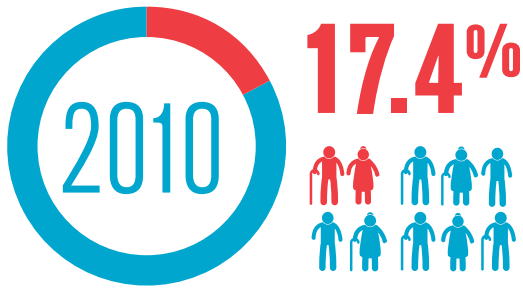
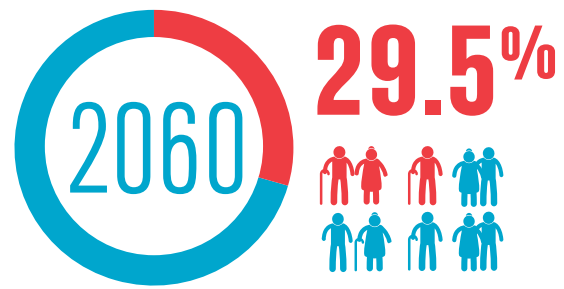


# OUR CHALLENGE: AGEING EUROPE



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.



# CREATING A SENIOR-FRIENDLY CITY

## WHY **Helping elderly citizens lead active lives**

The city of Sofia desires to be an age-friendly city where policies, services, and structures support people to age actively. Currently senior services are not well integrated in Sofia's policies and practices. Senior care is structured in the city differently than in many other European cities. The city doesn't have any special departments or policies considering senior citizens and senior care is organised through other types of social services. In this project, Sofia Development Association used service design as a tool to identify and assess practical solutions in order to create services that will have a real impact on elderly citizens.

## GOAL **Designing services to meet real-world needs**



The project team investigated barriers and opportunities in the city's strategy to become an age-friendly city. The goal was to better meet the needs of Sofia's residents by integrating an ageing perspective in urban planning and designing age-friendly city policies. The study aimed to create and test prototypes of user-centered services, practices, and physical structures and utilise underused city and community resources.

## METHODOLOGY **From ideas to testing - a lifecycle of service design**



Following a needs assessment, the team selected to focus on key areas including public space and buildings; mobility; social involvement and respect; communication and information; health care; active participation; and employment.

It was also important to set realistic goals for the project as well as considering underutilised resources. In order to do this the team used collaborative and participatory design methods and involved stakeholders with diverse backgrounds.

The concepts that resulted from this step were then put through an ideation process that is a critical component of design thinking. This resulted in more than 50 new ideas, a few of which were chosen for prototyping. Prototyping was implemented through a city platform for information exchange. A variety of stakeholders gave their mutual support and shared their experience in the platform.

## RESULTS **Creating a design-centric environment**

This was the first time a design process was applied to create solutions for city issues and policies in Sofia, which in itself was considered a positive result. During the process the team established a city platform for information exchange and mutual support through sharing experiences.

The project managed to pool together significant resources, including private sector, community, and media. Also corporate sponsors participated in the project in new ways which was an added, and unexpected, benefit.

## IMPLEMENTATION **Putting ideas into action**

Many concrete actions were taken during the project to make the city of Sofia more age-friendly. Five major and several smaller prototypes were designed and tested to create accessible urban environments and to promote active ageing in Sofia.

One of the prototypes created new learning opportunities for seniors through a partnership agreement between Sofia Municipality and Sofia University. Other prototypes included new possibilities for different generations to meet each other, age-friendly public space seating, as well as awards and programs for senior entrepreneurs. To promote healthy lifestyles, a sports festival for the elderly people was organized for the first time in the city's history.

Currently the project team is testing the prototypes at which point the service design project will have gone through a full design and testing cycle—showing the significant influence and power that harnessing service design can bring to projects.

**The project managed to pool together significant resources, including private sector, community, and media.**