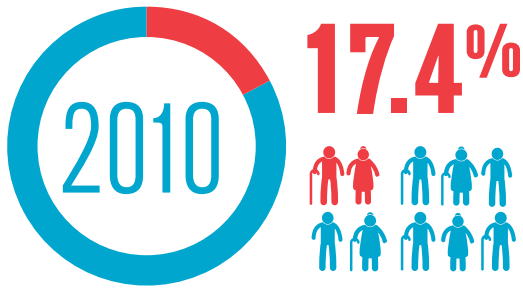
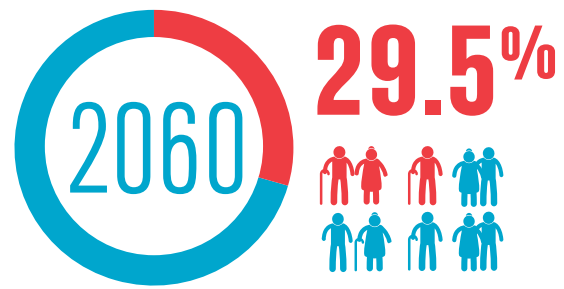


# OUR CHALLENGE: AGEING EUROPE



In 2010 the share of persons of age 65 or older was 17.4% in the EU countries.



In 2060 the share is anticipated to be 29.5%.

Demographic ageing is one of the major challenges Europe is facing in the coming decades. In 2060, the share of people over 64 years is anticipated to be almost 30% of the EU population. This will increase the burden on social and health care sectors, meaning that less people will be active in the workforce. The project **Design Led Innovations for Active Ageing (DAA)** brought together eight cities that were seeking sustainable solutions for demographic ageing. Innovations for senior care were developed through service design. The partner cities concentrated on different problems, learned new methods of innovation and gained a deeper understanding of senior care problems.

## WHAT IS SERVICE DESIGN?

Service design is a methodology of improving the quality of services and processes as well as innovating new ones.

Service design brings the users' point of view to innovation processes. Taking a design approach ensures that solutions meet the needs and demands of the users. These include not only customers or end-users, but all the people involved in the ecosystem, such as stakeholders and staff who provide the services.

### Involving users and stakeholders

Service design is adaptable to different situations or problems. The method is ideally suited for organizations in the public domain; those that provide important services and work in different, often complex, contexts.

Service design is a holistic approach that considers all the factors that influence the context in which a service is rendered. The design process starts from observing the prevailing situation and identifying problems. To determine new solutions, service users and other stakeholders are involved in the innovation process from the onset. This is called "co-designing" or "co-creating".

### Interdisciplinary ideation and development

The service design process includes distinct phases such as mapping stakeholders, ideating, and prototyping new practices. Feedback from stakeholders is gathered in every phase of the process to accommodate new insights in a continuous cycle.

In the end, service design should become a specific way of looking at day-to-day service delivery. Service design is a process of constantly analysing, defining, and re-evaluating your service and searching for ways to improve it. "Design" should always be a verb.



#### User-centered

Service design aims at delivering services that meet the needs and the demands of users. The methodology acknowledges humans as drivers of service innovation and focuses on gaining insights from users.



#### Contextual and diverse

Service design looks at the complete experience of how the service is delivered. Interdisciplinary work groups include all kinds of insights and forms of expertise – even contradicting ones.



#### Stakeholder involvement

Stakeholders participate actively in the process, which also helps strengthen their future commitment.



#### Dialogue tools

Dialogue in co-design workshops and brainstorm sessions is encouraged to inspire new ideas and explore different options.



#### Visualisation

Often ideas can be communicated most effectively when they are visualised into drawings, models, schemes, or icons. Visualisation is not just reporting, it can simplify complex ideas during the process.



#### Iterative process and feedback cycle

Often the process must be reassessed to accommodate new insights in a continuous feedback cycle during the design work.



#### Prototyping, trial and error

Just as in product design, services can be prototyped and tested, using research, analysis, trial and error testing, and simulations.



# ACTIVE SENIORS IN URBAN ENVIRONMENTS

## WHY **Helping seniors find more meaning in their lives**

The main trigger for becoming an active senior citizen is to feel meaningful to oneself and to other people. In urban environments such as Antwerp there are typically isolated seniors who are not aware of the services available. They rarely express their feelings of loneliness and are often hesitant to establish a new social network. Failing to build and maintain social connections impacts on their quality of life.

## GOAL **Improving senior lives with extended social networks**

The design team consisted of design consultancies Namahn and Yellow Window. They were commissioned by Care Company Antwerp and design support organization Design Flanders. Their goal was to help each local care centre engage with more seniors in a more meaningful manner to prevent social isolation and improve the quality of life.

It was vital to create a system of dialogue that would empower each local service centre in an optimum manner. The solution needed to be impactful and engage more seniors with the existing services. Ultimately each service centre needed to be equipped to extend its channels of communication.

## METHODOLOGY



### **Senior-centric solutions via collaborative service design**

The starting point for the team was to identify the triggers that would motivate seniors and make them become more active.

The service design process was grounded in collaboration with partners. The details of the issues and then the potential design solutions were first discussed and considered with Care Company Antwerp. Then via workshops with stakeholder groups, the design and creation of the potential solutions were explored together.

The design study's methods ranged from benchmarking of existing projects; cultural probes to provide user insights; creative and collaborative techniques; and the concept of self-organisation itself. Cultural probes were used to gather qualitative data about people's lives. In this case, seniors recorded their thoughts, feelings, and perceptions to a diary which guided the user-centric design. Creative and collaborative techniques such as different "personas" provided new ideas during the co-design workshops.

The concept of self-organisation was central for the project; the design team understood that the senior-centric approach meant end solutions which involve ongoing collaboration and dialogue with the seniors themselves.

## RESULTS



### **Seniors need some self-control in their networks and lives**

Unfortunately many of the elderly participating in the study lacked a sense of meaning in their lives. This is a more fundamental problem than activating senior citizens to meet other people. To solve this problem it was important to understand what motivates people to become and stay active and involved.

A key learning was that by engaging seniors in the day-to-day operations of the service centers encourages them to see the centre as their own. This will then lead to seniors to develop healthy and meaningful relationships with others, explore new interests, and increase their sense of purpose in life.

## WHAT'S NEXT

### **Tools to engage and empower seniors in a new way**

This study will develop a tool for service centres to create new activities for seniors. The initiative will be piloted in a local service centre where seniors can co-decide on an activity programme, and co-create activities. This tool can allow for seniors to self-organize themselves, leading to meaningful social contacts.

The goal was to bring a sense of purpose to the lives of lonely seniors through empowerment and self-determination.