

Age-inclusive nature-based climate adaptation

Practical guide for Age-friendly Communities and Cities working with nature

HelpAge International

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Introduction

Purpose of this document

This guide helps communities to understand climate-related risks and turn them into practical opportunities for action with an age inclusive approach. The document provides guidance on the design and implementation of small-scale urban age-friendly projects, such as inclusive public spaces, green areas and community gardens, that use nature as fundamental tools for community empowerment and inclusion.

What is the 'age-inclusive and nature-based community adaptation' approach?

This approach brings together care for nature and care for people. It focuses on simple community actions and adaptations that use nature to build resilience to climate-related risks while improving health, wellbeing, and social participation for people of all ages. It also highlights the importance of inclusive climate change adaptation. It shows adaptation is most effective when driven by both climate evidence and the lived experience, knowledge, and priorities of often-overlooked groups like older people.

Who this guide is for?

This guide is designed for development practitioners, project officers, community leaders, and local authority staff who wish to work with communities to improve their urban environments in the face of climate related challenges. The guide supports identifying climate-related hazards, planning actions, and implementing small-scale initiatives that address these challenges by using nature in shared urban spaces, with an age-inclusive approach.

What this guide is not

This guide does not replace detailed climate risk assessments or large-scale planning processes, as these should be led by local or national authorities. However, it provides an entry point to involve communities and older people in climate change adaptation discussions and local environmental initiatives.

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Things to consider

Climate change and population ageing are converging global trends that are reshaping the future of cities and communities, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Older people are often disproportionately exposed to climate-related risks such as heatwaves, flooding, air pollution, and disruptions to essential services, which can affect their health, mobility, independence, and social participation. However, they should not be seen only as vulnerable. Older people are also rights-holders, knowledge-holders, and active contributors to resilience, with valuable experience and insights that can inform adaptation efforts.

This section highlights the importance of integrating **Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA)** and **Age-friendly Cities and Communities (AFCC)** approaches to build more inclusive and resilient environments. It emphasises the need for **meaningful participation of older people**, **intergenerational collaboration**, and the application of a **gender-responsive lens** to ensure that adaptation processes address inequalities and benefit all members of society.

Climate change and older people

Population ageing and intensifying climate hazards are converging to reshape the future of cities and communities around the world. By 2050, the number of people aged 60 years and older is projected to reach 2.1 billion, with 80% projected to live in low and middle-income countries (WHO)[1]. Many older people are disproportionately exposed to heatwaves, flooding, air pollution, pandemics, and service disruptions that threaten health, mobility, independence, and social participation.

Older people should not be viewed only through the lens of vulnerability. They are rights-holders, knowledge-holders and witnesses to long-term environmental change. Climate adaptation processes should therefore recognise both their heightened exposure to climate risks and their capacity to contribute to solutions. An age-inclusive approach helps ensure that adaptation planning protects dignity, reduces exclusion, and enables older people to participate meaningfully in decisions that affect their safety, health, livelihoods and community life.

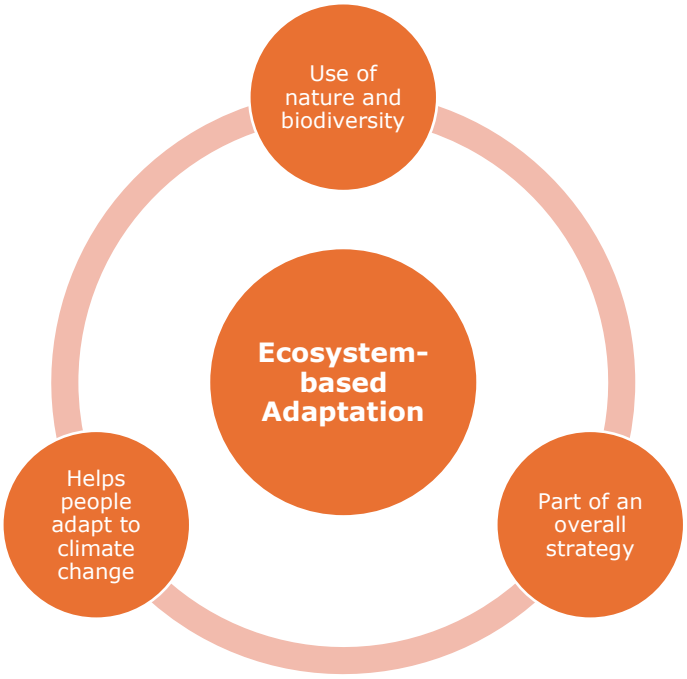


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What is Ecosystem-based Adaptation?

It is a nature-based solution that uses biodiversity and nature as part of a comprehensive strategy to help people adapt to the adverse effects of climate change[2]. For ecosystem-based adaptation to be effective at the community level, it should be designed with explicit attention to social inclusion. Green spaces, tree planting, community gardens, shaded public areas and water-sensitive urban design can reduce climate risks such as heat, flooding and air pollution, but their benefits are not automatically shared equally. Projects should therefore consider who can access, use, maintain and benefit from these spaces, particularly older people, women, persons with disabilities and those living in poverty.

Ecosystem-based Adaptation Criteria[3]

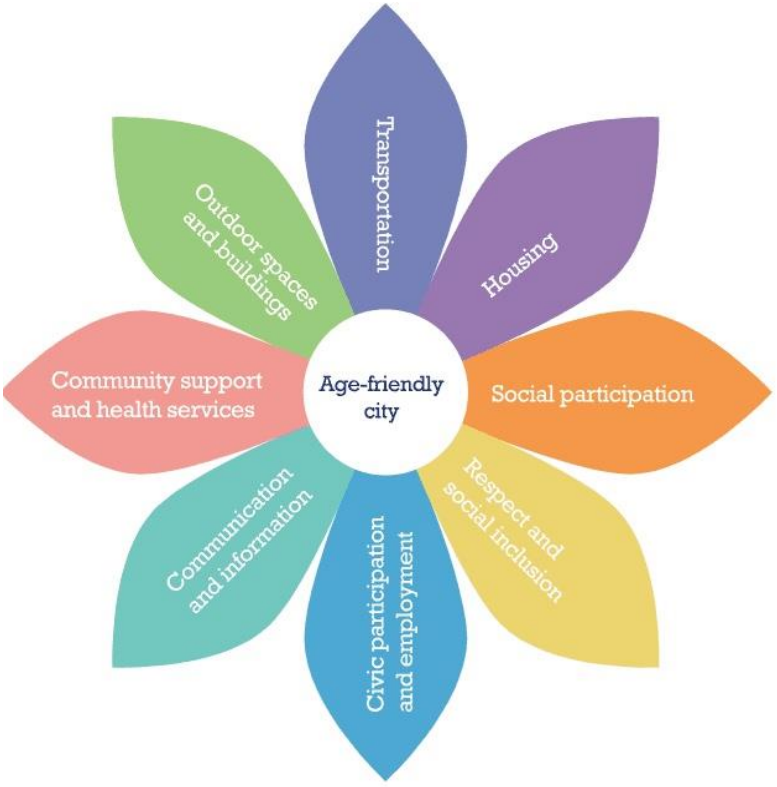


What are Age-friendly Cities and Communities?

Age-friendly Cities and Communities (AFCC) foster healthy and active ageing by creating environments that enable older people to remain connected, engaged, and included in community life. Through eight interconnected domains, the AFCC framework helps reduce physical and social barriers while promoting a participatory approach that empowers older residents to shape the development of their communities[4].

This includes improving accessibility and walkability, while creating opportunities for social interaction and activities for older people. These features support health, independence, and wellbeing, enabling them to remain as valued members of society.

Age-friendly Cities and Communities Domains[5]



Working with older people

Working with older people can be a truly rewarding experience. Older people hold valuable knowledge including memories of the past, local traditions, and a deep understanding of everyday challenges. Many also play important roles as caregivers, community leaders, volunteers, and sources of support for family and neighbours. Their warmth and a welcoming spirit enriches any participatory process and provide insights that can strengthen the design and implementation of community initiatives.

When older people are included in planning and decision making, people of all ages benefit from more inclusive communities. Intergenerational collaboration further enhances the effectiveness and sustainability of these efforts. Older people contribute historical memory, ecological knowledge, and perspectives on community change, while younger generations can support mapping, communication, digital tools, and implementation. Bringing generations together fosters mutual learning, challenges stereotypes, strengthens social cohesion, and builds greater community ownership of adaptation and development processes.

Integrating a gender perspective

Older women often experience multiple forms of disadvantage related to age, gender, income, caregiving responsibilities, and access to resources. Recognising their specific experiences, knowledge, and priorities is essential for ensuring that climate adaptation and community development processes are inclusive and equitable.

Gender should be treated as a cross-cutting theme at all stages of the process; from participatory activities and the identification of initiatives to empowering community members in decision-making. When working with communities you should be able to analyse how gender inequality shapes the ways different groups experience climate risks. For guidance on what should be considered to ensure gender inclusion, see *Annex 3 - Gender inclusion guidelines*.



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How to support age-inclusive communities that work with nature

Five steps for building age-inclusive communities that work with nature

Step 1
Preparation

Step 2
Community Engagement

Step 3
Age-Friendly Climate Community Assessment

Step 4
Age-friendly and Nature Action Plan

Step 5
Small Scale Urban Community Projects

Step 1 – Preparation

Identifying communities to work in

If you have not yet established partnerships with a specific community or are unsure how to engage with groups where people of different ages can work together, take time to carefully consider where you can make the greatest impact. Finding a good balance between community needs and what is possible to do can help build stronger participation and create longer-lasting impact.

- **Community needs and opportunities:** Look for communities affected by climate change where people could benefit from small projects that work with nature and encourage older people's participation.
- **Possibilities for delivery:** Think about whether the process can realistically be carried out with the available local support, resources, and community experience.

Secure consent from the community

A general agreement to work with the community, their members and/or within their communal spaces should be in place. It might be useful to have a written agreement, but if that is a challenge, make sure that there is formal communication with the local members and a consensus for working in their community, along with a commitment of time investment from their members. You should always make sure that all people involved are aware of what is the purpose of the project and have signed consent from all participants[6].

Assess the resources available

Start by understanding the resources the community already has. These can include spaces for meetings, expertise held by community members, and other civil society groups and organisations working there. This will help you plan how to gather information, organize workshops, prepare materials, and support small-scale actions. Think ahead about the time and effort needed, especially for coordinating with the community, organizing transport, and ensuring older people can participate comfortably.

Also consider the conditions of the places where activities will happen. Check if there is electricity, seating, and basic facilities including accessible bathrooms. In many communities, it is customary to offer snacks and drinks during workshops, so remember to include this in your planning considering older people may have different dietary requirements.

Conduct desk research

Collect existing information about the community. This can help you better understand the local context before engaging directly with people. You can find useful information from community groups, NGOs, public institutions, or universities. Some data may be publicly available, while other information may need to be requested.

Remember, this is only a starting point. The most important insights will come from working with the community members themselves. Desk research should support, not replace, participation.

Below is a list of information that may be useful. Keep in mind that every context is different, so you can adapt this list based on what is available and relevant.

List of useful information that can be found through desk research

Local context
• Community map, if possible, with infrastructure, natural resources, and vulnerable zones • Demographics of the population, disaggregated by age, gender, disability status. • List of local facilities and services, including healthcare centres, social welfare facilities, community centres, and public transportation accessible to older people. • Urban land use and zoning information, detailing built areas, green spaces and natural areas. • Community governance structure including information on older people's representation. • Socioeconomic dynamics, including poverty rates, employment patterns, and economic activities relevant to older people. • Data related to information of the most vulnerable groups, including older people living alone, people with disabilities, and low-income households. • Networks and support systems, including caregiver networks for older people. • Existing community groups, particularly Older People's Associations (OPAs).

Climate and risk
• Current and projected temperature data, highlighting heatwave frequencies. • Current and projected rainfall data, including intensity and variability affecting flooding or droughts. • Current information on hazards and risks, including flood maps, landslide-prone areas, and urban heat island zones. • Air quality and pollution, with a focus on respiratory health risks for older people. • Historical climate event data, including past extreme weather events, impacts, and recovery patterns. • Water availability and quality, considering the needs of older people for hydration and hygiene. • Impact of climate risks on public health, including vector-borne diseases, heat stress, and mental health issues. • Food security and nutrition data, highlighting age-appropriate food options. • Ecosystem health and biodiversity status, including urban green spaces, tree cover, and ecosystem services that support community resilience

Community Capacity and Resources
• Community adaptive capacity and existing coping mechanisms for climate risks. • Availability of emergency shelters ensuring accessibility for older people.

Information and Communication Systems
• Existence of early warning systems tailored for older people considering accessibility. • Communication channels and messaging strategies that are age-inclusive and culturally sensitive.

Step 2 – Community engagement

Ensuring older people's participation

A participatory approach engaging older people will provide you with some valuable and insightful information that will help collective decision making with an age perspective. Think about who your audience is, how much time each activity will take, and what activities might work well with your group. This might mean you need to have more than one session to include all the activities without trying to do too much at once. Always remember to communicate with empathy and awareness in order to create an enriching participatory environment. Below is a checklist of some key considerations for working with older people for further guidance, see *Annex 2 - Guidelines for working with older people in an intergenerational setting*



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Recommendations for age-inclusive participation
• Engage with older people and stimulate their interest in the topic and encourage them to share their day-to-day experiences with the community, climate change and nature related risks. • Hold separate focus groups for older women and men if cultural or social barriers exist or ask participants what they prefer. • Plan activities with older people of no more than 3hrs. • Plan for frequent rest breaks as per the needs of your participants and make sure bathroom facilities are available. • Create handouts with a written explanation of each concept so that participants can look at them while the discussion is ongoing or review ahead of the session or afterwards as reflection. Consider preparing a version in their native language if necessary. • Incorporate visual tools like pictograms and maps that are easy for people to understand. You may need more written content on handouts in large type to help participants understand key concepts, or you might need to provide more oral explanation of what is being discussed. • Ensure venues are physically accessible for participants with mobility challenges and that everyone can travel to the venue (if not, you may need to provide transportation or pay for their transportation). • Encourage intergenerational discussions to leverage the experiences and innovation of both older people and younger people. • Create ways for older people to continuously provide input, ensuring their concerns are addressed throughout the project lifecycle.

Activities you can organise

Encourage activities that help older people share their voices and take part in decision-making[7]. Below is a list of information that suggests simple activities you can use to stimulate discussion and gather information at different stages, with an age-inclusive perspective for more specific details for developing these activities, see *Annex 5 - Workshop Planning.*

Tools for community participation

Transect walk through the community
A short tour guided by community members to identify climate-related hazards, urban challenges, community assets, and potential opportunities for action through the perspectives, experiences, and historical memory of older people.

Stage: ◉ Assessment ◉ Action plan ○ Project

Focus Groups
Conversations that encourage the participation of older people and gather diverse community perspectives on nature, inclusion, community development, and climate change.

Stage: ◉ Assessment ◉ Action plan ◉ Project

Key Informant Interviews
One-on-one conversations with local leaders, community members and experts to better understand climate risks, their impacts on older people, and opportunities for action.

Stage: ◉ Assessment ◉ Action plan ○ Project

Community Mapping
Collaborative exercise to map the location of climate hazards and community assets; as well as their ideas, dreams, proposals and prospective projects in an easy-to-visualize mapping exercise.

Stage: ◉ Assessment ◉ Action plan ○ Project

Spatial Co-Design Workshop
Participants engage in hands-on workshops to co-create design ideas on a floorplan or physical model of the community or space, with movable elements that encourages the community to explore space for small scale community projects in a creative way.

Stage: ○ Assessment ○ Action plan ◉ Project

Community workshop
Community members interact in activities to better understand climate change risks, biodiversity, and how these impact the daily lives of older people and their wellbeing.

Stage: ◉ Assessment ◉ Action plan ◉ Project

Case Study 1:

Participatory process: from community engagement to action

Bosque San Juan de Aragon - Mexico

Our participatory community engagement process started at Bosque San Juan de Aragón, one of the largest urban parks in Mexico City. It aimed to undertake a community climate assessment and develop and implement small, community-driven projects.

The process began with intergenerational workshops where participants, older and younger people, identified and mapped climate-related risks affecting their community. Transect walks through the park allowed participants to see how an existing urban garden responds to local environmental conditions, while informal conversations highlighted opportunities to take practical actions.

Participatory mapping workshop



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Participatory mapping workshop



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Through this process, relevant local stakeholders were identified, creating opportunities for partnerships and scaling up actions. A clear opportunity emerged when a community dining group said they were interested in transforming their backyard into a vegetables, fruits and herbs garden to support the daily meals they provide to residents.

To develop this idea, community members visited similar initiatives and took part in hands-on co-design workshops. Using a simple site plan and symbolic tokens, they defined the new garden layout, exploring where to place crops, compost areas, and resting spaces. They also used digital communication tools to share ideas and provide feedback during the design process.

During implementation, community members participated in practical trainings on planting, composting, and water harvesting, which strengthened their sense of ownership and encouraged them to maintain and activate the new growing space over time.

Spatial co-design workshop



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Pots from planting workshop



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Step 3 – Age-friendly Climate Community Assessment

At this stage you will probably have a lot of qualitative information from the community and some relevant data resulting from the desk research which you can use to create summaries related to the local context including the ecosystem and how climate change impacts older people in the community. This will also be an opportunity to describe community assets and key findings that could be translated to opportunities to be taken forward in a nature-based community strategy with an age-inclusion perspective.

The assessment should consider four sections[8] related to community context, climate and ecosystem context, community risk and key findings:

Climate assessment contents

Community context
- A description of experiences of living in the community from older people's perspectives.

Climate and ecosystem
- A description of the local climate and the natural environment.

Climate change risks
- Identification of climate change related risks and how these can impact older people.

Key findings
- General results of the engagement process and key opportunities to take forward.

Community context

Write a description of the community in a way that helps others understand who lives there and what daily life is like. Include key information about age, gender, and population trends, such as migration or ageing, as well as basic conditions like income, education, and types of work. Highlight the role of older people; how they contribute to the community and how they depend on nature and local resources. Identify important assets such as parks, green spaces, and gardens, along with essential services like health centres, community spaces, and public transport. Pay special attention to how easy it is for older people to access and move around these places. You may also include a brief overview of local governance and key actors involved in the community.

Climate and ecosystem context

Describe the local climate in simple terms, whether it is hot or cold, dry or rainy, windy or calm, and note any changes or trends that may affect the community. Then describe the local ecosystem, including natural features such as plants, animals, insects, rivers, hills, or other landscape elements, and mention if these are native species and how they support daily life. Identify any pressures on the environment, such as urban growth, pollution, or climate change. Understanding both the climate and the ecosystem will help show how nature supports the community and how it can be strengthened.

Ecosystem services

Provisioning services

Things that nature gives us to support our daily lives.

Think about:

- Places where people grow food
- Sources of water
- Plants that people can use for food or medicine



Regulating services

Ways nature helps us to adapt to the changing climate.

Think about:

- Trees that provide shade and reduce heat
- Green areas that improve air quality
- Spaces that absorb rainwater and reduce flooding

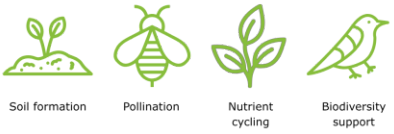


Supporting services

Processes that keep healthy natural spaces.

Think about:

- Soil for native plants
- Spaces for birds, butterflies, and pollinators
- Natural areas that support local fauna



Cultural services

Ways nature helps us feel healthy, connected, and happy.

Think about:

- Spaces where people can meet and interact
- Areas for recreation, learning, and cultural activities
- Green spaces that improve mental health and wellbeing



You can greatly benefit from the knowledge of older people, as they have a deep understanding of how the natural environment has changed over time and the reasons behind these changes.

Community risk related to climate change

Describe how risks are affecting the community from the perspective of older people. Identify the most relevant climate-related hazards, how people's livelihoods and ecosystems are exposed to them, and the community's vulnerability in terms of how sensitive older people are to harm and whether they have the capacity to cope with or adapt to these impacts.

Below there is some general guidance on different types of hazards, their levels of exposure and vulnerability, and how they may impact older people[9].

Hazards, exposure and impacts on older people

Hydro-meteorological hazards		
Hazard	**Exposure**	**Impact on older people**
 **Storms and winds**		
Including hurricanes, cyclones, typhoons, thunderstorms, and tornadoes.	Generally, impact is felt across the entire community, however, sometimes there are specific streets or spaces where wind is felt more strongly, for example near tall buildings.	Increased risk of injury or death due to mobility and physical limitations.
 **Flooding**		
• Local flooding from heavy rain. • Rivers overflowing. • Coastal flooding from high tides, storm surges, or sea-level rise. • Flash floods by intense rainfall.	Identify if there are specific areas of the community where these hazards would happen, for example on flat land next to the river.	Difficulty evacuating quickly, increased risk of waterborne diseases, and disruption of essential services.
 **Heat-related**		
• Extremely hot days or heatwaves lasting several days or weeks. • Heat islands in urban areas with higher temperatures due to concrete surfaces and lack of greenery.	Hot times of the day or a heatwave lasting several days – are there places or buildings in the community that feel hotter than other areas? Are areas with less green cover or natural tree shading hotter?	Higher susceptibility to heat stress, dehydration, and exacerbation of chronic health conditions.
 **Cold-related**		
• Cold waves or extremely cold days. • Snowstorms and blizzards.	Are there some types of houses or constructions that the cold weather is felt more?	Increased risk of hypothermia, respiratory issues, and limited mobility due to icy conditions.
 **Drought and water scarcity**		
• Prolonged dry periods leading to reduced water supply. • Groundwater depletion due to overuse and lack of rainfall.	Does everyone in the community have access to water, or would drought impact some areas more than others? Drought can also impact ecosystems such as trees and parks, as well as people.	Challenges in accessing clean water and maintaining hydration affect overall health.
 **Wildfires**		
• Forest fires due to dry conditions and high temperatures. • Bushfires and grassland fires.	Are there parts of the community more susceptible to wildfires? Do rural fires affect the air quality in the community?	Reduced ability to evacuate quickly, respiratory issues due to smoke, and loss of shelter and resources

Geological hazards		
Hazard	**Exposure**	**Impact on older people**
 **Earthquakes**		
Sudden shaking of the ground due to tectonic activity	Do earthquakes often happen? Are there locations that the impact is affected more? Are there some types of houses/buildings more prone to be affected?	Increased risk of injury due to mobility challenges during evacuation.
 **Volcanic eruptions**		
Including lava flows, ash fall, pyroclastic flows, and volcanic gases.	Is the air quality affected by volcanic eruptions?	Respiratory health risks from ash and gases, and difficulty in rapid evacuation.
 **Landslides and mudslides**		
Landslides due to heavy rainfall, earthquakes, or unstable slopes.	Are there places in the community where there is a risk of landslides happening? Are people living there?	Challenges in evacuation and higher vulnerability to injury or displacement.
 **Tsunamis**		
Giant Sea waves caused by underwater earthquakes or volcanic eruptions	• Which areas are affected by tsunamis, they tend to be lowlands close to the shore. • Are there areas, houses, roads or neighbourhoods that have been affected?	• Difficulty in reaching higher ground quickly, leading to higher mortality risk. • Risk of injury or isolation due to mobility limitations and infrastructural damage

Environmental hazards		
Hazard	**Exposure**	**Impact on older people**
 **Environmental degradation**		
•Deforestation, desertification, and soil erosion. • Water pollution and contamination.	Which areas present less trees, or green cover? Are there areas affected by new settlements? Are natural areas holding biodiversity affected by deforestation or urban occupation?	Loss of livelihood resources, decreased access to clean water and food, impacting health and nutrition.
 **Resource conflicts**		
Conflicts over water, land, or other natural resources.	Are there community members or urban areas immersed in conflicts related to the access of natural resources.	Displacement and social instability, leading to isolation and mental health issues.

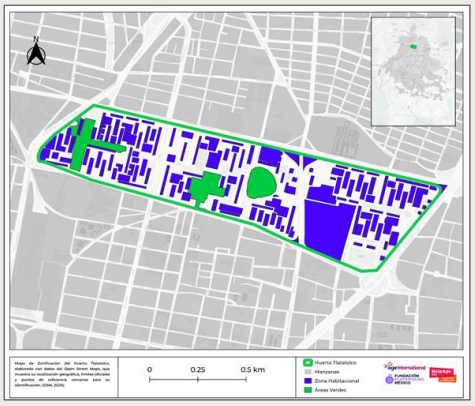
Case Study 2:

Age-friendly Climate Community Assessment

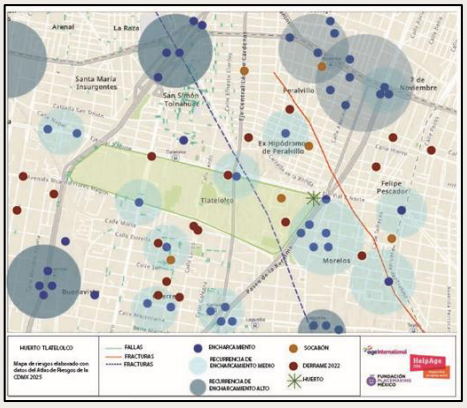
Tlatelolco neighbourhood - Mexico

The Tlatelolco Urban Garden is located in a dense housing complex built on former lakebed soil. Local green areas are isolated from each other, and biodiversity is low, with weakened trees and limited native species.

Map of green areas in Tlatelolco



Map identifying hazards



We conducted an assessment process which centred older people. Through workshops, transect walks, and mapping, the participation of older people helped to identify specific risks such as flooded walkways, extreme heat in paved plazas, and unsafe surfaces due to cracks. Hearing about their daily routines helped pinpoint where climate impacts are most felt, especially related to mobility and health.

Tlatelolco risk assessment

Hazard	Exposure	Older people vulnerability
Heavy rainfall and flooding	Flooded sidewalks and streets; damaged surfaces	Limited mobility; dependence on safe pathways
Heatwaves	Little shade; too much pavement; fewer trees	Sensitive to heat; limited access to cooling
Loss of green areas	Fewer and damaged green spaces; weak trees Fewer areas for birds and small animals Decline of native fauna	Dependence on green areas for comfort and recreation Loss of connection with nature and local culture
Environmental health risks	Poor air and water quality affecting the whole community	Higher risk of respiratory and stomach illnesses
Land subsidence and cracks	Uneven sidewalks, streets, and buildings	High risk when walking; unsafe terrain
Seismic risk	Living in a high-risk area; memory of past earthquakes	Ongoing fear and emotional stress

This participatory process led to a community assessment grounded in lived experience as older people linked environmental decline (loss of trees, fauna, and soil quality) with higher temperatures, poor air, and reduced well-being. At the same time, they recognized local natural assets; such as shaded paths, and small green areas.

The process showed that older people are not only vulnerable but also can provide local knowledge, and can help connect climate risks with practical, nature-based solutions.

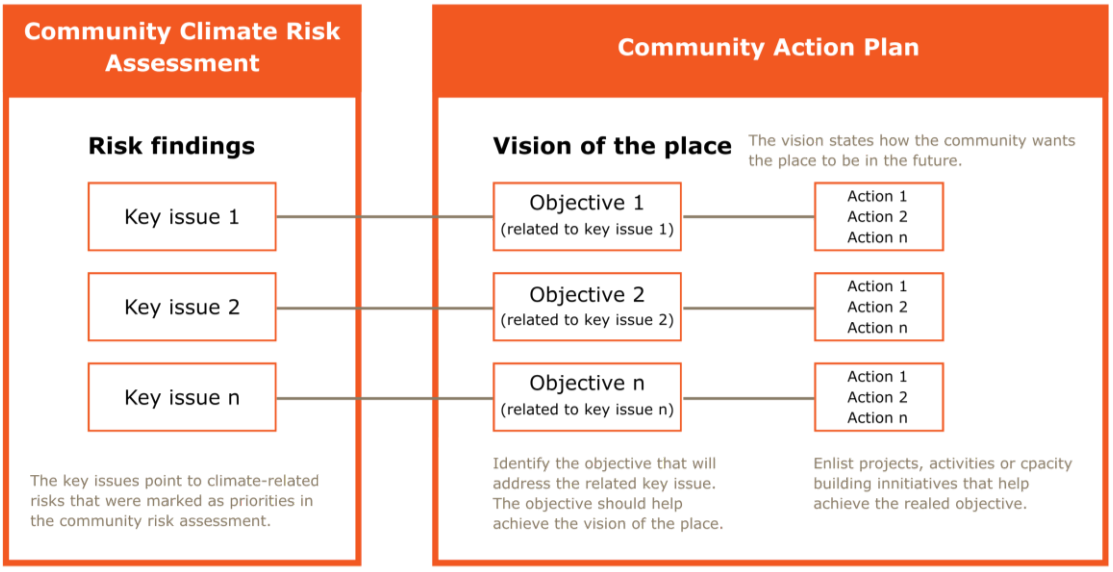
Step 4 – Age-friendly and Nature Action Plan

Integrate key findings from the community assessment

Once you have identified the key findings from the Step 3 – Age-friendly Climate Community Assessment, you are ready to turn these insights into actions that can improve the community. An Action Plan helps define practical steps that respond to local challenges and opportunities. Under this approach, you focus on actions that use nature and biodiversity to adapt to climate change, while also creating more inclusive and welcoming community urban spaces. A key part of the plan is ensuring that older people are not only included, but actively involved in decision-making and able to benefit from these actions.

You can adjust the scope and scale of the plan depending on what feels most relevant. You might work at the scale of the whole community, or focus on a specific group or place where change is most needed[10].

Action plan framework



Building a shared vision

The vision is a statement that reflects what the community hopes to become. It brings together shared ideas about sustainability, inclusion of older people, and overall wellbeing, and helps guide collective action.

When you build the vision with the community, aim for something that is inspiring but also realistic, based on local strengths and opportunities. This process should be worked collectively, as the vision becomes a shared statement that represents everyone and encourages people to move forward as a community.

Identifying objectives

Next, think about what needs to happen to make that vision real. These are your objectives. They provide direction to help organise efforts in a clear way. You can group them around key themes, such as improving the environment, reducing climate risks, encouraging social interaction and creating more opportunities for older people to participate and feel included in community life and community spaces.

Defining community actions

Now it's time to turn vision and objectives into action. Bring together all the possible projects, ideas and activities you have discussed with the community. Go through them together and ask: What is most important? What can we realistically do with the time and resources we have? This step helps you prioritise and focus your efforts.

Keep your actions simple, clear, and practical. When people understand what will happen and why it matters, they are more likely to get involved and stay engaged.

Below there are some initiatives that can help you explore different types of actions and inspire ideas that connect community priorities with nature-based solutions, while also strengthening the role and participation of older people[11].

Ideas for nature-based age-friendly community projects

Public spaces and streets Making streets and public spaces safe, comfortable, and welcoming for older people, while adding nature.					
Ideas	**Cost**	**Impact on**			
		Accessibility	**Awareness**	**Wellbeing**	**Climate Adaptation**
Murals and colours in streets Make places more friendly and share messages about nature and inclusion.	$		◉		
Intergenerational playgrounds Bring people together in accessible and safe spaces; include trees and natural elements.	$$$	◉		◉	◉
Accessible design for public spaces and streets Make urban spaces easy to use for everyone; add shade and green areas to reduce heat impact.	$$$	◉			◉
Sensory gardens Create spaces with native plants that people can see, smell, and touch; help people relax and stay cool.	$			◉	◉
Intergenerational urban gardens Grow food together and support nature. Make sure that these gardens are suitable for older people work.	$$	◉		◉	◉
Walking safe routes Make walking safer; add shade and protection from heat.	$$$	◉		◉	
Tree planting day Engage older people to plant trees to give shade, clean air.	$		◉		◉
Signage for older people Help people find their way to community places and spaces; share safety and environmental information.	$$	◉	◉		

Bringing older people together Helping older people meet, share, and take part in community life					
Ideas	**Cost**	**Impact on**			
		Accessibility	**Awareness**	**Wellbeing**	**Climate Adaptation**
Community exhibitions Opportunities for sharing stories and ideas by older and younger people; raise awareness about nature and the environment.	$$		◉	◉	◉
Walking tours for older people Tour days around the community for older people to visit local landmarks and community spaces including parks and other green spaces.	$	◉	◉	◉	
Board game days in public space Bring people together and build friendships by experiencing nature in recreational activities.	$	◉		◉	
Outdoor activities day Keep people healthy by doing outdoor activities surrounded by nature in green spaces (yoga, Tai Chi, dancing, cycling, etc).	$$	◉		◉	◉
Cultural activities (music, theatre, cinema) Recreational activities that include older people; include themes related to the natural environment.	$$		◉	◉	◉
Crafts day for older people Encourage creativity, activities could take place in green spaces or have themes related to the environment.	$		◉	◉	
Storytelling in the park Encourage community members to share experiences and knowledge about nature and life.	$		◉	◉	◉

Empowering older people Supporting older people to act and lead in their communities.					
Ideas	**Cost**	**Impact on**			
		Accessibility	**Awareness**	**Wellbeing**	**Climate Adaptation**
Community platform for older people A space for older people to share ideas and take part in decisions on issues related to their local urban context.	$	◉	◉	◉	
Older people voice advocacy Help older people to speak up and be heard by local stakeholders including authorities.	$$	◉	◉	◉	◉
Training in environmental issues Teach people how to care for nature and face climate challenges.	$$		◉		◉
Awareness campaigns for age inclusion Promote respect and inclusion for older people including on themes related to climate change.	$$	◉	◉	◉	
Waste management capacity building Teach how to reduce and manage waste, including reusing, reducing and recycling opportunities.	$$		◉		◉
Nutrition learning Promote healthy eating for older people with local and sustainable food.	$		◉	◉	◉

Mapping the actions

Choosing locations for your actions to take place can turn ideas into clearly defined projects and help show real, tangible results from the Action Plan. At this stage, you can create a simple and easy-to-understand map to show where key actions might happen – both physical interventions and changes, as well as events and activities. The map does not need to be precise or technical. It should be clear, friendly, and designed in a way that supports shared understanding and avoids conflicts within the community or with other stakeholders. Think about taking action in existing community gardens, empty spaces, or the community's public space.

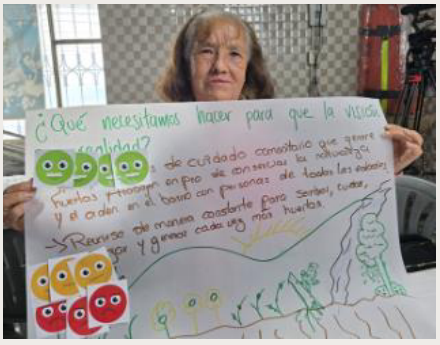
Case Study 3:

Community Age-friendly and Nature Action Plan

Brisas del Volador community - Colombia

In Brisas del Volador, Ciudad Bolívar, the community developed an Age-friendly and Nature Action Plan to strengthen their existing urban gardens as key spaces for climate resilience and social inclusion. The process built on a participatory assessment where residents, including older people, identified local risks such as heavy rainfall, heat, and landslides, as well as opportunities linked to gardens, green areas, and water use.

Community workshop for building the vision



Daniela Vásquez | HelpAge International

Through workshops, the community co-created a shared vision focused on being organized, united, and connected to nature. Older people played a central role, with useful contributions in terms of knowledge of planting, composting, and resource management The process also helped build stronger collaboration between neighbours and reinforced the role of older people as leaders and knowledge holders.

Community workshop registering actions in a matrix



Daniela Vásquez | HelpAge International

Together, the community identified practical actions. They discussed ways to collect and reuse rainwater, improve composting, grow a wider variety of plants, and organize regular days to care for the gardens. These activities not only support the environment but also create opportunities for people to meet, learn, and support each other.

Brisas del Volador action plan summary	
Vision: *"To be the most organized, united neighbourhood with the most gardens in Ciudad Bolivar, while being friendly to nature."*	
Objectives: • Promote community unity and care through gardens • Conserve and reuse water • Practice the three Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) • Use and care of community's public spaces	**Key Actions:** • Establish specific days to care for green spaces • Integrated rainwater harvesting and greywater reuse • Solid waste separation at source • Plastic material recycling • Diversification of plant species (food, medicinal, and shade trees)

Step 5 – Small scale urban community projects

Implementing small urban interventions

This final step focuses on implementing small urban projects, such as improvements to public spaces, green areas, urban gardens, streets, or community centres. These types of projects offer opportunities to adapt communities to climate change by working with nature while creating spaces that are welcoming for people of all ages, especially older people. By making thoughtful improvements to accessibility, comfort, identity, and learning opportunities, your community can become a vibrant hub for health, social interaction, and environmental awareness. These changes do not always require large investments; small, intentional actions can make a big difference, especially for older people and others who may face barriers to participation. Creating an inclusive and welcoming community is about designing a space where everyone feels they belong.

Recommendations for building nature-based age-friendly small projects

- **Project scope:** Agree with the community on what you want to do and how big the project should be. Make sure it is realistic by considering the resources available. Most importantly, be clear about the main change you want to achieve together.
- **Project design:** Turn ideas into a simple design using drawings or visual examples. Work with the community to choose key elements such as materials, plants, and features, keeping the design easy to understand and practical to build.
- **Construction:** Build the project using local resources such as existing materials on the site and local skilled workers where possible. Respect the community's timelines and make decisions together with the community if changes are needed.
- **Launching event:** Celebrate the completion of the project with the community. Organize a simple event to bring people together, enjoy the space, and highlight the importance of caring for nature and supporting older people.

Designing age-friendly nature-based projects

When designing a small age-friendly nature-based project, think creatively and inclusively. Also, focus on ideas that make a real impact and encourage community members and local stakeholders to take part in the process to build a sense of ownership.

Key questions for designing an age-friendly nature-based project

When you start defining which ideas will take place in your project, you should try to think how the project will address the following:

- Does this project support both people and nature?
- Can older people use this space comfortably and safely?
- Will people want to spend time here and come back?
- Is the design simple, practical, and appropriate for the local context?

Your project doesn't need to include all the design features suggested below, but the list can be useful to ensure that you have considered all the options, possibilities, and opportunities your community space provides. Having said that, basic accessibility is an essential requirement for any project to ensure that persons with disabilities can fully participate.

Key elements for and age-friendly nature-based project[12]



Nature based design

Use nature to reduce climate impacts, improve comfort, and make spaces greener and more attractive.

- Increase or preserve green areas as much as possible.
- Include permeable surfaces (plants, soil, gravel) as much as possible instead of hard paving.
- Include shade from trees or vegetation to help reduce heat for older people.
- Choose local or climate-adapted plants that are easier to maintain.
- Choose some plants that can support local diets and nutrition for older people
- Consider planting stratification, planting cycles and polyculture planting in accordance with ancestral knowledge.
- Support biodiversity by planting a mix of species that attract birds and pollinators and create sensory experiences for older people.
- Take care of the soil by using organic practices, encouraging community composting.
- Look for simple ways to manage water, such as collecting rainwater or improving infiltration.



Accessibility, safety, walkability & movement

Improve physical access and safety so everyone can use the space comfortably, and connect it to encourage walking and daily movement

- Make sure the space is easy to enter and move through, especially for people with reduced mobility.
- Provide clear and stable paths that are easy to follow, avoid or reduce uneven surfaces, steps, or obstacles where possible.
- Where needed, include ramps, handrails, or markings to improve safety.
- Make sure key areas such as seating, toilets and activity spaces are accessible to everyone.
- When older people are involved in farming, adapt planting structures to facilitate work (raised bed gardens, special tools, handrails).
- Provide or identify accessible toilets, either on-site or nearby.
- Create paths in the community that encourage walking and gentle movement (community local map).
- Connect the space to nearby streets, public transport and local services.



Welcoming visual identity

Create a positive and inclusive look that helps people recognise the place and feel invited to enter and stay.

- Give the space a clear identity (name, colours, or theme).
- Use simple and visible signage to help people understand and navigate the space.
- Add colours, murals, or visual elements to make the space more inviting.
- Design with clear reference points so people can easily recognize where they are.
- Reflect local culture and community identity in murals.



Social spaces for wellbeing

Spaces that encourage social interaction, and physical activity.

- Provide different types of seating for different needs (groups, pairs, and alone)
- Include seating with backrests and armrests for comfort
- Create spaces for both social interaction and quiet rest
- Think about how the space can help reduce isolation and bring people together
- Provide shade and shelter so people can stay longer comfortably
- Think about physical activities that could be implemented (yoga, dancing, cycling).
- Design spaces that can be used in different ways (resting, meeting, playing, etc.) or could adapt in time for other uses.



Learning and connection with nature

Use the space for education, awareness, and deeper connection with the environment.

- Provide basic information about climate and sustainability where relevant.
- Think about how the space can host workshops, activities, or community events.
- Include signage or boards about climate change.
- Information boards or signage about nature, plants, animals that help people connect with nature.



Materials sustainability

Use local materials and design the space so it is easy to care for over time.

- Use local materials whenever possible and avoid those that harm the environment.
- Reuse or recover materials where you can.
- Avoid excessive use of concrete or sealed surfaces.
- Use construction methods that fit the local context and skills.
- Avoid sharp, splintery components, objects or edges

Case Study 4:

A natural community space for all ages

Maravillas de la Montaña urban garden - Colombia

In Ciudad Bolívar, Bogotá, the Maravillas de la Montaña urban garden was renovated through a co-creation process that placed older community members at the centre of design and decision-making. The goal was to transform an existing garden into a more inclusive, productive, and climate-responsive space for everyone.

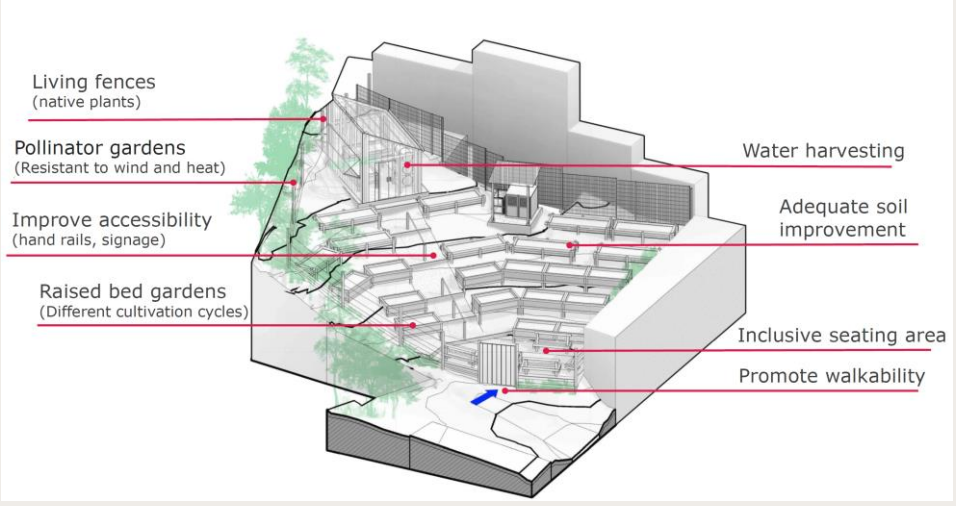


Urban garden placed in the hill Ciudad Bolivar locality

Bé Estudio - Yemail Arquitectura | HepAge International

Through participatory workshops and meetings, older people shared their knowledge of gardening, their daily needs, and ideas for improving the space. This exchange shaped key design decisions: raised planting beds were built at comfortable heights, pathways were improved, handrails were placed where needed, and seating areas with armrests were added for rest and social interaction.

Nature-based solutions were introduced to help the garden and the wider community adapt to climate change. These included living fences that attract pollinators, a wider variety of crops, a greenhouse to increase plant production, vegetation that cools the space and improves air quality, and a water harvesting system to support maintenance of the garden during the dry season.



As a result, the garden is now more friendly and welcoming to older people, and it has established its role as a social hub where people come together to share and connect with younger generations, and most important to feel part of a supportive community.

Handrails, raised bed gardens and seating area for older people



Bé Estudio - Yemail Arquitectura | HelpAge International

Food diversity, greenhouse green fences



Bé Estudio - Yemail Arquitectura | HelpAge International

Evaluating the impact of the project

Evaluating the process is important for understanding what has changed in the community, identifying lessons learned, and exploring ways to sustain and strengthen the initiative over time. It can assess both physical outcomes, and social outcomes, including participation, social connection, perceptions of safety, climate comfort, and the role of older people in decision-making. Using stories, photographs, quotes, and simple evidence briefs can help communicate both achievements and lessons learned to local authorities and other communities interested in replicating similar initiatives.

It is also important to recognise that projects that do not achieve all their intended outcomes can be just as valuable as those considered successful. Challenges and unexpected results offer important learning opportunities that can help improve future approaches.

Choose and gather data on a few simple to measure indicators before and after the project to track key results. This provides tangible evidence of the impact of the project and the level of participation.

Indicators for age-friendly nature-based small urban projects	
Indicator	**Description**
Urban green area	Measure the surface of the green areas that have been implemented, protected, or expanded.
Biodiversity	Quantify the different types of plant species that have been planted and harvested.
Pollinators	Measure the surface of plant species that support pollinator species.
Rainwater harvesting	Measure the volume of water collected in the tanks or other harvesting systems during specific months to determine how much is being collected and used.
Community participants	Record the number of individuals actively participating in the project's participatory related activities.
Age inclusion	Record the number of older and younger people participating and calculate their ratio for comparison to establish intergenerational equity.
Disability inclusion	Record the number of persons with disability participating in the projects' activities and calculate their ratio. Make sure that you disaggregate by types of disabilities.
Gender inclusion	Record the number of women and men involved in the project's activities and calculate their ratio to establish gender equity.
Community activities	Count the number of recreational or capacity training events held and the number of participants involved in these activities.

It's also valuable to listen directly to community members. Through interviews or small focus groups, you can learn how the project is affecting people's lives; especially in terms of climate adaptation, connection with nature, and the active involvement of older people.

Questions for community impact evaluation
The following questions could help you evaluate the impact of the project in the community: • Can you tell us about how you use this place, and what brings you here? • What makes this place feel welcoming (or not welcoming) for you and for other people in your community? • Have you learned anything here, or shared knowledge or skills with others? Can you give an example? • How does spending time in this place affect your wellbeing, physically, mentally, or emotionally? • Have you noticed ways this place helps the community respond to heat, rain, food needs, or changes in the climate?

Case Study 5:

Evaluation, Lessons learned and partnerships

Nuevos Horizontes urban garden - Mexico

The urban garden at the Nuevos Horizontes communal dining room was created as a community space to support food production, inclusion, and climate awareness, bringing together diverse age groups, especially older people. As part of evaluating the project, the impact of the changes to the garden was explored through a focus group with 20 participants, including older people, local leaders, and community members connected to the dining room and garden.

Through open conversations, participants reflected on how they use the space and what it means to them. Many described it as a place to connect with others and shared that they enjoy being surrounded by nature. One older participant explained how supporting daily tasks in the garden gave him a renewed sense of purpose, while another highlighted how bringing children to the space creates opportunities for learning and connection across generations.

The discussion revealed that the garden is not only a place for growing food, but also a space for wellbeing and learning. Participants spoke about improved emotional health, new knowledge of composting and planting, and visible environmental changes such as increased biodiversity and cooler, shaded areas.

The project and the focus group also helped strengthen relationships with other community initiatives based in the same space, opening opportunities for partnerships through shared workshops, cultural events, and educational visits.

Intergenerational focus group



Diego Collazos | HelpAge International

Register of focus group findings



Diego Collazos | HelpAge International

The evaluation highlighted how inclusive design features, such as raised planting beds and a welcoming community dynamic support participation of older people, while also pointing to areas for improvement like communication outreach. It also showed that engaging people through dialogue can activate new ideas and commitments for the future.

> *"We stay to do activities, we play a quick outdoor game, do some stretching. Many older people usually just go out for a walk, but we invite them to come, spend time with us, and find a sense of calm."*
>
> **Patricia, Age 65**

> *"After building the garden, birds we had never seen before have started to appear, along with new animal species, even squirrels. It is valuable to have a space of tranquillity and recreation within the urban area."*
>
> **Jose Miguel, Age 74**

Endnotes

[1] World Health Organization. (2025). Ageing and health. Retrieved from https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ageing-and-health

[2] Annex 1 - Key Concepts provides basic definitions of key concepts and other resources to have clearer understanding of the main criteria related to the environment, climate change and Ecosystem based Adaptation (EbA).

[3] Figure designed by author based in: Friends of Ecosystem based Adaptation (FEBA). (2017). EbA Criteria. Retrieved from https://friendsofeba.com/EbA-criteria/

[4] Annex 1 - Key Concepts provides basic definitions of key concepts and other resources to have clearer understanding of the main criteria related to inclusive urban spaces for older people and Age-friendly Cities and Communities (AFCC).

[5] Source: World Health Organization. (2007). Global age-friendly cities: a guide. WHO.

[6] Participants of workshops or community engagement activities should have a signed consent form in which they agree that the facilitators have the permission to use the collected information and any audio/visual material. The consented information includes photos/videos of the participants or their houses, testimonials, information collected during the workshops. In case there are minors, the consent form should be filled and signed by one of their parents or legal guardians. Annex 4 - Consent form template, provides the template for the consent form.

[7] HelpAge International developed the Voice and AFCC Module, a practical framework for strengthening older peoples' advocacy through their voices. It can be adapted to topics related to their urban surroundings including public space, mobility and climate change.

[8] Annex 6 - Age-friendly Climate Community Assessment report template includes a form with the main considerations to develop in each of the sections.

[9] Annex 8 - Tool for analysing climate risks and their impacts on older people is a matrix that can be helpful to identify the intersections between hazards, vulnerability and exposure with emphasis in older people.

[10] Annex 7 - Age-friendly and Nature Action Plan report template, includes a basic template to input a simple community EbA Action Plan.

[11] Annex 9 - Tool for age-friendly Ecosystem based Adaptation includes a comprehensive format to analyse how they relate to older people and climate change adaptation.

[12] Nature-based initiatives that can be complemented with Age-friendly project ideas identified in: HelpAge International. (2022). Let's Go: steps for engaging older people and improving communities for all ages. PAHO, HelpAge International and AARP.



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Annexes

The annexes bring together the key information and practical tools that support this document. They include shared definitions, guidance for working with communities, and simple templates to help plan, carry out, and document the work.

Overall, they are designed to be useful in practice. They combine concepts on climate change, ecosystems, and age-friendly communities with step-by-step guidance on inclusive and participatory approaches. There is a strong focus on ensuring older people are meaningfully involved, alongside considerations around gender and accessibility.

The annexes also provide tools to help analyse risks, develop action plans, and organise findings in a clear and structured way.

Annex 1 - Key Concepts

The definitions included are provided by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Friends of Ecosystem based Adaptation (FEBA), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities (GNAFCC).

Environmental concepts

- **Adaptive capacity:** Appraises the ability of systems, institutions, humans and other organisms to adjust to potential damage, to take advantage of opportunities, or to respond to consequences.
- **Climate change:** A change in the state of the climate that can be identified (e.g., by using statistical tests) by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its properties and that persists for an extended period, typically decades of longer.
- **Climate change adaptation:** In human systems, the process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects, in order to moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities. In natural systems, the process of adjustment to actual climate and its effects; human intervention may facilitate adjustment to expected climate and its effects.
- **Climate change mitigation:** A human intervention to reduce emissions or enhance the sinks of greenhouse gases.
- **Ecosystem:** A dynamic complex of plant, animal and micro-organism communities and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit.
- **Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA):** The use of biodiversity and ecosystem services as part of an overall adaptation strategy to help people to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change (CBD, 2009). EbA has three elements: it 1) helps people adapt to climate change; 2) uses biodiversity and ecosystems; and 3) is part of a broader climate change adaptation strategy; and has five associated qualification criteria.

Ecosystem-based Adaptation criteria



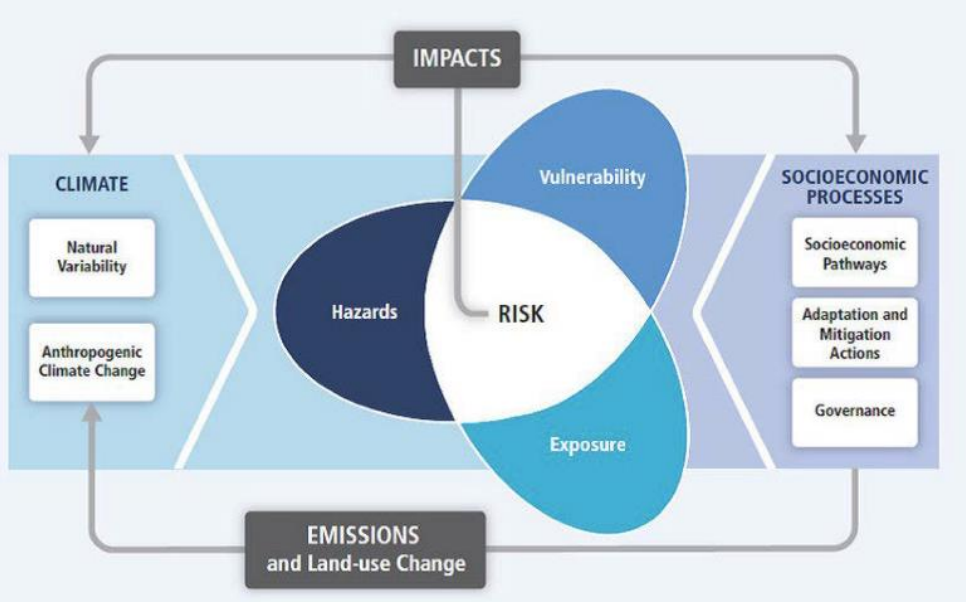
Source: (Friends of Ecosystem based Adaptation (FEBA), 2017)

- **Ecosystem services:** The benefits people obtain from ecosystems. These can be grouped into provisioning, regulating, supporting and cultural services.
- **Exposure:** The presence of people, livelihoods, species or ecosystems, environmental functions, services, and resources, infrastructure, or economic, social, or cultural assets in places and settings that could be adversely affected.
- **Hazard:** Climate-related physical events or trends, which may manifest as sudden events, like heavy rainfall, or as slow-onset changes, such as rising temperatures or sea-level rise. While not all hazards are extreme weather events, their likelihood and severity should be assessed by defining them in measurable terms, such as the

frequency and intensity of critical events (e.g., 'heavy rain events' instead of general 'rain').

- **Nature-based Solutions (NbS):** Actions to protect, sustainably manage and restore natural and modified ecosystems in ways that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, to provide both human well-being and biodiversity benefits. It is an umbrella term for a range of nature-based approaches, including Ecosystem-based Adaptation.
- **Resilience**: The capacity of social, economic and environmental systems to cope with a hazardous event, trend, or disturbance, responding or reorganising in ways that maintain their essential function, identity and structure, while also maintaining the capacity for adaptation, learning and transformation.
- **Risk:** The potential for consequences where something of value is at stake and where the outcome is uncertain, recognizing the diversity of values. Risk is often represented as probability of occurrence of hazardous events or trends multiplied by the impacts if these events or trends occur. Risk results from the interaction of vulnerability, exposure, and hazard.

Risk framework



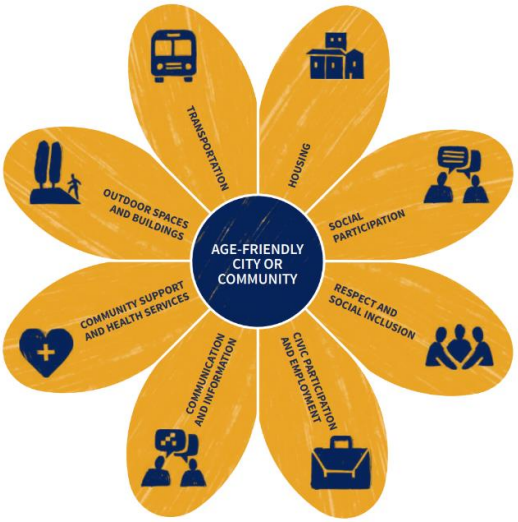
Source: (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Fifth Assessment, 2014)

- **Sensitivity analysis:** Evaluates the degree to which a system or species is affected, either adversely or beneficially, by climate variability or change.
- **Vulnerability:** The propensity or predisposition of a socio-ecological system to be adversely affected. Vulnerability encompasses a variety of concepts and elements including sensitivity or susceptibility to harm and lack of capacity to cope and adapt.

Age-friendly Cities and Communities concepts

- **Accessibility:** The degree to which an environment, service, or product allows access by as many people as possible.
- **Active ageing:** The process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation, and security to enhance quality of life as people age.
- **Age-friendly Cities and Communities:** Cities or communities that foster healthy and active ageing.

Domains for Age-friendly Cities and Communities



Source: (World Health Organization, 2023)

- **Age-friendly environment:** An environment (such as a home or community) that fosters healthy, active ageing by maintaining intrinsic capacity and enabling functional ability.
- **Ageing in (the right) place:** The ability to live safely and comfortably in a suitable home or community that meets one's needs and preferences.
- **Ageism:** Stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination based on age.
- **Barrier:** Any environmental factor that limits functional ability.
- **Built environment:** The human-made physical aspects of a community, including buildings, roads, parks, and utilities.
- **Caregiver:** A person providing care and support, including self-care assistance, emotional support, advocacy, and capacity-building.
- **Disability:** Impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions resulting from an individual's interaction with environmental factors.
- **Functional ability:** Health-related attributes enabling individuals to do what they value, shaped by intrinsic capacity and environmental interactions.
- **Health:** A state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, not just the absence of disease.
- **Healthy city:** A city that continually improves environments and resources to support well-being.
- **Healthy ageing:** Maintaining functional ability to support well-being in older age.
- **Mobility:** The ability to move, transfer, and use various forms of transport.
- **Older person:** Someone whose age has surpassed the median life expectancy.
- **Risk factor:** An attribute increasing the probability of disease or injury.
- **Self-care (or self-management):** Activities individuals undertake to maintain health and manage conditions.
- **Social care (services):** Assistance with daily activities such as personal care and home maintenance.
- **Universal design:** Designing environments, products, and systems to be accessible to all without adaptation.
- **Well-being:** Encompasses all aspects of human life, including physical, mental, and social dimensions.

Annex 2 - Guidelines for working with older people in an intergenerational setting

Planning and Preparation

Contextualise:

- Understand the local cultural context, including traditional knowledge and social norms.
- Recognise the diverse experiences of older people due to factors like gender, disability, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

Inclusive participation:

- Ensure the workshop is accessible to all participants, including older people with disabilities.
- Provide assistive devices and offer information in multiple formats.
- Consider varying literacy levels and language differences.
- Incorporate visual aids, storytelling, and other participatory methods.

Intergenerational balance:

- Strive for a balanced representation of different generations.
- Actively recruit older people from diverse backgrounds.
- Engage younger participants who are passionate about climate action.

Cultural sensitivity:

- Respect local customs and traditions.
- Avoid language or activities that could be offensive or discriminatory.
- Facilitate respectful dialogue and ensure everyone feels heard.

Logistics:

- Choose a convenient time and location for participants.
- Provide transportation assistance if needed.
- Offer refreshments and breaks to accommodate the needs of older people.
- Consider the time of day, and how heat or cold may affect older participants.

Age inclusive activities development

Establish a safe and inclusive environment:

- Begin with icebreakers and activities that promote interaction and trust.
- Set ground rules for respectful communication and active listening.
- Create a space where everyone feels comfortable sharing their experiences.

Facilitate Intergenerational Dialogue:

- Highlight the value of traditional knowledge and intergenerational learning.
- Create activities that require the generations to work together.
- Ensure that older people are included and that their experience is valued.

Focus on Community-Level Risks:

- Explore how risks impact different age groups, particularly older people.
- Use local examples and case studies to illustrate the effects of climate change.
- Encourage participants to develop actions that address needs of older people.

Address Intersecting Identities:

- Recognise the diverse experiences of older people due to intersecting identities.
- Discuss how climate risks can exacerbate existing inequalities.
- Ensure that the voices of marginalised older people are heard.

Annex 3 - Gender inclusion guidelines

Considerations for gender inclusion	
Theme for analysis	**Reflection questions**
Rights: legal, political, and customary frameworks	• Do women and men in the community know their legal rights? • Are there traditional or customary practices that limit women's access to or control over natural resources?
Resources: access, use, control, and benefits	• Who has access to which resources? • Who controls these resources? • How do women and men use and benefit from them?
Roles and responsibilities: division of labour and time	• Who is responsible for productive (e.g., income-generating), reproductive (e.g., caregiving), and community roles? • How much time do women and men typically spend on these activities? • What are their main sources of income?
Practices: attitudes, customs, and beliefs	• What social norms, beliefs, or customs limit women's involvement in productive or environmental activities? • Are there beliefs that restrict women's access to land or natural resources?
Representation: participation and decision-making power	• Who makes decisions within households and communities? • What is the level of women's participation in community governance, such as local boards or traditional leadership structures?
Environment: climate risks and vulnerability	• What are the main environmental challenges affecting the community? • Do women, men, and youth perceive these problems differently? • How are they each affected by climate change, environmental degradation, or resource scarcity?

Annex 4 - Consent form template

Consent Form

(Photos / Videos / Audio / Personal Information)

This form should be completed by people who voluntarily agree to participate in photos, videos, audio recordings, or other materials that may include their personal information.

Personal Information

Full name: _____

Contact details: _____
(Phone number, address, or email)

I give permission for my photographs, videos, audio recordings, and personal information to be used for communication and educational purposes in printed, digital, and online materials.

I understand and agree that:

The materials may be used, shared, and adapted in different formats, including websites, social media, reports, presentations, and other communication materials.

The materials may be used to support community awareness, advocacy, learning, fundraising, and project activities.

My participation is voluntary, and I am not expected to receive payment or compensation.

I can request that my photos, videos, audio, or personal information stop being used in future materials, although content already shared publicly may not always be fully removed.

My personal information will be handled responsibly and respectfully.

I am giving this consent freely and without pressure.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Consent by Parent, Guardian, or Representative

(If the person is under 18 or unable to provide consent themselves)

Full name: _____

Relationship to participant: _____

Contact details: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

For Office Use Only

Name of person collecting consent: _____

Organization: _____

Annex 5 - Workshop Planning

General considerations for community activities

- **Estimated duration:** Sessions should be no more than 3 hours, making sure to have breaks and extra time for guidance.
- **Materials required:** Community plans, colour pencils, markers, post-its, markers, recording device for videos and photos, computer and projection equipment (TV); if not possible to have appropriate projection area it could be used some stationary and large papers.
- **Location:** Select a place that is accessible to the participants and has some siting area and tables to be able to work. Also, it is important to have an easy access to toilets. It is preferable to have a roofed place for rain and sun protection.

Activity 1: Introduction and community context

Objective: Introduce the workshop to the participants and learn about the community.

Duration: 45 min

Activity guide:

- Explain to participants that the purpose of the workshop is to gather their perspectives and experience of the community in relation to risks and opportunities related to the climate crisis and ecosystems
- Provide an opportunity for participants to ask any clarifying questions.
- Ask participants to describe their community in 3 sentences. Who lives there, what the community is like, what is their favourite characteristics of the community?
- Ask participants what specific responsibilities do older women have in the community? What about older men? Are there differences in how they experience the community? Ensure explicit questions about the experiences of both genders.

Activity 2: Learn about the community's climate crises

Objective: Introduce participants around the topic of the climate crisis affecting their community

Duration: 60 min

Activity guide:

- Present slides/pictograms that introduces the climate crisis and ecosystems.
- Allow participants to ask any questions or have a brief discussion about their contents
- Ask participants to work in groups of 3, ask them to:
    - Discuss whether each of the hazards in the list happens in their community and how often, and if they happened before, what was that experience like?
    - Discuss each of the hazards and the impact they can have on the community and on older people in particular. Does it affect older women different?
    - Rank the top 3 hazards the community faces based on likelihood and the severity of impact they have.
- Present a list of potential hazards that the community might experience, with additional notes on what impact those hazards can have on older people, and where in the community people might be exposed to those hazards. It's important to let older people lead the discussion and contribute their own suggestions, perspectives and experiences before you use the list to further the discussion.
- Bring participants back into a larger group and discuss the most common 3 hazards identified. Have a group discussion about how these hazards affect older people in the community, making notes of the discussion as you go along.
- You may want to think about the following ways in which climate hazards can have an impact on older people
    - Physically safety and wellbeing
    - Health
    - Access to health services, medication etc.
    - Loneliness and isolation
    - Financial consequences
    - Ability to go places, access shops and services
    - Hazard differently affects older people of all genders

Activity 3: Participatory community mapping

Objective: Identify locations impacted by hazards and community assets.

Duration: 60-90 min

Activity guide:

- Display a map of the community and ask participants to mark where on the map there is a chance of the main hazards happening and impacting people in the community. It is important to think about how these hazards affect livelihoods or are impacting natural areas or ecosystems. For some hazards, the impact is widespread across the entire community, for others, the impact is sometimes very specific and local. You only need to discuss the main hazards that you have identified as significant risks for the community.
- In the map ask participants to mark key community resources that people might turn to in times of climate emergency, including which community services/assets they might use. You can use the list below to help participants identify these resources. Possible resources include:
    - Parks
    - Community centres
    - Local authority events/resources
    - Health centres
    - Churches
    - Schools
    - Public transportation stops

  Be sure to ask participants if there are assets missing from the list that exist in their community.
- In the map identify locations where projects or ideas for community development could be implemented if you think about doing age-friendly urban interventions. Some might already have been planned, or you might think about considering how the existing assets could be used.
- If you are working with big group, think about dividing them into groups of 3-5 and have some space to make them present their mapping exercises to the group.

Activity 4: Spatial Co-Design Workshop

Objective: Explore different spatial arrangements and develop ideas for the urban intervention proposal.

Duration: 45 min

Activity guide:

- Together with the community, identify the main elements or features to be included in the project (e.g., seating areas, gardens, pathways, shade structures, play areas).
- Prepare a simple site plan or physical model of the intervention area. Ensure it is easy to understand and that participants can easily recognize the space.
- Create movable tokens or cut-outs representing the proposed project elements. These will be used on the site plan or model.
- Invite participants to experiment with different layouts by placing and moving the tokens around the plan or model.
- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each option and collectively agree on the preferred spatial arrangement.
- Use the selected arrangement as the basis for developing the urban intervention proposal, ensuring that it reflects the community's ideas and priorities.

Activity 5: Transect walk through the community

Objective: To get participants out in the community so they can demonstrate where hazards and resources exist.

Duration: 30 min

Activity guide:

- Make sure participants are aware, ahead of time, that they will be asked to do a brief walk through the community. The walk can be short, even 10 or 15 minutes can be valuable, or longer if possible.
- Make sure that the walk is leaded by the community members and give them some time to prepare the locations that will be visited.
- Ensure there are opportunities for breaks if participants need them. Check where there are bathroom facilities at the start, during, and end of the transect walk.
- If you workshop includes wheelchair users, make sure the route is as accessible as possible, avoiding steps and other obstacles.
- During the walk, make sure you are marking specific locations on a map and taking photographs of things participants point out to you. You can use a mobile app to mark it in a map using its GPS.
- Decide what information you want to gather during the transect walk, this could include:
    - Identifying locations of where climate and ecosystem related hazards can take place and specific locations where a climate hazard can have a specific impact on older people.
    - Identifying the ecosystem related assets such as woodlands, forest, hills, cliffs, green areas, community gardens, parks, rivers, swamps, water bodies or other areas that provide natural environmental services.
    - Identifying community assets and resources that people rely on, places they might go and resources they might use when exposed to a climate hazard
    - Identifying locations of prospective specific actions and activities to implement in the community, reviewing accessibility and safety.
    - Identifying specific places of greater concern to older women

Activity 6: Key informant interviews

Objective: Speak to key people who can help understanding the climate related issues, the impacts they can have on older people, and opportunities for older people empowerment.

Duration: 15-45 minutes

Activity guide:

- The interviews should be arranged with ample time and a relaxed environment that invites the interviewee to share their opinions.
- Prepare the questions beforehand and if possible, send them for an initial review.
- Before beginning, explain the objective of the interview.
- Be objective when asking questions to make sure that the answers are related to the information needed; avoid talking about non-relevant factors.
- Make sure to have the consent form signed and ask if it's possible to record the interview.
- If possible, identify a quiet and comfortable location for the interview, where there are less opportunities for interruptions.
- Ensure interviewing a balanced number of all genders as key interviews.
- Suggestions of people you can speak to community leaders; members of older people's associations, Youth groups, public sector representatives, experts on relevant topics, care home representatives, representatives of women's organizations and groups.
- The following are suggestions of questions you can ask, make sure to adjust them depending in the person that is responding:
- Could you describe the community, its history and how it has evolved during the years?
    - Could you describe older people, considering all genders? What are their main activities and roles in the community according to their gender? Is it easy for them to move around the community? How are older people of all genders perceived by younger people?
    - Which types of hazards happen in the community and how often? If they happened before, what was that experience like? How does it impact older people and younger people?
    - Can you describe the local ecosystem? How has it been affected by climate change?
    - Would you say the risks in the community are due to human related activities that impact to the ecosystem? How so?
    - Do you notice differences in how climate change affects older women compared to older men in this community? Could you provide specific examples?
    - Which actions are needed to improve older people's integration to the community? How should this be implemented?

Annex 6 - Age-friendly Climate Community Assessment report template

This template can be modified to accommodate projects of varied nature, size and scope.

Section 1 – Community context
Contents: Describe the community and its main characteristics, including: • Population profile (age, gender, migration trends, ageing population, etc.) • Main roles of older people in the community • Socioeconomic conditions (income, education, employment) • Community assets such as parks, gardens, and green spaces • Community services and facilities, including resources for older people • Accessibility and mobility for older people • Key local stakeholders and governance context
Complementary information (if available): • Photos of the community, public spaces, and green areas • Map showing the location of the community. Additional maps if relevant • Community quotes or short testimonials
Section 2 – Climate and ecosystem context
Contents: Describe the local climate and ecosystem, including: • Main climate trends and recent climate-related events • How climate change affects the community, natural habitats and older people • Description of the local ecosystem (plants, animals, water bodies, soils, etc.) • Identify ecosystem services (Provisioning, Regulating, Supporting, Cultural)
Complementary information (if available): • Photos of natural areas, plants, and wildlife • Ecosystem or environmental maps if relevant • Timeline of important climate events • Community testimonials
Section 3 – Community risk related to climate change
Contents: Describe the climate-related risks affecting older people and the community. • Hazards: Describe the main climate-related hazards, how often they occur, and how they affect older people. • Exposure: Describe how and where the community is exposed to the identified hazards, including impacts on older people, their livelihoods and the ecosystems. • Vulnerability: Describe the main factors that increase vulnerability, including sensitivity to harm and limited capacity to cope, with attention to older people.
Complementary information (if available): • Photos of hazards and vulnerable areas • Climate risk matrix focussing on older people (hazards, exposure, vulnerability) • Community mapping of exposure of hazards (official risk maps if available). • Community stories or testimonies
Section 4 – Key findings
Contents: Summarize the main findings, including: • Prioritization of main climate risks and impacts in the community • Effects on older people, vulnerable groups, ecosystem and natural resources • Priority areas for action and climate resilience strategies
Complementary information (if available): • Infographics to enhance visual impact of the key findings.

Annex 7 - Age-friendly and Nature Action Plan report template

This template can be modified to accommodate projects of varied nature, size and scope.

Key Issues from Age-friendly Climate Community Assessment
(if prepared as a separate document only)

Contents: Highlight the main issues identified through the Age-friendly Climate Community Assessment:

- Consider the key priorities and opportunities identified
- Briefly describe the participatory process used to identify these issues

Complementary information (if available):

- Photos of the community, people, and climate-related challenges
- Photos showing the participatory process

Section 2 – Vision

Contents: Write the agreed community vision, making sure it is:

- Inspirational
- Realistic
- Easy to understand
- Clear about what the community wants to become

Complementary information (if available):

- Photos of the process for building the Vision

Section 3 – Action Plan

Contents: Define the objectives and related actions, considering the following:

- Ensure the objectives address the key issues identified in the community assessment
- Ensure the actions contribute to achieving the community vision
- Use a simple structure such as:
  - Objective A
    - Action 1
    - Action 2
    - Action n.
  - Objective B
    - Action 1
    - Action n.
  - Objective n

Section 4 – Map of the Action Plan

Contents: Mark the actions the actions that can be implemented in specific locations within the community.

- Not all action plans require a map; assess whether it is useful for your context
- Ensure the map helps explain the action plan clearly across the community
- Keep the map simple, schematic, and easy for the community to understand
- The map does not need to be technically detailed or highly accurate
- Avoid locating actions in areas that could create conflicts or negatively affect others

Annex 8 - Tool for analysing climate risks and their impacts on older people

This matrix can help you register and organize the results from the assessment.

Climate related Hazards					**Older People Exposure**		**Older People Vulnerability**	
	Once	Recurrent	Yearly	Continuous	Identify people, homes, services, jobs, or activities exposed to climate hazards.	Identify natural areas, plants, animals exposed to climate hazards.	Identify conditions that make older people more easily affected by climate impacts.	Identify barriers limiting older people's ability to respond or recover from impacts.
Storm and wind								
Cyclone								
Storm surge								
Thunderstorm								
Precipitation								
Rainstorm								
Monsoon								
Flood & sea rise								
Coastal flood								
River flood								
Surface flood								
Water scarcity								
Drought								
Hot temperature								
Heat wave								
Extreme hot days								
Wildfire								
Forest fire								
Land fire								
Geological								
Landslide								
Other								
…								

Annex 9 - Tool for age-friendly Ecosystem based Adaptation analysis

This tool is useful to identify if the actions are considered EbA and how they rank in terms of the community's priorities and the project's feasibility.

Actions	EbA Criteria Checklist			Priority			Feasibility		
	Element A: Helps people adapt to climate change	**Element B:** Makes use of biodiversity and ecosystem services	**Element C:** It is part of an adaptation strategy	High	Medium	Low	A Very feasible	B Medium feasibility	C Not very feasible
							A	B	C
Public Spaces and Streets *(Identify actions that make streets and public spaces safe, comfortable, and welcoming for older people, while adding nature)*									
Bringing Older People Together *(Identify actions that help older people meet, share, and take part in community life).*									
Empowering Older People in the Community *(Identify actions that support older people to take action and lead in their communities).*									

Annex 10 - Further suggested readings and resources

Relevant links for consultation

Ecosystem and Ecosystem Services

- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) - Ecosystem Approach
- Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MEA) - Ecosystem Services

Climate Change, Mitigation, and Adaptation

- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
- UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

Nature-based Solutions (NbS) and Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA)

- IUCN - Nature-based Solutions
- IUCN - Ecosystem-based Adaptation
- SDGAcademyX: Ecosystem-based Adaptation: Working with nature to adapt to a changing climate
- IISD- ALivE Adaptation, Livelihoods and Ecosystem Planning Tool

Risk, Hazard, Exposure, and Vulnerability

- IPCC - Risk and Adaptation Framework
- UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)
- GIZ - Climate Risk Assessment for Ecosystem-based Adaptation: A guidebook for planners and practitioners
- UN-Habitat - Climate Change Vulnerability and Risk – A Guide for Community Assessments, Action Planning and Implementation

Age-Friendly Cities and Communities

- WHO-National programmes for age-friendly cities and communities A guide
- GDCI - Global Street Design Guide
- HelpAge International Let's Go Guide

Age Inclusion

- HelpAge International- Bringing generations together for change
- HelpAge International - Age Inclusion Handbook

Project partners

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

Age International (legally known as HelpAge International UK) is a subsidiary charity and the 'international arm' of Age UK and the UK supporting member of the HelpAge Global Network. Age International responds to the needs and promotes the rights of older people, focused on those facing challenging situations in low and middle-income countries.
www.ageinternational.org.uk

Fundación Placemaking Mexico transforms public spaces into vibrant meeting points. It is not just to intervene in the physical environment; it is to unite efforts to create places with identity that communities embrace, enjoy, and maintain over time.
www.placemaking.mx

Funding partners

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The Global EbA Fund is a catalytic funding mechanism for supporting innovative approaches to EbA to create enabling environments for its mainstreaming and scaling up. The fund is financed by International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV) and co-managed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and partners. Learn more about the Fund and apply for a grant through the website:

www.globalebafund.org

As part of this project, HelpAge, alongside its project partners, produced a number of resources to support communities and policymakers to take action.

You can find all of this content and more online at:

www.helpage.org/america-latina-y-el-caribe/adaptacion-basada-en-ecosistemas/

Age-inclusive nature-based climate adaptation

Practical guide for Age-friendly Communities and Cities working with nature

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