Enhancing the Social and Digital Participation of Older People

O1: Fact Sheet

National report for The Netherlands

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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 The Netherlands 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.

The Netherlands performed 11 interviews by telephone or using Microsoft Teams. We involved 4 older adults from The Hague and Gouda in the interviews, aged between 69 and 87. One of them is a volunteer in a project 'iZi Experience Home', that aims to allow older people to live independently at home for a long time, using modern technology. We spoke with 2 older adults (retired) who provide on a voluntary basis ICT trainings to older adults. The involved stakeholders represent the following organisations:

- SeniorWeb, a national operating society that provides ICT trainings and support to older adults
- SeniorTab, a social enterprise and part of BOP foundation (Involved Entrepreneurs Platform)
- Student aan Huis (Student at Home) a company that provides individual ICT training and support to mainly older adults at home
- Older people's interest organisation KBO-PCOB, a national organisation that includes lobbies to improve digital skills of older adults
- Library The Hague, 'Older people in the neighbourhood', an initiative that is implemented by the four major libraries in the Netherlands (Rotterdam, The Hague, Utrecht, Amsterdam) and is aimed at AOW recipients with the aim of making them (again) self-reliant

3. Research results

3.1 Political and practical approaches to age-friendly environments

In the Netherlands, only the municipality of The Hague and the city of Amsterdam are official member of the WHO Global Network on Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. In other municipalities and regions, and at national level the aims of the AFC concept, such as active and healthy lifestyles, independent living, participation in society, are also well achieved, however it is not common to use the name age-friendly environments for it, nor is clear how consequently the holistic approach of the AFC concept is being used.

To focus on the practices of The Hague and Amsterdam:

The Hague developed in 2020 their Action Programme Senior-friendly The Hague 2020-2022 (The Hague, 2020). The programme aims to further develop as an age-friendly city for older adults by achieving the following goals: participation and meaningful lives, healthy and resilient, independent living. Each year the municipality measures its progress (THUAS, 2020). The Hague facilitated the development and validation of the Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Questionnaire (AFCCQ) in 2020 (THUAS, 2020).

The city of Amsterdam actively participated in the research initiated by ESPON[1]: ACPA – Adapting European Cities to Population Ageing: Policy Challenges and Best Practices, 2020. Amsterdam's action lines are: loneliness, dementia, fall prevention and physical exercise and housing (ESPON, 2019). Also, the city of Hengelo participated in this research, however they are not a member of the WHO network.

Dutch project partner AFEdemy is Grant Holder and Vice Chair of COST Action 19136 NET4Age-Friendly (2020-2024). This network of researchers aims to foster awareness, and to support the creation and implementation of smart, healthy indoor and outdoor environments for present and future generations. The Action will bring together existing and future research and will build a repository with guidelines, standards and practices.

3.2 Findings on digitalisation and demography

In the Netherlands, every household can have access to internet. Either per landline, or per mobile facilities. The Dutch government aims to provide The Netherlands with a high-level internet infrastructure (5G and fibreglass), also in remote areas (OveralSnelInternet.nl, 2020). Municipalities have the lead in creating the connectivity. Therefore, no matter the age, everyone should be able to be connected to internet.

However, despite the fact that every Dutch citizen can be well connected, research (Netwerk Mediawijsheid, 2019) shows that in 2019, almost one third (32%) of people aged 75+ never used the internet. Also 10% of the people between 65-75 years never used internet. Especially fear for doing things wrongly and the usage of English terms is blocking older adults from using internet, smartphone or other digital devices.

3.2.1 Older age and ICT usage

In 2019, the Central Bureau for Statistics reported that 76% of people in the age group of 65-76 years makes use of social media (CBS, 2019). 70% of them sends text messages; 39% is active on social networks and 41% makes use of videocalls via internet. People older than 75 years of age are less active with social media: 34% of them sends text messages, 17% is active on social networks and 18% uses videocalls.

Older people's organisation ANBO surveyed among members that since the Covid-19 outbreak, 35% of the respondents started to use internet more often. 90% of the respondents uses internet daily. More than 50% uses a desktop, 25% uses a tablet and 21% a smartphone. They used the digital devices mainly to make more videocalls (48,8%), more social media (19,6%) and more online games (18,1%) (ANBO, 2020).

In 2019, Nationaal Ouderenfonds performed a survey among 537 respondents, mainly aged 65-85 years (80% of the respondents). Most respondents possess more than one digital device:

[1] ESPON: Co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund. Mission: ESPON 2020 shall continue the consolidation of a European Territorial Observatory Network and grow the provision and policy use of pan-European, comparable, systematic and reliable territorial evidence.

desktop: 97.8%, smartphone: 80.5% and tablet: 68.5%. Smartphone is the device that is most often used more than once per day by 89.6% of the respondents. The older people are, the less they make use of digital devices or the internet. Respondents know least about their tablet: 12.9% tell not to know at all or not quite what is feasible to do with it. This lack of knowledge increases with the age. Emailing is the main reason to use digital devices, followed by looking for information and arranging governmental or banking businesses.

Also reported in 2019, Universiteit Twente performed in 2018 a survey among almost 1700 respondents, 40% of them was older than 55 years of age. A big majority had access to internet. Used devices are: desktop (63%), tablet (52%). Also smartphone are popular, however their usage declines per each 5-years age group, from 74% of people between 55-59 and 37% of the people older than 75. According to this research, people of 55 years and over are most confident on their operational internet and internet communication skills. Mobile skills and content creation skills lack behind. People aged 75 and over are less skilled overall.

A recent survey among the members of national older people's organisation KBO-PCOB in January 2021, learned that 9 out of 10 older adults that don't use internet and 46% of the adults that are online, are fed up with the fact that services increasingly are offered online only. Companies and governments should always provide an alternative to people who are not online (KBO-PCOB, 2021).

3.2.2 Policies regarding digitalisation and demography

The national government is the main driver of digitalisation policy in the country. At national level the Dutch government focuses on the following domains:

- Digital skilled small and medium enterprises
- Innovative and flexible industry
- Transparent and digital accessible government
- Smart and sustainable mobility
- Digitalisation to improve quality of life
- Sustainable and safe food provision
- Flexible energy system

The Dutch ministry of Health supports the broad deployment of digital solutions in health and social care by providing funding for implementation of eHealth applications. They launch calls for proposals, but also facilitate several organisations active in the field of eHealth. Such as Nictiz, a national working foundation for electronic exchange of health and care information. The activities of Nictiz include the targeted development and management of information standards at the request of and in partnership with the stakeholders in healthcare. Nictiz advises these parties on all aspects of information exchange and identifies (future) national and international developments. Also the ministry facilitates Vilans, a national centre of expertise for long-term

care in the Netherlands. Digital transformation of long-term care is one of focus areas. The ministry is further active in the European Active and Assisted Living (AAL) programme and organises yearly a big event on ICT & Healthcare.

Private initiatives at national level, specifically targeting older adults, are SeniorWeb and Student aan Huis. SeniorWeb has been founded in 1996. Nowadays, SeniorWeb is a national society with 150,000 members, 425 training locations and 3,000 (older) volunteers. They provide among others, trainings at local level or online, newsletters, and personal support with using computers.

Another national working organisation is Student aan Huis (Student support ICT at home). The company was founded about 13 years ago and has about 110,000 subscriptions for services online or at home. Main client group are older adults (average age is 62 years) who either want to have support with the installation of devices or want to have individual support with usage of ICT or receive training.

At local level, municipalities support the improvement of digital skills of their citizens in many ways. For example, by providing several trainings at local level in cooperation with SeniorWeb or financial support for buying equipment and internet subscription (Ooievaarspas, U-pas). Municipalities are also actively working on the digital accessibility of the municipality. The Dutch Society of Municipalities (Vereniging Nederlandse Gemeenten) is developing innovative concepts for inclusive local services. For example way-finding for blind people, self service desk – social distancing at 1.5 meter and user-friendly waiting rooms (VNG, 2020).

Municipal libraries have an extensive range of leaflets and information about neighbourhoods, the municipality in general, learning books, journals and maps (on paper), but also digital-skills-training for beginners and advanced people. They are accessible facilities in the neighbourhoods.

3.2.3 Benefits and challenges of the digitalisation for older citizens

Benefits and disadvantages of digital devices and internet are, according to Nationaal Ouderenfonds survey of 2019, the following:

- 12.66% finds it (very) difficult to use digital devices or the internet
- 8.59% think that digital devices/internet it makes LESS easy to maintain social contacts
- 64.4% of the respondents think that they gain independency by using digital devices/internet
- 86.4% think that digital devices/internet makes it more easy to arrange practical issues
- 18.6% of people older than 85 years of age does NOT think that they are in control of their affairs (such as internet banking) by digital devices/internet
- 47.67% was rather or very scared to use digital devices or internet for the first time

From the interviews we learned that:

Benefits of digitalisation:

- It provides real time information, and keep people updated of the latest news

- Availability of online products and services 24/7, such as groceries, last will, taxes, museums, banking
- It offers safety, such as GPS tracking, digital doorbell
- It connects easily with other people, also at the other end of the world: family, friends or people who have the same hobbies, activities, clubs
- It provides more independency and freedom because it allows to arrange affairs by people themselves without needing others
- It enlarges and enriches the world of older adults

Challenges however are:

- Availability of infrastructure, WIFI and internet provision
- Using software: how to update programmes, uploads and downloads, email, how to survive in the jungle or red ocean of internet
- The usage of DigiD (digital identification number) and governmental apps
- The usage of apps of other organisations. Apps change continuously
- The speed of change of digitalisation that makes it hard to remain updated
- Digital skills need to be maintained: if you don't use it, you lose it
- To understand the English language that is used
- Being afraid of using ICT, fear of abuse, fear of being judged as stupid
- Cybercrime, such as spoofing, data privacy protection
- Decreasing capacity to learn at older age
- Overload of ICT offers and no support to choose
- Family who takes over, for example more digitally skilled partner, (grand)children
- Financial obstacles: to afford a device, internet subscription, lessons
- Physical obstacles: impairment such as bad sight, usage of arms, hands, fingers, bad physical health
- Mental obstacles: cognitive impairments
- Lack of motivation to learn digital skills
- Loss of meaningful human contact
- Administrative skills need to be redeveloped, storage of documents, retrieve documents etc.
- Old fashioned devices and software that are given to older adults by relatives

3.2.4 Consequences of the digital divide

Consequences of not being digitally skilled is that it is difficult to keep up with society. Society is continuously digitalising. People who are not up-to-date digitally skilled lose their connection with society. It may block to be or remain independent from others, may lead to isolation, may lead to missing financial benefits, may deepen the gap between being informed and not informed and so on.

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

3.3.1 Social media for Community or neighbourhood watch

Objectives

To prevent neighbourhoods from criminal activities.

Key facts

The practice can be found everywhere in The Netherlands. In urban, sub-urban and rural areas, small and large communities.

This practice is only run by volunteers. Neighbours in a street, neighbourhood or larger community agree to share their mobile numbers and to create a WhatsApp group. Sometimes also the local policy officer participates in the group. No investment costs.

Implementation

The group function of Whatsapp is used in The Netherlands to create so-called Whatsapp Neighbourhood prevention groups. Neighbours can share information and alarm each other to inform if a suspicious person or other dangerous situations in the neighbourhood occur. Such as: a woman is ringing at doors and cheating older adults, or there have been burglaries while using the back door in street X. When entering the neighbourhood a special sign (see figure below) is placed to warn criminals off. These signs can be found everywhere.

Figure 1: WhatsApp Neighbourhood Watch

Results

The initiatives are to be found everywhere in The Netherlands. Groups come and go, depending on the availability and activity of a few group leaders.

3.3.2. iZi Experience Home, The Hague

Objectives

An initiative of The Hague municipality, the project promotes technological solutions that allow older people to be self-reliant in their current home environment for longer. They welcome developers to test their solutions with older residents. The iZi house is open to the public to visit and learn about solutions, many of which are already available on the market.

Key facts

The iZi Livinglab was founded by the municipality of The Hague in cooperation with Leyden University Medical Centre, University of Tilburg, The Hague University of Applied Sciences, Social Housing cooperation HaagWonen, Welfare organisation Xtra, Nell, Technical University Delft, World Startup Factory.

Implementation

The three-room experience house in The Hague has 90 solutions; some but not all are digital. There are devices like social or care robots, smart tablets, lifestyle sensors, and personal alarms. The bathroom is adapted with handles and slip-proof floors, as well as a toothpaste dispenser. The bedroom has special lighting to prevent falls during a trip to the bathroom at night.

The project includes the iZi Living Lab, which consists of a pre-existing group of older residents in social housing that can test and provide feedback on the products. More proficient users work with and train others in the group, and can tour visitors through the iZi house.

The program won a World Smart City award in 2018 (Inclusive and Shared Cities category). However, it is not unique, as many such smart showcase homes currently exist in The Netherlands (i.e. Comfort Woning in Overschie, Rotterdam).

Results

The iZi experience house is available for visits. Funding for upscaling and further exploitation is being searched for.

Resources

www.Wijenizi.nl
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZH1U8uqtoM

3.3.3 Stumble campaign The Hague, The Hague

Combination of social and traditional media

Objectives

During the local Week of Fall Prevention in 2020 it was reported that The Hague performs rather badly regarding fall incidents in or outside the house. This report made the Older People's Council of The Hague (Stedelijke Ouderen Commissie, SOC) initiate to perform a closer research on this topic. They launched a reporting point, where older adults could signal the presence of loose, crooked or sagging paving stones. The SOC received over 400 notifications from older adults. The SOC assembled the notifications in a report and handed over to the responsible city executive/alderman.

Key facts

The initiative is a combination of traditional and social media. The SOC launched the call by contacting their member organisations and by publishing in local media. The presentation of the report and the response of the alderman was filmed and published on YouTube, where it is still available. The YouTube video also includes demonstrations of dangerous situations. The initiative was mentioned on radio DenHaagfm.nl, local editions of newspaper and the online Seniorenjournaal.

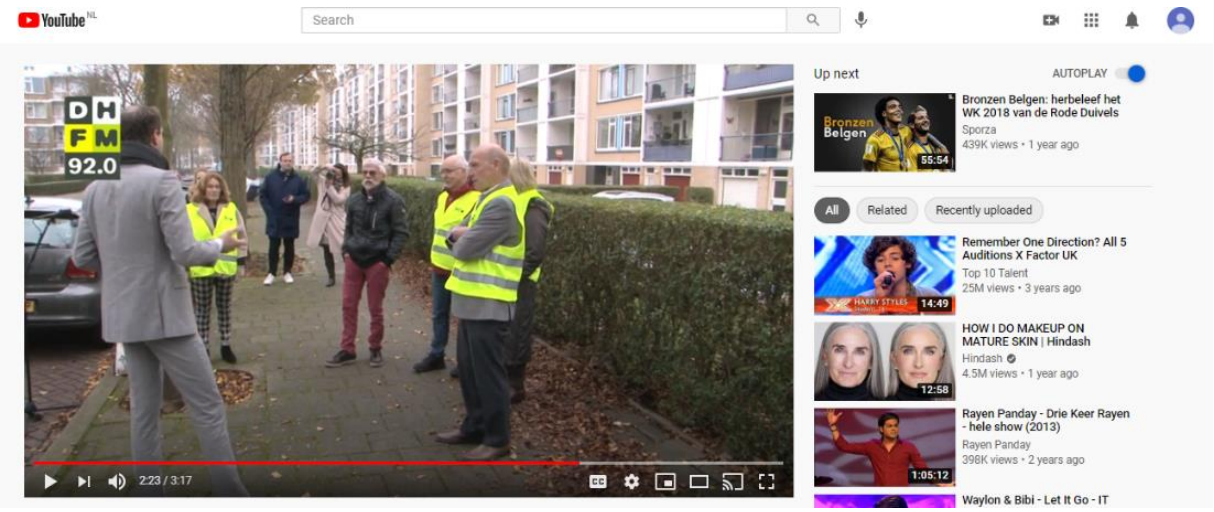


Figure 2: Stumble report handed over, YouTube

Implementation

The report was well received by the alderman of the city of The Hague and he promised to improve the situation in The Hague.

Results

Not visible yet.

Resources

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NkdR3Pjs9aI

3.3.4 App to report situations on outdoor places (Slim Melden), National, including the municipality of Gouda

Objectives

To enable citizens to report directly to the municipality of cases that are loose, crooked or sagging on outdoor places, the municipality of Gouda created and launched the 'Slim Melden' app. After a notification, the municipality answers within a limited time the rapporteur and solves the reported issue.

Key facts

The app presents a map of the location where the rapporteur is, if the rapporteur allows access to the current location. It is also feasible to add an address in the search button and to look for the location this way. The map can be enlarged. The map includes symbols of streetlights (green bulbs) and playgrounds. By clicking on a symbol, a citizen can report the issue.

It is also feasible to report without using a symbol. In that case the citizen directly chooses a spot on the map. After choosing the right category, the citizen can right the report and leave an email address or telephone number in case the citizens wants to receive a reaction from the municipality.

If someone else already reported the issue, it is possible to report that it also affects the citizen.

In case of dangerous situations, it is better to call directly the emergency line of the municipality.

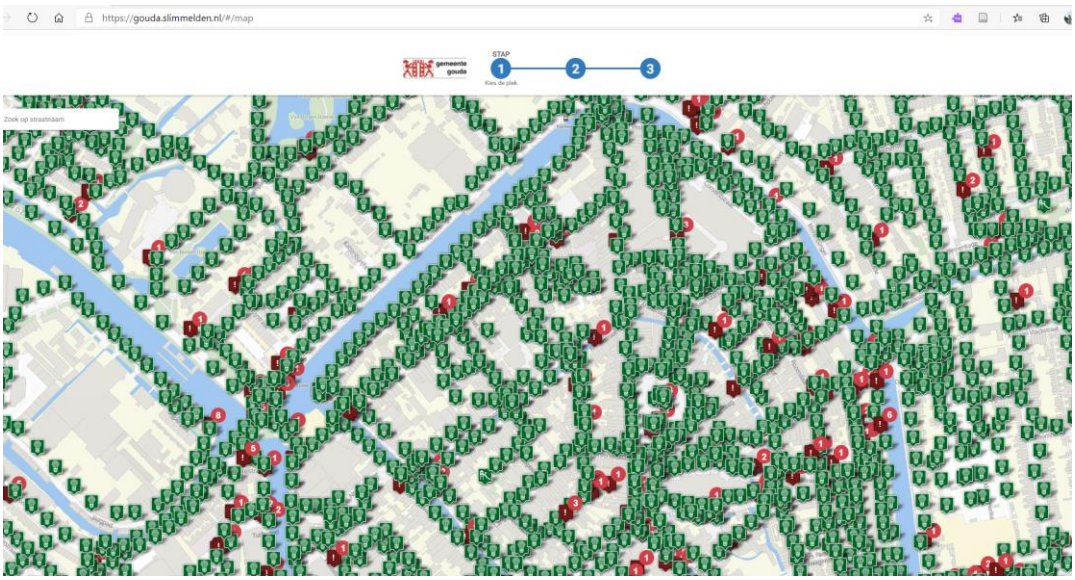


Figure 3: Outdoor spaces report Gouda

Results

Out of own experience the results are a quick response of the municipality to improve the local situation.

Resources

https://civity.nl/en/products-solutions/smart-reporting/
https://gouda.slimmelden.nl/#/home

3.3.5 Alliantie Digitaal Samenleven (Alliance Digital Society)

Objectives

To foster the participation and inclusion of people in the (digital) society and to empower them.

Key facts

Alliance Digital Society is a public private cooperation of about 30 partners. It was initiated by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Number Five Foundation and VodafoneZiggo in 2019.

To become partner of the Alliance there are three possible roles:

- Family: close to the alliance, like a family. Partners support coordination, facilitate and organise the programme of the Alliance. Support is given in hours and in money.
- Friend: participates actively in the working groups and contributes by expertise, people and means.
- Fan: works on the actions of the Alliance, sometimes participates in events and disseminate the Alliance in further occasions.

Implementation

Alliance Digital Society helps people to identify the most important things in society and support in digital solutions. The Alliance works with several themes in working groups:

- losing a partner by death or divorce, where remaining partners are supported to take care of their affairs by learning digital solutions, and
- the Society supports digital skills among older people

Results

The initiative is expanding and gaining more and more interest. Interview partners SeniorWeb, Student aan Huis and KBO-PCOB are members of the initiative.

Resources

www.digitaalsamenleven.nl

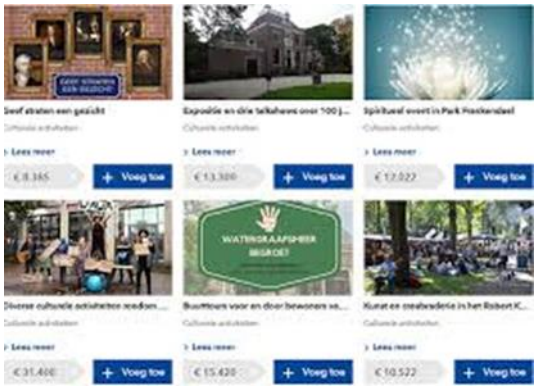
3.3.6. Municipal platform for neighbourhood initiatives

Objectives

Activate citizens and let them decide themselves on the implementation of ideas to improve their neighbourhood.

Key facts

Neighbourhood platforms are being set up in many municipalities. For example Oost Begroot, including Watergraafsmeer in Amsterdam and Seghwaert Doet! In Zoetermeer.



Residents can digitally submit their ideas. Depending on the size of the neighbourhood, normally 10 to 30 ideas are put forward by citizens.

Performance

The municipality grants a neighbourhood a certain amount to spend. Then neighbourhood residents submit their project plans. Local residents digitally vote for the projects by distributing their vouchers among them. One of the main lessons learned is that the municipality don't limit the residents too much in their creativity. Municipalities should also not impose too many rules or set up (voting) procedures that are too difficult to understand.

Results

Many projects have already been implemented this way. Others are in the phase of finalizing decision making by the municipality.

3.4 Recommendations for training

3.4.1 Needs of the end-users

Needs of end-users differ very much. It depends on the interest and motivation of end-users, their experience with ICT, their educational level and financial possibilities. From the interviews we noted that the main needs to learn digital skills are the following:

- Start from the current living situation and the current questions and themes of the participants.
- Start with the basics: email, online banking, google, WhatsApp, DigiD, social media in general and secure use of internet
- Expand from the basics according to the interest of the learners. For example, special modules to build photo books, use livestreams, create websites etc. etc.
- Make sure that there is permanent structural expert support nearby in the neighbourhood.
- Don't ignore the aversion to digitization, take the fear seriously.
- Use humour, meeting, socializing.

3.4.2 Obstacles to actively participate in the community

Digital services and products, such as online banking, traditional media offering additional information online, governmental information, online taxes etc. is everywhere nowadays and expanding very fast. People who are not digitally skilled and/or don't maintain their digital skills will gradually lose their connection with society. Learning and maintaining digital skills is a prerequisite for continuous participation.

Older adults that are home-bound due to chronic diseases or impairments and are not capable (anymore) to use digital devices may also lose social contacts. The usage of social media is an easy way to connect with children and grandchildren. Alternatives are social visits (difficult in the current times of the pandemic) or telephone calls.

3.4.3 Strategies to attract and address potential training participants

- Connect with municipalities and their libraries They know best the people who would need extra training in digital skills. Also they can offer financial support to buy devices and to follow trainings for those people who cannot afford it.
- Include the training in bigger initiatives such as the Digital Alliance (Digitaal Samenleven), SeniorWeb, green or white/yellow cross membership societies and pension funds, people's universities.
- Announcement of the existence of trainings in local papers and not only on the website. Or provide a "Digi-bus" to visit every neighbourhood to announce the training of deliver individual support.

3.4.4 Appropriate training contents and methods

Appropriate training in the field of implementing age-friendly environments and advocacy with the support of digital tools focuses on the following topics below. The topics must be considered in combination of each other and are depending on the local needs and circumstances of people and places. The aims of the participants of the workshop series are leading; the learning material and tools are accordingly chosen.

Topics that must be addressed are:

- Age-friendly environments
- Advocacy
- Social skills
- Digital skills

Age-friendly environments and smart healthy age-friendly environments foster participation in society and active and healthy ageing. Understanding the overall concept and methods to implement (SH)AFE measures should be part of the curriculum.

Advocacy: traditional and digital methods of advocacy will be explored during the workshop sequences.

Social skills: it is important for older adults to maintain and additionally practice their social skills. These skills could have been deteriorated due to less social contacts and less flexibility. Learning to cooperate (again) and socialize is an elementary part of the curriculum.

Digital skills: The best way to educate digital skills is to offer a mixture of group learning and individual coaching. During the workshop sequences it means to select those digital tools, that are needed to achieve the aims of the group learners. Normally it is wise to start a digital skills training with a group training where people can learn basic things and to offer individual support during the course and afterwards. It is very important to continue the support, also in case a project or training course has finished.

General rules:

- Rule 1. Appropriate timing of the workshops: not too early in the morning and not in the evening and offer the training in an environment that is easily accessible. Regard the financial accessibility.
- Rule 2. Regard the differences in skills, motivation and experience.

When training digital skills:

- Rule 3. Focus on building trust and joy in using ICT and modern technologies.
- Rule 4. Be very patient and offer step by step learning: It is very important to guide older adults step by step. For example, how to switch on/off the device. If people have to press enter, describe it, don’t expect that people automatically know.

- Rule 5. Provide learning material also on paper. Many older people like to print the material to have it next to them when using the device. The use of powerpoint should be adjusted.
- Rule 6. Deliver individual support during the training and continue this support afterwards.

3.5 Feedback on the relevance of the project

The need for participating in society while using modern technology is broadly supported. All interviewees underline the fact that digital skills of older adults need to be improved and maintained. To combine the learning of age-friendly environments with digital skills training is supported as well. This may provide an extra motivation to learn digital skills, because it has a context.

Older adults' redundancy to learn digital skills: additional methods are needed.

Main thing is to start with the goal the older adults want to achieve, and to look for the means to achieve them.

4. Relevant stakeholders and potential cooperation partners

The interviewees, older adults, older adults/volunteers digital training and stakeholder organisations, already show much interest in the project. They are interested to follow the project and to distribute it when it becomes available.

We will further work on connection to other local and national initiatives, such as Digital Alliance in The Netherlands, municipalities, older adults groups.

5. Quotes of interviewees

"I can't imagine what it is to live without digital skills, I don't see any disadvantages of having digital skills." (Volunteer providing digital trainings to older adults)

"Main advantage of having digital skills is be prepared for the future and to remain independent from others." (Volunteer providing digital trainings to older adults)

"Personalisation of ICT' offer and training is most important. Start with individual interests and expand from there. Do not overload people." (Co-director Student aan Huis)

"Build trust and joy for ICT and train digital skills step by step" (Marketing officer SeniorWeb)

"Start training with the basics and according to the interest of people. Continue to offer (individual) support after finalising the training" (Policy officer older people's organisation)

"Meaningful human contact is the most important thing in life." (Policy officer Older people's organisation)

"Provide more sustainable digital solutions to enable people to remain digitally skilled for a longer period of time" (Policy officer Older people's organisation)

“Older persons can help each other over the bridge, overcome their fear and resistance by working together.” (Peter Verstappen, SeniorTab)

“Even if there is resistance, if you make it easy it works.” (Peter Verstappen, SeniorTab)

"’It will take my time’, many say. I think that's a pity. You have to continue to participate and not sit back, not wait until everything is handed to you, not just consume. You have to be able to do it yourself and together.” (Older volunteer)

“The means is the training, the goal is communicating with other people. Prefer age-specific, e.g., over-80s. I would like to learn to vlog and blog.” (Older volunteer)

“Digital and human contact go together. Not just emailing, especially just calling. Communication is key, in every way possible.” (Older volunteer)

“The digital world is that large, that you can’t stop exploring it, because there is always something new that you want to learn.” (Older volunteer)

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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?

Annex 3: List of interviewees

Older adults

1. Bea Oedai, volunteer at iZi demonstration housing The Hague
2. Marja Pijl, Older women's network and living in Benoordenhout, The Hague
3. Joost Kreulen, Volunteers' platform Benoordenhout, The Hague
4. Theo Sanders, Student internet training and volunteer Gouda

Older adults/volunteers SeniorWeb

1. Harry Maaskant
2. Hermien Mulder

Stakeholders

1. Peter Verstappen, SeniorTab
2. Saskia Hamminga, Marketing/communication manager SeniorWeb
3. Jan Brinkers, Policy officer digitalisation older people's interest organisation KBO-PCOB
4. Jaap van Meerveld, Co-director Student aan Huis
5. Lidy Munninghoff, Library The Hague