The ideal user of ICT solutions « *has experience in technology, likes it and is not startled when things do not work as they should* »

What are older persons' experiences and views on technology?

"At my age it is very difficult to understand technology"
(Female, 81 years old, Badalona)

"I think it's the future of life. Look at the phones...when I was young the phones did not exist and now we are all under control"
(Male, 83 years old, Badalona)

"Older people are being surpassed by technology and they can't follow it"
(Male, 72 years old, Antwerp)



What matters to older people?

Do I need it?

1. Acknowledge the need and wish to adopt a service (e.g. tele-monitoring) or a device
2. Should solutions be offered without presenting also alternatives (i.e. more traditional methods of care and support)?

Lesson learnt: at the end of trial, many people will not miss the technology, but the chats with the people who call in and the visit to their place

"I will miss the chats with those who called when looking after the equipment"

(Male, 78 years old, Louth)

"I can do without the healthcare technologies and wouldn't miss the end of it... My bloods are closely monitored by the doctor so the devices aren't as necessary for me. I would miss the visits and the calls however"

(Female, 79 years old, Louth)

How will this change, in perspective?

What will the response be in 40 years by people that are now in their 40s?

What technology will be in use?

What matters to older people?

Can I use it?

"I only use the devices when my daughters come to visit, once a week"

(Female, 70 years old, Badalona)

"The blood-pressure meter is difficult to place in the arm"

(Male, 83 years old, Badalona)



Implementing technologies has to be accompanied by ongoing training, social services, and long-term technical support

Lesson learnt: User-friendliness (design-for-all) and accessibility should be at the heart of innovation: future generations will be more ICT-literate as technology evolves, but there will also be people less confident than others

What matters to older people?

Can I trust it?

Older people looking for assistance can easily fall in the hands of crook: people who do not know what they are doing or who charge unnecessary high fees.

If you had had bad experiences and have no trustworthy person to help you, this can be a barrier to the use of ICT.

Marja Pijl, AGE Expert on the occasion of the AAL Forum, Odense, September 2010

Lesson learnt:

Trusting the service offered is a process that takes time and efforts.

ICT must be fully tested and completely reliable before it is given to an older person.

"I never had to use the Mambo, but it is always plugged in. In the beginning I used to test it by pushing the button... I do not really like it; I am afraid some of the grandkids could come in and push the button, putting out an SOS!"

(Female, 85 years old, Louth)

Involving, (em)powering

A win-win situation

ICT represents a real tool for inclusion and participation in society. Technology has the opportunity (and the responsibility) to avoid increasing the digital divide and the social exclusion.

Matter of trust, acceptance, availability and affordability are not only ethical concerns, they are also very practical issues, enabling or hinder people's life.

Involving with the users is among the keys towards the development of ICT for ageing well.

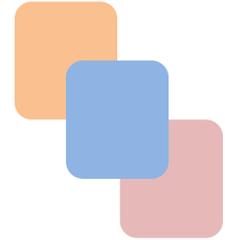
Involving the users in processes and decisions:

- From the outset, since the first planning
- Including the largest variety of users possible
- Complying with the principles of user engagement (AGE guidelines on involving older people in social innovation development: <http://www.age-platform.eu/dossiers-en-gb-6/2139-guidelines-on-involving-older-people-in-social-innovation-development>)



Involving, (em)powering

A win-win situation



For older people

- ✓ Participation allows to increase the sense of ownership
- ✓ It reduces the feeling of being exploited by research
- ✓ It enhances social participation
- ✓ It contributes to the development of skills of older people
- ✓ It allows to keep at pace with (the) research developments and innovation
- ✓ It helps the users understand their role in the process, technology and methodology used

For researchers

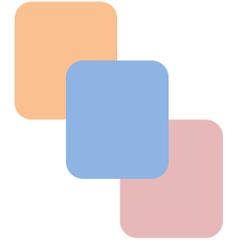
- ✓ Participation ensures researchers understand users better
- ✓ It forces researchers and beneficiaries to speak the same language
- ✓ It explores ways to bring users in the discussion: engaging users means acquiring efficiency, efficacy and consistency, while late involvement often means a high risk that the feedback from the users will not be implemented
- ✓ It reduces the gap between research and practice
- ✓ It encourages the consensus between/within stakeholders
- ✓ It helps achieve better research results, encompassing hard-to-reach groups
- ✓ It facilitates user/society acceptance and therefore business development of innovation

For society

- ✓ Participation of beneficiaries diminishes the risk of ageism
- ✓ Research priorities reflect those of users, ensuring that money and resources are not wasted on research with little or no relevance
- ✓ Increase real impact of research on society
- ✓ Improve services and products (i.e. accessibility) for the benefit of society as a whole

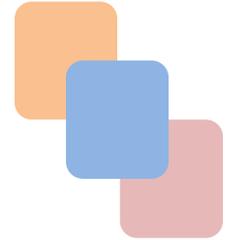
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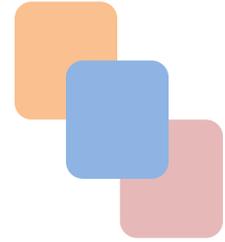


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For practices of User Involvement

❖ **INNOVAGE- Social Innovation promoting active and healthy ageing**

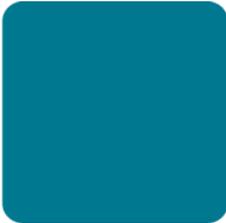
AGE has released the **INNOVAGE guidelines on user involvement** for social innovation (available [on-line](#)) aimed at facilitating involvement of older users in the social innovation process. The Guidelines are based on literature findings and also on their experience of working with older people in the framework of INNOVAGE and other European research projects.

❖ **ENGAGED– Community for Active and Healthy Ageing**

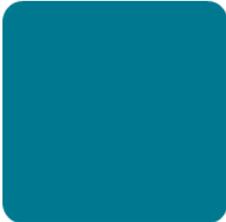
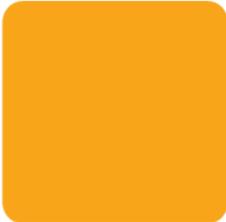
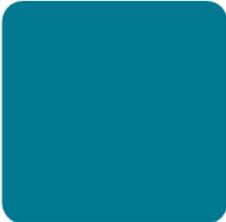
Involving EU stakeholders in a sustainable network on innovation and age-friendly environments, promoting the transferability of evidence about what works and what does not, supporting **regions to implements innovative** models, tools and services.

❖ **Age-Friendly Environments Campaign and Thematic Network (AFE-INNOVNET)**

Pooling interested stakeholders (public and private authorities at all levels, users, researchers, business stakeholders, ...) in a comprehensive and participated network for sharing solution to common challenges; towards a **Covenant** of local and regional authorities **on Demographic Change...**



Thank you for your attention !



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