

## ***SUMMARY STUDY***

Two-phase primary research

*Institutional cooperation to promote age-friendly and caring communities (Co-AGE for short), a summary study of the experiences of the "trust persons for caring communities" and the views of older people in the framework of the project AT-HU123.*

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## Introduction

The Soproni Evangélikus Egyházközség (Evangelical Parish of Sopron), as a Project Partner, has been supported by the European Regional Development Fund for the implementation of its application within the framework of the Interreg V-A Austria-Hungary Programme. The project is entitled: Institutionelle Zusammenarbeit für die Förderung von altersfreundlichen und fürsorgenden Gemeinschaften / Institutional cooperation for the promotion of age-friendly and caring communities. The project short title is Co-AGE, project ID ATHU123. More information about the project can be found at [www.coage.eu](http://www.coage.eu).

The Interreg AT-HU 123 - Institutional cooperation to promote age-friendly and caring communities (Co-AGE) - Austrian-Hungarian cross-border project had as its **primary objective** the development and cross-border networking of caring communities based on voluntary engagement to improve the quality of life of the older generation.

There are countless challenges on both sides of the border. The region's small rural areas face two main **challenges**: (1) an ageing population and (2) a steady increase in the number of people moving from rural to urban areas. These two problems are co-existing and have an impact at the individual and systemic level.

→ **At the level of the individual**, ageing challenges are emerging and more and more older people and their relatives are feeling overwhelmed.

The active employment of the younger generations does not allow them to stay at home with their elderly relatives, and the traditional extended family model that used to help care for the elderly is in retreat. At the same time, increasing life expectancy means that the day-to-day challenges of caring for the elderly are growing.

→ In addition, resources and supply are both scarce at **system level** and need to be better coordinated and further developed in line with needs.

Another problem is that there are not enough professional services for older people. This needs to be addressed primarily at regional level. New, comprehensive initiatives are needed to rethink the social care system to ensure that the quality of life of the region's elderly does not deteriorate drastically.

Within the framework of the project, a strategy and methodology for the creation of caring communities was developed, taking into account local needs and conditions and involving relevant stakeholders, and then the capacities of local/regional institutions active in the social and health field and of the different local representations/civic associations were strengthened by training the so-called "trust persons" who coordinate these communities, and the organisational framework conditions for cross-border volunteering were created by developing a bilateral model.

Strengthening public participation was essential to achieve this goal. The mobilisation of the elderly in the border region was achieved by supporting professional and communication activities and social media solutions. In addition, the voluntary activities of the population in the project region were strengthened. Furthermore, the project vision was to provide comprehensive support to communities which, together with their inhabitants, are committed to this forward-looking theme (Co AGE pilot communities).

The project also aims to support voluntary and operational networks, where members actively participate in order to retain the benefits they have experienced and to maintain the project's results. The project was implemented through the work of volunteers and the active involvement of NGOs. The trust persons have a good knowledge of the local population and their problems, and where possible have local suggestions for solutions.

## MAIN RESULTS OF THE PROJECT

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1	Cross-border sustainable network of caring communities supported by volunteerism
2	Establishment and operation of a social media network and social media solutions
3	Training of trust persons in the communities
4	Complementing the range of programmes for older people in the communities
5	Preservation of active ageing

*Figure1 . main results of the project*

As the project draws to a close, we felt it necessary to summarise the experiences of our "project drivers", i.e. the trust persons, and to gather and summarise the views of the main target audience of the project, the older generation, in a study.

## Qualitative research

### Definition of objectives and research methodology

#### Analysis methodology

A total of 12 in-depth interviews were conducted, which will be used to determine the total number of items in the sample. The interviews were recorded separately before the summary analysis. A table was then used to summarise the main lessons, similarities, differences and specificities by code group. These thematic groups were as follows:

- Associations
  - ageing societies worldwide
  - intergenerational relations
  - gaps in elderly care
  - declining quality of life for older people
  - care, assistance
  - volunteering in Hungary/Austria
- Experience of eldercare before Co-AGE
  - previous experience
  - achievements in the field of elderly care and proposals for improvement
  - cross-border aspect and elderly care system on the other side of the border
- Attitudes towards the Co-AGE project
  - project objective
  - the attitude of older people to the project
  - cross-border aspect
  - future, development proposals
- Trust person's responsibilities, cross-border aspects and development proposals
- Communication proposals, project development proposals
  - choosing the right communication channel
  - application ideas, themes
  - future project development in the border area

Initially, the visible, surface manifest content was analysed, and then the latent, hidden content was deciphered through repeated examination of the interviews. In our qualitative

description, we interpreted the opinions and experiences of the trusted staff. We also incorporated their key advice and opinions in the form of quotes.

## General information

In the survey, 12 trust persons (Austrian and Hungarian) were interviewed. All of the interviewees had complex tasks in the Co-AGE project, one of the most important of which was the coordination of volunteers. The volunteer group of the trustees is selected from the population of villages and towns, young and old, who have attended a training course at the beginning of the project. In the project they were referred to as the "heart" of the volunteer programme, the key players and coordinators. In addition to their administrative tasks, they were also the leaders of the volunteer team.

The following 12 interviews form the basis of the report and can be found in Hungarian in the annex.

### Interviewing volunteers, confidant

1	Baumgartner Michaela	Volunteer of the Pastoralreferentin Regionalreferentin für Pflegeheimseelsorge Refion Südststeiermark
2	Bokor Terézia	Volunteer trust personen - Fertőszentmiklós
3	Dobos Tiborné	Volunteer trust personen Harka
4	Goda Ilona	Volunteer trust personen - Kétvölgy
5	Imréné Szendi Laura	Volunteer trust personen - Bucsú
6	Labossa György	Volunteer of Szombathelyi Evangélikus Egyházközség Szeretszolgálatért Alapítvány
7	Mészárosné Löökkös Ildikó	Volunteer trust persone - Lővő
8	Mórotzné Kiss Györgyi	Volunteer trust persone - Boba
9	Pomeisl György	Volunteer trust persone - Csempezkopács
10	Sütő Teréz dr.	Volunteer trust persone - Sopron
11	Weinhofer Eveline	Volunteer of Berufsförderungsinstitut Burgenland (BFI)
12	Zselinszkyné Kondor Nikoletta	Volunteer trust persone - Ágfalva

*Figure 2: List of volunteers and trust persons interviewed*

In some areas, there are differences in the responses of the twelve respondents, which can be attributed to differences in professional experience, regional characteristics, life experiences

and age. In addition, similar experiences and opinions were frequently mentioned in each of the topics.

## Association task

The introductions were followed by short association exercises. The main aim of these was to get the respondents' thoughts and opinions on the terms used in the project. The association tasks can be seen as "ice-breaker" questions, facilitating the release of the initially more tied, reserved mood of the respondents and the creation of a safer atmosphere.

The following six terms were deliberately built on each other and were queried one after the other: **ageing societies worldwide, intergenerational relations, elder care deficiencies, declining quality of life for older people, care and assistance, volunteering in Hungary/Austria.**

The first term was **ageing societies worldwide**. The following term has been met with uniform associations. Generally speaking, old age is being extended and the retirement age is being centrally extended so that retired people cannot actually retire. This creates difficulties: retirement is characterised by inequality and vulnerability. This is why it is so important to help them, as the age is increasing, but we need to be healthy to be able to live to a ripe old age. This is both a challenge and an asset, as older people are both the past and the roots. *"On the one hand, it's a challenge in a sense because you have to support the elderly. On the other hand, it's also a resource, because if their health can be maintained, then their activity can be maintained,"* said one trust respondent. Many highlighted that ageing societies face serious problems in Europe that need to be addressed. *"The ageing process in Europe is accelerating. In Hungary, in just 20 years' time, people over 65 will make up a quarter of the population."* said one interviewer.

The following thought cloud provides a brief overview of the first term of the association task. **(ageing societies worldwide)**





Figure 3: Thought cloud on the term "ageing societies worldwide"

The next term was the **link between generations**.

For this association, opinions were more divided, with both positive and negative responses. Many stressed the importance of the old times and values, when several generations lived together. In contrast, today's age is characterised more by distance, weakened relationships, misunderstanding and distancing. Much less time is spent together and, in general, there is a lack of openness on the part of either party towards the other.

In contrast, however, there were more optimistic responses. *"I think it is getting better and stronger now. It is getting better in the village, which is cumulatively significant."* they pointed out in an interview.

Virtual communication came up as a topic in several different interviews. According to the respondents, it is not the generations that have changed, but the communication (channels) between them. These are rapid social changes that cannot be reacted to quickly enough. This is also strongly influenced by the fact that young people do not live with their grandparents, so that the (grand)parent-child relationship often becomes virtual.

Forward-looking suggestions were also made during the association, where the importance of intergenerational programmes was stressed. Several highlighted the importance of creating a space where all generations can get along and learn from each other, thus eliminating the huge gaps between generations.

The following thought cloud serves as a brief overview for the second term of the association task. **(intergenerational relationships)**

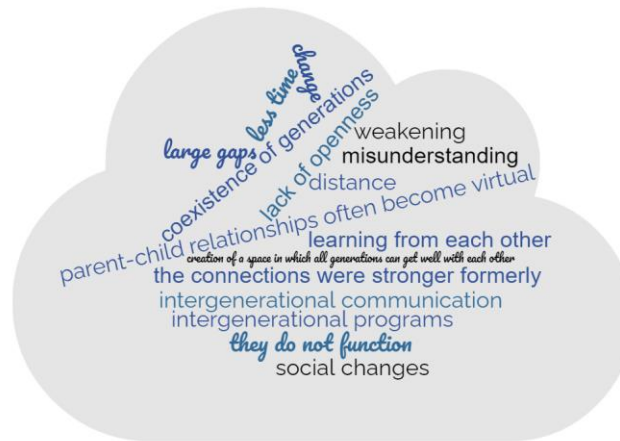


Figure 4: Thought cloud on the term "intergenerational relations"

We then ask respondents for their views on **the shortcomings of eldercare**. Respondents think that there is a great need for care for older people, especially in this ageing society, but that there is a very large gap in the social safety net. The sector is characterised by a lack of professionals, facilities, equipment, overwork and training.

It is our social responsibility to address this, a task that falls to local authorities, public care for the elderly and health care at system level. At individual level, attention and care within the family and the community have been identified as the solution. Several trustees from smaller communities highlighted the importance of the '*good neighbour*' relationship of old times. "*Lucky people are those who grow old without needing support.*" reflected one respondent.

The following thought cloud provides a quick overview of the association exercise "**elder care deficiencies**".



Figure 5: Thought cloud for the term "elder care deficiencies"

We wanted to know respondents' views on the **reduction of quality of life for older people**.

There were some who thought it was untold and relative, as it depends on who you ask. There were also views that it is both increasing and decreasing.

Many felt that the quality of life of older people is actually declining, with financial hardship, vulnerability and powerlessness characterising old age. They also highlighted the negative effects of the ageing virus, and the sense of isolation and loneliness. *"It is also a widespread disease in Hungary, that we cannot reach the age of old age as in other countries"*, was the response.

There is a difference between the opinions of Austrian and Hungarian respondents.

Austrian trust persons were generally more positive about the situation, believing that the quality of life of older people is increasing rather than decreasing. In addition, some Hungarian interviews reported an increase. *"I think it is more likely to increase in today's world. As they learn the world of the internet, they read as many newspapers, the ones they like and not just the ones they can buy with their small pension. Their quality of life is also increasing in terms of medicines and care,"* he said in an interview.

Various solutions have been put forward to address the problem. Many argue that new forms and methods should be found to help older people to remain in their own homes for as long as possible if their ability to care for themselves decreases and their functions and living conditions change.

The following thought cloud serves as a brief overview for the fourth term of the association task (**decline in quality of life for older people**)



Figure 6: Thought cloud on the term "decline in quality of life for older people"

Closely related to the previous term, the next concept was **care, assistance**. Respondents shared their thoughts on the term from different perspectives.

The 'self-centred' society was mentioned by several respondents, the negative impact of which is reflected in our society's willingness to help. Fewer and fewer people are devoting time to community activities, leaving a heavy burden on volunteer helpers. *"Often some professionals think they know what is good for people, but that is not the case. Our society is too self-centred,"* said one trust person. There is a difference between the two countries, with one Austrian respondent reporting a positive trend, with many volunteers in her environment. There are more people who are sensitive to the issue and willing to give of their time and energy for the community.

There was one respondent who stressed that the elderly are generally grateful after having received help. However, it can be stated that they are difficult to move, they find it difficult to trust others, which is why there are cases when the elderly themselves are the obstacles. There is a tendency for older people who live in the community to be more accepting of helping hands later on, because they experience that others need help too.

The following thought cloud provides a brief overview of the association task **"care, assistance"**.



*Figure 7: Thought cloud for the terms "care, help"*

The last association question is **volunteering in Hungary/Austria**.

Different answers were also given to this association task.

Many think that the "we-feeling" should be strengthened and that more emphasis should be put on sensitisation from childhood, so that it is possible to encourage and motivate young people in the future, because at the moment "The young pensioners are most active in the field of elderly care".

However, many also see the increased prestige of volunteering among young people and the importance of organised volunteering, as demonstrated for example by the rallying together during the ageing crisis.

In general, those who have empathy and the ability to listen to others will find the idea of volunteering comes naturally, and "It's not just those who are registered on paper who volunteer".

However, during the interviews, there were those who felt that in a Western, welfare society, volunteering has a much greater value than it does here. We don't make time for volunteering anymore. It's more ad hoc, campaign-style volunteering that we have in Hungary.

The following thought cloud provides a brief overview of the last term in the association task, **"volunteering in Hungary/Austria"**.

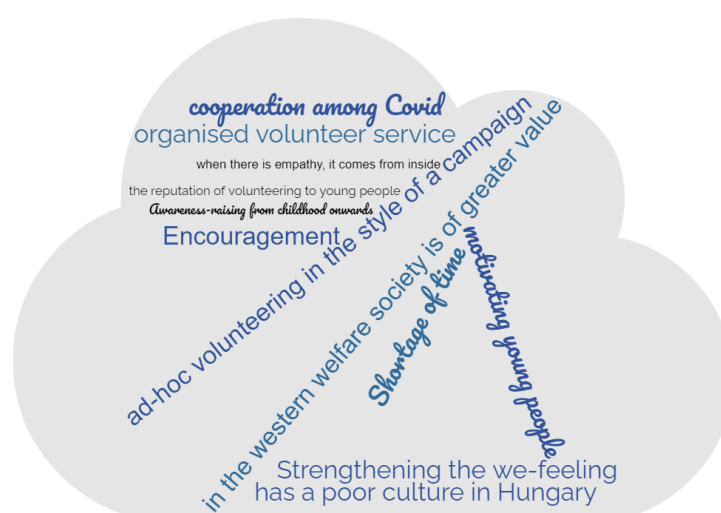


Figure 8: Thought cloud for the term "volunteering in Hungary/Austria"

## Experience of eldercare before Co-AGE

## **Past experience**

Generally speaking, the trust persons interviewed had previous knowledge and experience in the field of elderly care and working with the elderly. Many of them reported previous experience in institutions, and many of them had dealt with issues related to various topics during their studies. However, some have been involved in voluntary work in their spare time for a longer or shorter period of time because of their social sensitivity. There were also some who had grown up in a multi-generational family from childhood, so that they had a lifelong social sensitivity to older people, and many who felt a vocation to the task after retirement.

The trust persons have carried out their tasks within the framework of the Co-AGE project in the hope of applying the knowledge they have acquired in their previous jobs and the ideas they have developed to improve the living conditions of the elderly population. It is important for them that the elderly are also in the community and thus develop.

It is a common experience that the elderly themselves are sometimes distrustful and reserved, but if they let someone in, they can be very grateful.

## **Achievements and proposals for improvement in the elder care**

Based on the interviews with trust persons, it can be said that they faced a lot of gaps and problems in the area of elderly care before the Co-AGE project. In many villages, older people are left to fend for themselves as younger family members move away to study or work, and older people left alone are unable to care for themselves properly. Volunteers have a difficult job because there is a great lack of trust in them, and the experience of the trust persons is that volunteering is not as prestigious in Hungary and young people do not feel a sense of vocation for it, so there are few volunteers, especially in the field of elderly care. In addition, the people who help face many physical and psychological challenges. The problems of residential care institutions were also mentioned, with more emphasis nowadays on health care than social care. When older people enter such institutions, they are usually already in very poor health. In this context, a solution has been put forward to set up a retirement home system, where the pensioner decides when he or she would like to move into such an institution, where he or she can be with others in a similar situation and thus have access to the right social and social community, as well as to excursions and cultural activities. In addition, it is important to develop the social life of older people in the future, either through retirement clubs or other social activities.

However, there was also a view that in the future, the level of care and support that is currently provided will no longer be possible, as there will be even fewer carers and less willingness to care for relatives at home. The reasons for this are that some options will not be available, such as financial funding. That is why we need to be open to new things and developments. There will also certainly be a need in the future to involve more volunteers, which can complement and combine professional care.

### **Border aspect and elderly care system on the other side of the border**

In the last part of the previous experience before Co-AGE, we asked about border aspects. The main question was what good practices they see in the other country that could be replicated in their own country, and what they know about the Austrian or Hungarian elderly care system.

Based on the interviews with the Austrian trust persons, it can be said that they do not know enough or only have a broad knowledge of the Hungarian social care system and the Hungarian elderly care system. One Austrian trustee mentioned during an interview that he assumed that church organisations in Hungary show more initiative than in Austria and that he had experienced during study trips that there is a greater willingness to volunteer in village structures. In addition, in Hungary many elderly people live at home and there is a need for initiative to support them. He emphasised and found it appropriate that there is a sense of cohesion between people in villages.

Taking into account the responses of Hungarian trust persons, we can conclude that Austrians believe that they put more emphasis on the care of the elderly, provide them with more opportunities and receive more assistance. In addition, they invest more energy in bringing volunteers together and building up volunteer programmes than in Hungary. *"In Austria they even do hip replacements and knee replacements for 70-80 year olds and send them to rehab. We can talk very nice and very good things here, but when you look at the lives of families there and here, you can't say that Hungary is making progress, because I don't see any progress in this area. I think these are very serious problems."* - said the following during one of the interviews, which the trust person had experienced in Austria in relation to the elderly and healthcare system. Another example mentioned during one of the interviews that could be adopted by Hungary is 0-24 hour home care. The interviewee added that in Austria people are able to afford this service, whereas in Hungary families do not necessarily have the financial means to pay for it. They also praised the developed Austrian social network. As for



volunteering in Austria, they said that, based on their experience, they value those who do such work more.

Trust persons reported greater development of the Austrian care system and social safety net for older people than for the care system at home. In addition, charities and volunteering play a greater role there. Austrian pensioners are in a different financial situation than Hungarian pensioners, due to different living conditions. *"I think Austria is a little bit better, more organised, they have more possibilities to use nursing homes, which unfortunately not everybody can afford."* - was said during an interview about elderly care in Austria. In addition, the Austrian insurance system to support their voluntary programmes was mentioned as a positive aspect by one of the trust persons during an interview. In addition, there is institutionalised care in Austria, but it is very expensive. Furthermore, Austrian families have a greater financial responsibility. If they can afford to pay for some benefits for elderly relatives, the state intervenes very late to help and support them.

## Co-AGE experience

One of, if not the most important part of the interview was to explore the respondents' attitudes towards the Co-AGE project and to gather their experiences of the project.

### Project goal

Within the framework of the project, we were looking for the views of trusted persons on the goals, successes, achievements and challenges of the project.

In general, all respondents were positive about the success of the project. Overall, they stated that it was a good start and that they hoped that a good process had been set in motion and that the closure of the project would not be the end of the initiative.

Several respondents pointed out that the project had broadened both their network of contacts and their professional knowledge. *"This is a very important benefit of this programme and that professionals have met from time to time. Personal contacts, friendships have been formed... I think it was very empowering for everyone to see how many of us are involved in this, how many of us are investing energy and time. We are very different, but we have common ground and that has really led to friendships."* said one of the trust person.

Both the excursions and the professional training provided an opportunity to make new contacts. One respondent stressed that in his case the lack of professional experience in the field of elderly care was a difficulty. The problem was solved by the network of trust persons,

which helped them to learn a lot from each other, both in the cross-border aspect and at regional level.

Positive aspects reported by participants during the interviews were that they had gained knowledge in the community, gathered useful, compact knowledge and got to know each other's thoughts, methods and ideas. Several trust persons commented that the ideas they had gathered through the project had made them more aware of local community organising in their municipality, and that they were more focused on older people than before.

They also stressed that the project has raised awareness of community building, which can be an important first step in recruiting volunteers.

Some respondents described the project as "inspiring" and highlighted the awareness-raising aspect. This was in reference to the fact that the project paid a lot of attention to the volunteers and the functioning of the organisation, which had previously only been ad hoc in the municipality. Another respondent, who spoke about a retirement club in the community, mentioned that it was very positive for him to be able to strengthen the organisation. Its main aim was to bring back the old so-called "good neighbourly relations" in the community, so that residents could help each other. The basis for this, according to the trustee, is to foster intergenerational links, which is why volunteers, young people and young people with children were called upon to look after the elderly, while also creating a community.

In addition, the exploratory nature of the project was highlighted by many. The project has therefore given them a clearer picture of the gaps and the way forward in the field of elderly care.

### **Attitudes of older people towards the project**

It can be concluded that the attitude of the elderly towards the project was positive and that the trust persons overall considered the project to be useful in improving the quality of life of the elderly.

A trust person reported a difference in the mobility of older people, which they identified as being due to the different size of the settlements. One trust person from a smaller settlement mentioned the different mentality, lifestyle and outlook on life. "We have a very ageing population, so there are few people or age groups that are young, retired but still active. So we have a lot of people who are close to 80 or above, who are really hard to move for a number of reasons," he elaborated.

However, there were also some settlements where the trust person reported a continued openness from the start of the project from older people: they were keen to take up the opportunity and were even very happy to have the attention. They felt cared for and that it was good to have their views heard. There was a particular interest in field trips and excursions. In addition, several trust persons pointed out that there was a high level of interest among older people in IT training, which continued until the end of the training. Older people also saw that the internet could offer them a wide range of opportunities. They cited the free, more environmentally friendly and more widely available news portals as an example. One of the trust persons highlighted that the project had enabled older people to meet and keep in touch with each other in the virtual space, after face-to-face meetings and programmes. She also emphasised that it is very difficult to make friends in old age, but the project had greatly facilitated this, making older people feel less lonely.

In addition to IT training, the Senior Dance of Joy was also highlighted by many as a successful event. Not only did they feel it was useful to stay healthy, but it was also seen as a good opportunity to be part of a fun community.

However, some respondents mentioned as a challenge the fact that active seniors already had a small community before the project, so it was difficult for them to join a small group of friends that already existed. In addition to this, several volunteers mentioned the pandemic, the COVID-19 epidemic, as a major obstacle.

Some respondents elaborated on the insecurity of older people. In fact, the elderly had reservations about the project at the beginning, being nervous about the pictures and signatures needed for documentation. In addition, it was not clear to them why there was a border aspect to the project. All obstacles were overcome by personal approaches and building trust.

One of the biggest challenges was therefore to gain the trust of the elderly. This depended, according to the interviews, on the familiarity of the trust person and his previous community activities in the municipality.

The solution was therefore personal contact and communication. The opportunities provided by the project, such as posters, flyers, "internet/virtual village network", were useful, but the majority of the trustees considered personal outreach to be the most effective way of engaging older people.

One respondent stressed that it was important for the older people that he, as a trust person, was part of the events and activities, to keep in touch with them.

In the Austrian region, no events were organised as part of the project, but a larger complex survey of older people was carried out under the title *"Helping to build an age-friendly*

*community*". The research included questions on mobility, public space, housing, communication, information, volunteering, social participation, health and well-being, which were analysed, presented and will be used as a basis for further findings.

One of the Hungarian trust persons said it was important that the study trip to the border also gave the elderly an insight and an opportunity to experience for themselves how the elderly care system works in the West.

### **The cross-border aspect**

The Hungarian trust persons were generally positive about the project from a cross-border perspective. In several cases it was mentioned that this common path should be continued as it provides mutual learning opportunities for both countries.

They praised the technical conditions and the assistance of the interpreters, both in person and online. Everything went smoothly for both countries. The Austrian-Hungarian event on 1 July was also highlighted. Despite the language difficulties, everyone remembers the event with an open (to friendships) and positive attitude.

However, the difficulties brought about by the corona virus came up several times during the interviews. The elderly were isolated, afraid and afraid to go out into the community. As a result of the virus, Austrian senior clubs are not functioning as they used to, so Hungary and Austria have had to find their way out from about the same level, as fear has become very widespread in both countries as a result of the pandemic.

It was also repeatedly said that although there are differences - different mentality, different culture, different material possibilities, and that Hungary is about 40 years behind Austria (in thinking, mentality, means) - Hungary also has very good possibilities and gifts that could be better used. This is why the project was very useful, as it gave the volunteers an insight into other systems.

On the Austrian side, too, there was generally positive feedback on the border aspect. They also saw the project as a mutual "win-win" situation, believing that the two countries could learn from each other. Through such projects, neighbouring countries can get to know each other's problems and other structures better, which can be beneficial for both sides.

In many cases, similar issues and problems have arisen in both countries (such as the lack of volunteering), but different approaches and circumstances have been used to address them. This is why cooperation and the continuation of similar projects is very important. In some places, the common journey continues after the project, and a follow-up project has already been submitted, which would never have been possible without the project.

Overall, the project has produced good results from the Austrian side, apart from the difficulties of the pandemic.

### **Future, development proposals**

In the following, we sought to answer the question of whether it is feasible for the idea of caring communities in the border region and in the individual communities to continue working after the project is completed.

The responses were generally upbeat and positive. Very good communities have developed, which are likely to be sustainable in the long term. Volunteers do not want to stop working, but would rather continue to build and think about what they can do locally.

Several times it was mentioned as a great value of the project that volunteer communities of 4-5 people have been created, which can cooperate in a more organized way, so in the future time will not be spent on gathering people and building the organization, but can focus on implementation from the beginning of the project.

But much depends on the state, local government and the European Union. Ideally, if communities are involved in such a project, there should be sufficient funding for it through some kind of grant scheme. In addition, it was said that children should be socially integrated into their lives from primary school onwards in how they can help the elderly, so that there is a future for this.

Another important question is how to motivate seniors to take part in Co-AGE activities. There were several references to the fact that the concept of "Co-AGE" is still less in the public consciousness and needs to become better known. Despite social media, posters and roll-ups, pictures in galleries, T-shirts and balloons, there is still a need for more awareness of Co-AGE. For example, the fact that they can take part in free programmes is particularly attractive to older people. But organising and running an event takes a lot of time, energy, attention and communication. Overall, the best way to reach older people is to address them personally. They are interested in many topics (IT training, walking club), but are more open to religious content and programmes. If they are not afraid of illness or fear, they are more willing to go out to different programmes. Older people are motivated by feeling good, so they need to find activities that they enjoy. They also want to be useful, so maintaining a sense of usefulness is also very important for them.

The issue of trust was raised several times in response to questions. The important role of trust was also mentioned. This is a very important issue for the future, because once trust is given and the trusted workers and volunteers invite the elderly to a next project, it will no

longer be important what the invitation is about, but who invites them. It is a secure point of commitment for the elder to commit to them and to the new project.

Austrian trust persons recommended a high level of training for trust persons and the maintenance of networks.

However, motivating seniors to actively participate will prove a challenge in the future. Accessibility of people is also a big problem. Therefore, training on how to reach the right target group would be useful. However, various ideas have already been put forward to create event spaces and outdoor seating areas.

Austrian trust persons and volunteers also emphasised the importance of personal contact in terms of active participation. They also mentioned the need to contact not only the elderly but also their relatives and clarify with them the details of the organisation and the events.

## **Trust person's responsibilities, cross-border aspects and development proposals**

After the attitudes towards the Co-AGE project, the trust persons identification with the task and their suggestions for improvement are presented below.

In this part of the interview, we asked about the role of the trust persons, the cross-border aspect and their future plans and development proposals. In particular, whether they considered it a good decision to take on the role of trust person, what problems they encountered during the implementation of the project and what results the Co-AGE project had achieved. From a cross-border perspective, we asked them whether they thought that the network of trust persons had contributed to community building along the border. As for the future and improvements, we asked whether the trust person thought that the idea of having trust persons and other volunteers continue to work both in the border area and in the individual settlements after the project has ended was feasible.

The trust persons were unanimous in saying that it was undoubtedly a good decision to take on this task and that they would definitely do it again if asked. *"I think that having been involved in the life of the village so far, this was an extra opportunity to be able to help the village, in addition to getting to know them, I was able to bring positive programs, experiences and added value to the village with the people I invited."* - said one trust person about why she felt it was a good decision to take on the role of a trust person. *"I would take it, I would take it under any circumstances, because it was a huge challenge for me and I learned many, many interesting things."* - added another interviewee. In addition, several interviewees mentioned that they had been given a fiduciary training at the beginning of the project, which,

although it was conducted online due to the COVID-19 epidemic, they had really enjoyed and learned a lot from it. In addition, they were able to build a great community of trusted confidants and friendships were formed. However, some of them commented that they found it challenging at the beginning and did not know what they would be undertaking and what their responsibilities would be.

When asked about the problems they encountered during the project, several respondents said that the COVID-19 epidemic was the biggest obstacle. They found it harder to communicate with their elders and with each other. As mentioned above, the training of the trust persons was also held during the pandemic. There was little face-to-face contact, so there were many communication problems. The problem mentioned with volunteers was that many of them also had full-time jobs, so they were unable to attend and help with the morning programmes during the week.

The last question on this engagement was about the results of the project and what the trust persons are most proud of having achieved during the Co-AGE programme. Several of them mentioned that during the study visits and through the different events that took place in other settlements, both in Hungary and in the Austrian border region, the trust persons learned a lot from each other and exchanged experiences. In addition, friendships were formed among the trust persons and in many places a very good community was established. Many of them were most proud of the fact that they were able to bring joy to the elderly through their work, that they were trusted and accepted. Another positive thing they highlighted was that, thanks to the project, volunteers were more willing to approach them and share their ideas with them.

*"I'm proud that this was able to happen because it was quite a difficult birth at the beginning, or I would say it started with a long pregnancy, a long expectancy. We had to give in several times, they put this project back together. It took a lot of work from both the Austrian and the Hungarian staff and I had already given up on it, I didn't think it would happen."* - said one of the visionaries behind the project.

On the cross-border aspect, the responses of the trust persons were mixed. Many said that because they did not speak German, they had not been able to make much contact across the border. However, one trust person said that he had had contacts in Austria in the past, so that he could ask for help during trips to Austria. During the project, several of them managed to build up a network of contacts and a good relationship with the Austrian trust persons, with whom they would like to maintain and develop their relationship in the future.

The majority of trust persons are keen to continue working after the project has ended and to stay in touch with other trust persons. It was suggested that at least once a year it would be



worth organising a meeting or conference to discuss current problems and opportunities, and to exchange experiences and build closer relationships and friendships.

In terms of motivating trust persons, several respondents said that they would need training to develop their current skills. On the other hand, it is important for communities to show their gratitude and trust in their frontline staff. It is motivating for volunteers to see the joy on the faces of older people that they have contributed to. "Consciously, in a coordinated way and always giving them positive feedback so they see and feel that what they are doing is really important, has a place and meets a need," said one trust person. It would also be important to provide financial resources for trust persons to manage.

In addition, the promotion of volunteering is seen as a key priority.

### **Communication proposals, project development proposals**

The last part of the in-depth interview was aimed at assessing the communication and project development suggestions of the trust persons. This included the channels through which they would communicate in the future to achieve more effective communication, and whether they had any ideas on what activities would be worth bidding for to improve the quality of life of older people and elderly care. Finally, we asked them about their proposals for future project development in border areas.

When asked about the channels of communication that would be useful in the future to achieve more effective communication, the answer was almost without exception that they would contact the elderly in person. The reason given for this was that, in their opinion, the most effective way to reach this age group is to contact them in person, as this is the best way to ensure that they can provide credible information. It gives them the feeling that they are not part of a crowd, but that they retain their individuality and identity in old age. In no way can the importance of meeting people in person, of community life and of visiting be pushed into the background.

As part of the project, the so-called virtual village network was created, where a profile was created for each of the communities that participated in the programme. Through this communication channel, the trust persons shared the different programmes and information about the project. In order to be able to use it, the elderly people were given IT training to acquire the necessary skills. Based on the interviews with the 12 trust persons, it can be concluded that this communication medium has proved to be effective. More and more people are joining this virtual community space and many have followed the content shared there. It is a very fast and effective forum for the transmission of information and the elderly can also



establish contact with other elderly people living in Hungarian or Austrian villages who are participating in the project. However, a number of the trust persons believe that the world of the Internet is too cold and impersonal to establish a proper connection, especially for the elderly, and that this type of communication space can seem alien to them. It was also noted that some older people were reluctant to participate in IT training. They may have been ashamed of their lack of computer skills. It was also pointed out that if there were another similar project in the future, it would be worth starting the IT training at the beginning, which would also motivate the participants. They also suggested that billboards could be placed in prominent places such as shops or post offices, and that television advertising could be tried. In addition, the most effective way would be to use several communication channels and to coordinate them. A number of the trust persons agreed that flyers and advertising in newspapers are not an effective communication channel, as they are quite expensive and often discarded.

The next question sought ideas from the trustees on what activities would be worth applying for to improve elderly care and quality of life. The responses provided a number of useful suggestions on how to improve the quality of life of older people, and highlighted issues that could be addressed in the future, including bidding for activities that could help.

Several of them also mentioned that it is important to apply for activities and programmes that support, ensure and finance events and programmes aimed at improving the community life of older people, such as excursions, festivals, dance events, senior citizens' clubs and clubs for the elderly. Any project similar to Co-AGE is eligible to apply.

In addition, trusted persons also pointed out that more attention should be paid to elderly care, as 80% of elderly people in need of care still prefer to live alone at home and only 20% live in a nursing home. It would be important to reward in some way family members who care for elderly relatives at home and to provide basic training for these people. The number of elderly people suffering from dementia is increasing both in Hungary and in Austria, and it would therefore be important to improve the living conditions of people suffering from this condition. In connection with this, more attention should be paid to sensitising the younger generation to this issue, so that they are not alienated by it, understand it and are not afraid of their relatives with dementia. In addition, the elderly must be given the opportunity to receive regular medical care and help with transportation.

The last question asked about their proposals for future project development in border areas. This was a topic that particularly divided the trust persons. The responses can be divided into two groups.

Some think that it is not worth developing this area as the majority of older people do not speak German, so projects of this kind may be unnecessary as they cannot communicate with each other and providing an interpreter may be problematic. It would be better to stay within the border and strengthen the links between the villages and communities here.

On the contrary, there are those who believe that it would definitely only enrich us if we could see more sides and even include Slovenian territory in future projects. Moreover, by cooperating across borders, we can see how other nearby countries live and what methods they use, which we can also adopt and implement. It can also be important to maintain contacts and exchange professional experience. It would be important to provide language learning opportunities for older people so that they can overcome language barriers in the future.

## **Quantitative research**

### **Definition of objectives and research methodology**

#### **Link to the project objectives**

The aim of the quantitative research was to ask older people about the development of activities to improve their quality of life and to explore their awareness and liking of the Co-AGE project. In addition, the research aimed to get seniors to rate the work of the trust persons . A further aim was to study openness to new similar projects.

#### **Research methodology**

In view of the topics of the research, the respondents were the residents of the project region, in order to avoid waste coverage . The survey was carried out through a face-to-face interview, a telephone enquiry and an online link. All these queries could only be carried out with the help of the trust persons.

#### **Analytical methodology**

Thanks to the presence of interviewers, we did not have to clean the completed questionnaires. In total, 151 people were interviewed among the elderly population of the Co-AGE pilot settlements, aged over 65. This gives the total number of items in the sample for later analysis. Questionnaires were coded before analysis and data were analysed using SPSS mathematical-statistical software. Mean and frequency calculations were used to evaluate the data. For each question, the responses by gender, education level and place of residence (town/village) are illustrated in graphs.

### **Detailed findings of the research**

A survey of attitudes towards the Co-AGE project was carried out among 151 residents aged 65 and over living in the programme area.

## Attitudes towards settlement

Attitudes towards the settlement were measured using agreement scales for four statements, which were:

- The elderly in our village feel well.
- Many elderly people in need of care live in our village.
- I consider it essential for civil society organisations to play an active role in improving the quality of life of older people.
- The pandemic situation has highlighted the importance of caring communities.

The average of ratings from one to five (where 5 means strongly agree) was above medium in all cases. The least agreed statement was that there are many elderly people in need of care in the municipality (3.25). The most supported statement was that the involvement of civic actors is essential to improve the quality of life of the elderly (4.66). This was followed by the statement that the pandemic has highlighted the importance of caring communities (4.62). The statement "the elderly in our settlement feel well" received an average rating of 4.2.

## How much do you agree with the following statement?

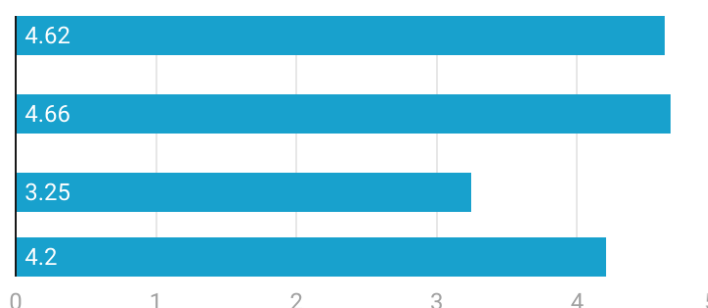
average

The pandemic situation has highlighted the importance of caring communities

I believe that the active involvement of civil society organisations is essential to improve the quality of life of older people

Many elderly people in need of care live in our municipality.

The elderly in our municipality feel comfortable.



5- I totally agree

Figure 9: How much do you agree with the following statement?

## How much do you agree with the following statement?

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Standard deviation
I believe that the active involvement of civil society organisations is essential to improve the quality of life of older people	147	1	5	4.66	0.745
The pandemic situation has highlighted the importance of caring communities	145	2	5	4.62	0.727
The elderly in our municipality feel comfortable.	136	2	5	4.20	0.739
Many elderly people in need of care live in our municipality.	109	1	5	3.25	1.233

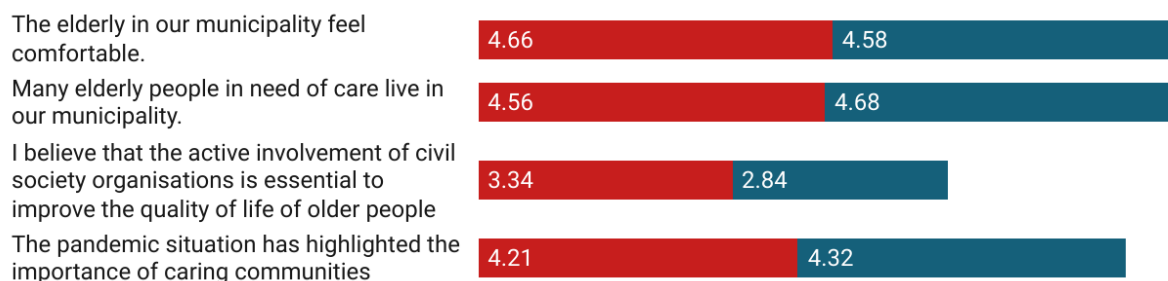
*Table 1: How much do you agree with the following statement?*

The charts below show the respondents' opinions on the four statements examined above, broken down by gender, place of residence and level of education.

## How much do you agree with the following statements?

by gender

■ Women 
 ■ Men



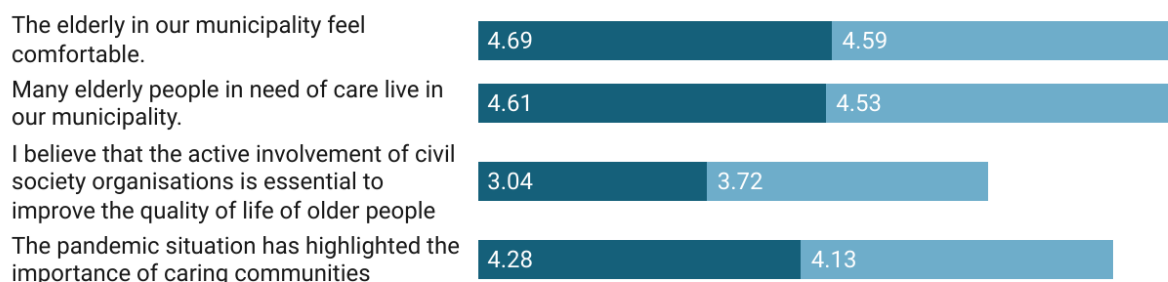
Average, 5 - I totally agree

Figure 10: How much do you agree with the following statement? – by gender

## How much do you agree with the following statements?

by place of residence

■ village 
 ■ city



Average, 5 - I totally agree

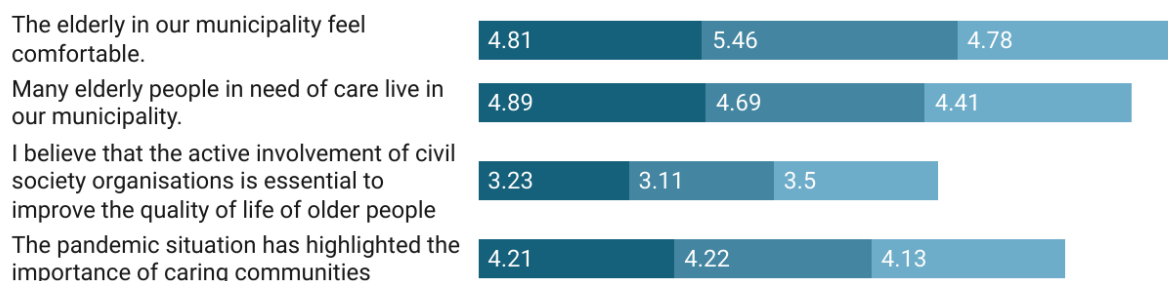
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Figure 11: How much do you agree with the following statement? – by place of residence

## How much do you agree with the following statements?

by level of education

■ college or university 
 ■ high school 
 ■ 8 years of primary school or less



Average, 5 - I totally agree

Figure 12: How much do you agree with the following statement? – by level of education

The results for each claim are detailed in the following pie charts.

### The elderly in our municipality feel comfortable.

N=136

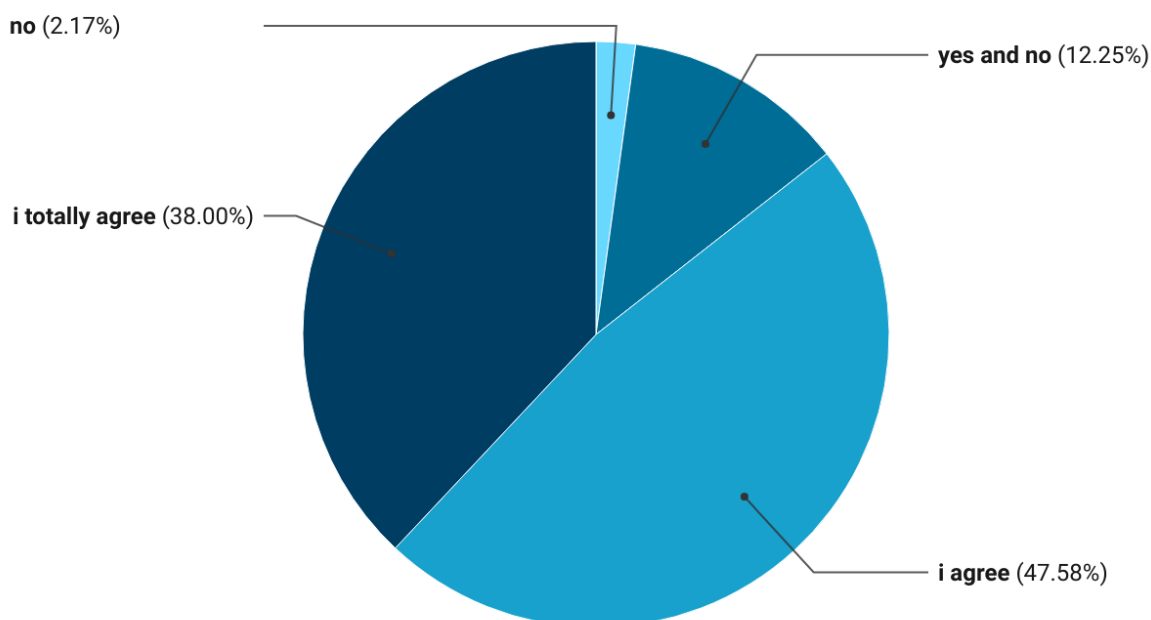


Figure 13: How much do you agree with the following statement? – by place of residence

The results for this claim were better than expected. As can be seen, more than four-fifths of respondents consider that their silver-haired peers feel comfortable in their own community. It is worth noting that not a single respondent chose the category "strongly disagree".

## Many elderly people in need of care live in our municipality.

N=109

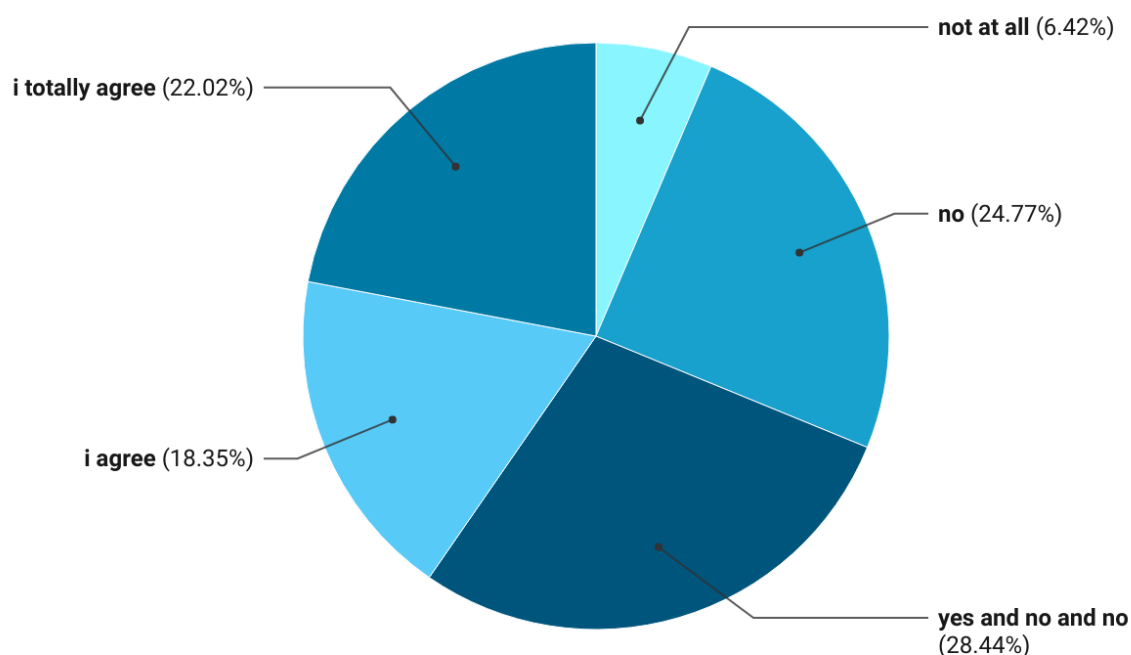


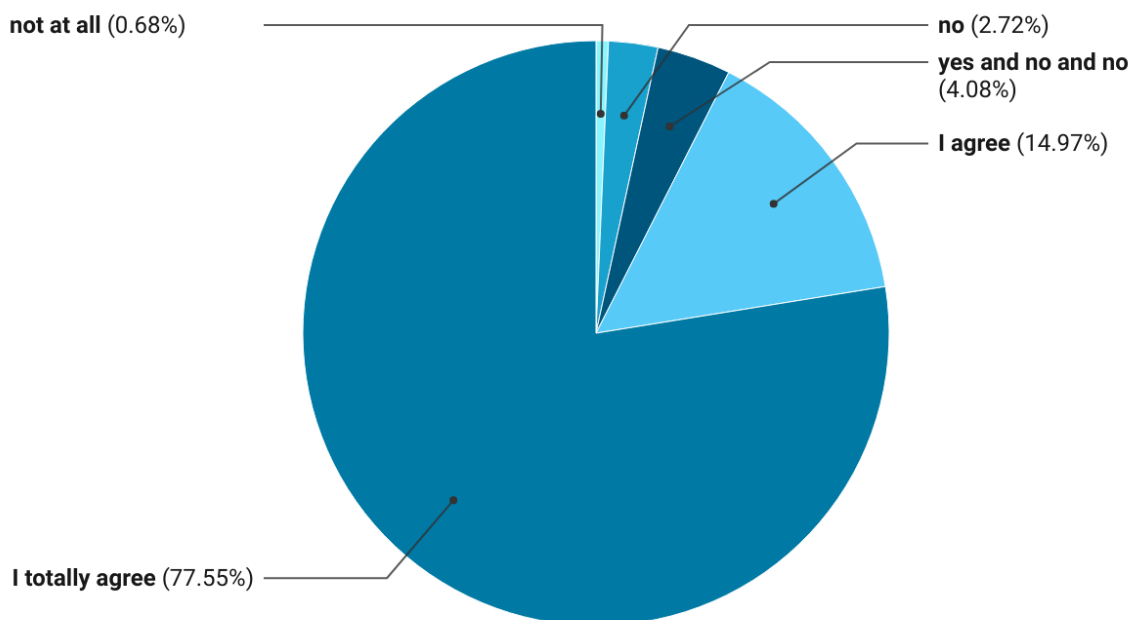
Figure 14: Many elderly people in need of care live in our municipality.

Regarding the large number of elderly people in need of care, more than 40% of the respondents agreed, almost 30% were undecided, and the remaining 30% said that there were not many elderly people in need of care in their municipality.



## I believe that the active involvement of civil society organisations is essential to improve the quality of life of older people

N=147



*Figure 15: I believe that the active involvement of civil society organisations is essential to improve the quality of life of older people*

There seems to be a high level of agreement, with more than three quarters of respondents saying that NGOs are a way to improve the quality of life of older people. The number of people who disbelieve in this area is negligible.

## The pandemic situation has highlighted the importance of caring communities

N=145

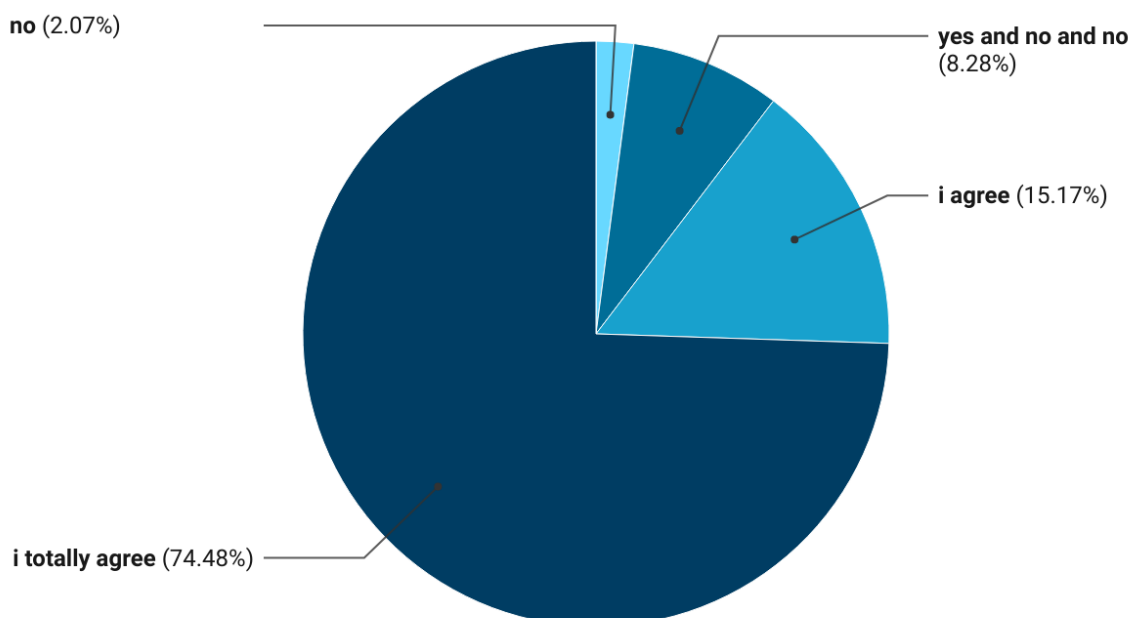


Figure 16: The pandemic situation has highlighted the importance of caring communities

There is also a strong consensus on the importance of caring communities, which has become even more evident in the context of a pandemic.

### Number of volunteers

33.77% of respondents think that there are relatively few volunteers in their villages, but the same number feel that the number of volunteers is sufficient. A further 31.13% do not have enough information about the number of volunteers.

### How many volunteers do you think are active in your community to help the elderly?

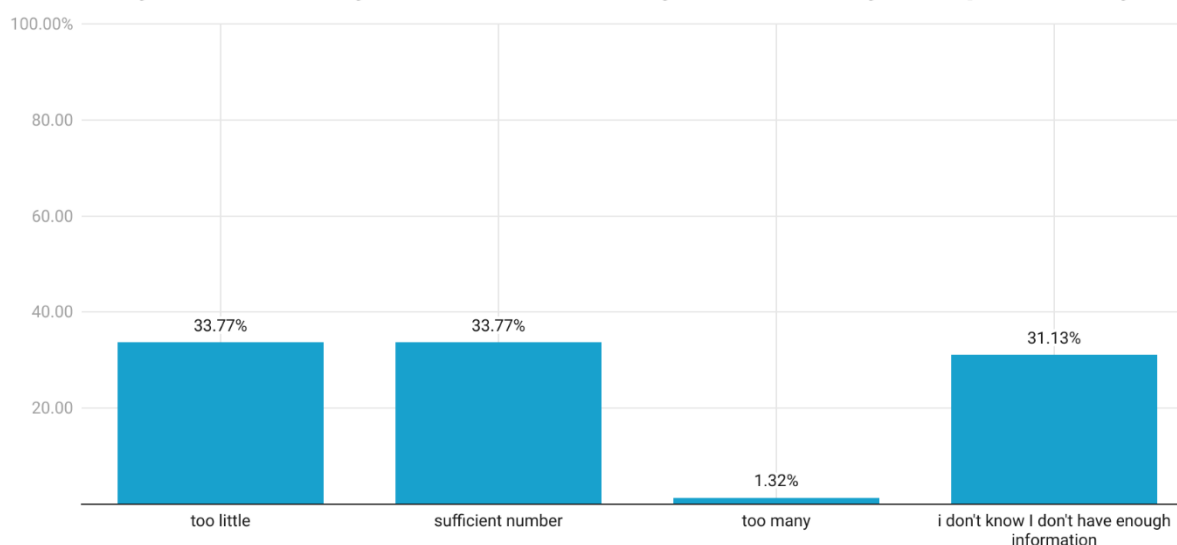


Figure 17: How many volunteers do you think are active in your community to help the elderly?

### How many volunteers do you think are active in your community to help the elderly?

	Number of mentions	Frequency (percent)	Valid Frequency (percent)	Cumulative valid frequency (percent)
too little	51	33.80%	33.80%	33.80%
sufficient number	51	33.80%	33.80%	67.50%
I don't know, I don't have enough information	47	31.10%	31.10%	98.70%
too many	2	1.30%	1.30%	100.00%
In total	151	100.00%	100.00%	

Table 2: How many volunteers do you think are active in your community to help the elderly?

In the following we examine the above in socio-demographic terms.

## How many volunteers do you think are active in your community to help the elderly?

by gender

■ Women ■ Men

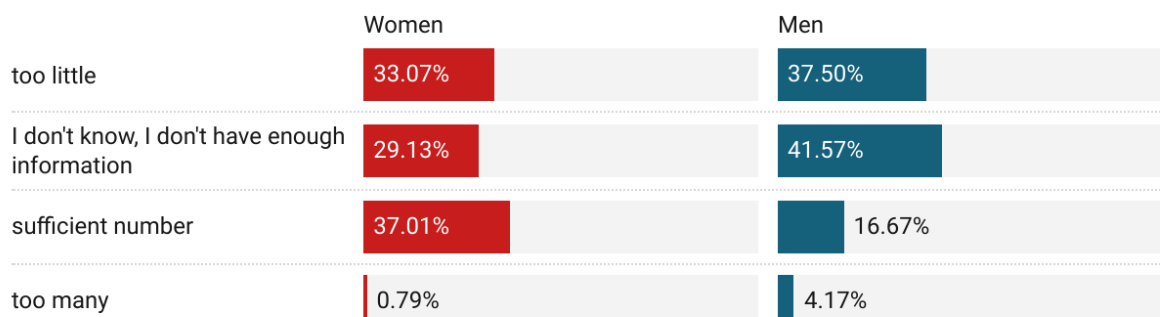


Figure 18: How many volunteers do you think are active in your community to help the elderly? – by gender

## How many volunteers do you think are active in your community to help the elderly?

by place of residence

■ City ■ Village

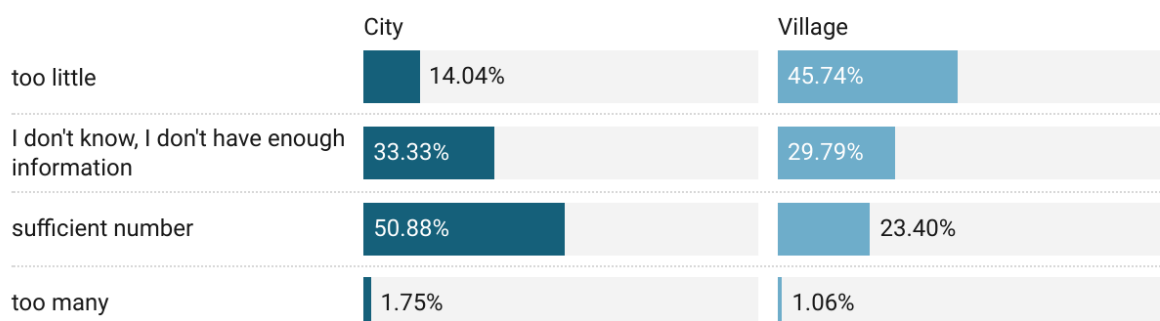


Figure 19: How many volunteers do you think are active in your community to help the elderly? – by place of residence

## How many volunteers do you think are active in your community to help the elderly?

by level of education

■ 8 years of primary school or less ■ high school ■ college or university

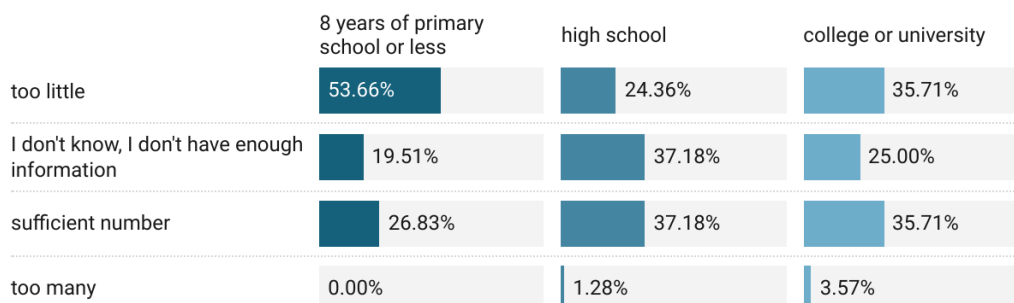


Figure 20: How many volunteers do you think are active in your community to help the elderly? – by place of residence

## Awareness of the Co-AGE INTERREG project

74.17% of the respondents had already heard about the Co-AGE project, which aims to promote closer cooperation between public institutions and NGOs in the Austrian-Hungarian border region. 1.32% of the elderly respondents do not remember.

**Have you heard about the Co-AGE INTERREG project, which aims to promote closer cooperation between public institutions and NGOs in the Austrian-Hungarian border region through the development of volunteer-based elderly-friendly care communities?**

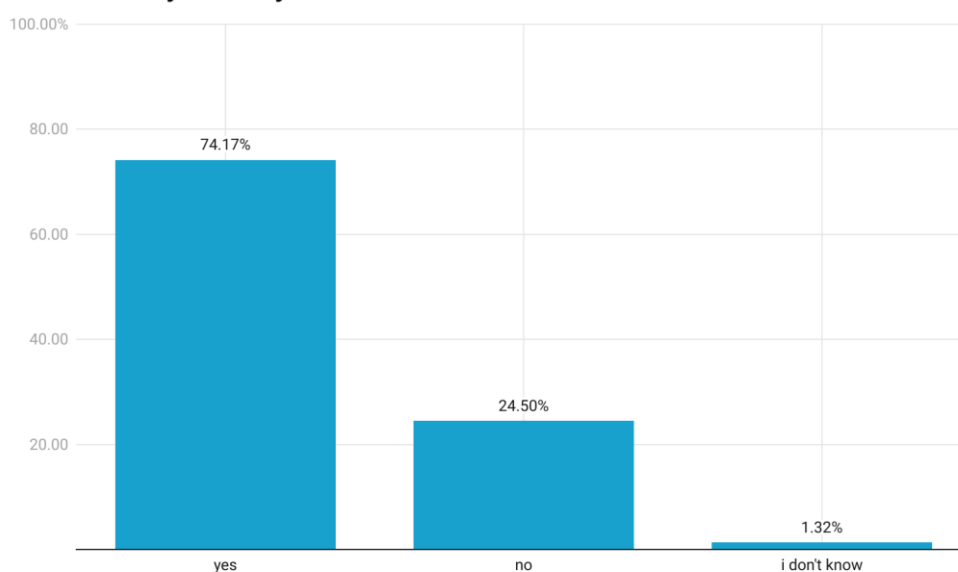


Figure 21: Have you heard about the Co-AGE project before?

**Have you heard about the Co-AGE INTERREG project, which aims to promote closer cooperation between public institutions and NGOs in the Austrian-Hungarian border region through the development of volunteer-based elderly-friendly care communities?**

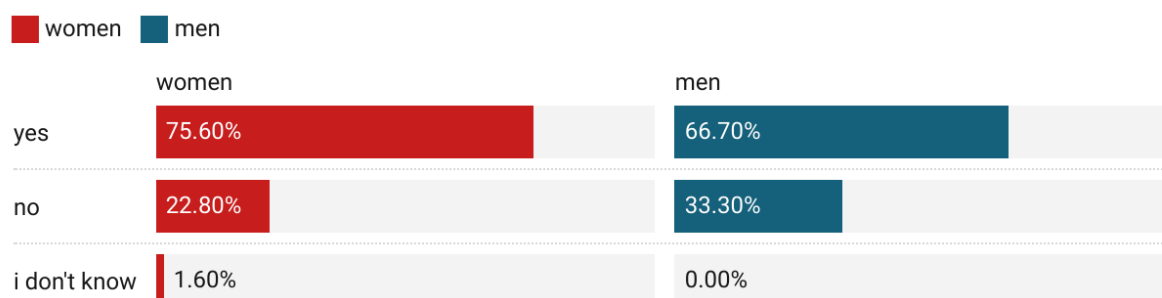
	Number of mentions	Frequency (percent)	Valid frequency (percent)
yes	112	74.20%	74.20%
no	37	24.50%	24.50%
i don't know	2	1.30%	1.30%
In total	151	100.00%	100.00%

*Table 3: Have you heard about the Co-AGE project before?*

In the following we examine the above in socio-demographic terms.

## Have you heard of the Co-Age project before?

by gender



*Figure 22: Have you heard about the Co-AGE project before?*

## Have you heard of the Co-Age project before?

by level of education

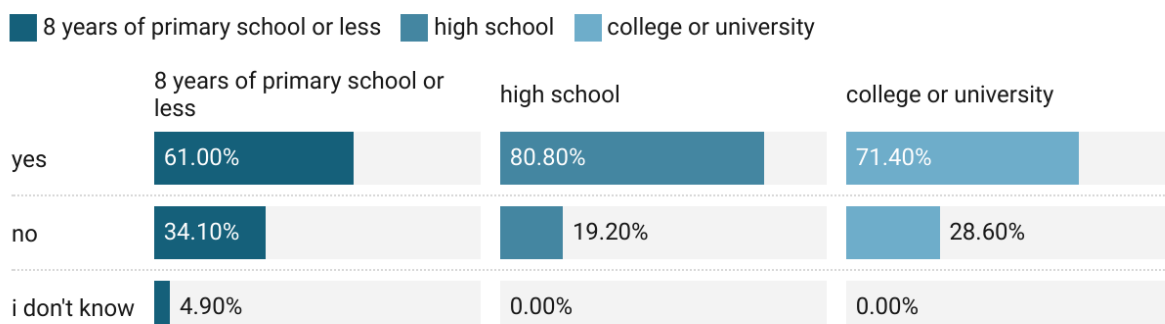


Figure 23: Have you heard about the Co-AGE project before?

### Trust persons awareness and characteristics of the ideal trust person

During the research, we examined the familiarity of trusted colleagues according to spontaneous mentions. Trust persons, who have a role in the BRIDGE, serve as a point of information and communication about the services offered, trained trust persons are a kind of "ambassadors" of the Co-AGE project. The most frequently mentioned facilitators are, in alphabetical order.

When describing the ideal trust person, respondents chose five of the criteria from the questionnaire that they considered most valid for the trust person. The most frequently cited aspects were: helpful (80.13%), knows the needs of the public (64.9%), respects the rights and dignity of others (42.38%), and communicates well (36.42%). The least frequently cited aspect was "is disciplined in his/her actions" (19.87%).

## What are the characteristics of an ideal trust person?

N=151

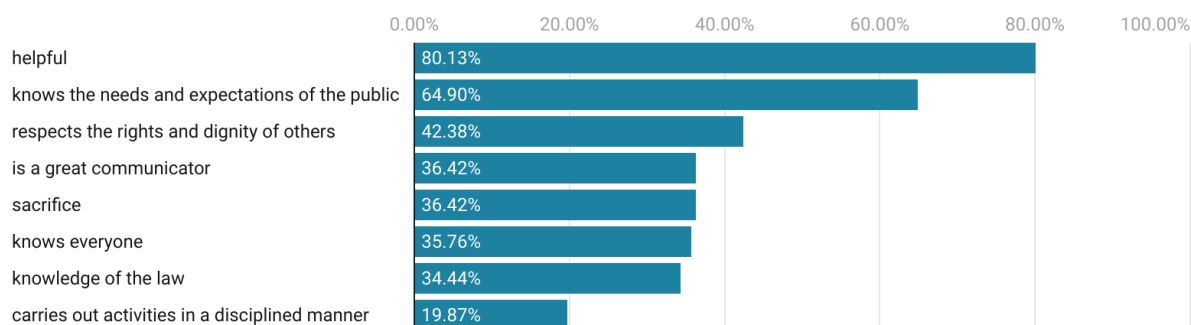


Figure 24: What are the characteristics of an ideal trust person?

## What are the characteristics of an ideal trust person?

by gender

■ Women 
 ■ Men

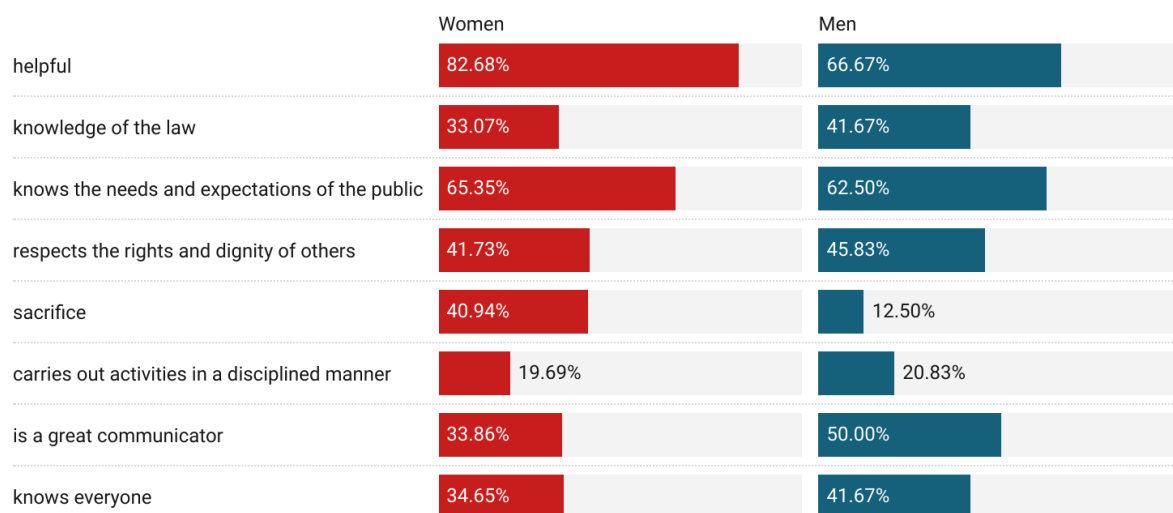


Figure 25: What are the characteristics of an ideal trust person? – by gender



## What are the characteristics of an ideal trust person?

by place of residence

City Village

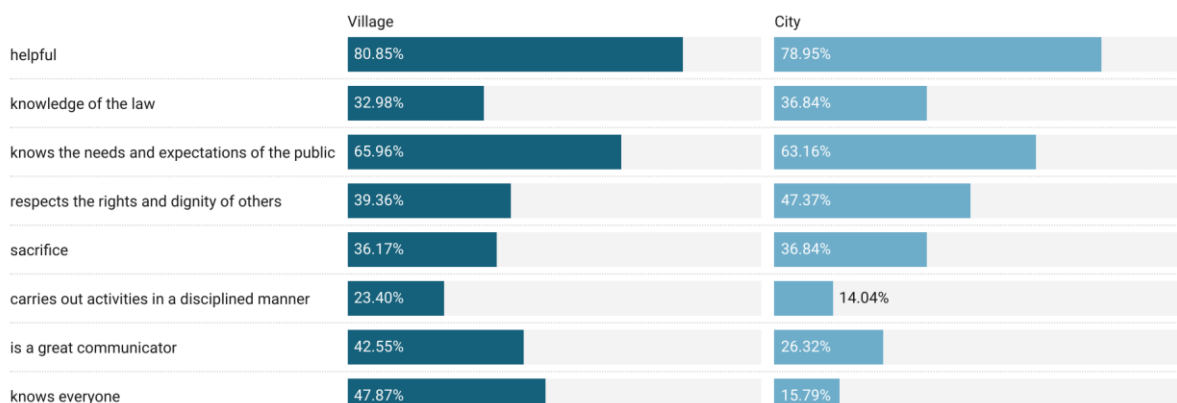


Figure 26: What are the characteristics of an ideal trust person? – by place of residence

## What are the characteristics of an ideal trust person?

by level of education

8 years of primary school or less high school college or university

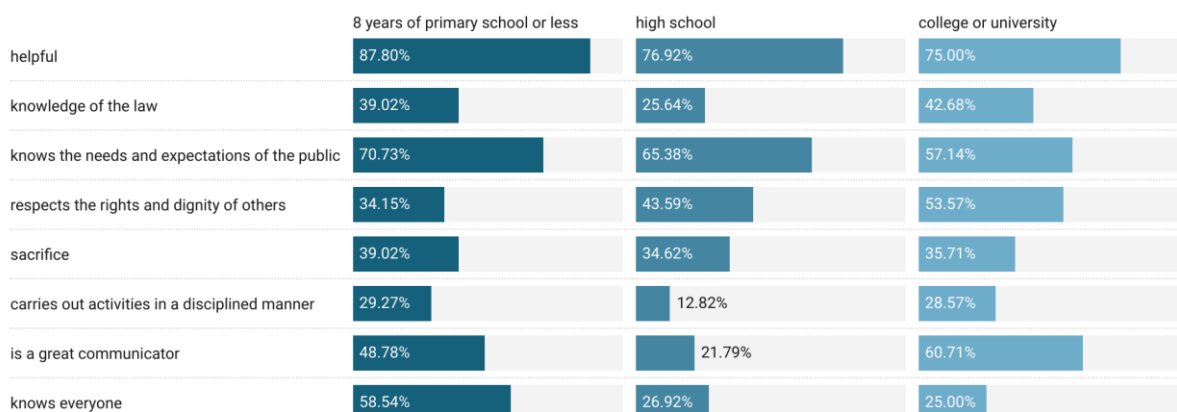


Figure 27: What are the characteristics of an ideal trust person? – by level of education

## Attitudes towards volunteers

Attitudes towards volunteers were measured using an agreement scale (where 5 means strongly agree) for three statements, which were:

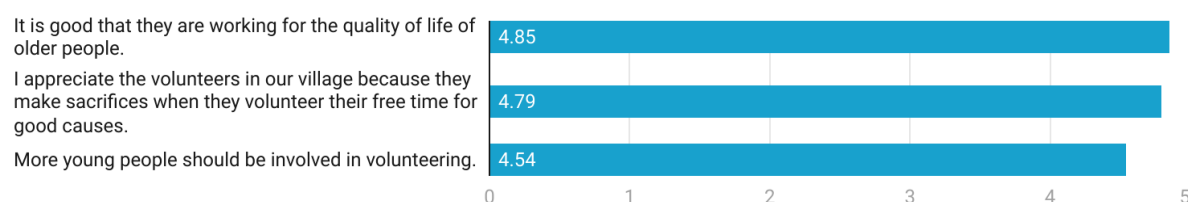
- I appreciate volunteers in my village because they make sacrifices when they volunteer their free time for good causes
- It is a good thing that they work to improve the quality of life of older people

- More young people should be involved in volunteering

There was the highest level of agreement with the statement that it is a good thing that volunteers work to improve the quality of life of older people (4.85). The lowest level of agreement was that more young people should be involved in volunteering, but again the average level of agreement was high at 4.54.

## How much do you agree with the following statement?

average



5- I totally agree

*Figure 28: How much do you agree with the following statement?*

## How much do you agree with the following statement?

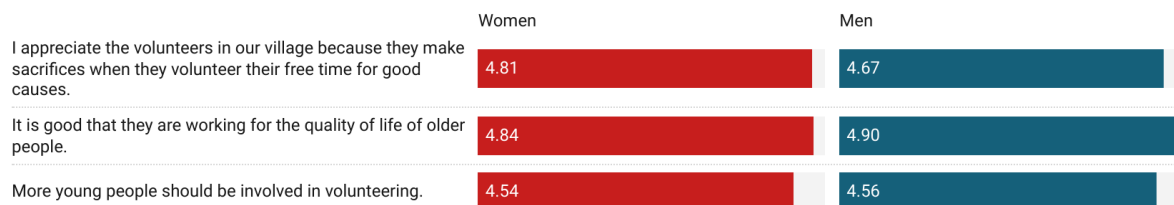
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Standard deviation
It is good that they are working for the quality of life of older people.	137	3	5	4.85	0.400
I appreciate the volunteers in our village because they make sacrifices when they volunteer their free time for good causes.	132	1	5	4.79	0.553
More young people should be involved in volunteering.	122	1	5	4.54	0.854

Table 4: How much do you agree with the following statement?

## How much do you agree with the following statements?

by gender

■ Women ■ Men



Average, 5- i totally agree

Figure 29: How much do you agree with the following statement? – by gender

## How much do you agree with the following statements?

by place of residence

City Village

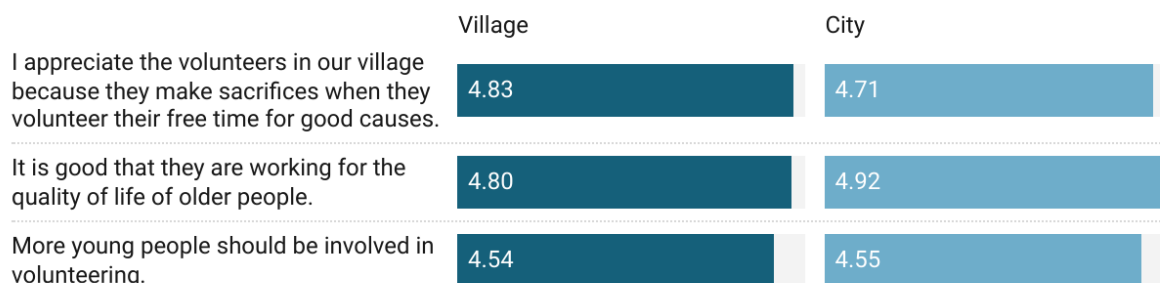


Figure 30: How much do you agree with the following statement? – by place of residence

## I appreciate the volunteers in our village because they make sacrifices when they volunteer their free time for good causes.

N=132

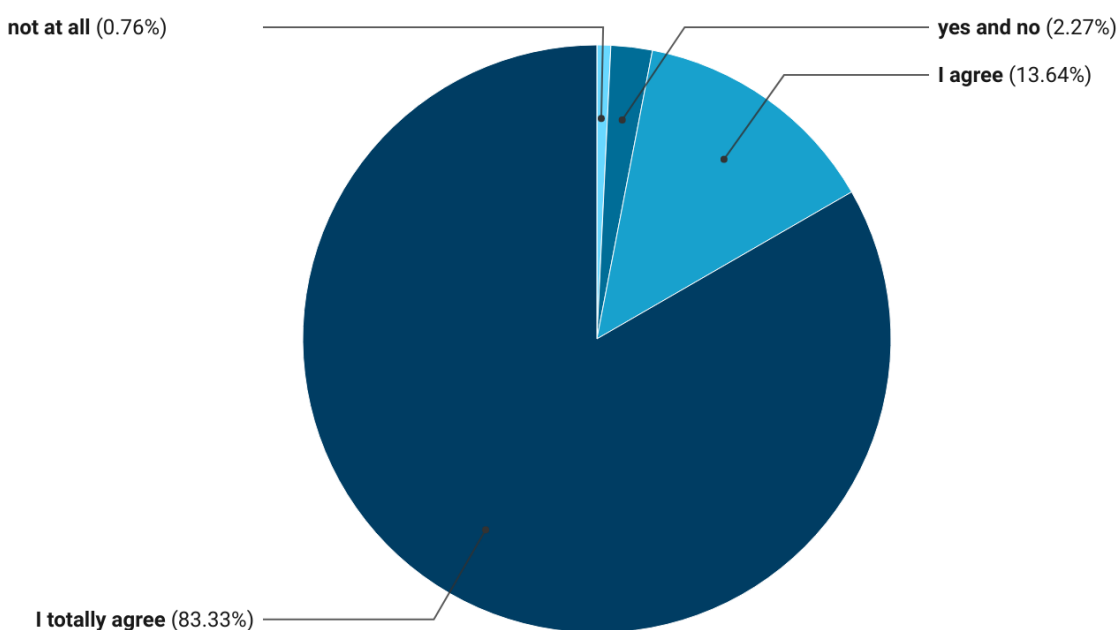


Figure 31: I appreciate the volunteers in our village because they make sacrifices when they volunteer their free time for good causes.

### It is good that they are working for the quality of life of older people.

N=134

yes and no (1.46%)

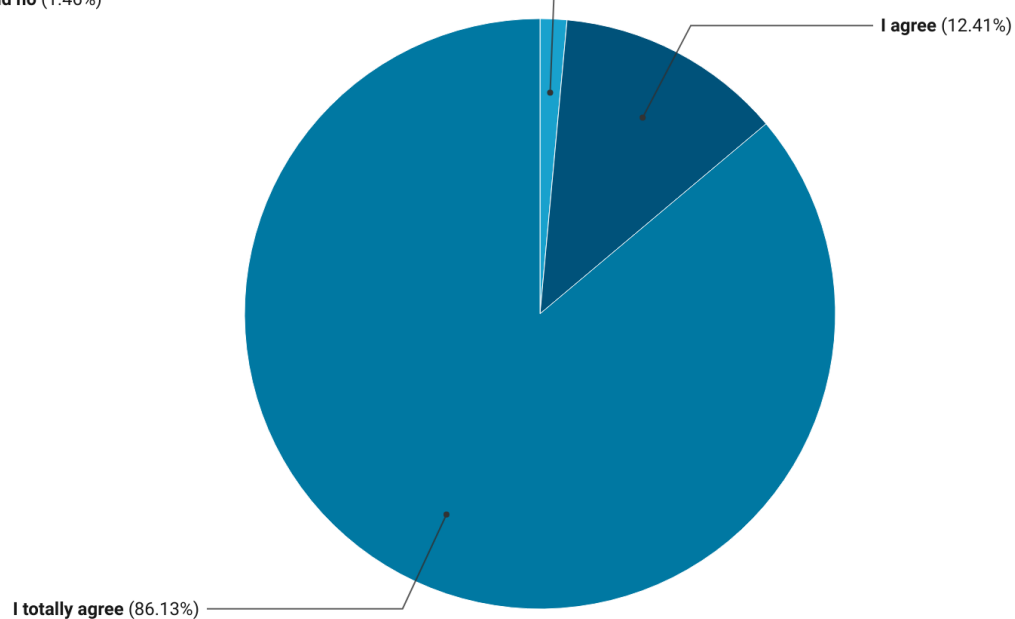


Figure 32: It is good that they are working for the quality of life of older people.

### More young people should be involved in volunteering.

N=122

not at all (0.82%)

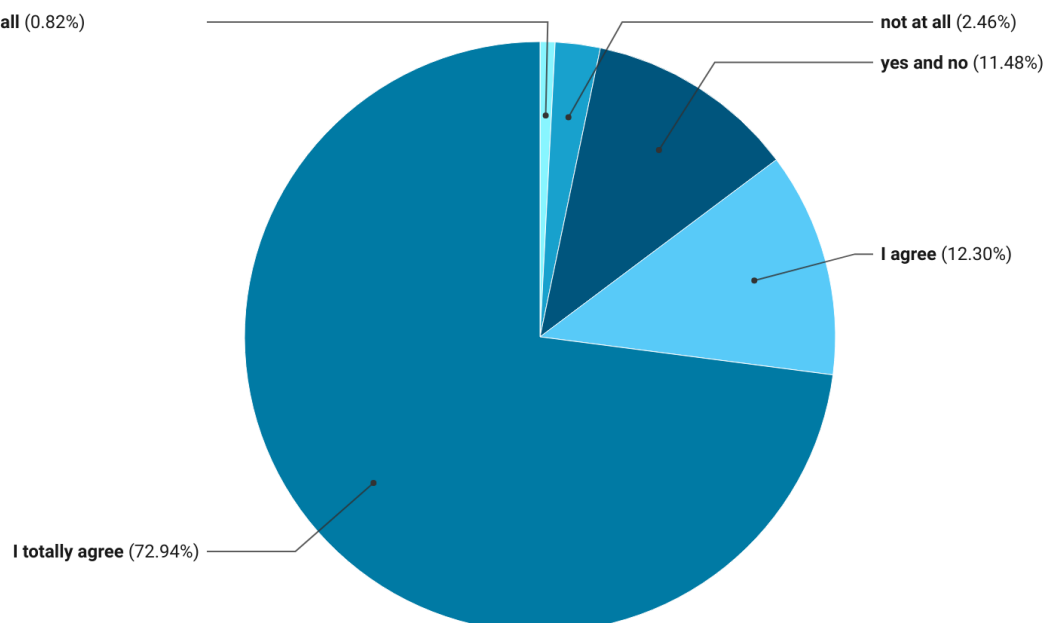


Figure 33: More young people should be involved in volunteering.

## Importance of Co-AGE project elements

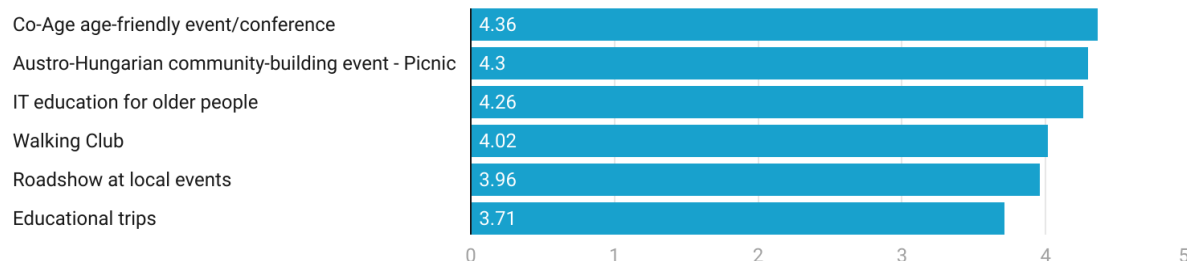
Respondents ranked the following project elements on a scale of importance from one to five (with 5 being very important):

- Co-AGE elderly-friendly event/conference
- Austrian-Hungarian community-building event - Picnic
- IT education for older people
- Roadshow at municipal events
- Study tours
- Walking club

The importance averages of the events ranged from 3.71 to 4.36. The most important event was the elderly-friendly conference, followed by a picnic, IT education, a roadshow and finally a study tour.

## The importance of Co-Age project elements

average



5- very important

*Figure 34: The importance of Co-Age project elements*

## The importance of Co-Age project elements

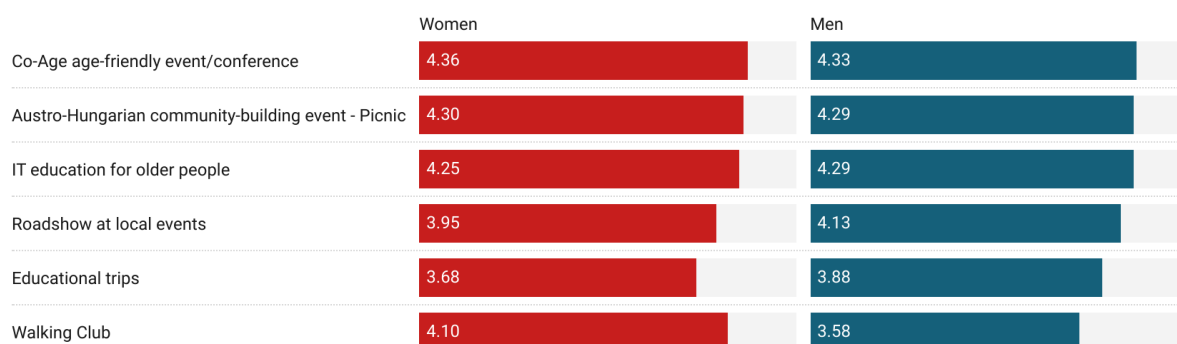
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Standard deviation
Co-Age age-friendly event/conference	151	1	5	4.36	0.897
Austro-Hungarian community-building event - Picnic	151	1	5	4.30	0.951
IT education for older people	151	1	5	4.26	0.996
Walking Club	151	1	5	4.02	1.128
Roadshow at local events	151	1	5	3.98	1.086
Educational trips	151	1	5	3.71	1.147

Table 5: The importance of Co-Age project elements

## The importance of Co-Age project elements

by gender

■ Women ■ Men



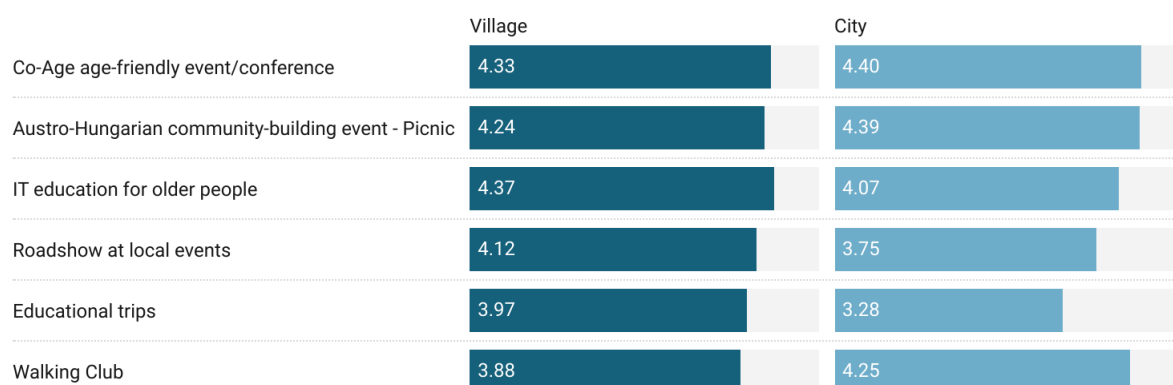
Average, 5- very important

Figure 35: The importance of Co-Age project elements – by gender

## The importance of Co-Age project elements

by place of residence

City Village



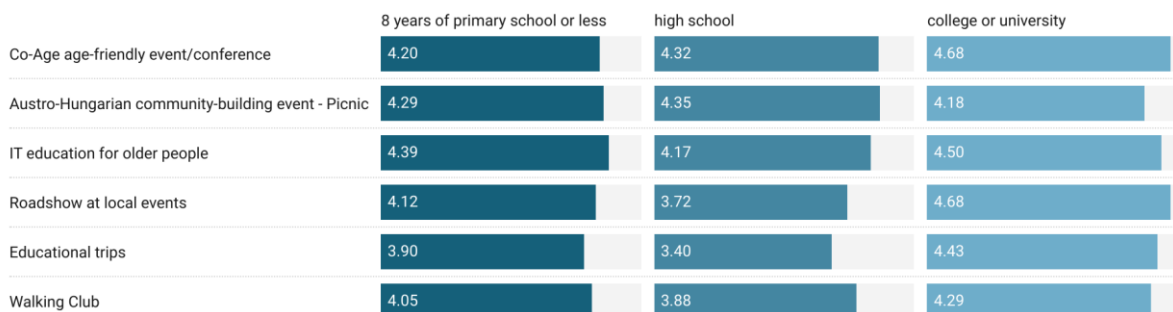
Average, 5 - very important

Figure 36: The importance of Co-Age project elements – by place of residence

## The importance of Co-Age project elements

by level of education

8 years of primary school or less high school college or university



Average, 5 - very important

Figure 37: The importance of Co-Age project elements – by level of education



## Co-Age age-friendly event/conference

N=151

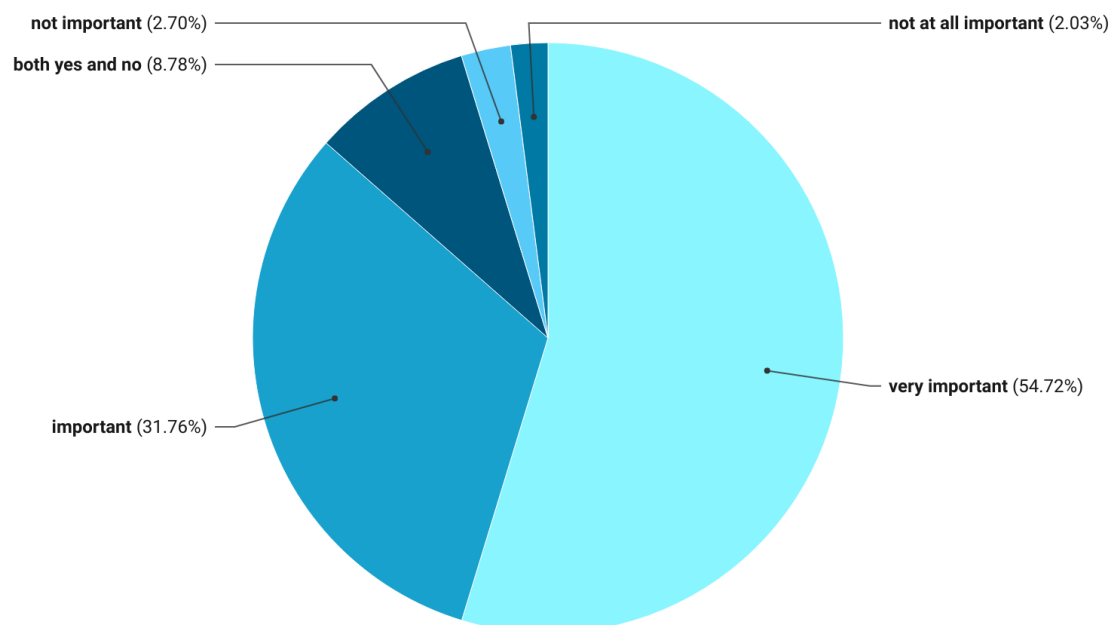


Figure 38: Co-Age age-friendly event/conference

## Austro-Hungarian community-building event - Picnic

N=151

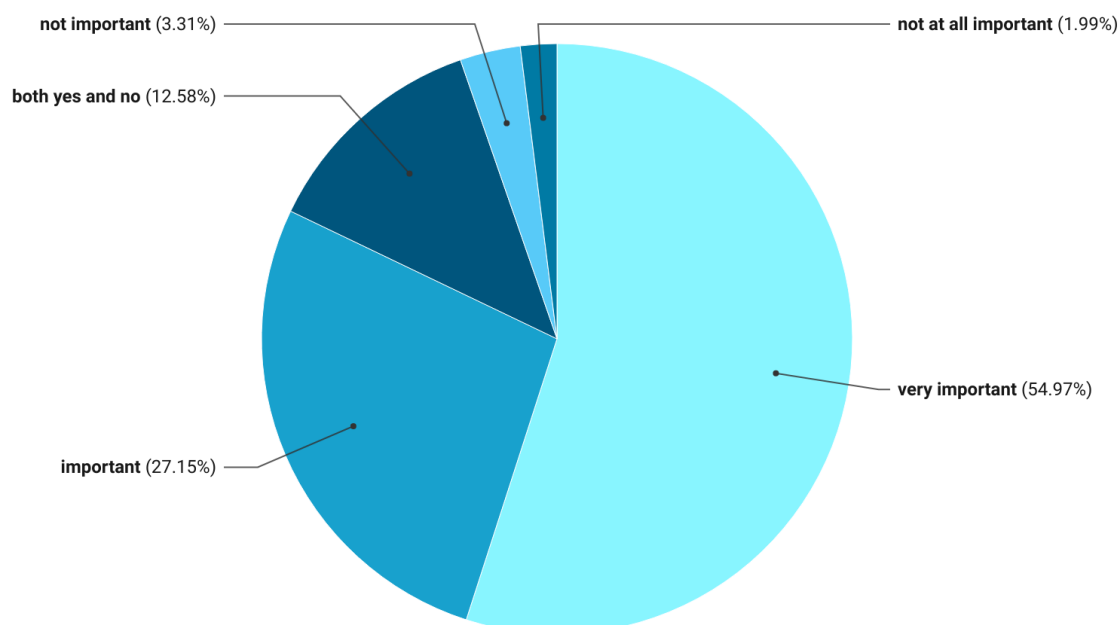


Figure 39: Austro-Hungarian community-building event - Picnic

## IT education for older people

N=151

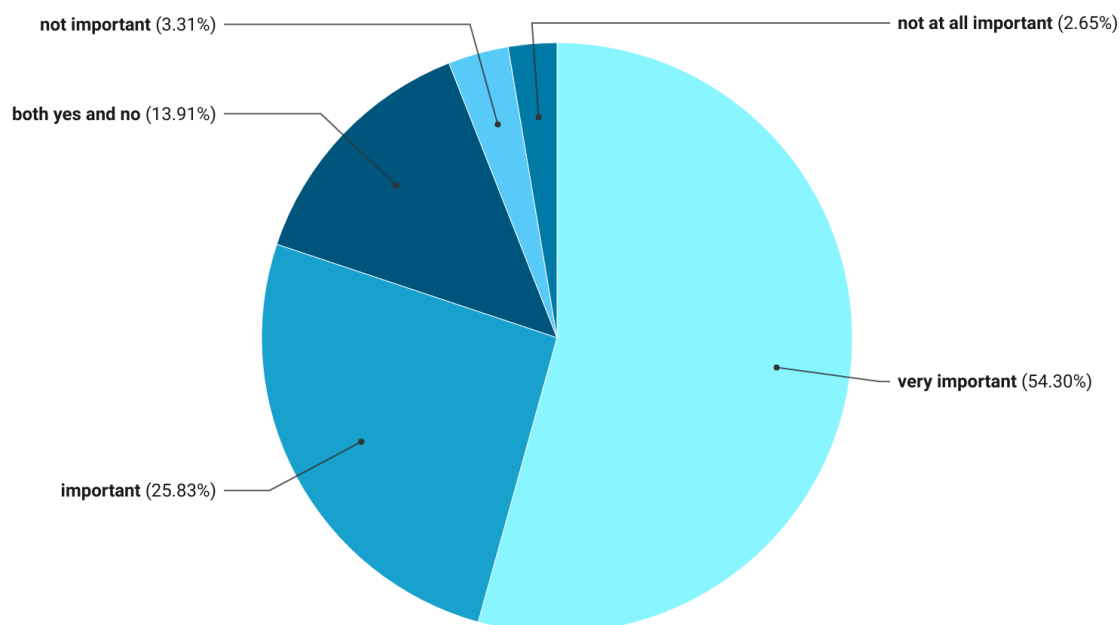


Figure 40: IT education for older people

## Roadshow at local events

N=151

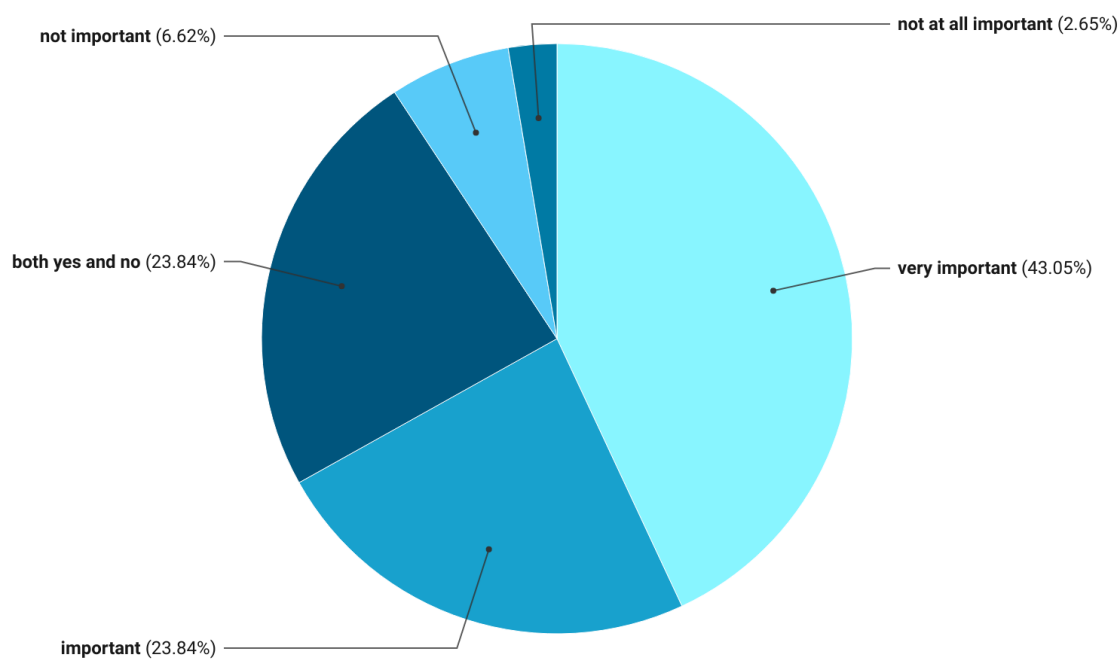


Figure 41: Roadshow at local events

## Educational trips

N=151

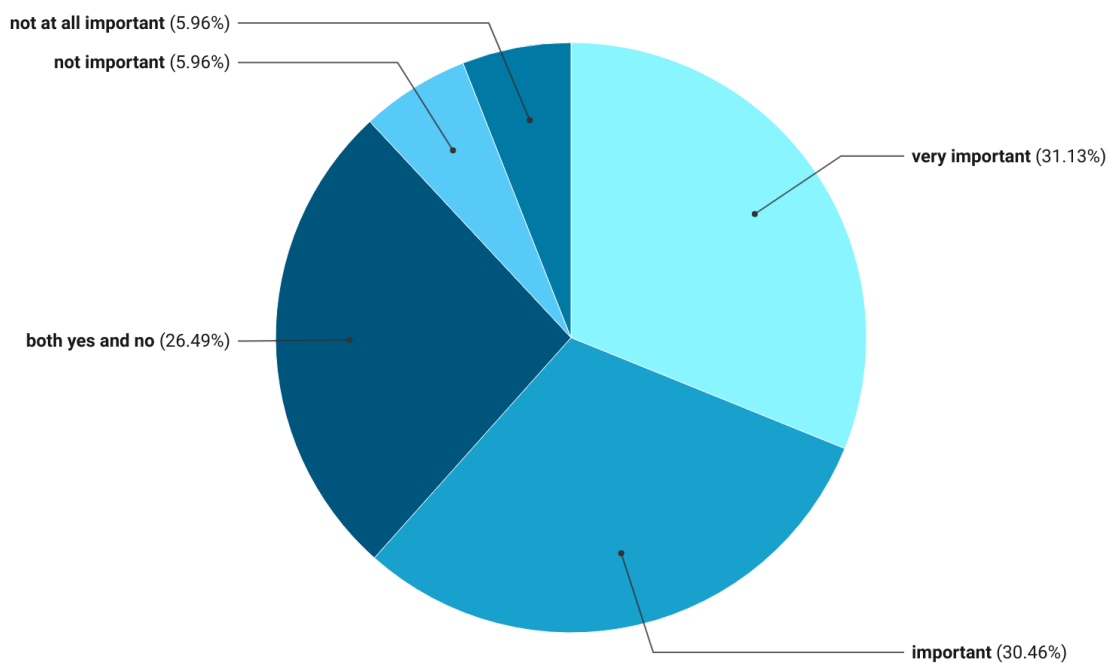


Figure 42: Educational trips

## Walking Club

N=151

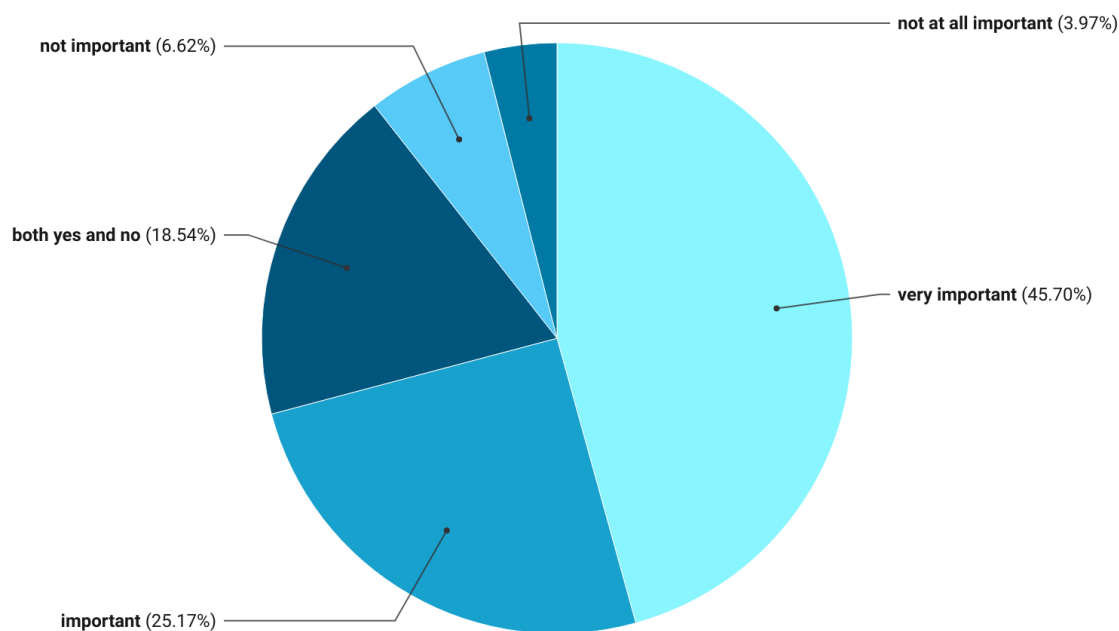


Figure 43: Walking club

## Attendance of Co-AGE project elements

The most attended project event was the elderly-friendly conference, with more than half of respondents (53.64%) attending such an event. This was followed by the picnic (53.64%) and the roadshow (40.4%).

## The importance of Co-Age project elements

N=151

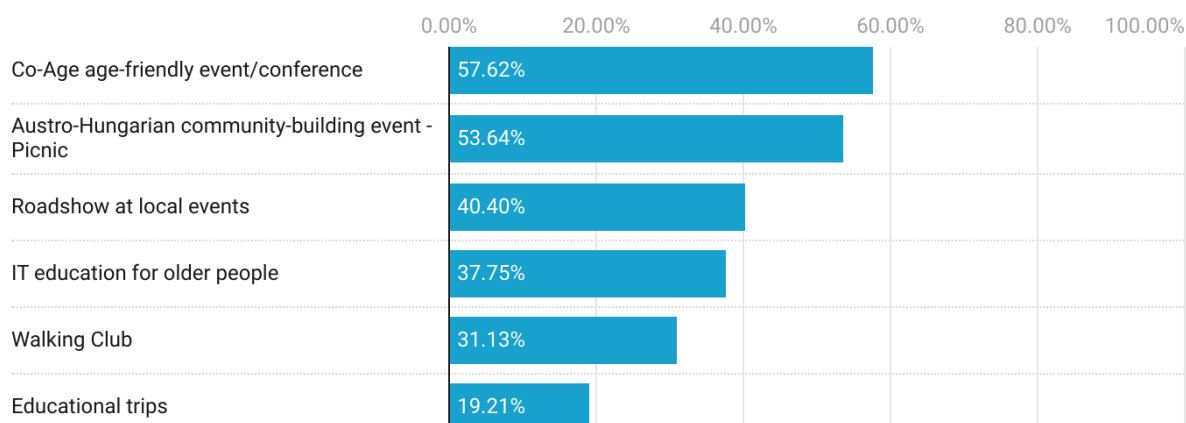
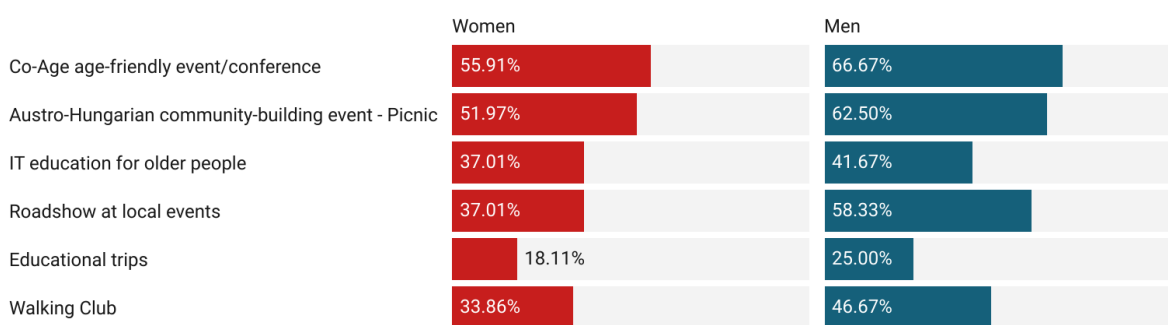


Figure 44: The importance of Co-Age project elements

## The importance of Co-Age project elements

by gender

■ Women ■ Men



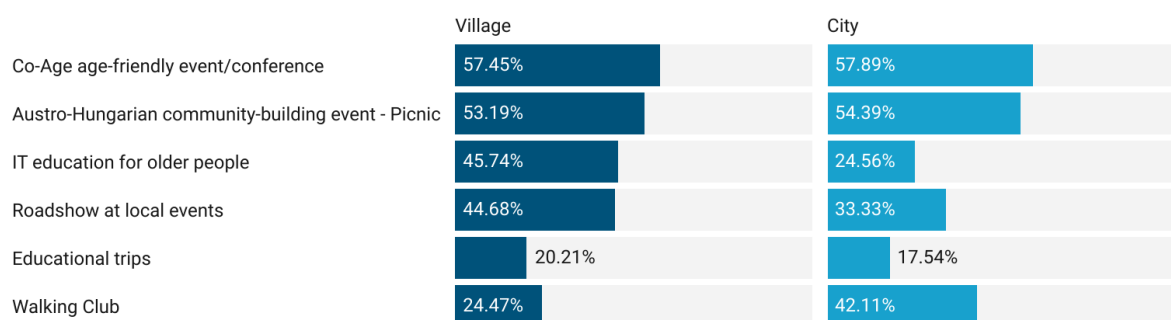
5- very important

Figure 45: The importance of Co-Age project elements – by gender

## The importance of Co-Age project elements

by place of residence

■ Village ■ City



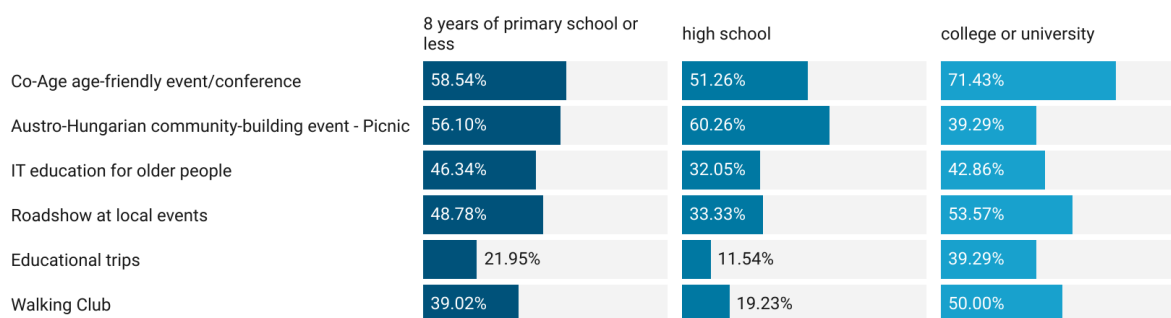
5- very important

Figure 46: The importance of Co-Age project elements – by place of residence

## The importance of Co-Age project elements

by level of education

■ 8 years of primary school or less ■ high school ■ college or university



5- very important

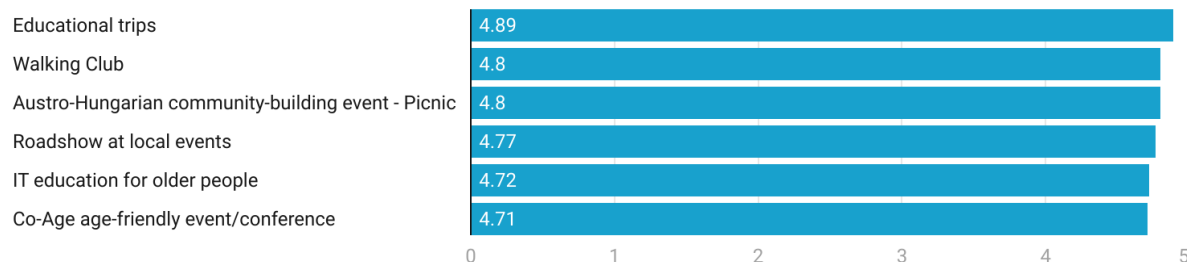
Figure 47: The importance of Co-Age project elements – by level of education

## Participant evaluation of Co-AGE project elements

The evaluation of participants in Co-AGE events shows a high level of satisfaction. The ratings were on a scale of one to five, with five being excellent. All project elements had an excellent average rating, ranging from 4.89 to 4.71. The standard deviations range from 0.3 to 0.6.

### If you participated in a project element, please rate it!

average



1 - was a very poor event, 5 - was an excellent event

Figure 48: If you participated in a project element, please rate it!

### If you participated in a project element, please rate it!

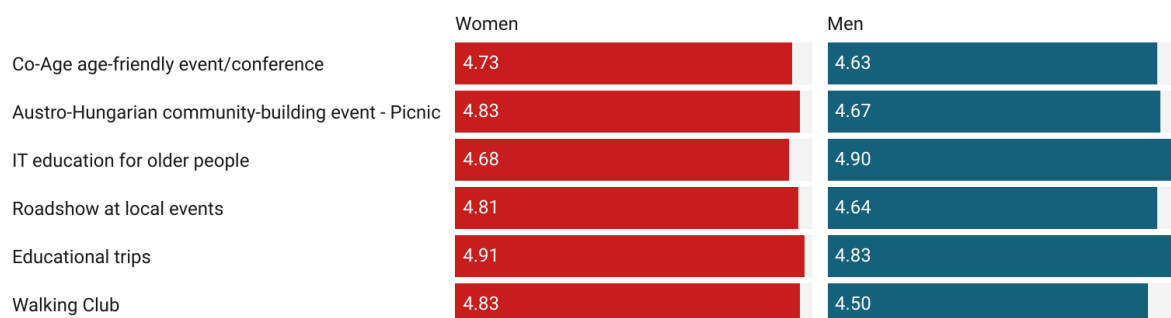
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Standard deviation
Educational trips	28	4	5	4.89	0.315
Walking Club	46	3	5	4.80	0.453
Austro-Hungarian community-building event - Picnic	81	3	5	4.80	0.431
Roadshow at local events	61	2	5	4.77	0.560
IT education for older people	57	3	5	4.72	0.491
Co-Age age-friendly event/conference	87	2	5	4.71	0.589

Table 6: If you participated in a project element, please rate it!

## Visitor evaluation of Co-AGE elements

by gender

■ Women ■ Men



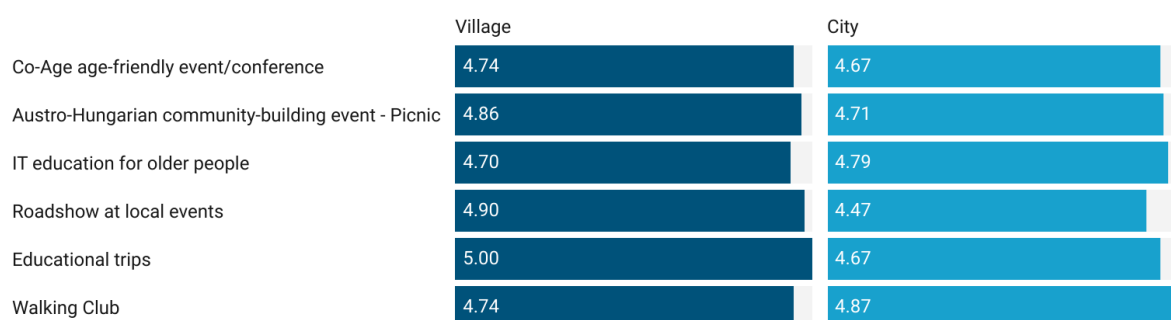
5- excellent

Figure 49: If you participated in a project element, please rate it! – by gender

## Visitor evaluation of Co-AGE elements

by place of residence

■ Village ■ City



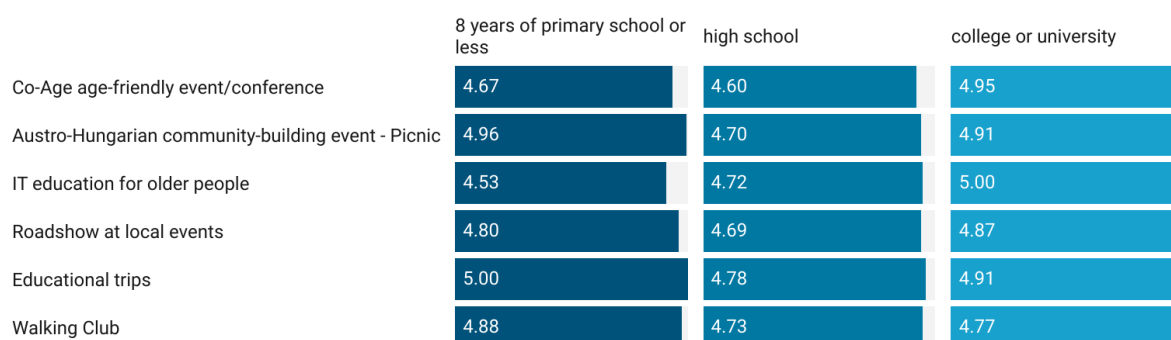
5- excellent

Figure 50: If you participated in a project element, please rate it! – by place of residence

## Visitor evaluation of Co-AGE elements

by level of education

■ 8 years of primary school or less ■ high school ■ college or university



5- excellent

Figure 51: If you participated in a project element, please rate it! – by level of education

### Co-Age age-friendly event/conference

N=87

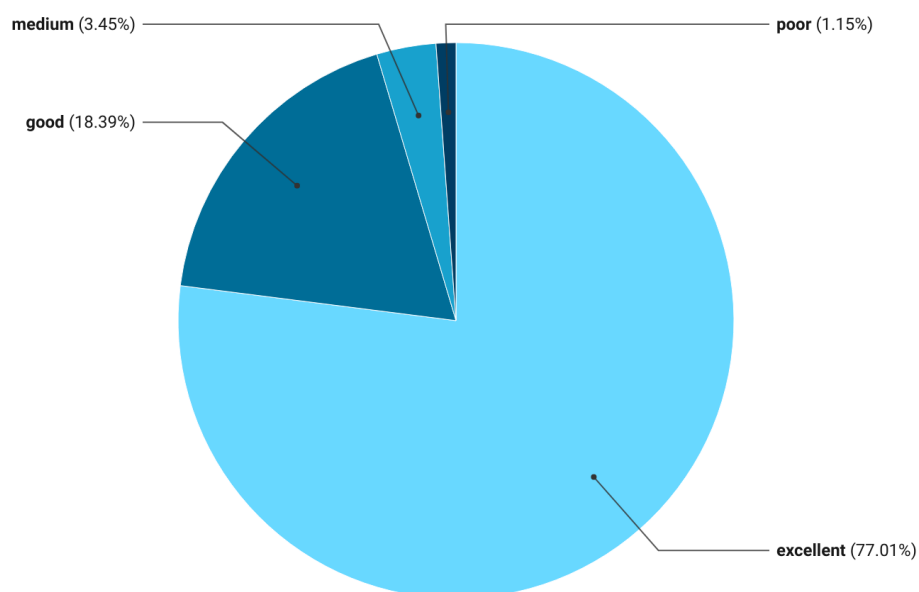


Figure 52: Co-Age age-friendly event/conference

### Austro-Hungarian community-building event - Picnic

N=81

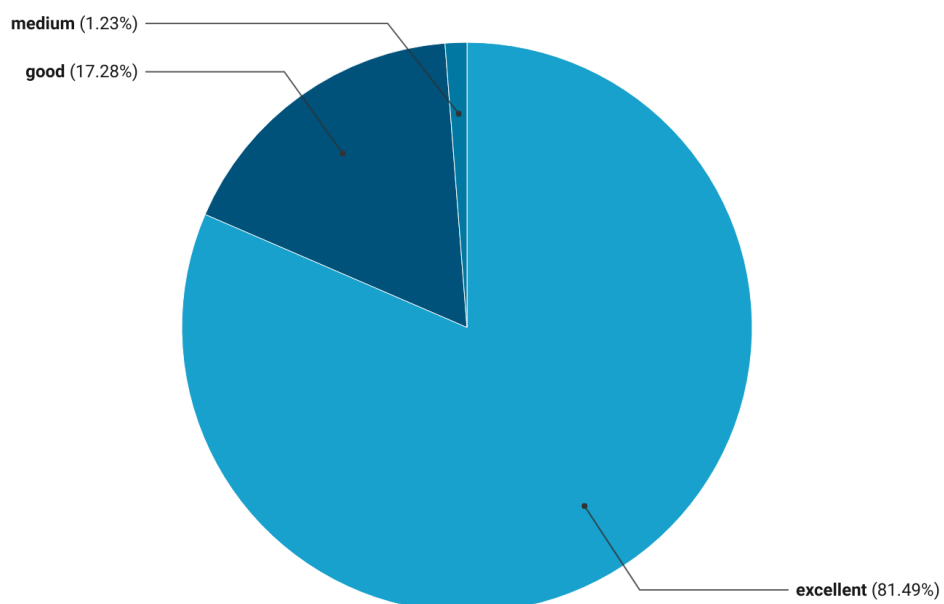


Figure 53: Austro-Hungarian community-building event - Picnic



## IT education for older people

N=57

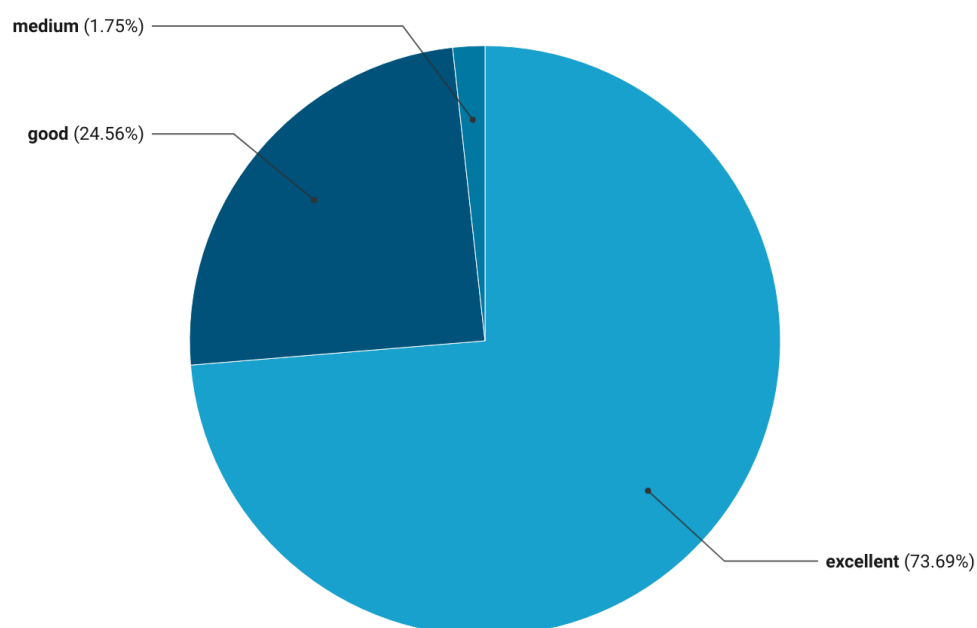


Figure 54: IT education for older people

## Roadshow at local events

N=61

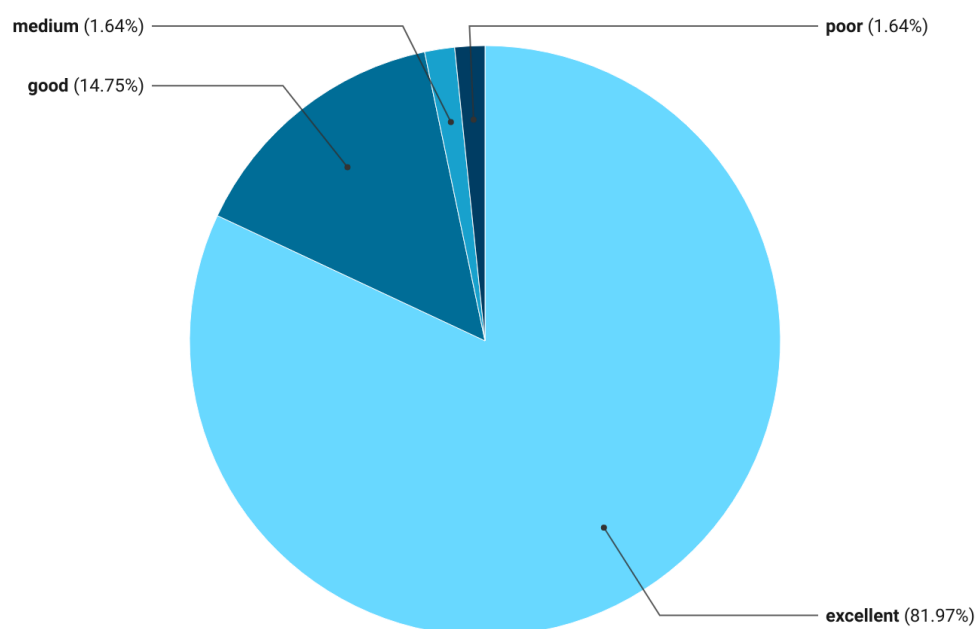


Figure 55: Roadshow at local events

## Educational trips

N=28

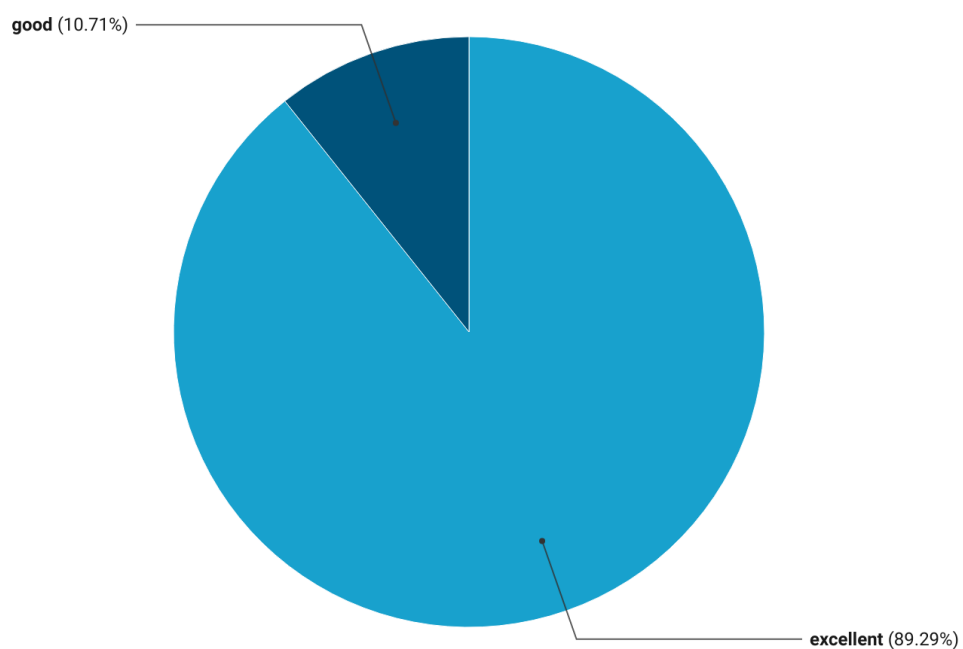


Figure 56: Educational trips

## Walking Club

N=46

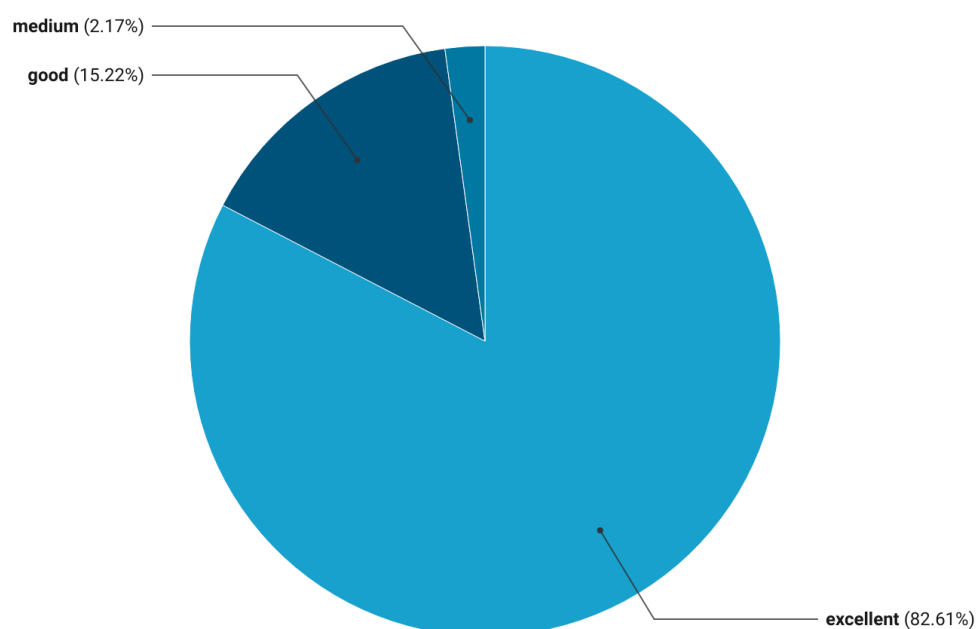


Figure 57: Walking Club

## Co-AGE project elements you would like to participate in over the next 3 years

Visitors to the events would most likely revisit the picnic and elderly-friendly conference project elements in the next 3 years (86.09% mention frequency). Roadshow (64.59%), IT education (59.6%), walking club (57.62%) are all events that could be of interest in the near future. Study trips are the least favoured by the elderly, with a frequency of 43.71%.

## Events in which you would like to participate in the next 3 years

N=151

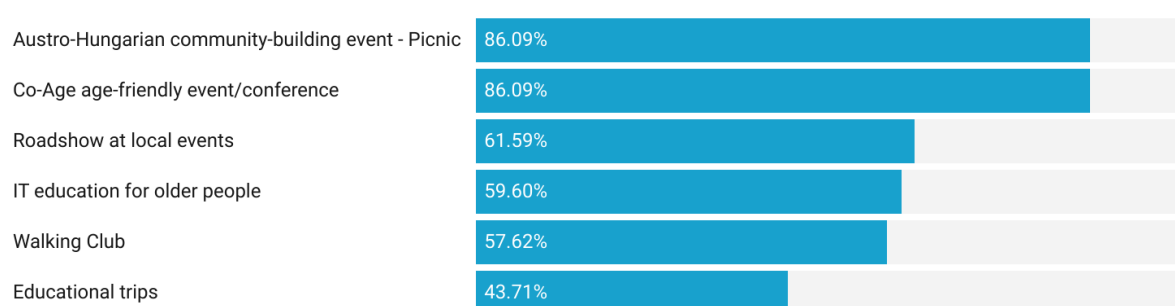


Figure 58: Events in which you would like to participate in the next 3 years

## Events in which you would like to participate in the next 3 years

Women Men

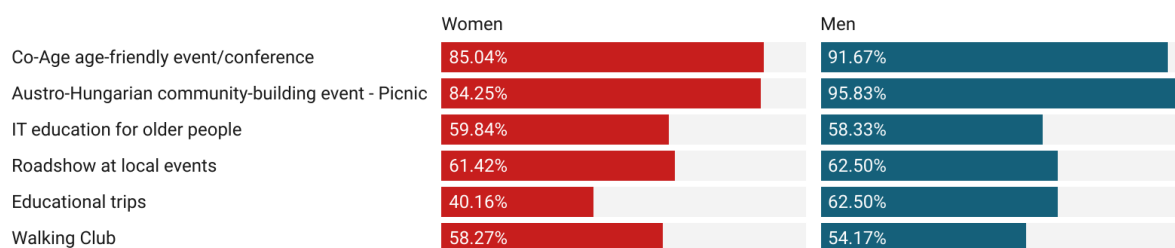


Figure 59: Events in which you would like to participate in the next 3 years – by gender

## Events in which you would like to participate in the next 3 years

by place of residence

■ Village ■ City

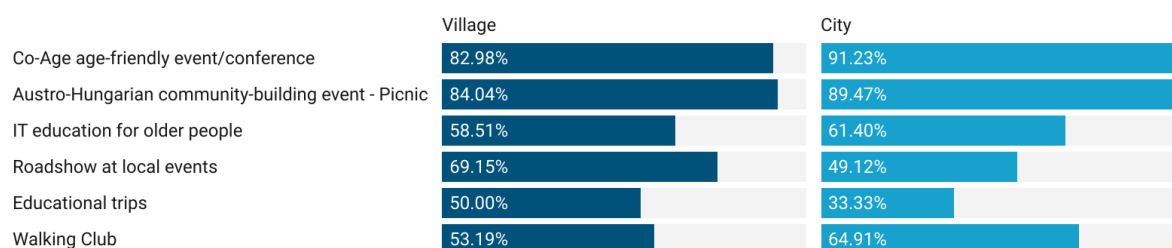


Figure 60: Events in which you would like to participate in the next 3 years – by place of residence

## Events in which you would like to participate in the next 3 years

by level of education

■ 8 years of primary school or less ■ high school ■ college or university

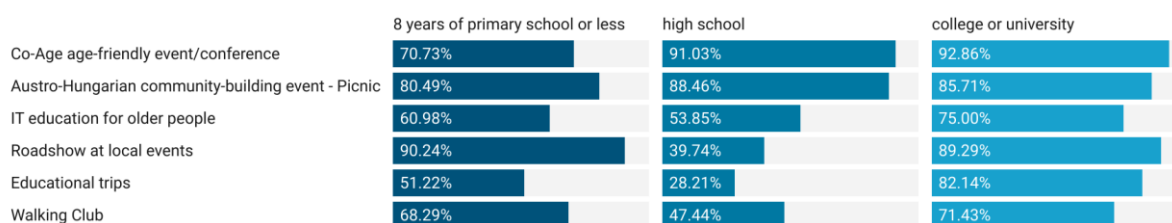


Figure 61: Events in which you would like to participate in the next 3 years – by level of education

## Measures to improve the quality of life of older people

Spontaneous suggestions for measures to improve the quality of life of older people included the need for more events and attention for older people. Topics of interest for older people include health, information technology, language training, cultural events, traditions, "cooking clubs". Several people suggested maintaining and setting up a senior citizens' club, for which investment in infrastructure is also considered necessary.

## Measures to improve the quality of life of older people

Mentions	Number of mentions	Frequency
Events for older people	32	22.22%
Taking better care of the elderly, listening, talking to the elderly	14	9.72%
Health-related events, lectures, measurements	9	6.25%
Pensioners' Club	9	6.25%
Construction of a community centre, building renovation	7	4.86%
Shopping and pharmacy for older people with reduced mobility	6	4.17%
Day care centre	4	2.78%
By permanently applying and continuing the Co-Age project elements	3	2.08%
Conversation evenings, getting together with young people	3	2.08%
Safety	3	2.08%
GP to be more tolerant, with medical care support	3	2.08%
Excursions, exploring other cities	3	2.08%
With pension increases, financial support	3	2.08%
Increase the number of volunteers	3	2.08%
Computer education, information technology	3	2.08%
I want to incorporate sport and exercise into my day with help	3	2.08%
To "take" the events to the elderly who have difficulty moving, to involve them somehow	2	1.39%
Village nurse bus, transportation	2	1.39%
Walking club, joint excursion 3-6 km	2	1.39%
With community involvement	2	1.39%
In the field of culture, invite speakers	2	1.39%

There would be no drastic price increases, healthy lifestyles would be covered	2	1.39%
Language courses	2	1.39%
Reviving old folk songs and traditions	2	1.39%
Theatre, cinema, concert (culture) participation	2	1.39%
Informing older people about scams, what to look out for.	1	0.69%
The village administration should pay more attention to the elderly and help them	1	0.69%
Expanding community life	1	0.69%
The re-launch of non-church circles	1	0.69%
With state support	1	0.69%
Extension of the family assistance service	1	0.69%
Helping older people living alone who are ill	1	0.69%
Cooking club, women exchanging recipes, making old traditional dishes	1	0.69%
Educational lectures	1	0.69%
Gardening lectures, tree planting, woodcutting expert advice	1	0.69%
Knitting club	1	0.69%
Mórotzné Györgyi	1	0.69%
There should be more cohesion in the village	1	0.69%
Very difficult because few people are involved in whatever is happening in the village	1	0.69%
Organisation of song evenings	1	0.69%
More young helpers	1	0.69%
More information on the programmes	1	0.69%
More middle-aged helpers	1	0.69%
<b>Total</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

*Table 7: Measures to improve the quality of life of older people*

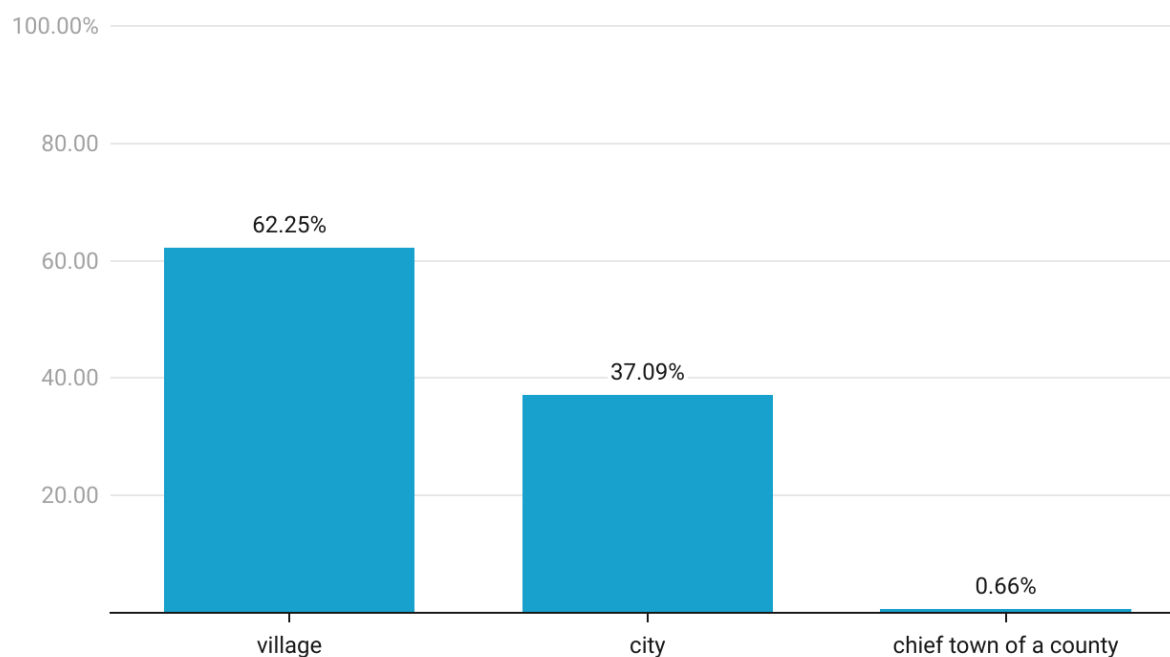
## Measures to improve the quality of life of older people

### Demographic characteristics of the sample

62.25% of respondents live in a village. 51.66% of respondents have completed secondary school, 27.15% have 8 years of primary education or less. The proportion with a college or university degree is 18.54% and 2.65% did not respond to the question on education. 84.1% of respondents are female.

### Your place of residence

N=151



*Figure 62: Your place of residence*

## Postcode of the municipality

	Number of mentions	Frequency (percent)	Valid frequency (percent)
9400	37	24.50%	24.70%
9461	26	17.20%	17.30%
9422	18	11.90%	12.00%
9792	17	11.30%	11.30%
9444	14	9.30%	9.30%
9542	10	6.60%	6.70%
9423	5	3.30%	3.30%
9443	5	3.30%	3.30%
9982	5	3.30%	3.30%
9431	4	2.60%	2.70%
9421	3	2.00%	2.00%
9764	3	2.00%	2.00%
9471	1	0.70%	0.70%
9641	1	0.70%	0.70%
9700	1	0.70%	0.70%
In Total	150	99.30%	100.00%
no answer / no data	1	0.70%	
Total	151	100.00%	

Table 8: Postcode of the municipality



## Your level of education

N=151

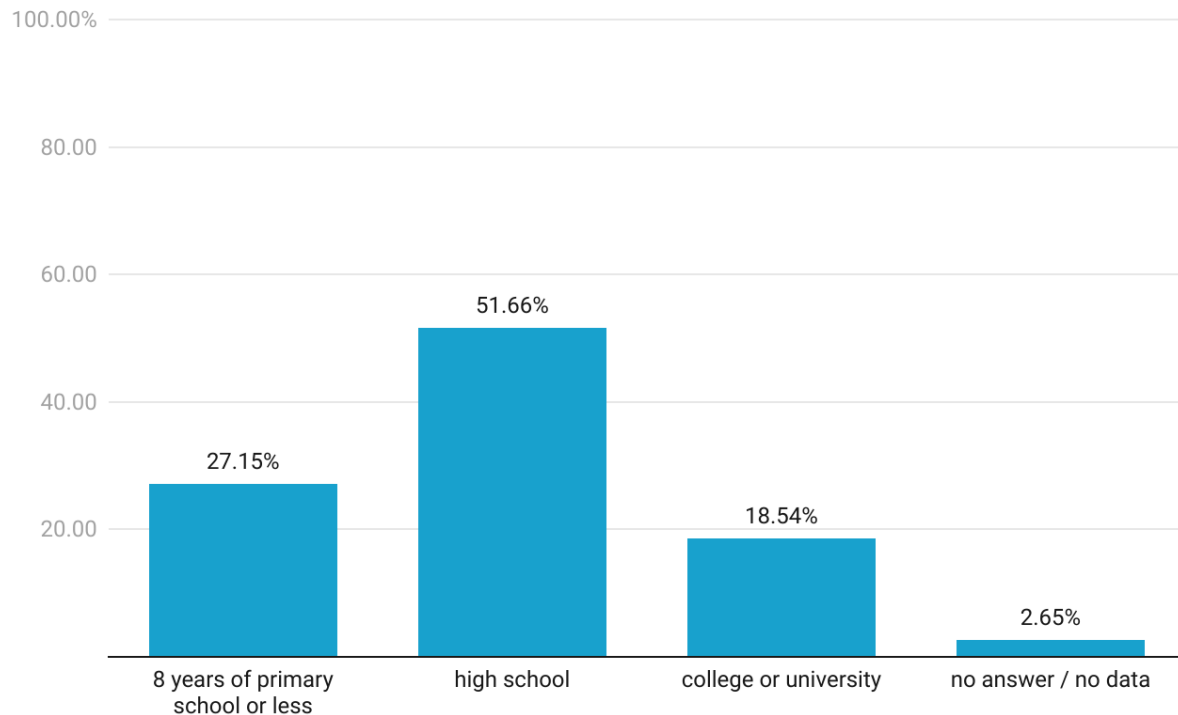


Figure 63: Your level of education

## Proposals, future sustainability

In addition to presenting the results of the two-phase research, the aim of the synthesis study is to discuss the long-term sustainability of the project results.

The topicality of the project makes it particularly relevant, as we live in an ageing society. Population ageing is the biggest social transformation of the 21st century, affecting almost every sector of society, including the labour market, pensions, health, housing, migration, politics and of course consumption, as well as family structure and intergenerational relations. An analysis of population structure reveals a worldwide increase in the size of the population. According to UN figures, in 1950 there were 2.53 billion people on the planet. In 2010, it was around 6.9 billion. The UN projects a population of 10.12 billion in 2100. (<https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/population>)

In today's ageing society, the phenomenon of ageism is increasingly topical. By this we mean discrimination, prejudices and stereotypes based on chronological age. An example of this is that older people often complain that they are not interesting to talk to. These are all ideas that our society represents. Heterogeneity and a disregard for the particularities of the older generation are strongly observed. The problem is that older people are often seen as a homogeneous unit, but it can be seen that individual differences increase with age. Older people often feel devalued or unappreciated in comparison with younger people and are increasingly affected by the invisibility or lack of recognition that comes with age.

These feelings were exacerbated by the social distance and isolation during the pandemic. Protecting the elderly through social distancing leads to isolation and loneliness, which can have a negative impact on the mental and physical health of the elderly. This leads to the perpetuation of negative stereotypes of older people as helpless or weak. The pandemic has shown that older people are a particularly vulnerable part of society. It is therefore very important to take measures to protect their mental health. In this way they can be made to feel that they are important members of society.

But the point is that ageing is not a problem to be solved or a disease to be cured, but a natural, lifelong process that binds us together. An ageing society affects all aspects of life and, above all, presents social and economic challenges and opportunities.

The project also highlighted the need for community and active programmes in old age.

The partners working together in the Co-AGE project have shown with this pilot project that it is possible to run socially useful, sustainable programmes based on people's voluntary work from the bottom up. The project has demonstrated the community-building impact of exemplary volunteering by trust people and their environment. We see this as a key area: finding and engaging respected, respected, active, socially sensitive, well-communicated, leading individuals with a large network of contacts in each of the neighbourhoods of the major cities. By focusing on 1-1 sub-tasks, taking into account local needs and characteristics, they can build sustainable elderly-friendly care communities step by step, following a long-term strategy.

In order for this to be felt at the level of society as a whole, a good example must be set, and its continuation must be ensured by the largest possible number of similar projects and their continuation, as the ageing society is one of the greatest challenges of our century.

An important shaping factor of social relations is the relations between generations; more specifically, the attitudes of each generation towards other generations, the extent to which

they seek or avoid interactions with each other. There have been recent negative trends in this respect, with generations tending to stereotype, prejudice or behave in a discriminatory way.

In order to mitigate these negative trends, we plan to highlight possible solutions in the Co-AGE 02 project.

In today's society, age-based segregation is also very prevalent in the border region, which is amplified by social media. Individuals typically communicate only with their own peers from a young age and each generation has little opportunity to experience other generations. And one of the most powerful tools for overcoming stereotypes can be group interactions. Events where the Co-AGE project has had the opportunity to present itself have also shown that intergenerational contact has a positive impact on the perception of older people. Our research has shown that the quality of contact is more important than the quantity of contact. Intergenerational programmes and events are a good way to create the opportunity for this interaction. The longer the contacts and the more they require joint cooperation and goals, the more effective the results will be.

The two-phase research results suggest that the Co-AGE programme should be continued. Positive attitudes towards the events were measured by positive feedback and ratings from both trust persons and participating older people