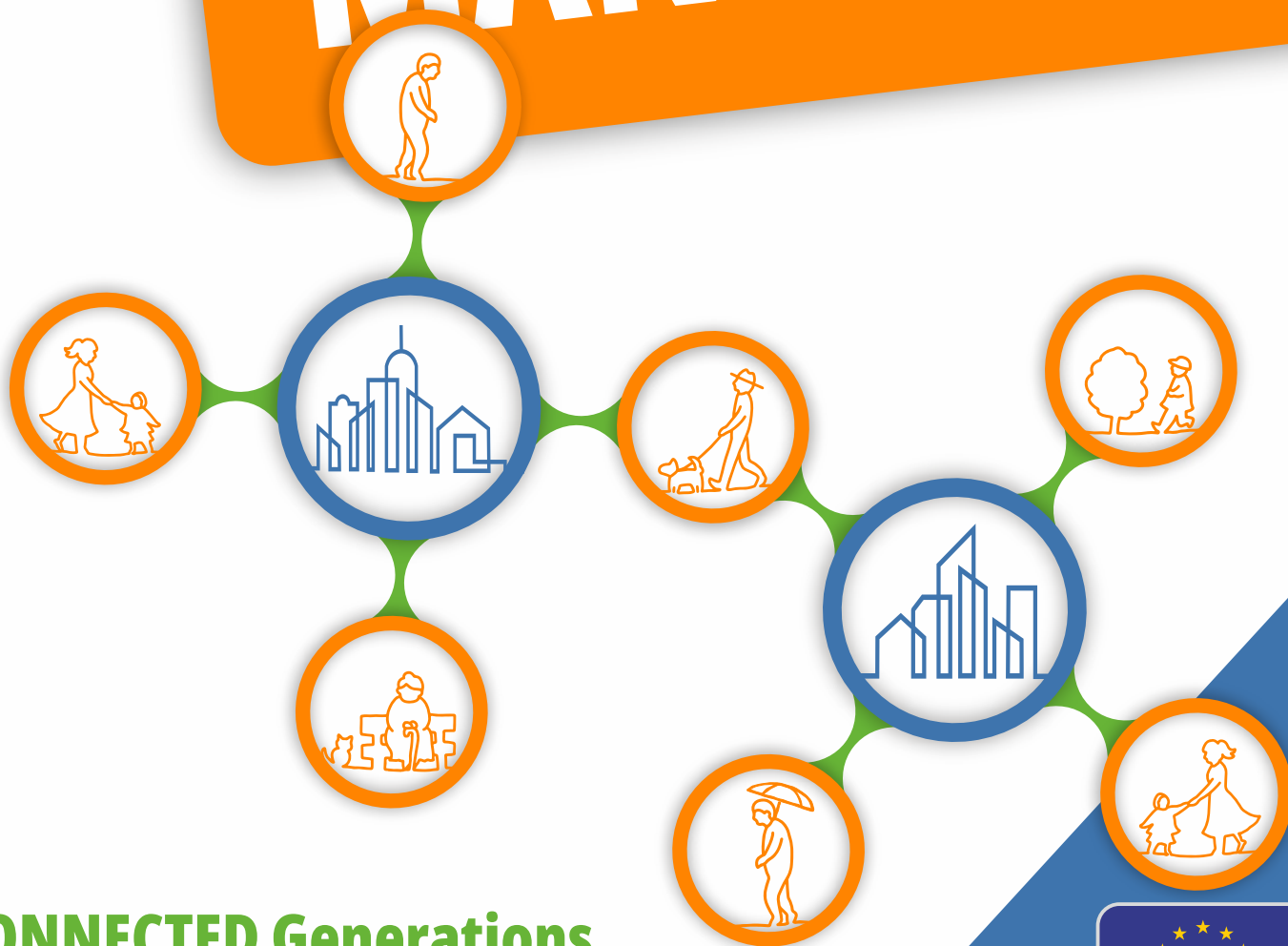




Age-Friendly Cities and Communities'

MANIFESTO



**CONNECTED Generations,
CONNECTED Cities:**

The Age-Friendly Vision



city & co

COLOPHON

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Title: Age-Friendly Cities and Communities' Manifesto. CONNECTED Generations, CONNECTED Cities: The Age-Friendly Vision

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This Manifesto was developed as part of the City&Co ENUTC project:



The project involved older adults in validating an instrument for the evaluation of age-friendliness of cities and communities – **Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Questionnaire (AFCCQ)**, and in co-designing a geoportal – an innovative platform that could be used by policymakers to evaluate how age-friendly different areas of their urban community are, based on freely available geospatial data and photos taken by citizens in different neighbourhoods. Older adults from three European countries (the Netherlands, Poland, and Romania), residing in The Hague, Kraków, Wrocław, and Bucharest, contributed feedback over a six-month period to test the geoportal.

Drawing on data from the AFCCQ and the geoportal, the City&Co project developed co-creation workshop with older adults and policymakers from four cities.

This Manifesto is a programmatic document that can be used to empower local and national organisations, municipalities, and policymakers to create age-friendly urban environments, where older adults feel welcomed and enjoy a better quality of life. The Manifesto outlines **10 key points** that underpin older people and policymakers' views on *the age-friendly cities and communities'* framework, as stated by the World Health Organization (2007)¹.

Connect

Bring older and younger people together and facilitate common spaces and activities

Offer

Focus more on what older people could offer to the urban communities

Nurture

intergenerational relationships based on mutual respect and understanding

Networking

with people having different skills and experiences, for a common good

Elaborate

policies for older adults, having **a safe future** in mind

Continuity

in policies and local projects

Tailored

policies for groups of older adults with different needs and expectations

Involve

older people in decision-making processes in their communities

Neighbouring

people in community centres for all ages, not only in day centres for older people

Grandparenting

volunteer opportunities, as older adults are happy to take this role

1. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241547307>

Bring older and younger people together and facilitate common places and activities

CONNECT

“How can we work with younger people?” – This is a quote from one of the older adults involved in our co-creation activities. The quote shows the essence of how older people envisage the fundament of policy planning to create an age-friendly environment. In their views, urban communities should be bridges between young and old, and policy **design should facilitate intergenerational opportunities** by:

- **Shared living spaces and places** – young and old could benefit from each other proximity; people need to live in less age-segregated urban communities
- **Shared activities** – more appreciated by older adults than the segregated age activities
- **Shared discussions** – to nourish mutual understanding and reduce prejudices
- **Shared projects** – planning the future together and finding common goals



OFFER

“What can I still offer to the community?” –one of the participants rhetorically asked during our collaborative activities. Older people need to be seen as assets rather than burdens to urban communities. Policy design should actively involve older adults, leveraging their skills and experience in implementation. Older adults are willing to contribute to their communities' welfare and refuse to be seen only as recipients of programmes and services. They expect to find places and activities in the community **where they could contribute and be seen as valuable and resourceful members**:

- Find ways to involve older people in activities **where they feel valued and they can contribute**
- **Actively involve** older adults in policy design and implementation
- Develop programmes **to assist older people in finding ways to contribute** to their communities
- Design policies that **allow meaningful activities for older people**
- Design policies **not “for” older people but “with” older people**, using a **participatory approach**



Nurture intergenerational relationships based on mutual respect and understanding

NURTURE

“We complain that younger people do not respect us, and sometimes we don't respect them”, an older participant from Poland summarised an extensive discussion on intergenerational difficulties faced in urban communities. Policies should be designed to allow forms of mutual understanding, reciprocity, and collaboration between young and old. Age-friendly environments are spaces where conflicts between generations are reduced and cooperation between people of different ages is nurtured. Reducing ageism is a key aspect of the new age-friendly initiative launched by the World Health Organization (2023)*

- Develop policies aimed at reducing ageism and negative stereotypes about older adults
- **Allow spaces of debate between young and old** to raise awareness of the explicit and implicit views they hold on each other
- Promote activities **to allow people from different generations to know each other better**
- Investigate potential conflicts between generations, **how such conflicts are shaped and reproduced, and ways to reduce them**
- Design policies and actions to address the conflicts and **promote a better intergenerational understanding, nurturing reciprocal respect and appreciation**

*<https://www.who.int/news/item/19-04-2023-who-releases-new-guide-on-developing-national-programmes-for-age-friendly-cities-and-communities>



NETWORKING

"I am grandfather on the phone" said one of the older adults during our collaboration activities, suggesting the need to be in contact with loved-ones through the new technologies. Learning activities, particularly related to the use of digital technologies, are appreciated by older people. Technology use is perceived by both older people and policymakers as a way to be in contact with various events and activities run within the community, to reduce loneliness and social isolation, and to stay informed and connected with other community members and service providers. The role of digital technologies is yet insufficiently integrated into the Age-Friendly Cities and Communities' framework – described by the World Health Organization – and needs to be better elaborated.

- **Foster networks among individuals with diverse digital skills** to encourage mutual learning
- Involve older adults in networks where others have different skills and abilities, so **they can/ are able to fulfil their learning potential**
- **Design policies and activities to allow older adults to learn** and enlarge their competences in different areas that are relevant to community life
- **Create learning opportunities for older adults** and involve them in designing and implementing learning activities
- **Policies should maintain a non-stereotypical** view of how older adults learn and their motivation to attend learning activities



Elaborate policies for older adults, having a safe future in mind

ELABORATE POLICIES

“What if the policies designed today do not work for the older adults tomorrow?”

This question was raised by one of the policymakers during the co-creation activities. There was a general agreement that most policies are designed for the current situation of older adults and do not have a life-course perspective. The potential frailty of the oldest old (80 years of age and over) and unexpected life transitions from active to frail situations are not covered in the way policies are designed. Policymakers suggested:

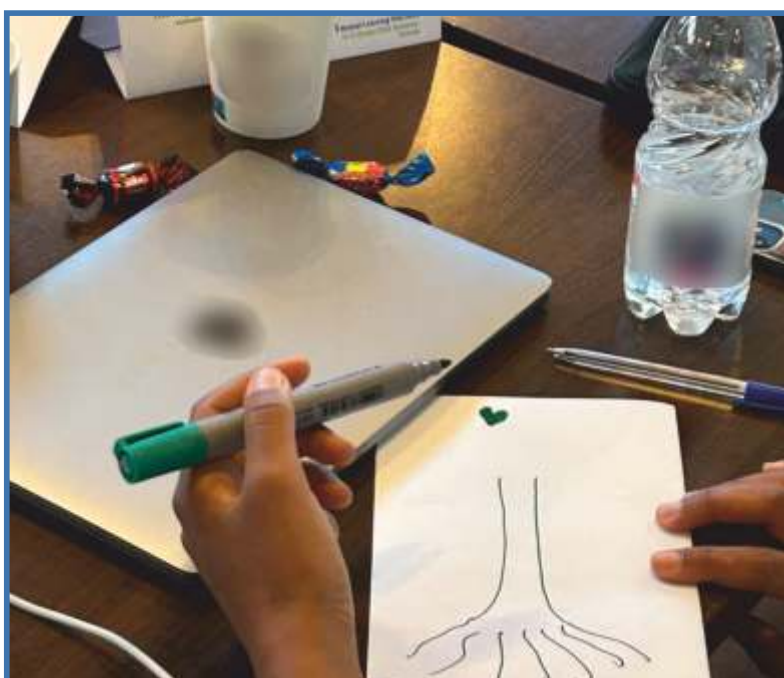
- Policies should **follow a life-course perspective**
- **Design policies** not only for the present life of older adults but also **for a safe future**
- **Policies should create a sense of safety and security** for older adults in their communities
- **Address the challenges faced by the oldest-old population:** find ways to get people with fragile health situations involved in the community
- **Prepare for life transitions**, and design policies that are sensitive to several disruptions in people's lives and a call for resilience among older people (such as retirement; the passing away of a spouse).



CONTINUITY IN POLICIES

Both older adults and policymakers pledge for a future orientation and long-term thinking in policy planning and implementation. The lack of continuity in many of the initiatives is criticised by policymakers, and the financial support for some services is unpredictable. Older adults found some initiatives sporadic and run for a limited time or only one-time initiatives and urged for continuation.

- **Design policies with long-term sustainability** in mind and think about the continuation
- **Preserve the positive outcomes of some policies** in older adults' lives by long-term planning
- **Address challenges in finding funds** and resources for continuation
- **Develop partnerships** between municipalities, non-governmental organisations, neighbourhoods, support groups, private sectors, schools, groups of volunteers, etc.
- **Prioritise activities with higher potential for long-term sustainability**
- **Evaluate different** policies and initiatives **by the long-term change in older adults' quality of life**

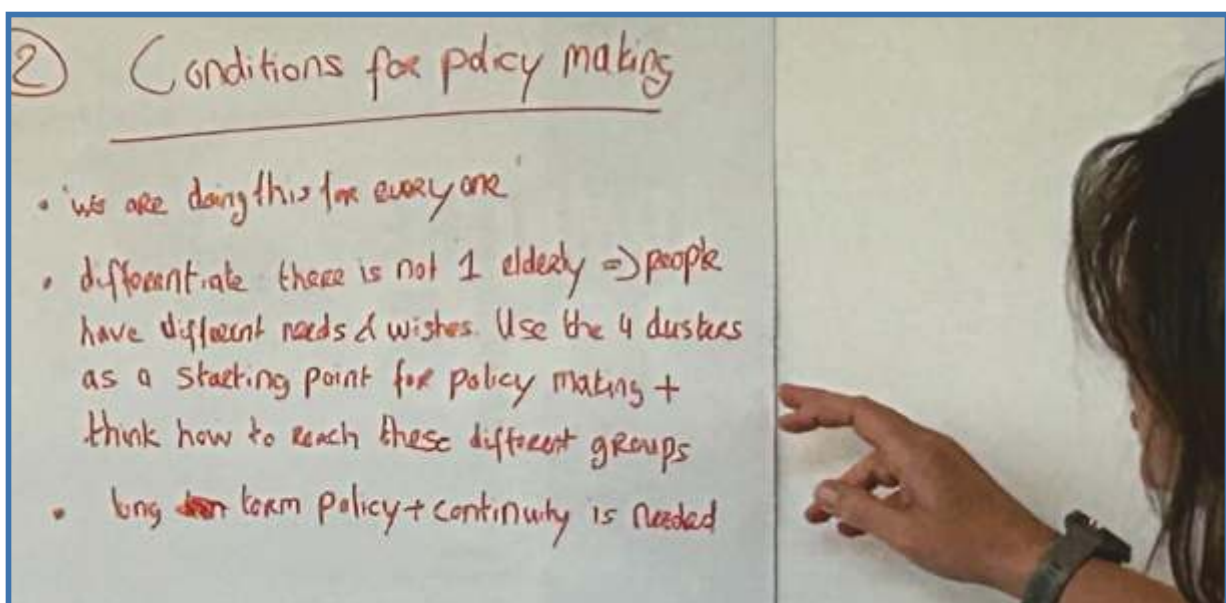


TAILORED POLICIES

“There is no one type of older adult” and older adults are heterogeneous in their needs, expectations, life situations, and skills. The over-homogenisation of “older adults” is criticised by scholars, policymakers, and older people alike. Policy design and implementation should identify clusters – typical groups of older adults who would be at the centre of different urban initiatives. There is an increased heterogeneity with age, and age-friendly communities should embrace people's diversity later in life.

- **Create culturally-sensitive policies** and take into account the socio-economic situation of different older adults
- **Explore and define clusters of older people** within different cities and communities
- **Policies should be tailored for the particularities of the clusters/typologies** and not for the older population in its entirety as if it were a homogeneous group in our population
- **Use research to identify older adults' clusters/typologies** and adjust the clusters by time.

For example, the Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Questionnaire (AFCCQ) allows a multi-country analysis. We have identified five distinct typologies of older adults based on their experiences in the urban communities, in eight countries.



Involve older adults in decision-making processes in their communities

INVOLVE OLDER ADULTS

Older adults expressed their views on the lack of consultation in policy design and implementation at the city level, but also in various neighbourhoods. With some positive examples in mind – as **the Seniors Council of the municipality of Kraków** (elected body with a decision role) – older adults need to be better represented and more involved in decision-making processes at the city level, especially in the case of policies concerning the age-friendly city agenda.

- **Recommend cities to install Councils for Older Citizens** and define the role of such councils in the decision-making process
- **Allow Councils for Older Citizens to be visible** and recognised as important bodies in urban communities
- **Find other ways to involve older adults** in the municipality's decisions concerning the quality of life of older adults.
- Give voice to people who are usually silent, having an inclusive vision of the decision making process
- Support local initiatives that **establish lobby groups** and **neighbourhood associations** to monitor municipalities' initiatives and give feedback on decisions and policies concerning the lives of older citizens
- Create spaces and opportunities for meeting for older adults who want to get involved in such lobby groups **to facilitate active civic participation for all**



NEIGHBOURING PEOPLE

Older adults expect age-friendly communities to provide spaces for meeting others from different age groups and not only people of their age. Community centres should host activities for all citizens, with no age segregation. The suggestions from both older adults and policymakers are to collaborate with schools, kindergartens, and high schools from the neighbourhood – creating the opportunity to meet and reducing the “distance” between the generations.

- Create spaces to meet and **activities with common interest**
- **Community centres are more valued** than centres for older adults
- **Involved children and adolescents in activities with older adults** and collaborate with schools
- Facilitate activities that **promote proximity between older adults** and between older adults and younger people
- **Policies should target different neighbourhoods** and older adults should be included because they belong to these neighbourhoods and not because they are old



GRANDPARENTING

"We are now living separately from our grandchildren", noticed one of the older participants in our collaborative activities. Nuclear families and transnational families, with grandchildren living far away, are a reality in today's societies. Many older adults feel very much attached to their role as grandparents, challenged by such societal changes. Policies should consider their suggestion to be involved in voluntary activities that would constitute an enactment of their role as a grandparent. Being voluntary grandparents in the community would serve many of the other aspects underlined in this Manifesto: the intergenerational proximity and the need to offer things to the community and reciprocate.

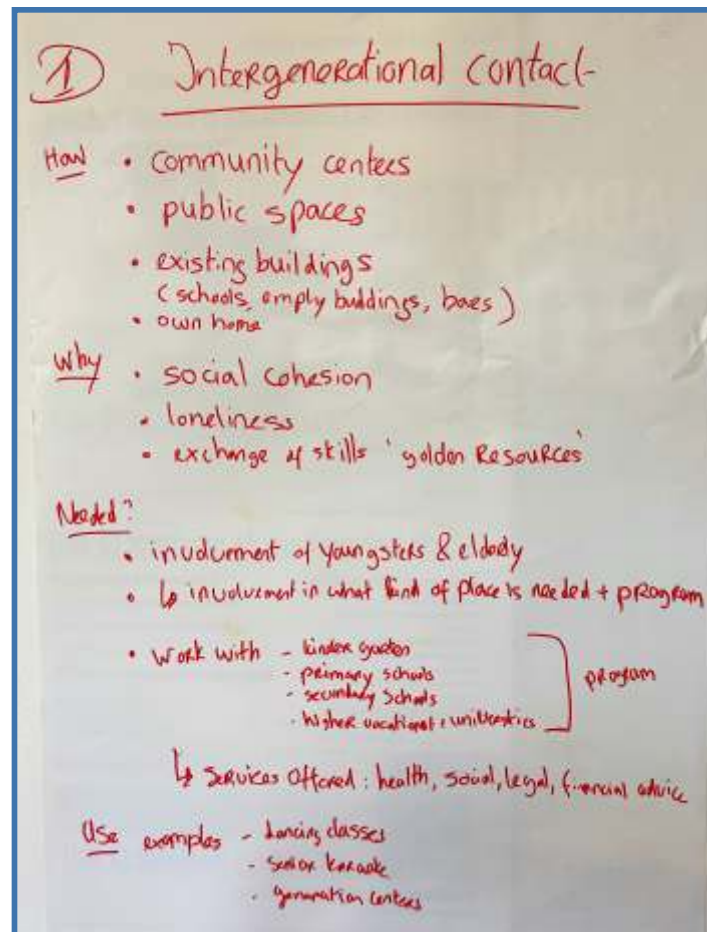
- Develop policies addressing **the need of older adults to perform their grandparenting role with the local children/ youngsters**
- **Promote voluntary activities for older adults that** allow them to maintain a positive role in the society
- Engage older adults in activities that **resonate with their emotional needs and family bonding**



BEST PRACTICES

The co-creation workshops with older adults and policymakers in an inter-cultural space allowed examples of good programmes envisaged to promote the values written in this Manifesto.

- Intergenerational dance classes/ karaoke
- Community cultural activities (such as community theatre)
- Co-residence with people from other age groups (families with children, students)
- Common activities and proximity between older adults in nursing homes and kindergartens
- Common activities between community centres and schools/high schools
- Programmes with older adults having different professional skills and vocational schools
- Intergenerational centres (offering activities such as cooking, and gardening for young and old)



We Celebrate Age-Friendly Communities by **CONNECTING**

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Nurture

Networking

Elaborate policies

Continuity in policies

Tailored policies

Involve older people in decision-making

Neighbouring people with different skills

Grandparenting





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