



Learning companion and audio guide

*Voice training – Module 5:
Voice and age-friendly cities
and communities*

HelpAge

International



Asociación de Apoyo Auquis de Pamplona Alta – Peru

We would like to thank AARP for their contributions and support in developing *Voice training, Module 5*, plus the *Learning companion and audio guide*



HelpAge would also like to acknowledge its partners who participated in this learning. **Argentina:** Sociedad Argentina de Gerontología y Geriatria (SAGG) and Asociación Civil Diagonal Red Mayor. **Colombia:** Asociación Red Colombiana de Envejecimiento (Red COENVE) and Asociación Cultural Casa del Niño (ACCN). **Peru:** Asociación de Apoyo Auquis de Pamplona Alta

HelpAge International is a global network of organisations promoting the right of all older people to lead dignified, healthy and secure lives.

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*Voice training – Module 5:
Voice and age-friendly cities and communities*

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Asociación Red Colombiana de Envejecimiento – Colombia

Contents

4 Introduction to the module

Testing the module

If you are training community leaders, government and local authority decision makers...

5 If you are directly training older people...

6 Section 1: Why should we deliver this training?

7 Section 2: How to deliver flexible and effective training

Review all the content in the module before you start to create your own workshop session

Get people interested before the workshop

8 What if we want to do something totally different?

9 Consider the specific needs of participants in your group

10 Section 3: Post workshop – what can we do to keep the momentum?

Develop an action plan

Mapping relevant local authorities

External engagement

Reaching across generations on age-friendly cities and communities issues

12 Section 4: Listening to lessons – an audio guide

13 Participants' voices

14 Facilitators' voices

Introduction to the module

Older people's voices and lived experiences are vital in the development of cities and communities that are inclusive of all ages. The purpose of this module is to strengthen capacity and understanding of the importance of older people's Voice in the development of age-friendly cities and communities amongst community leaders, government and local authority decision makers, and groups of older people themselves.

The full module consists of 10 sessions that explain and discuss the key principles of Voice and introduce some of the issues older people face in the design of streets, green spaces, and transportation in their communities.

This module can either be delivered as training for community leaders, or government and local authority officials, to build their understanding and capacity of Voice so that they return to their own communities and develop workshops and other Voice strengthening activities with the older people that live there. The module can also be delivered directly to groups of older people at the community level; however, in this case, HelpAge suggests adjusting the content accordingly.

Testing the module

Between November 2023 and January 2024, HelpAge partners in Colombia, Peru and Argentina coordinated the delivery of five workshops to diverse groups of older people. The idea was to test how the module, originally intended for NGOs and CSOs, would work at the community level, directly with older people.

Participants ranged from 20 to 90-years-old, and included community leaders, members of local authorities, and older people interested in making their cities and communities more age-friendly. Facilitators also ranged in age and approach, with some using music and art to deliver the theories of the module.

Below is advice and guidance on how to prepare to deliver the module depending on who your participants are, what topics you want to explore and develop, and how best to build momentum around these issues in your local communities. This advice has been gathered from real participants and facilitators who have attended or delivered the training in a variety of contexts.

If you are training community leaders, government and local authority decision makers...

We recommend **Session 2** and **Session 7** as core sessions on the importance of the Voice of older people and how their Voice can be included in decision-making. You can also choose either **Session 4** on streets, public spaces and green spaces or **Session 5** on public transportation, or both, depending on what you think your group is most interested in.

You can then also add content from any of the other modules, depending on which ones you think are most valuable and interesting for your group. When creating slides to present to government and decision makers, you may want to add additional contextual information, such as the age profile of the local population, showing how many older people (aged over 60, or an age that you feel is appropriate for your context) live in the community and why responding to their needs is so important. You could also find publicly available data on things like who uses public transportation, levels of air pollution, or statistics on pedestrian accidents and fatalities to give context on how your community can be challenging for older people.

We hope that having strengthened the understanding of community leaders, government and local authorities, as to the importance of the Voice of older people in decision-making around age-friendly cities and communities, that they then return to their own communities and design and implement workshops and other voice-related activities directly with older people in order to strengthen their participation.



Facilitator's note

Hear more about the experiences of both participants and facilitators of the module, in our *audio guide*, starting on page 12 →

Follow-on activities could also include the development of an action plan – we have provided a brief example in **Session 9**, but a more comprehensive workshop based on some of the content in this module would give an opportunity for older people in each community to create their own action plans.

If you are directly training older people...

If you want to use the module to directly build the capacity of groups of older people in your community to understand the importance of Voice and age-friendly cities and communities, you may want to create your own shorter version. However, we recommend including basic content from the following sessions:

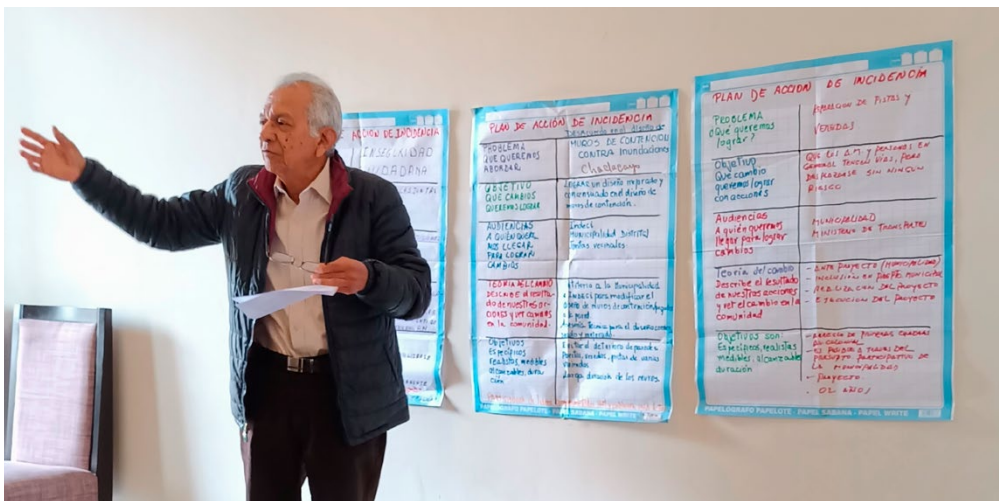
- **Session 2 – Understanding Voice**; this will introduce the key concepts around why the Voice of older people is important.
- You can choose either **Session 4** on streets, public spaces and green spaces or **Session 5** on public transportation depending on what you think your group is most interested in – remember to consider your context and include examples from your own city and community!
- **Session 7** helps you connect the issues facing the community with the Voice domains.

If you are delivering the training to older people, make sure to add opportunities for people to speak, share their experiences and their opinions. You will find that older people have a lot to say about these issues!

Remember also to add interesting examples from your own city or community to help participants connect the topics to real life issues they face day to day. This could include publicly available data on things like who uses public transportation, levels of air pollution, or statistics on pedestrian accidents and fatalities to give context on how your community can be challenging for older people.

We would also strongly recommend that you design an action plan workshop session at the end of the module, to deliver at the same time or at another date. **Session 9** in the module provides a brief example, but it is likely that the older people participating in your training will be eager and enthusiastic to discuss the issues that have been raised and put some actions down on paper that you can take forward as a group!

You are welcome to use content from the other sessions as well, depending on how suitable and relevant you think they are to your group. For example, some groups of older people report that **Session 3** – focusing on intergenerational approaches – is important for community cohesion. This session is brief, but many older participants have expressed an interest in expanding on this topic, or even inviting younger participants to the workshop.



Asociación de Apoyo Auquius de Pamploña Alta – Peru

Section 1: Why should we deliver this training?

The training was piloted in five locations in three countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. The aim was to deliver the training directly to older people and collect feedback.

Here's what real people had to say about the training, its impact and potential:

“The training was very positive, older people need to feel that their voice is relevant and they have the ability to be heard or to amplify and share their voices for change.”

Graciana, Facilitator, SAGG, Argentina

“I like the teaching task that allows me to encourage people to discover their abilities.”

María, Facilitator, SAGG, Argentina

“In an increasingly ageing world, ‘Listening to the Voices of Older People’ seems essential and vitally important to me. To this end, opening training and citizen participation channels would be a facilitating mechanism to achieve the inclusion, integration and protagonism of this age group in Society. An organised community is made up of all the actors involved, but at the center of the management table there must undoubtedly be older people, offering their voice and making themselves heard.”

Edgardo, Participant, SAGG, Argentina

“I appreciate the opportunity to lead this initiative and am excited about the possible actions we could take to make our community an even better place for our older people.”

Hernando, Facilitator, Red COENVE, Colombia

“...discovering that urban planning is not an eminently technical matter, only technical and bureaucratic, but that it is a matter for citizens and that they [older people] have a lot to say about it, well I think it was the most relevant thing.”

Nelson, Facilitator, Red COENVE, Colombia

Section 2: How to deliver flexible and effective training

Consider the module content as a guide for you and your group to use.

Here are some ways to make the most of it:

Review all the content in the module before you start to create your own workshop session

- The module is there to guide you and to provide examples – you do not need to use every slide or cover every topic. Think about the participants in your group, and what would they find most useful to focus on.
- Consider what a suitable length of training for your participants is – depending on whether they are groups of older people, community leaders, government or local authority decision makers, and what content is most appropriate to include for them.
- Think about how you would like to deliver the content – either use the slides we have provided or create your own slides. Remember accessibility: using audio/visual materials and larger fonts can allow for a larger range of people to participate in the training.
- Some of the examples provided in the module may be less or more relevant to your community and context – pick and choose which make most sense, and feel free to add your own! For example, in some locations, participants addressed the topic of the El Niño phenomenon and how they could manage the risk from the power within their communities.
- While presenting the slides, use language that is common and relatable in your country and community, and feel free to mention examples that are more recognisable to your participants.

“The readjustment of the content occurs according to time. If what we want is to be brief but concise with our explanation, it is key to know what the most important thing in the session is and thus explain it with the methodology agreed with the directives. In my case, in the module on age-friendly cities, I delved a lot into the key word ‘green spaces’ since this was the central axis of my talk and after the activities the others were explained in a shorter way by time issues.”

Harol, Facilitator, Red COENVE, Colombia

Get people interested before the workshop

- In Argentina, participants were asked before to take photos of urban issues that affect them in their neighbourhoods. They then brought these into the training sessions, where participants compared their environments and discussed various solutions or approaches.

What if we want to do something totally different?

It's great to get creative; feel free to think about new or adapted ways of delivering the module content you feel is most relevant for your group. This could include different settings, activities, or facilitation methods to get participants interested and engaged. For example, some piloted methods include:

- **Colombia: Through music and art**

At the training in Bogotá, facilitators used a variety of creative methods to deliver the module material. These included music, acting and an 'inductive method', where people applied design concepts to examples from their lived realities.

“We added dynamics with a music therapist that made people motivated, with lyrics that show the value of the voice and expressing their voice.”

Graciana, Facilitator, SAGG, Argentina

- **Colombia: Use your hands**

Another group used plasticine to create small sculptures inspired by the concepts of Voice and age-friendly cities as a creative activity to break up the sessions in the module – and for the intergenerational sessions, they asked participants to design and draw a poster highlighting the value of intergenerational engagement.

“Then the plasticine was distributed, they worked in pairs and made a sculpture regarding the concept of voice.”

Harol, Facilitator, Red COENVE, Colombia

“In this session, the concept of an intergenerational approach was worked on, with which participants in groups made a poster as an explanation of what it meant to actively interact with young people and what was the importance of communication.”

Harol, Facilitator, Red COENVE, Colombia

- **Peru: A personal touch**

HelpAge's partner in Lima recognised life stories as an important tool to support participation of older people in the trainings. This allowed people to share their experiences as they pertain to different urban problems, and a space for open discussion and solution sourcing.

Consider the specific needs of participants in your group

- Think about how many hours is an appropriate amount for your participants to be engaged in the training workshop. Consider spreading the sessions over several days or weeks, it does not all need to be delivered in one session.
- Plan for frequent rest breaks as per the needs of your participants.
- Consider whether participants in your group have difficulties listening or seeing. If so, perhaps you need more written content on handouts in large type to help them understand the key concepts – or conversely, perhaps you need to provide more oral explanation of what is being discussed. As above, audio/visual materials can also help in explaining concepts or provided examples.
- You may want to create simple handouts that give a simple written explanation of each concept so that participants can look at them while the discussion is ongoing, or review ahead of the sessions or afterwards as reflection.



Asociación de Apoyo Auquis de Pamplona Alta – Perú

Section 3: Post workshop – what can we do to keep the momentum?

After you have supported the strengthened capacity of older people on issues of Voice in age-friendly cities and communities by delivering the training module to decision makers or to older people in your community, think about how you can take these issues forward by engaging with local groups of younger people, finding new partners and stakeholders, holding debates and discussions, and working on joint projects to address shared objectives.

Develop an action plan

As mentioned in **Session 9**, a key next step could be to work with groups of older people in the community to develop an action plan. There are different ways in which you can discuss the issues older people face and the priorities they have. An action plan can help identify priorities and next steps to taking action.

Should you need support in structuring an action-planning workshop, please reach out to HelpAge and we will be happy to work through planning and tailoring this to the interests of your participants and community/city.

Mapping relevant local authorities

Many participants in the pilot trainings were interested to learn who are the relevant local authorities in their community to which they can approach with their ideas and demands. Consider mapping the relevant decision makers and agencies that are connected to the issues older people care about and engaging with them.

External engagement

Highlight to external stakeholders and audiences that you have delivered the training and built the capacity of your community groups around issues of age-friendly cities and communities by posting on social media, arranging meetings with politicians and decision makers.

“Exchange of ideas with other population groups and conversations with political decision makers or public officials who explain the mechanisms available to them to advance initiatives.”

Nelson, Facilitator, Red COENVE, Colombia



Facilitator's note

AARP's *Age-Friendly Guidebook* contains specific guidance and exercises on identifying relevant stakeholders on pages 18–19, which can help lead participants through this process →

Reaching across generations on age-friendly cities and communities issues

Many of the pilot training facilitators felt that intergenerational engagement on these issues is vital. A next step could be to hold a small workshop session with younger people and older people together to discuss the issues that have been raised. Another possible step would be to include the idea of intergenerational events and issues in discussions with local authorities and stakeholders, to look for opportunities to bring different generations together on common urban issues.



Charlie Cordero/Fairpicture/HelpAge International – Colombia

“It is important for older adults to interact with younger people to promote their ability to debate with other population groups, while strengthening the possibility of understanding realities from the point of view of younger people.”

Nelson, Facilitator, Red COENVE, Colombia

Below are some quotes directly from older people on intergenerational issues:

“I think it would be meaningful to include people of all ages, because that way we could hear all voices, and collect opinions, suggestions and comments according to age, gender and where people live, whatever their age.”

Rosa, Participant, SAGG, Argentina

“Being able to integrate other generations would make it possible to work together to break down existing prejudices and stereotypes, transmit knowledge, promote a culture of respect, good treatment and positive communication focused from a rights-based approach. Likewise, intergenerational solidarity would be a vitally important link to reduce the isolation and unwanted loneliness of older people.”

Edgardo, Participant, SAGG, Argentina

Section 4: Listening to lessons – an audio guide

Straight from the source

HelpAge and partners sat down with the facilitators and older participants from all five sessions across three countries.

We talked about what they liked, what they didn't like, general thoughts and feedback, and what changes could or should be made for future trainings.

Have a listen to what they had to say on the following pages.



Juan Camilo Gonzalez/Santo Studio/AARP/HelpAge International – Colombia

Participants' voices

103 participants were included across all workshops. They sat down and told us what they liked, why the themes were important to them, and what they would like to see next time. Listen to what they had to say about the experience:

All participants

 16 audio clips

Peru

Elizabeth

 4.44 mins

Fidel

 3.04 mins

Oscar

 3.08 mins

Victor

 4.07 mins

Argentina

Edgardo

SAGG

 5.54 mins

Rodolfo

SAGG

 0.47 mins

Ferreya

SAGG

 0.12 mins

Araceli

Diagnol

 1.13 mins

Beatriz

Diagnol

 2.27 mins

Guillermo

Diagnol

 2.31 mins

Sandra

Diagnol

 1.36 mins

Colombia

Francisco

Red COENVE

 1.45 mins

Teobaldo

Red COENVE

 2.54 mins

Omaira

Red COENVE

 1.01 mins

Luisa

ACCN

 0.46 mins

Marta

ACCN


 2.06 mins

Note: the participants and facilitators recorded their voices in Spanish. The English translations of these clips were created using AI technology.

Facilitators' voices

Workshop leaders included local community-based organisations, HelpAge staff and professional facilitators, resulting in a variety of experiences. Listen to find out what worked, what they would change, and how to make the most of your workshop:

All facilitators

 8 audio clips

Peru

Esperanza

 4.44 mins

Mercedes

 4.44 mins

Argentina

Graciana

SAGG

 4.06 mins

Rosa

SAGG

 2.33 mins

Adriana

Diagnol

 3.08 mins

Colombia

Nelson

Red COENVE

 11.26 mins

Hernando

Red COENVE

 3.13 mins

Natalia

ACCN

 2.33 mins

Note: the participants and facilitators recorded their voices in Spanish. The English translations of these clips were created using AI technology.



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