

THEORY OF CHANGE

WORK PACKAGE 2 - OUTPUT 5

Deliverables D2.1.1 (Inventory of initial situation), D2.2.2 (Roadmaps) and D2.2.5 (co-creation sessions)

At the beginning of the AGE'IN project the mutual objective was clear: we wanted to detect elderly people experiencing loneliness and develop actions in our neighbourhoods to connect them. But how do you monitor the process you work on in a neighbourhood? How do you visualise change in the short and long term? How do you show that the interventions you are developing, have an impact?

We decided it was more valuable to work with 'impact monitoring' tools rather than 'impact measurement' methodologies. We wanted to propose a detection strategy, test our hypotheses, adapt the strategy when necessary and end up with a framework that has a strong impact on our local communities. The 'Theory of Change' proved to be a framework that answered these questions.

HOW TO USE IT?

Creating a Theory of Change is a participatory process that helps to formulate long and short-term goals, translate these into concrete actions and visualise the assumptions and conditions that are necessary to instal the social change that is aimed for.

Planning: the Theory of Change defines long-term goals and then works back to short term goals and concrete actions. The framework also questions the conditions that must be in place (and how these are related to one another) in order to create actions with the desired impact. The framework we used during the Age'in project consists of five main components: the problem analysis, the actions (the AGE'IN project WP2 deliverables), the short-term goals (the AGE'IN project WP2 outcomes), the end results and the long-term impact.

It is a **participatory process**: our stakeholders get to hear and challenge one another's understanding of the goals, the challenges, and what must hold true in the environment for the initiative to succeed.

Evaluation: the visual framework of the Theory of Change helps to maintain focus during the process evaluation.

The Theory of Change grows, changes and evolves during the project. At the end of the AGE'IN project we will have the three 'stages' of the neighbourhood change theory to promote aging in place: the original input and vision (start of the project in 2019), the reworked and evolved project vision and goals (mid-term, April 2021) and the final framework (a clear view on the short and long term goals, the critical conditions and key to success, the end result, an overview on the participatory processes and evaluation – April 2022).

WHY USE IT?

The Theory of Change is a powerful monitoring tool to visualise the social change you are working towards. It stimulates the involvement of all partners and stakeholders in defining the desired short- and long-term goals. It opens the discussion about monitoring results and the impact of the actions. It makes it possible to capture the complexity of the project and gives a visual representation of the desired changes in the community. It functions as a practical blueprint for a participatory evaluation of the project process. We found a good introduction on the use of the Theory of Change on: <https://www.theoryofchange.org/>