

ENGAGEMENT OF TEST PERSON AND CONSIDERATION OF LEGAL ASPECTS

Deliverable D.T3.6.2

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Introduction

This document reports the activities related to the engagement of seniors and caregivers and the process of recruiting them together with the successive administration of the first round of questionnaires.

Furthermore, it provides the first feedback gathered from the recruited users from the level of their digital skills to the benefits they can gather from their participation in the pilot in Bologna.

1. Engagement

The recruitment of people for the group sample was accomplished by collecting memberships within the voluntary associations that belonged to the old version of YouBOS (BOS, Bologna solidarity) and which found on the portal itself an opportunity to promote their events and initiatives. The first subjects recruited provided their informal adhesion during a meeting on an IT platform (Google meet) and were subsequently contacted individually by the psychologist of the LHA BO in the administration setting, where they have been proposed:

- a first short cognitive interview
- the administration of the EQ-5D-3L scale for the assessment of basic autonomy
- the UCLA questionnaire (University California Los Angeles Loneliness Scale; Russel 1996) for the assessment of loneliness and social isolation
- the Zarit Burden Interview questionnaire (Vers. It. Chattat et al., 2011; Zarit & Zarit, 1987) for caregivers only

The subsequent medium-term (July 2020) and long-term (November 2021) evaluations include, in addition to the above mentioned tools, the UTAUT questionnaire (Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology; Venkatesh et al., 2003) relating to acceptance and the use of information technologies. The pilot we are conducting currently has 34 (thirtyfour) recruited subjects, including 25 (twenty five) elderly with good self-sufficiency and 9 (nine) informal caregivers.

Compared to the initial sample reported in the Nicelife Pilot Status of (April 2021), there are currently 4 drop-outs in the elderly group. Participants were asked at first to fill in a questionnaire certifying basic computer skills. The questionnaire was launched in February, when memberships still amounted to 25 subjects. 18 subjects (72%) responded.

Almost all participants stated that they have an internet connection (17 out of 18). The answers showed a good knowledge and use of social networks (Whatsapp and facebook); a good ability to use the smartphone, with some difficulties of advanced use such as, for example, saving an unknown number after a call (11 out of 18), or installing new apps (11 out of 18). There is also a familiarity with the videochat tool, which everyone currently uses, as well as e-mail, many know how to manage more complicated functions than just sending and receiving e-mails (13 out of 18). All respondents use Google as their main search engine. With regard to more advanced skills, such as installing programs on the PC, the sample is less prepared (7 out of 18), confirming a poor mastery of use in the field of Hardware and Software, showing in another sense a good use of the Word program.



2. Explanation of principles and benefit of pilot action

We believe, in agreement with an extensive bibliography (ex.: Casanova et al., 2021; Choi & Lee, 2021; Eysenbach et al., 2016), that the use of communication technologies through an intelligent and targeted use of ITCs can counteract the effects social isolation and loneliness that the pandemic situation has made even more insidious (ex.: Hajek & König, 2021), compared to what normally afflict the existential condition of the elderly. Our pilot is aimed primarily at overcoming situations of resistance and illiteracy towards ICT, with the not secondary goal of overcoming communication limits and social isolation. It also aims to encourage good levels of stimulation and cognitive ability, through tools such as reading, writing, cognitive stimulation exercises, exchange of social content and photographs, participation in thematic meetings. Periodic meetings with the participants are aimed to present the contents conveyed on the platform, at their discussion and organization, including editorial, at the detection of problems related to the use of the platform and at promoting a general climate of participation while increasing, at the same time, the IT skills of the participants.

3. Contact with home caregiver / family members

Caregivers (N = 9) were contacted and recruited through the same method used for elderly users. Many of them are affected by the conflict between a variety of commitments, including professional employment and caregiving activities. Therefore in this first phase of the pilot it is more complicated to involve this target in the activities described.

4. Written consent from participating users (GDPR)

As reported in D.T.3.6.4 the protocol for the realisation of the pilot was approved by the ethical committee and the related forms for written consent were provided to the recruited users for their signatures.

Currently, compared to the final recruitment recorded at the end of April, which counted 42 subjects, the sample has narrowed to 34.

33 subjects signed the informed consent according to the rules of the European regulation 679/2106, GDPR and the investigator declares the absence of conflicts of interest.

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