bridge the gap

Enhancing the Social and Digital Participation of Older People

O1: Fact Sheet

National report for Austria

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1.   Introduction

The demographic development calls for measures to enable older people to live autonomously and shape living environments in a way that their independence and the social participation is supported. Simultaneously, the transformative power of digitalisation is visible in almost every field of our society. The speed of digital development is going that fast that even younger seniors cannot keep up the pace. New knowledge and skills are needed to be able to fully participate in society. It is highly important that we reduce the digital gap that divides certain groups (e.g. older people) from those with full access to the digital world. The Bridge the Gap! project aims to create age-friendly neighbourhoods and reduce the digital divide between generations by developing trainings that empower and train older people to explore, analyse and (re)shape their neighbourhoods with the help of digital tools.

The Intellectual Output of the research phase is the Bridge the Gap! Fact Sheet. It is a basis for the partnership as regards content as well as for the promotion, dissemination and implementation of the project. The Bridge the Gap! Fact Sheet aims to inform about the subject older people in the digital era as well as interesting best-practice examples of participation in older age – with a focus on age-friendly environments and ICT. This national report for Austria describes the research activities and summarises the main findings to be included in the Bridge the Gap! Fact Sheet, as well as fruitful training settings and content for the development of the training.

2.   Methodology and proceedings

In order to achieve the above-mentioned aims, the following methods were applied:

- Desk research in each country concerning approaches to age-friendly environments, perspectives on the topic "digitalisation and demography", best-practice examples as well as training settings and contents.

- Interviews in each partner country with stakeholders, experts and representatives of the target group for the training.

The desk research focused on the following issues:

- Political and practical approaches to age-friendly environments (at national, regional and local level)

- Policies and strategies regarding digitalisation and demography (at national, regional and local level)

- Facts and figures related to digitalisation and demography

- Best-practice examples in co-producing age-friendly environments with the facilitation of digital means

Lead questions for interviews with experts and stakeholders as well as for potential training participants ("learners") were agreed upon in the kick-off meeting (see Annex 1 and Annex 2).

Regarding the experts, the interview questions have been adapted to the functions, expertise and personal background of the interviewees.

In Vienna 10 people were interviewed. Experts and stakeholders included an expert on accessibility from the Mobility Agency in Vienna, the founder of the initiative "Seniorenweb", a social gerontologist from the University of Vienna, the project manager of the project "Ageing. Digitally" in Lower Austria, and an older blogger. Moreover the expertise and needs of older learners who were previously engaged in the AFE Activists- Project was collected in two focus group discussions.

All interviews were organised and recorded via ZOOM and lasted for approximately 60 minutes. Two focus group discussions with 6 older learners and potential participants of the "Bridge the gap" Training were also organised via ZOOM.

List of interviewees:

- Christine Darwisch, Verein Seniorenweb

- Maria Grundner, Mobilitätsagentur Wien

- Renate Kaufmann, blogger "www.frag-die-oma.blog"

- Vera Gallistl, ACCESS project, University of Vienna

- Doris Maurer, Project Manager ‚Digital, Gesund Altern', Lower Austria

- 2 focus group discussions with 6 participants of the Mobility-Scouts project in Vienna

## 3.	Research results

### 3.1	Political and practical approaches to age-friendly environments

We found some interesting applied and practical research dealing with the issues of participative urban development, development of age-friendly environments and civic participation in planning. The handbook "Participation in the future" (Oberösterreichische Zukunftsakademie, 2016) for example, deals with trends and developments in the field of civic participation and coproduction and describes the following five principles of a future-oriented participation culture:

- Participation at an early stage

- Low-threshold possibilities to participate

- Different methods and settings of participation

- Open, public and media-effective implementation of participation processes

- Dialogue-oriented implementation

Publications, such as "Handbook civic participation at national and regional level" (Amt der

Vorarlberger Landesregierung, 2010) as well as the Handbook "Participation – jointly developing the city" (Magistratsabteilung 18 – Stadtentwicklung und Stadtplanung, 2012) provide some interesting methods and tools for implementing co-production and participation processes.

Furthermore, the guidelines „Unterwegs im Leben. Denkanstöße für eine alter(n)sgerechte Gestaltung des öffentlichen Lebens" (BASK, 2015) aim to raise awareness for the importance of mobility in older age. The guidelines were commissioned by the Austrian Ministry of Social Affairs and show how to contribute to mobility-friendly environments.

At national level, there are two strategies and policies, which generally stress the importance of active citizenship and participation of older people:

The Austrian Health Targets (Bundesministerium für Gesundheit und Frauen, 2017) include the overall aim "to give older people the possibility to actively co-produce and co-create their living environment and to participate in decisions, which affect their living conditions, promotes their healthy aging" (p. 7). However, no concrete measures and activities to achieve this target are mentioned. Measures focus mainly on promoting a cross-policy dialogue to find a joint strategy of active ageing and accessible housing.

Based on the analysis of the health and living situation of older people in Austria, in the "Bundesplan für Seniorinnen und Senioren" (Bundesministerium für Arbeit, Soziales und Konsumentenschutz, 2013) experts recommend inter alia promoting the social and political participation of older people. The concrete recommendations include:

- The revaluation of the political participation of seniors' association
- The inclusion of further target groups, such as older people with special needs
- The motivation of older people to get involved in volunteering as well as the adequateframework for voluntary engagement

Again, older people as experts of their living environment are not explicitly mentioned. From co-production perspective, at regional level (Vienna) a shift from "doing to" to "doing with" can be observed: The municipality of Vienna established a service center for civic participation. The service center acts as information hub: On the one hand feedback of citizens is forwarded to responsible departments of the municipality. On the other hand the service center informs on plans and initiatives in the field of urban development. Therefore, the service center for civic participation functions as major interface between the municipality and the citizens of Vienna.

The municipality elaborated a Master Plan Participation. The aim of the Master Plan "Partizipative Stadtentwicklung. Frühzeitiges Beteligen der Bevölkerung an städtebaulichen Planungs- und Widmungsprozessen" is to improve the communication and cooperation of citizens, the municipality, politics and project initiators (Magistrat der Stadt Wien, 2017). Furthermore, the Plan includes the framework of citizens' involvement in planning processes and defines main target groups to be considered: residents, professionals involved and future residents.

The brochure "Good-Practice-Beispiele der Gesundheitsförderung mit Fokus auf Förderung sozialer Teilhabe im Alter" (Antony and Gaiswinkler, 2019) collected good practice examples of

health promotion with a focus on social participation in old age that would be suitable for implementation in Austria. An emphasis has been put on inspiring (international) methods to approach target groups and ways to implement such activities in Austria.

A Practical Example of Age-friendly Communities in Austria

In Austria, the concept of age-friendliness cities has gained more attention in the past years. However, no city has so far (officially) joined the WHO Age-friendly Cities network. The city of Tulln in Lower Austria for instance has recently announced to be a "Stadt des Miteinanders" ("City of Togetherness") drawing attention to the importance of comfortable and inviting urban places for all generations. Some small projects initiated so far focus on social connectedness in the neighborhoods, and creating intergenerational meeting spaces, like a playground with devices for all generations (Generationenspielplatz).

3.2 Findings on digitalisation and demography

3.2.1 Status quo of demography and digitalisation

„Digital competences enable social participation, enhance the independence in older age and foster inclusion in society." (Digitale SeniorInnen)

„Access to the Internet and a competent use of digital tools not only eases everyday life, but also increasingly determines about being able to fully participate in society."
(Safer Internet)

Increasingly, being able to use digital tools is crucial to participate in everyday life, to be heard, to learn and to share ideas. Thus, having the competencies to participate in the digital world becomes an important factor for social inclusion and participation. Amongst other studies also the "Bundesplan für Seniorinnen und Senioren "Altern und Zukunft" (BMASK, 2013, 34) stressed the importance to especially support older adults and enhance their competencies in using new (digital) media, increase the general "media literacy". As being able to use media, acquire information becomes more and more important in participating in society (e.g. e-government services, online counselling, online shopping).

In Austria 2019, 19% of the population is aged 65 years and older, the prognosis foresees 23,2% adults aged 65 years and older in the year 2030. As of next year 2021 there will be more people aged 65 and older than people aged 20 years and younger (Statistik Austria, 2019).

Looking at the regular use of the Internet, smartphones and other digital services, it becomes apparent that adults aged 65 years and older use digital tools lesser than younger age groups. However, a historical perspective and the development over the last 10 years prevails that the use of the internet among adults aged 65 years and older almost doubled from 2010 (28%) to 2020 (57,4%) (Statistik Austria, Erhebungen über den IKT-Einsatz in Haushalten 2002 bis 2020).

No other age group has made comparable developments, adults aged 65 and older is thus the group of internet users that grows fastest. However, also putting in perspective that in younger

age cohorts the use of ICTs was a lot higher already in 2010 high(er) than among adults aged 65 and older (Statistik Austria, 2020).

Approximately 57% of adults aged 65 to 74 years use the Internet, one third stated they have never used the internet (biggest group of Non-Users in comparison to other age groups). Looking at the reasons for using the Internet, results from 2020 show that among those who use the Internet regularly 40% stated that they use e-government services, e.g. looking up information on website of municipal services, or downloading forms. Also videocalls (29%), internet-banking (29,3%) and using social networking sites (20,6%) are other common reasons to go online.

In regards to using mobile devices when out and about 30% of adults between 65 and 74 years use the Internet on their smartphone (Statistik Austria, 2020). Similar to other (older) age groups, there is a gender gap in using digital devices is, whereas men use the Internet more often than women, the difference as of 2020 marks around 10% (Statistik Austria, 2020).

These general findings on the usage of digital tools/media correlates with findings from the PIAAC study (Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies) looking at competencies in various age groups. Results from the latest PIAAC study in 2011/2012 show lower competency skills for the area "problem solving with new technologies" for adults aged 55 years and older in comparison to younger age groups.

However, after looking at quantitative numbers a closer, more qualitative look on factors behind the numbers pays off. When solely looking at biological age one has to be careful to (not) make general assumptions. Increasingly solely looking at ones biological age loses its significance (i.e. "Doing Age" concept), also when the use or non-use of digital tools is concerned. Instead other factors play a significant role including: educational attainment, gender, income, health, mobility, available social (support) networks, and geographical location (BMASK, 2014).

The actual use and willingness to use and try new tools is multifaceted and older adults bring different experiences, needs and expectations to the table. Moreover different previous experiences (i.e. "Technological Biographies"), current needs and individual possibilities, e.g. financial means or availability of a motivating and supporting learning environment are crucial and deciding factors.

However, some factors support the use and willingness to try digital tools and engage digitally despite ones (biological) age. Educational opportunities should be divers in order to reach the heterogeneous group of older adults and their varying needs and build on previous knowledge (BMASK, 2014).

The study "Measures for Seniors in the Digital World"("Maßnahmen für Senior/innen in der digitalen Welt", Bundesministerium für Arbeit, Soziales, und Konsumentenschutz, 2014) compiled available data on digitalisation and older adults in Austria. Supportive measures were formulated in policy recommendations to enable and support the use of digital tools for older adults.

The study concluded with some recommendations, including:

- In line with the *Bridge the Gap!* Approach, measures should be designed in such ways that older adults recognize a **connection to their lifeworlds**, thus examples and explanations should be as realistic as possible.

  "The concrete benefits of what has been learned and the transfer into their own life worlds play an important role, especially for senior citizens, when dealing with the Internet. Purely theoretical, incomprehensible or complicated topics and explanations rarely interest seniors. They ask for simple and practical solutions" (BMASK 2014, 22).

- Older adults expect personal gains and ease of their daily life brought by new technologies. Especially older adults oftentimes spend their time thoughtfully and selectively in front of a PC. Thus, the **communication of clear benefits** (e.g. concrete improvements of social connectedness by acquiring telecommunication skills), and ease of use (i.e. usability) are crucial elements when training older learners.

- Educational trainings should open up spaces for individual ways of life, and as questions like "What do I like to do?", "Where can I connect to my lifeworld?" "What is important to me?" or "Where does the use of digital tools bring benefits to my current and future situation?"

3.2.2 Areas of application of ICT by older citizens

The areas of application for older citizens are manifold and encompass many areas of life. However, for Bridge the Gap! we have identified some areas of application which could be of interest to older learners:

- E-Government Services, in terms of communicating needs

  "Sags Wien" App: a (free) app to report concerns or disturbances when moving around Vienna. Reports can be made via messages or uploading pictures. The municipality then checks whether (similar) reports in this location has been made and take measures for improvements.

- Being mobile and moving around the city / neighborhood

  "Wheelmap" App: crowdsourcing information about wheelchair accessible places (stores, restaurants, pharmacies) in cities (worldwide). The categories for mapping places is organized with a traffic light system (red: not accessible; orange: partly accessible; green: fully accessible)

- Staying connected and get organized virtually (e.g. with other training participants or cooperation partners) via Skype, Zoom, Jitsi
  - The Austrian initiative and service point "digital seniors" ("digitale SeniorInnen") provides many infosheet and step-by-step guides in regards to using a Smartphone and specific topics like video-chatting.

- Another interesting initiative called "in the neighborhood" ("ImGrätzl") is a citywide website where people and organisations can post their events or offer neighbourly support.

- Biography work: collecting and digitalizing (old family) pictures for an online photo album; (cost-free) tools to create digital albums

  We have found a nice inspiration in regards to photo projects: the "You lovely thing" ("Du liebes Ding") project. It portrays older adults living in Vienna, they show a favorite item from their home and tell their stories.

- Making your voice heard and your story be told. Nice examples in Vienna include:
  - The "Faltenrock FM" podcast ("Alter gehört gehört") a cooperation between Caritas and Radiochannel "Radio Orange". Older adults tell their stories and interview others.
  - The podcast "Erzähl mir von Wien" – acoustic walks - guides listeners to different places in Vienna and their historical, socio-political backgrounds. The podcast is co-organized by a retired tour guide.

3.2.3 Policies regarding digitalisation and demography

In Austria several (national and local) policies fostering digitalisation are on the political agenda, however oftentimes older adults and the demographic trend of an increasingly ageing population are mentioned but concrete measures to promote digital inclusion among older adults are missed.

Results from an international policy analysis within the ongoing ACCESS project show a policy gap between policies supporting digitalisation (of older adults) on the one hand and enhancing social participation and inclusion on the other hand. Policy frameworks combining digital education in old(er) age are yet rather missing. In contrast to little formalization in this area so far, growing number of local, grassroot initiatives have emerged.

In December 2020 a press release by the Austrian ministry of digitalisation (Bundesministerium für Digitalisierung und Wirtschaftsstandort BMDW) announced together with the Austrian Broadcasting (Österreichischer Rundfunk, ORF) further steps towards (more) opportunities and support for digital participation of senior citizens in Austria. Some measures have already been taken, including:

- Production of a learning-video series titled „Smartphone-ABC" available on the website www.digitalelebenswelten.at

- Discussion of topics and features on older generations in specific magazines, like "Digital Austria" – enhancing media attention for topic of older adults and digital means, products are supported and spread also via the Seniorenbund (an advocacy association for seniors in Austria)

- Advocate for a positive image of ageing and digitalisation and increased awareness and visibility for this issue

The „Digitale Agenda 2025. Vienna's Strategie for Digitalisation" („Wiens Strategie für Digitalisierung") is a city-wide strategy for digitalisation announced in 2019. The framework for the 12 developed principles of this strategy are the Smart City goals formulated by the municipality. One of the 12 principles "age-friendliness, accessibility, and digital equality", puts special emphasis on the accessibility of all services by the municipality for older adults and people with disabilities, stressing that no one – in times of increasing digital services - should be left behind.

Generally, some senior citizens advocacy groups and results from the BMASK study suggest to rather follow bottom-up instead of top-down strategies, as a more general political goal to establish and secure a basic provision of (digital) educational opportunities for older adults. The importance of providing low-threshold, easily accessible and regional learning opportunities is essential to reach a wide range of (potential) older learners (BMASK 2014, 85).

3.2.4 Consequences of the digital divide

Especially in terms of digital participation and opportunities to stay socially connected the COVID19-pandemic has shown that especially older adults oftentimes lack the means, knowledge and support (systems) to engage digitally and use means of telecommunication which are becoming increasingly important to combat and reduce social isolation.

Additionally, increasingly services (like banking, voting etc.) are possible digital, however information about such services is often only found online. Christine Darwisch, the representative of the Vienna-based organisation "Seniorenweb", one of our interviewees, stressed repeatedly that in her experience, information about (new) digital services or tools is only available online which can create additional hurdles for older adults to know and use those.

3.3 Best practice examples of co-producing age-friendly environments with the facilitation of digital tools

3.3.1 Digital, gesund altern, Lower Austria, Austria

Objectives

The project "Digital, healthy ageing" promotes neighbourly connections, an autonomous life and the health of older people. The aim of the "Digital, healthy aging" project is to increase the health literacy of and social connections among older adults with the help of digital applications.

Key facts

The project "Digital, healthy ageing" is being implemented in 14 municipalities in Lower Austria. It targets older adults living autonomously at home. The initiator of the project is *Waldviertler Kernland*. Doris Maurer is the Project Manager and the project is funded by Fonds Gesundes Österreich.

Implementation

Regularly, so called "smart cafés" are organized where older adults can get in touch and learn about digital devices from each other and so called "Smartphone-companions" who join the meetings and join participants on their discovery-journeys. The "smart cafés" take place in coffee shops, and public libraries. Usually a group of up to 5 adults meet, the emphasis of "smart cafés" is on peer-to-peer learning and creating a comfortable environment to try new things and explore devices and functionalities together. Furthermore, an App called "Stupsi" (linked to the term "nudging") was developed where older adults can receive information on health promotion and individual or group activities to meet up and explore their living environment together – fostering connections between the digital and analog worlds.

More information

https://www.waldviertler-kernland.at/cms/digital_gesund_altern/

(Fotocredit: Waldviertler Kernland. Photo downloaded from official project website, accessed 02.02.2021)

3.3.2 Mobility Scouts Go Blogging, Vienna, Austria

Objectives

A group of older learners who are participating in the Mobility-Scouts project in Vienna have been active to create a (more) age-friendly living environment in Vienna since 2018. Many projects to support an age-friendly city have been implemented so far. The group of Mobility Scouts has been active in different roles in order to create a more age-friendly Vienna: as initiators of projects, as spokespeople for other older adults and as experts for public organisations and research. Recently, despite the COVID19-pandemic the group still wanted to do something and actively advocate for their ideas and needs and decided to also explore "digital paths" and new ways of advocacy.

Key facts

The project is initiated and supported by queraum. kultur- und sozialforschung, and takes place in Vienna. The ongoing project is funded by the Austrian Ministry of Social Affairs.

Implementation

The group of Mobility-Scouts are admits a co-creation process to jointly run a WordPress website and a Blog to raise awareness about their projects and reach a broader public. This process started in the summer months of 2020. During the Mobility Scouts-Blog project the participants are acquiring new digital skills on how to set up and run a WordPress website and a blog. Regular online meetings via ZOOM are organised to enable the exchange of experiences among the participants, learn from expert inputs, discuss further developments of the project and foster peer-to-peer learning.

Results

So far, the website has been updated and filled with information about current projects and helpful links the group wants to share with other interested citizens. Further, the Mobility-Scouts Blog has started!

More information

More information on the project "Mobilitäts-Scouts", on the new Website and the Blog can be found here: www.mobilitäts-scouts.at
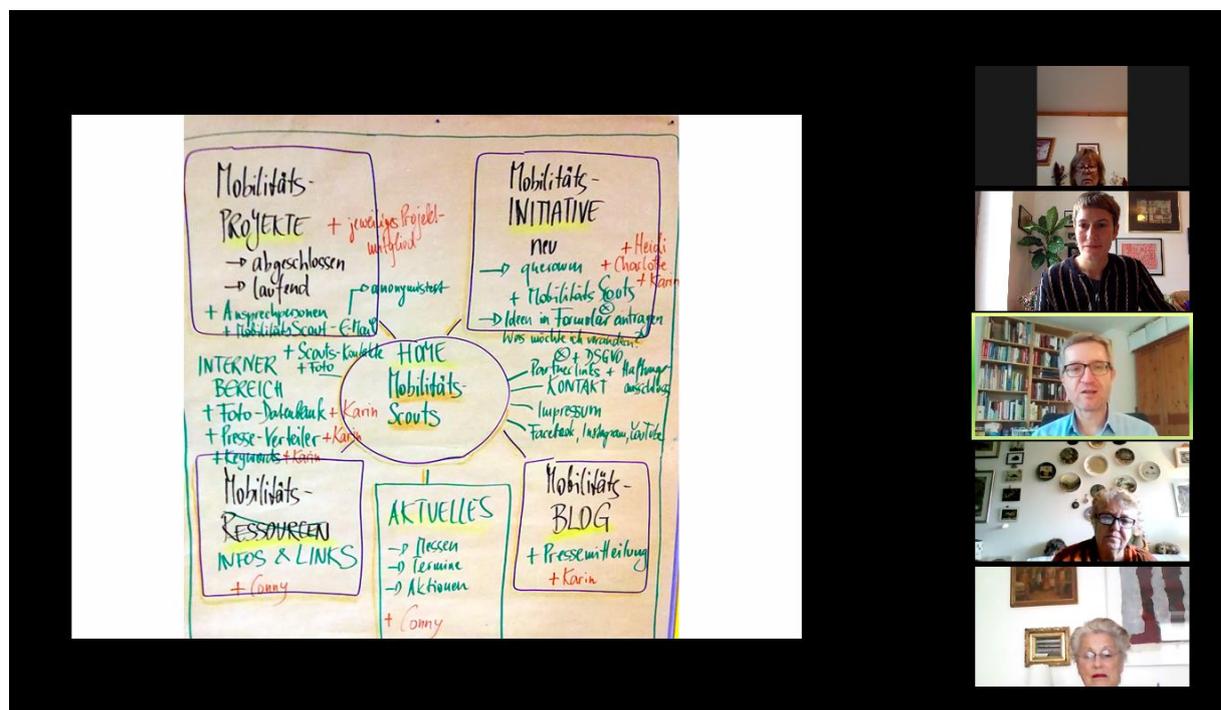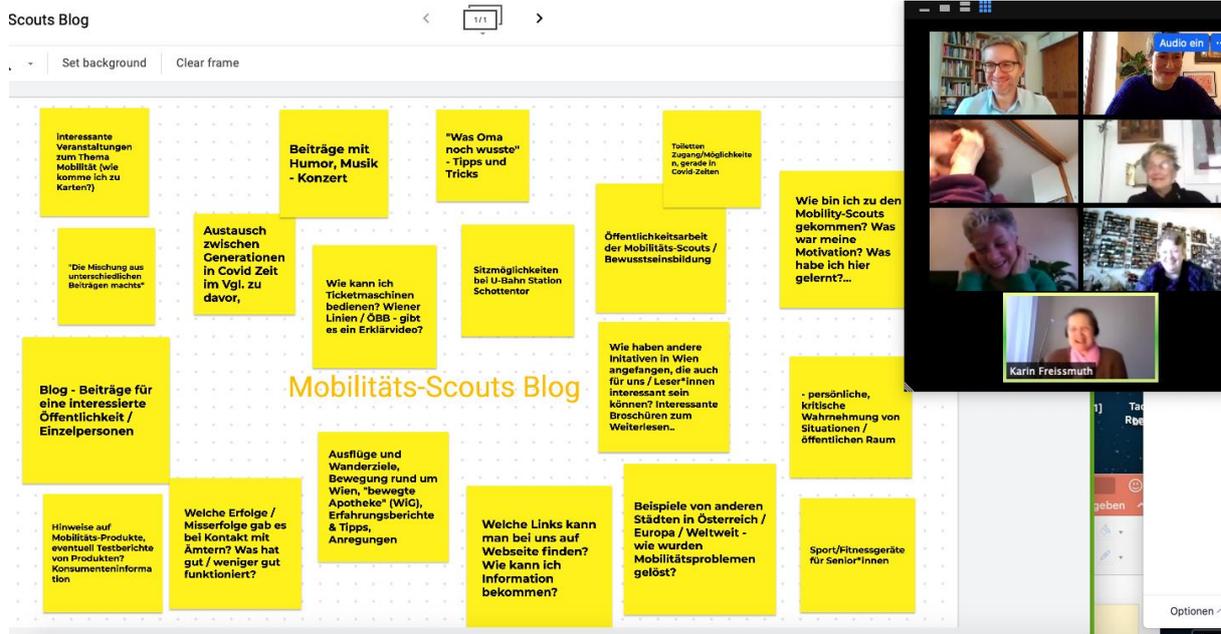
(Fotocredit: queraum. kultur- und sozialforschung. Both pictures were taken during online meetings in November and December 2020.)

3.4 Recommendations for training

During our interviews for *Bridge the Gap!* as well as researching reports and recommendations from other service providers in the realms of teaching digital skills and older adults, we have compiled some recommendations for the training:

- Give inspiring examples of other projects and initiatives to show "what is possible within the training"

- Mix of input, self-learning, discussion and take-home assignments

- Enabling a (safe) learning environment where participants find the courage to explore new tools with others in a group, and share helpful materials with others

- Enable a playful and fun way to engage with new digital tools or functions, through methods that support social learning in terms of:
  - Learning from each other and supporting mutual exchanges (i.e. peer-to-peer and peer mentoring approaches)
  - Learning through regular inputs by experts
  - Biography-oriented learning: what are my previous experiences with digital tools? Where can I connect to my prior knowledge and interests?

- Critical reflection on "what are digital competences?" In the "Dialogpapier zur geragogischen Annäherung an Digitalisierungsprozesse in Bezug auf ältere Menschen" (2019) the AK Geragogik in Germany has stressed that digital competencesare a competence to use digital tools/services as well as a critical reflection-, and decision-making competence of which tools/services one wants to engage with

3.4.1 Needs of the end-users

The needs and interests of older learners should be at the core of the *Bridge the Gap!* project and the training. From what we have learned in previous projects (especially Mobility-Scouts and AFE Activist project) it is important to show manifold ways to get active for an age-friendly environment. Thus not only enable participants to follow their own ideas for initiatives and projects but also to slip into the role of an advocate for other senior citizens or an expert advisor e.g. on how user-friendly digital services/tools are for older adults.

Additionally, also the diverse digital competences and interests that participants bring to the project should find place and openness in the project and training. Thus, showing the large spectrum of how digital tools can be used to support different needs and how these can bring benefits to one's idea will be crucial, e.g.:

- **Taking & forwarding pictures** on Smartphone: Take pictures of age-friendly examples in your neighborhood or places that need improvement

- **Staying connected** with other participants via telecommunication tools

- **Voice recording**: interviewing other residents about how they view their neighborhood, what do they like best? in their opinion, what could be improved?

- **Producing (short) videoclips** about certain situations/incidents in the neighbourhood or (problematic) situations for older pedestrians when crossing the street

- Uploading audio files to a platform, creating a podcast

- **Creating a Blog**

3.4.2 Obstacles to actively participate in the community

During our desk research and interviews we found that in regards to *Bridge the Gap!* it will be important to also approach and invite low-digitally skilled older adults, and adults who may initially appear as "non-users" to partake in the project.

Oftentimes behind negative and reluctant attitudes are real and concrete experiences of discrimination in regards to ageism and digitalisation. Especially older adults, as one interviewee puts it "have a hard time to enter the digital world (…) they often omnipresent get the feedback that they are not able to do it, and that the Internet etc. is nothing for them" (Vera Gallistl).

Thus, also these experiences and adults who have a reserved or negative attitude towards digital tools and its possibilities shall find space in the project. By listening closely to their prior experiences, taking their stories seriously and looking for points of (digital) contact and possible starting points, this can help to minimize barriers for low-digitally skilled older adults to join the project.

3.4.3 Strategies to attract and address potential training participants

In Vienna we plan to use various promotion methods in order to spread information about the *Bridge the Gap!* project and training. We have already been asking former and current participants of our projects to inform their friends and acquaintances. Of course, also older adults who joined the Mobility Scouts training as well as the AFE-Activists project will be informed about the new project and the opportunity to take part. Additionally, cooperation partners who were previously involved will be contacted, especially the Mobility Agency Vienna, the "*Hilfswerk Wien*" (an aid organization), local district councils, "*Wiener Linien*" the public transport provider in Vienna, "*Das Bezirksblatt*" a local newspaper.

Further *queraum* will share information through our own online channels (website and Facebook).

3.4.4 Appropriate training contents and methods

Throughout the interviews some issues were mentioned several times and stressed their importance. In regards to the *Bridge the Gap!* training these were the following:

- The importance to provide helpful materials in the form of step-by-step guides, "How To" tutorials,
- The importance to use symbols and pictures / screenshots when creating information sheets,
- Show large spectrum of using digital tools and its possibilities
- Foster peer-to-peer learning and mutual support
- Provide information where to find information on digital tools or topics (e.g. How to use videocalls like ZOOM or Skype: what functions are available, etc.)

- Engage older learners as experts and advisors for (new) digital services, e.g. online route planners for public transport services

- Offer possibilities for checking the individual status quo of digital skills, e.g. an example is available on the platform "fit4internet"

3.5 Feedback on the relevance of the project

The feedback on the relevance of the project was very positive, most interviewees pointed to the highly relevant topic, and the attractiveness of the project due to its thematic frame of age-friendly environments and connection to the lifeworld's of older learners. Additionally, the flexibility to engage learners with different digital skills and experiences was mentioned.

We want to point out some issues which were mentioned several times:

- Peer-to-peer learning; exploring with other older learners, learn from the others experiences, ideas,

- A training setting that enables to repeat things, thus taking important steps towards reducing the "respect and fear" towards digital tools to destroy something,

- Learn in a playful and fun way,

- Benefits of a half-formal learning setting,

- To be given the time and opportunity to try something new, e.g. get accustomed with a new device.

4. Relevant stakeholders and potential cooperation partners

Relevant stakeholders and potential cooperation partners for Bridge the Gap! for us are organizations and stakeholders active in the fields of promoting age-friendly neighborhoods as well as in the domains of digital education in old(er) age, including amongst others:

City Level: Municipality

- Mobilitätsagentur Wien

- Senior*innen Büro Wien

- Kompetenzzentrum übergeordnete Stadtplanung, Smart City Strategie, Partizipation, Gender Planung (KPP) Magistratsdirektion der Stadt Wien

- Magistrat der Stadt Wien, MA 21 – Flächenwidmung und Stadtteilentwicklung.

Local Level: Organizations and Initiatives

- Seniorenweb

- Medienzentrum WienXtra Jugendinfo

- Expertise and experience of Renate Kaufmann, blogger

- Digitale SeniorInnen

- Safer Internet

- ÖIAT - Österreichisches Institut für angewandte Telekommunikation

- Gebietsbetreuungen Wien

- Lokale Agenda 21

5.   Quotes of interviewees

"I like this project so much because it enables older adults to socially participate and get active, and it is often this group that is being overlooked." (Maria Grundner, Mobility Agency Vienna)

„Especially older adults want to re-read information at home or be able to look it up again." (Christine Darwisch, Seniorenweb)

„Digital participation (…) there are a lot of opportunities to get engaged today, but if you don't have the competences and skill, than you can't do anything, that's the difficulty." (Christine Darwisch, Seniorenweb)

„When is something fun? How does joyful learning take place? When I get in contact with someone. This brings fun to learning." (Doris Maurer, „Digital, Gesund Altern")

„How does learning actually work? Learning works when I acquire something that I need now, then I learn the fastest." (Doris Maurer, „Digital, Gesund Altern")

„Life-long learning is the spice of life." (Renate Kaufmann, blogger)

"Once a peer shows you what this [a Smartphone] can do, and what possibilities this opens up to how we can communicate - that is the first step." (Renate Kaufmann, blogger)

"In our activities to create age-friendly neighborhoods, you could think like a reporter: What do I need to do make a story public? Research information online as a first step for instance." (Connie Bruckner, Mobility-Scout, Vienna)

"Learning in later life has always the point of the departure in the everyday life and the personal lifeworld." (Vera Gallistl, Sociologist)

„The digital competences and experiences are very divers in older age that is a challenge." (Vera Gallistl, Sociologist)

„Digital tools can create a lot of self-efficacy. I can quickly take a photo and upload it, or create a Blog, which can reach a broad public. This is a real chance in regards to digital tools." (Vera Gallistl, Sociologist)

6.   Sources

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Annex 1: Lead questions for interviews with stakeholders or experts

Organisation: …

Professional background: …

The **Bridge the Gap!** project aims to train, empower and support older people to explore, analyse and (re-)shape their neighbourhoods as activists according to their interests and needs and to make use of digital tools to do this.

Q1 Why is it important to increase the digital literacy of older people in a project like **Bridge the Gap!**?

Q2 What are the main obstacles for older citizens to actively participate in their community?

Q3 What benefits can digitalisation bring to older citizens?

Q4 What disadvantages do you see for those who cannot use digital tools?

Q5 In your opinion, what are the main barriers preventing older citizens from using digital tools?

Q6 What is particularly important when teaching knowledge about the use of digital tools to the group of older citizens (e.g. regarding settings, proceedings …)?

Q7 Which digital technology skills are older citizens particularly keen to learn?"

Q8 Which training methods can you recommend?

Q9 What should be considered to in reaching out to older people with fewer opportunities (e.g. socio-economic or health issues) and involving them in a digital training to improve their neighbourhoods?

Q10 Do you have ideas or know about inspiring examples of creating age-friendly environments with the help of digital means?

Annex 2: Lead questions for interviews with older learners/activists

Age: …

Gender: …

Educational level (ISCED 2011 level 0-8): …

Participation in courses in the last two years: … courses

Background in professional and/or voluntary work: …

Q1 Have you ever participated in a local project or initiative to create an age-friendly environment? If yes, please describe your activities.

Q2 Which digital technology do you use personally?

Q3 What advantages do you see in using digital tools?

Q4 Are you having difficulties in using specific digital tools? If yes, which?

The **Bridge the Gap!** project aims to train, empower and support older people to improve their neighbourhoods according to their interests and needs and to make use of digital tools to do this.

Q5 Is a project like **Bridge the Gap!** raising your interest? If yes, why? If no, why not?

Q6 Would you participate in a training for digital literacy and improving your neighbourhood? If yes, why? If no, why not?

Q7 How should such a training be designed so that it is attractive to you?

Q8 What would be a good way to reach out for disadvantaged people (e.g. socio-economic or health issues) and to encourage them to participate in a training for digital literacy to improve their neighbourhoods?

Q9 Do you have any ideas what should be done to improve your neighbourhood towards an age-friendly environment?

Q10 How could digital tools facilitate the work towards age-friendly environments?