

Pre-Launch Event: Mega-map on interventions and programs for age-friendly environments

Date: Monday, 15 June 2026

Time: 90 minutes

Location: Third World Congress of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities, Donostia-San Sebastián, Spain

Lead Organization: World Health Organization (WHO)

1. Background

Cities and communities around the world are taking action to become more age-friendly, recognising the importance of creating environments that support healthy ageing and improve the lives of older people. This momentum is reflected in the strong engagement and innovation of the WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities, which now includes over 1,800 members and 28 network affiliates from more than 50 countries.

At the same time, research on age-friendly environments is steadily growing. An increasing number of studies examine the impacts of interventions that aim to create, or contribute to, more age-friendly environments. However, this evidence is often fragmented and not always easy to access or translate into practical decisions. As a result, many policymakers, practitioners, and age-friendly focal points face challenges in finding, understanding, and using the available knowledge to guide effective action.

In response, WHO is strengthening the link between evidence and action through its *Age-friendly Environments evidence-action architecture*, bringing research, policy, and practice closer together. The mega-map is a key part of this effort. By bringing existing evidence together in one place, it helps clarify what we know and where important gaps remain. This approach supports better coordination of evidence generation, synthesis, and action—making it easier for stakeholders to identify what works, for whom, and in which contexts.

A mega-map is a visual overview of evidence drawn from across a large body of research. It focuses on systematic reviews and evidence maps, rather than individual studies, and covers multiple domains to provide a comprehensive picture of the available knowledge. You can learn more about this type of evidence synthesis here: <https://www.who.int/initiatives/decade-of-healthy-ageing/evidence-gap-map>.

The Third World Congress of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities, to be held in San Sebastián, marks an important moment to present the mega-map and recognise it as a collective achievement of the age-friendly community. This occasion will provide an opportunity to share key findings from the mega-map and to engage in a collaborative discussion on how to further improve its usability for the WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities and beyond—including policymakers, practitioners, and researchers.

2. Objective

Primary Objective:

To present the WHO mega-map on interventions and programs for age-friendly environments to the global age-friendly community, showing its main findings, demonstrating its utility as a tool for identifying evidence-based interventions, discovering research gaps, and supporting evidence-informed decision-making in the design and implementation of age-friendly policies and programmes.

Secondary Objectives:

- Familiarize Congress participants with the methodology, structure, and navigation of the mega-map
- Facilitate interactive exploration of the map's features and demonstrate practical applications for cities and communities
- Gather feedback from diverse stakeholders to inform the development of derivative products and dissemination activities
- Strengthen connections between research evidence and practice within the global age-friendly community
- Promote uptake and utilization of the mega-map among researchers, policymakers, and practitioners globally

3. Target Audience

- City and community leaders from the WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities
- National programme coordinators and policymakers
- Academic researchers and evidence synthesis specialists in ageing and public health
- Civil society organizations and advocacy groups working on age-friendly environments
- Health and social service practitioners implementing age-friendly initiatives

4. Session Format and Timing

The session is designed as an interactive event combining presentation, demonstration, facilitated exploration, and audience engagement. (Table 1)

Time	Duration	Activity and Presenter
0:00–0:05	5 min	<p>Welcome and Context Setting Thiago Hérick de Sá (WHO)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and framing • Importance of evidence for age-friendly environments • Introduction to Mega-map concept and objectives
0:05–0:20	15 min	<p>Mega-map Presentation Amanda Fernandes (WHO)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Mega-map methodology • Structure and domains covered • Examples of evidence concentrations and gaps • Discussion of practical applications for different stakeholder groups
0:20–0:40	20 min	<p>Facilitated Interactive Exploration Pan-African Collective for Evidence (PACE)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live demonstration of map functionality • Guided exploration of specific use cases
0:40–1:00	20 min	<p>Q&A and Discussion (1) Moderated by Louise Lafortune (McMaster University)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of potential applications in participants' contexts • Implications for research and practice • Ideas for future enhancements, both on content and design
1:00–1:20	20 min	<p>Q&A and Discussion - Derivative Products to Improve Mega-map Usability (2) Moderated by Co-author (Anne Berit Rafoss)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideas for derivative products to improve usability for different audiences • Suggestions supporting tools and actions for the mega-map dissemination and uptake
1:20–1:25	5 min	<p>Closing and Next Steps Thiago Hérick de Sá (WHO)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of key points and feedback received Information on accessing the map post-launch • Plans for updates and maintaining the map • Call to action for utilization and dissemination
Buffer Time		5 minutes built into schedule