Campaigning to tackle ageism:

Current practices and suggestions for moving forward

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Acknowledgements

Executive summary

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines ageism as stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination directed towards people on the basis of their age.[1] Although it is experienced most commonly in later life,[2] ageism can affect people at all stages of the life course.[3]

In light of changing demographics worldwide and the realization that ageism has detrimental effects on the health and well-being of older adults, the 194 Member States of WHO called for the development of the Global Campaign to Combat Ageism.[4] A necessary first step in this campaign was to develop an evidence base in two key areas: ageism (i.e. what it is, how it is experienced, how it is measured) and the process of addressing this phenomenon (i.e. what works and what does not work in tackling ageism).

The goal of the project that formed the basis of this report was to gather information on campaigns aiming to tackle ageism and to identify what has and has not worked in past or ongoing local, national and regional campaigns. It involved a review of six local and three national or regional campaigns, as well as a desk review of campaign material and a series of in-depth qualitative interviews and a focus group discussion with key personnel involved in the three national or regional campaigns.

This report has been produced as part of the Global Campaign to Combat Ageism to inspire and support the development of future campaigns that can help change the narrative around ageing and older adults. It presents an overview of current practice as well as suggestions for developing and implementing future campaigns at the local, national and regional levels. These suggestions revolve around five key themes: using research, fostering community engagement, planning strategically, implementing key activities and communicating effectively. Important aspects of these themes and the findings of the review are summarized below.

1. Using research: Constraints – such as time pressure and limited resources and expertise – often limit the use of high-quality research (i.e. formative, process or monitoring, and evaluation) in campaigns, thereby hindering their ability to assess the extent to which the campaign is achieving its goals. In the future, such constraints may be overcome by supporting communities in understanding what needs to be measured, and when and how it should be measured. It is important that campaign teams include time for research activities in their planning and foster a learning environment in which new findings from research activities can be used to continually improve the campaign.

2. Fostering community engagement: Campaign teams that are guided by participatory action research approaches often incorporate the perspectives and experiences of numerous interested parties from their community (e.g. user groups, representatives from affected communities) into the development and implementation phases of a campaign. This is known as a middle-out approach, in which mid-level managers are able to take initiative and have the flexibility to respond to the concerns of community innovators. . The establishment of middle-out governance and the use of participatory action research can enhance the effectiveness of a campaign. Campaigns that work with representatives from affected

communities, involve them as co-researchers and become increasingly attentive to intersectionality can enable multiple voices to be incorporated into similar campaigns in the future. Campaigns that embrace this type of management seem particularly adept at engaging the community.

3. Planning strategically: Aligning the different components of a campaign (i.e. goals, objectives, messaging, activities, monitoring and engagement) improves its directional focus. This has been likened to a golden thread being woven throughout the campaign. Such alignment was identified in only a small number of campaigns and was noted as an area for improvement in others moving forward.

    Having the ability to think in creative, strategic and entrepreneurial ways was identified as a necessary skill for ensuring the resourcing and ongoing sustainability of a campaign. Working in partnership seemed to be an essential component of most campaigns, and partnerships involved a variety of external organizations and decision makers who fulfilled a range of different roles. Positive and productive partnerships had mutual benefits for those involved. Gaining the support of decision makers (e.g. governments and influential committees) was also crucial for sustaining the long-term momentum of a campaign.

    Moving forward, campaigns are encouraged to develop a theory of change at the outset because it can help identify the steps that need to be taken and the partnerships that need to be built to achieve the desired change. Campaigns must also develop the connection between steps and their relationship to the overall goal (i.e. the golden thread).

4. Implementing key activities: Different activities were undertaken to help campaigns fulfil their goals. Many of these activities required active participation by the target audience (i.e. discussing, making, sharing, listening, learning). This engaged approach to learning about ageing and ageism was encouraged through activities such as drama and arts workshops. It held great potential for empowering learners to examine critically their beliefs, values and knowledge, with the intention of helping them develop a reflective knowledge base and sensitivity towards ageing and older people. Activities that brought together different generational groups also seemed particularly beneficial and are to be encouraged going forward.

5. Communicating effectively: All campaigns communicated through words and images to challenge ageism in their communities. Messages were well received when they were simple, actionable, credible, evidence based, positive and sensitive to the challenges of ageing and were communicated via personal stories. Similarly, target audiences also reacted well to images that evoked an emotional response, emphasized relationships and showed real people doing real things. Moving forward, it is suggested that cities and communities develop a communications strategy. Based on the findings of this research, such a strategy would benefit from including (i) templates and guidance for campaign partners and (ii) guidance on using and producing inclusive, balanced images of ageing and older adults.

1. Background

1.1 Ageism: what is it and why is it important?

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines ageism as stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination directed towards people on the basis of their age.[1] Although it is experienced most commonly in later life,[2] ageism can affect people at all stages of the life course.[3]

Ageism is widespread, and examples of ageist stereotypes can regularly be found, among other places, on social media, and in songs,[5] birthday cards[6] and advertising.[7] By seeping into our everyday lives, ageism can become normalized and, subsequently, remain unchallenged. Feelings of shame based on getting older can also become internalized, constraining what people believe is possible in later life and limiting a sense of pride in the accomplishment of growing up and growing older.[3,8]

Ageism can have negative impacts on our health. For example, it can have long-term effects on mental health,[9] result in slower recovery from disability[10] and reduce life expectancy.[11] It can also affect how people relate to one another by preventing social integration[12] and the formation of meaningful relationships between different generational groups.[13] Ageism is also deeply ingrained within social policy,[14] which can impose barriers to the development of age-friendly policies by influencing the framing of problems, the questions that are asked and the solutions that are offered.[3]

There is a need to change people's understanding of ageing and older people, and to develop the political will to tackle ageism. We know from experiences with sexism and racism that changing social norms is possible and can result in more equitable and productive societies. This is especially the case when there are deliberate collaborations between various stakeholder groups (e.g. government, civil society and private enterprise) and sectors (e.g. health, environment and economy) to achieve a policy outcome.

To respond to this need, in 2016 the 194 Member States of WHO called for the development of a global campaign to combat ageism.[4] A necessary first step in this global campaign was to develop an evidence base in two key areas: ageism (i.e. what it is, how it is experienced, how it is measured) and the process of addressing ageism (i.e. what works, what does not work).

1.2 Campaigning to change social norms

The evidence highlights a number of conditions that must be met for any campaign to work.[3] For example, a campaign needs a clear vision and goals. It also needs to be evidence based to allow for an accurate identification of the precise problem, the communities it affects, the way in which it affects them and potential actions that could be taken in relation to specific target audiences.[15] Campaigns are more effective when they are underpinned by a theory of change that allows for the

identification of the different pathways for change relevant to different target audiences, including the preconditions that will enable, and potentially inhibit, each step.[16] The evidence also highlights the importance of integrating research into campaign planning. Formative research can help inform the design of the campaign; process (or monitoring) research can be used to modify and develop campaign operations; impact and outcome (evaluation) research can, in turn, ascertain the extent to which a campaign's goals and objectives have been met and how.[17] Identifying interpersonal influencers (e.g. peers, coworkers, medical personnel, family) is also important to a campaign because these individuals may be able to sway the target audience.[18] Finally, to ensure sustained action, campaigns need to be supported by long-term funding.[19]

Few campaigns have been developed with the express purpose of changing the narrative around ageing and older adults. As a consequence, knowledge of what works and what does not work within this specific context is extremely limited. The evidence regarding the required conditions and characteristics of successful campaigns is helpful, but there remains a need to extend this work into the domain addressing how best to tackle stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination directed towards people on the basis of their age.

The goal of the research project that formed the basis of this report was to address this gap by identifying what has worked and what has not in past or ongoing local, national and regional campaigns to tackle ageism.

This report draws on the findings from the research project and has been produced to inspire and support the development of future campaigns aimed at changing the narrative around age and ageing. It is intended to spur campaigning efforts at local, national and regional levels as part of the Global Campaign to Combat Ageism. It presents an overview of current practice as well as suggestions for developing and implementing new campaigns.

1.3 How this report was developed

The findings presented in this report stem from a research project that involved reviewing six local and three national or regional campaigns (see Table 1). A campaign to tackle ageism was defined as a planned activity or set of activities carried out over a period of time in order to achieve a more fair and equitable society for all, irrespective of age. To be included in this study, a key activity of the campaign had to relate to communication and raising awareness of ageism and its presence in our everyday life.

National or regional campaigns were identified through an internet-based scoping review conducted in 2017. Local campaigns were identified through the WHO Global database of age-friendly practices by selecting "ageism" in the dropdown menu for the category "Filter by issue" and using the keyword "ageism".[20] Additional local campaigns were identified in June 2018 through an open call issued to affiliates of the Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities.

For each of the campaigns included, a desk review of campaign material and one or more in-depth qualitative interviews with the designated focal point were conducted. A focus group discussion with key personnel involved in the three national or regional campaigns was also undertaken.

Table 1. Summary of the campaigns to tackle ageism that were included in the review

Campaign	Scale	Country	Vision or mission	Main activities	Time frame
Selfie with a Senior, City of Rockingham	Local	Australia	Break down negative stereotypes associated with seniors	Community members shared selfies on Rockingham's Facebook page, showing them with an older person who had a special meaning to them	Seniors Week 2015
***Best Before Date*, Peterborough Council on Aging**	Local	Canada	Change the perceptions that people in Peterborough have about older people	A short film brought to life the stigma around ageing by showing people of all ages getting a "best before date" tattooed on their forehead; the film was first presented at a summit on ageing and is available online	2013–2014 (12 months)
CamminaMenti (move your mind), Age-Friendly Udine	Local	Italy	Combat stigma, age discrimination, prejudices and ageism through interventions in different educational settings	Numerous group-based intergenerational educational activities were introduced, including social groups for game playing, university students teaching older adults computer skills	Pilot project during 2012–2013; ongoing
Sóc gran, i què? (I'm old, so what?), Ajuntament de Barcelona	Local	Spain	Raise awareness about the stereotypes and prejudices generated and perpetuated about older adults	Primarily arts-based activities involving all age groups (e.g. theatre, video, writing and drawing workshops) were used to deconstruct stereotypes	2016–2018

Campaign	Scale	Country	Vision or mission	Main activities	Time frame
Gatineau, a City of all Ages, Ville de Gatineau	Local	Canada	Raise awareness of prejudice and discrimination against older people	Two short films were produced (*Seniors and Ageism* and *Teenagers and Ageism*) with accompanying provocative posters that were prominently displayed around the city	September– October 2015
***Old Enough to Know Better: Aging Well*, Age-Friendly Sarasota**	Local	USA	Counter ageism and enhance public discourse on ageing	Documentary drama *Old Enough to Know Better: Aging Well* was produced by Florida Studio Theatre	2013– 2015
Get Old, Pfizer	National and regional	USA	Empower people at all stages of life to age well and with continued health and vitality	Digital communications	2012– present
Disrupt Aging, AARP	National and regional	USA	Build a society in which all people live with dignity and purpose and fulfil their goals and dreams	Digital communications	2016– present
Take a Stand Against Ageism, HelpAge International	National and regional	Regionally available in middle- to low- income countries	Change situations in which people around the world are denied their rights, simply because of their age	Consciousness-raising and role-playing workshops	2016– present

AARP: American Association of Retired Persons.

2. Campaigning to tackle ageism: current practices and suggestions for moving forward

2.1 Using research

Campaigns can enhance their effectiveness by investing resources in research activities, including into formative, monitoring and evaluation research. Most campaign focal points involved in the projects that were reviewed recognized the importance of including all forms of research into their campaigns, and they also recognized the significance of collecting appropriate baseline data to demonstrate the extent to which any change had occurred. Yet research was rarely included in the campaigns due to time, budget and human resources constraints. Given the potential that research has to increase the effectiveness of a campaign, it is suggested that teams include it in future campaigns and that they foster learning environments that can make use of research findings to continue to improve the campaigns.

2.1.1 Current practices

There are two types of research that can be used within a campaign. Formative research, which is generally used to inform the development of the campaign, and monitoring and evaluation, which provides information on what a campaign is doing and how well it is performing in terms of meeting its goals and objectives.

2.1.1.1 Conducting formative research

Formative research can be used to develop many aspects of a campaign, such as the design, strategy, name, target audience, messages and activities. Using formative research is beneficial because it can save time and resources that might otherwise be wasted on areas that fail to maximize the campaign's effectiveness.

The review of the campaigns found that formative research was generally underused. This was often due to a lack of time. For example, in some instances a campaign was planned at the last minute to coincide with a related event in the hope of capitalizing on the momentum that would be generated by the event (e.g. a senior summit or the International Day of Older Persons). While this synchrony could be fruitful, the last-minute nature of the campaign left little time for effective preparatory work to be undertaken.

The ability to undertake formative research was also constrained by a lack of financial resources or by resources being prioritized for the actual delivery of the campaign (i.e. communications and

other activities) rather than for its associated research-related activities (i.e. formative research, monitoring and evaluation), or both.

When formative research was conducted, it generally took the form of a focus group discussion or consultation with larger community groups (e.g. elders' councils, lunch clubs), with the purpose of identifying what should be included in the campaign from the perspective of the affected communities. This was a valuable exercise and aligned with the characteristics of participatory action research (also see Section 2.2.1.1). However, conflating the two approaches (i.e. formative research with participatory action research) often positioned members of the affected communities and other stakeholders as participants in the formative research, rather than as equal, collaborative partners in the campaign, which can limit the involvement of affected communities and the overall potential of a campaign (see Section 2.2.2.1). Some national and regional campaigns used online surveys to gather information from a large and diverse population sample, an approach that campaigns may wish to draw from in the future.

2.1.1.2 Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation provide information about what a campaign is doing and how well it is performing in terms of meeting its goals and objectives. This information can provide guidance for future campaigns.[21]

Monitoring is the regular, ongoing collection of information about campaign activities. It enables the campaign team to identify whether things are going as planned and, if necessary, correct the courses of action. Monitoring also allows a campaign's inputs and outputs to be tracked, including the activities undertaken, finances and budgets, reporting and documentation.[21]

Evaluation identifies whether a campaign achieved what it set out to do (i.e. met its goals and objectives) and what difference it made to ageism as a result. Depending on the outcome, an evaluation helps to understand how and why the campaign worked well or, alternatively, what could have been improved or done differently. Collecting baseline data at the beginning of a campaign is a necessary step for conducting a proper evaluation as it enables change over time to be identified. It is common for evaluations to be repeated at intervals of 2 to 3 years to reveal any longer-term changes that may have been brought about.[21]

Monitoring and evaluation were similarly constrained by limited financial resources or by resources being prioritized for the actual delivery of the campaign. Furthermore, teams often lacked the skills required to undertake these research activities, expressing uncertainty regarding what to measure and how to measure it, particularly in relation to the concept of ageism.

> How would you monitor that [change brought about by the campaign]? Yeah, that is a tricky one! [Laughs] Because…ageism is such a difficult one to monitor and to evaluate, because you're not just talking about a photo that we show; you're actually talking about people's attitudes, and that would have changed.
>
> (Selfie with a Senior, Rockingham, Western Australia, interview with campaign focal point)

Contextual factors also influenced the extent to which campaigns engaged in high-quality monitoring and evaluation. For example, while many arts-based practices are now being hailed as promising means for challenging ageism,[22] these activities were not necessarily implemented under the rubric of an intervention or a research project to tackle ageism. Accordingly, collecting data (including baseline data) was frequently not envisioned or planned.

> Descriptive data regarding sociodemographic characteristics of the audience [were] not ascertained because the play was designed first and foremost as a cultural arts performance, rather than a research study.
>
> (*Old Enough to Know Better: Aging Well*, Age-Friendly Sarasota, desk-based review, email correspondence with campaign focal point)

It is also likely that when some of these campaigns took place there was less emphasis on the need to demonstrate the feasibility and impact of a campaign through monitoring and evaluation activities compared with the current climate. In fact, there was evidence across the sample of increased recognition of the importance of including monitoring and evaluation activities into the design and delivery of a campaign. This included a growing awareness that baseline data were needed for any evidence of change to be observed.

> [The campaign] was not evaluated. In 2014, we were not there at all, and you know we're starting, in the last two years, we're starting to work on readiness [for] evaluation, basically. We still have a long way to go with that as a [leisure] department, but I would say that it's the case for most leisure departments. ... We have no idea of the prevalence of ageism being here in the city prior to the campaign, so we have no idea...if the campaign did effectively challenge the behaviour of anybody. I don't know.
>
> (Gatineau, a City of All Ages, Ville de Gatineau, Quebec, Canada, interview with campaign focal point)

When campaign monitoring and evaluation did take place, teams used a range of data collection techniques to gain some insight into the value of specific campaigns, as presented in Table 2, which also provides suggestions for how current techniques for learning about the performance of a campaign might be improved. Further information on the social media metrics that could be used to monitor and evaluate a campaign aiming to tackle ageism are provided in Annex 1.

Table 2. Data collection techniques used for monitoring and evaluation in campaigns to tackle ageism

Method	Advantages	Areas for improvement
Questionnaire	• They are quick and easy to administer to large samples. • Options for both online and paper formats allow for greater inclusiveness.	• Incorporate questions that relate specifically to a campaign's goals (e.g. attitudes toward ageing) rather than focusing solely on demographic details or feedback on specific campaign activities.

Method	Advantages	Areas for improvement
	• Standardized content can be developed by the campaign team.	• Undertake a detailed analysis of the responses, securing additional expertise in data analysis if needed. • Identify and share key findings from the analysis regarding areas of success and areas where corrective courses of action may be required. • Consider using the same questionnaire at different time points throughout the campaign for monitoring and evaluation purposes.
Social media analysis	• Data are readily available. • Data provide detailed insight into how many people the campaign is reaching and who is engaging with it. • Social media analysis lends itself well to campaign monitoring.	• In addition to the number of mentions, consider using this analysis to measure reach, engagement and influence. • Be clear about how the findings will be evaluated in relation to the campaign's goals. • Consult teams with expertise in social media analysis if possible.
Talk-back sessions, focus group discussions, consultations	• Talk-back sessions (e.g. with an audience after a performance) allow real-time responses to a campaign activity to be gathered. • These strategies enable teams to gather in-depth insights into participants' thoughts and perceptions. • They also facilitate a greater understanding of how and why participants feel or act the way that they do.	• Ask the right questions in the right way to encourage detailed and relevant responses. • With permission, digitally record, transcribe and analyse these conversations to identify the full range of key themes that were important to the participants (rather than those remembered as being important by the moderator).
Qualitative interviews with older adults	• Interviews before, during and after the campaign can provide detailed insight into how experiences, beliefs and attitudes about ageing and ageism might be changing throughout the campaign and why.	• Ensure that interview questions relate directly to the different dimensions of ageism: how people think (stereotypes), feel (prejudice) and act (discrimination).

Most of the monitoring and evaluation of campaigns took the form of analysing key performance indicators for social media. At a local level, this tended to focus primarily on assessing the reach of a campaign. Larger campaigns often benefited from the expertise and capacity of a dedicated digital team, and these campaigns were able to also include measures such as exposure and engagement.

> In order to overcome the algorithms [that dictate what people see] that are being developed every day, we need more engagement, so we are really seeking comments and shares, going beyond just the "like" word or [promoting] a post.
>
> (Disrupt Aging, AARP, interview with campaign focal point)

However, measurements showing how a campaign had impacted any of the dimensions of ageism (i.e. stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination) were often not taken or not reported.

2.1.2 Moving forward

In view of the findings presented in the previous section, it is important that future campaigns to tackle ageism consider including research throughout their campaigns and paying careful attention to what it is they should measure, how they should measure it and when. It is also important for campaigns to foster a learning environment to help the campaign team take corrective action when needed and maintain those activities that are shown to work.

2.1.2.1 Include research throughout the entire campaign

Future campaigns can enhance their effectiveness in tackling ageism by investing resources (i.e. time, budget, access to specialized expertise) in research activities throughout the entire duration of the campaign. Formative research should be included to identify the campaign target and to develop messaging, design and activities; process research, or monitoring, should be used to assess whether a campaign is on the right track and to enable corrective action to be taken if needed; and evaluation research should be undertaken at specific time points to understand and demonstrate the extent to which the campaign has brought about change.

2.1.2.2 Know when to measure, what to measure and how best to measure

For comparative purposes, baseline data must be collected ahead of the campaign's launch, with subsequent measurements being taken during and after the campaign. Measurements relating to ageism and attitudes to ageing and older adults should be collected if the campaign team is to assess impact.

Being attentive to the range of data collection techniques available, why they might be useful and how they can be employed effectively will further enhance the campaign. For example, in relation to formative research, some national and regional campaigns have used online surveys to gain insight from a large, diverse sample. Future campaigns might benefit from adopting similar methods.

It is also important to be certain that the right questions are asked, particularly during formative sessions.[23] An example of this was given by a team member from the *Old Enough to Know Better: Aging Well* campaign in Sarasota, Florida.

One of the areas where we saw very serious ageism in our community was driving. … When we did focus groups early on, it was so funny because, in all of the focus groups, we asked, "Have you experienced any bias, any discrimination, prejudice?", and people were like "No, no", and I'm talking about people into their nineties, "Oh no, not at all". And then as soon as the topic of transportation came up, we heard people complaining about older drivers. Oh, it was brutal! … So, [as part of the campaign] we're now working with a theatre group and we're in talks about getting some funding to actually do some improv theatre where we're going to [take an] intentional perspective talking across generations [about driving].

(*Old Enough to Know Better: Aging Well*, Age-Friendly Sarasota, interview with campaign focal point)

The findings showed that asking questions about specific actions or activities can be a productive way of initiating a conversation about ageism and its impact on people's life.

2.1.2.3 Create learning environments

There is a need to foster learning environments within campaigns so that research findings – be they formative, process-oriented or evaluative – can be considered and responded to in an appropriate and timely manner. This can be a challenge when campaigns have a short time frame. That said, as the evidence builds around the process of campaigning against ageism, examples of good practice can be communicated across a campaign team (including to its wider matrix – that is, across the management matrix, in which individuals report to more than one manager). In addition, campaign teams working to tackle ageism in their communities may consider pooling the lessons they have learned and sharing best practice examples from their individual research efforts through existing networks such as the Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities.[24]

Observations of what worked to facilitate learning environments in national and regional campaigns indicated that regular feedback meetings were crucial (e.g. with the campaign team, across the matrix). Box 1 details the lessons learned from the three national and regional campaigns about how the performance of a campaign could be enhanced on social media. It provides examples of the type of information that was shared during campaign feedback meetings.

> **Box 1.** Techniques that increase the performance of social media campaigns. The examples include current good practices, lessons learned and suggestions from desk-based reviews of national and regional campaigns aiming to tackle ageism.
>
> ✓ Create a designated, memorable handle for the campaign (e.g. @getold).
> ✓ Ensure consistent use of the designated hashtag associated with the campaign in all posts (e.g. #DisruptAging).
> ✓ Encourage the use of social media during campaign activities (using handles and hashtags).
> ✓ Schedule a regular number of posts per week, more than 1 but less than 7.
> ✓ Prompt event speakers to promote the use of social media with the handle and the hashtag.
> ✓ Respond (with comments) in a timely manner to relevant news items.
> ✓ Post information and publicize events and other activities on blogs and via other social media.
> ✓ Partner with an appropriate social influencer or spokesperson.
> ✓ Provide less-confident and less-experienced users with templates and examples of tweets.

At the local level, findings also indicated that engaging in reflective practice was an important exercise for identifying areas where improvements to a campaign could be made. Reflective practice involves thinking about and critically analysing one's own actions, with the goal of improving and refining a practice.[25] An example of this was noted when a focal point of a local campaign reflected on how their own passion for tackling ageism had clouded their judgement about how receptive the community would be to such a campaign. Following relatively low engagement, this reflective practice alerted the campaign team to the need to improve subsequent marketing strategies and build buy-in with community groups ahead of running campaigns in the future.

2.2 Community engagement

Campaigns to tackle ageism were particularly effective when they engaged, responded to and incorporated the voices of the communities that they aimed to serve. This required adopting specific approaches to campaign development and governance, including participatory action research and middle-out approaches to governance. Moving forward, campaigns should continue to seek out ways of involving communities in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of a campaign.[26]

2.2.1 Current practices

The engagement of communities in campaigns was facilitated through participatory action research practices, which involve working with affected communities. The use of middle-out management structures by the organizations leading these campaigns also seemed to be conducive to fostering community engagement as it enabled better communication and involvement of the local community.

2.2.1.1 Drawing on participatory action research

A participatory action research approach involves working with affected communities and, when appropriate, relevant stakeholders to determine their needs and address locally identified priorities, rather than imposing an intervention – or campaign – from above.[27]

Several of the campaigns included in the study harnessed the strengths of participatory action research by involving affected communities in identifying experiences of ageism, designing communication assets and even developing the campaign's name. Affected communities are those whose lives are impacted by ageism and, accordingly, they should benefit from a campaign designed to tackle it. They are not necessarily the same group as those targeted by the campaign. For example, a campaign may target young people to challenge their stereotypical assumptions regarding older age, and this could reduce the level of ageism experienced by older adults (i.e. the affected community). Teams that ran successful campaigns were clear about the differences between these two groups.

> The campaign has been collectively developed through a participatory process that started with work sessions between the Senior Citizens Advisory Council and other sectoral participation councils (women, immigration, [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender

and intersex people], Roma people). Older adults decide (i) which stereotypes are the ones that most affect them, (ii) which are the arguments to dismantle them, (iii) which communication strategies will be used to raise awareness (e.g. participation in designing the web and network profiles).

(Sóc gran, i què? [I'm old, so what?], Ajuntament de Barcelona, desk-based review)

Strengths of participatory action research[27] and examples of where these strengths were in evidence are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Strengths and examples of adopting a participatory action research approach to campaigning against ageism

Strengths of the participatory action research approach	Examples from the research
Embraces the concerns experienced by a group, community or organization	The CamminaMenti (move your mind) campaign was developed partly in response to the needs expressed by older adults during a series of focus group discussions (formative research) that related to feelings of social isolation and the desire to learn about information technology.
Allows campaigns to be adapted to suit the local context in which they will be delivered	The messages of the *Old Enough to Know Better: Aging Well* campaign were developed through a collaboration among the scriptwriter, performers and the test audience. Certain themes were emphasized, or dramatized, for the purpose of achieving a strong theatre production.
Contributes to the discovery and development of sustainable conditions and actions for change	The Gatineau, a City of All Ages campaign evolved to include a focus on adolescents following consultation with the city's youth commission, through which the team was advised that young people within the city also felt that they were victims of ageist stereotyping by older adults. As a consequence, it was concluded that a campaign focusing on the needs of older adults alone would not bring about the conditions for change because of the resentment that would be felt by the city's youth.
Facilitates inclusivity with regard to other minority groups and those experiencing multiple forms of discrimination by providing opportunities for their voices to be heard	The Sóc gran, i què? (I'm old, so what?) campaign has forged partnerships with sectoral participation councils such as those focusing on women; immigration; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people; and Roma people, as a means of meeting one of the main objectives of the campaign, which is to involve specific groups of older people that might be experiencing intersectional discrimination.

In the spirit of co-development, campaigns aiming to tackle ageism often involved representatives from affected communities. This meant that they were not research participants from whom data would be collected but, instead, were collaborative partners. Representatives contributed to the development of campaigns by sharing their perceptions and experiences of ageism (e.g. for the Best Before Date campaign, Peterborough Council on Aging, Canada), providing input on the design of communication assets (e.g. Sóc gran, i què?) and, in some instances, helping to devise the campaign's name. For example, the documentary drama *Old Enough to Know Better: Aging Well* had originally been called *Older than Dirt*, a name that was later discarded because researchers and theatre artists thought that it could unintentionally affirm ageist stereotypes.[22] The team considered that the title *Old Enough to Know Better: Aging Well* was better because it included both humour and a positive outlook on ageing.

Ensuring that affected communities were engaged early in a campaign was important for incorporating multiple voices into its development and implementation. Early involvement facilitated opportunities for making collaborative, informed decisions from the outset regarding such issues as language use, definitions and naming.

2.2.1.2 Adopting a middle-out governance structure

The campaigns involved in research had a range of governance structures. Some were tightly governed by an organization, team or lead who made decisions about issues such as content, delivery and reporting. This represented a top-down approach. A top-down approach to governance refers to a campaign environment in which contributions to decision-making are not generally invited from the intended targets of the campaign or the affected communities.

An advantage of using a top-down approach included its facilitation of a clear, predetermined course of action. It also minimized the risk of a campaign being pulled in unexpected, and potentially unhelpful, directions based on the input of interested parties that might have competing agendas. By virtue of dealing with fewer people and, therefore, fewer opinions, a top-down approach could appear to be efficient in managing time and resources. A disadvantage of this approach was the hierarchical nature of the campaign structure, in which the voices of those at the bottom of the hierarchy (i.e. members of the affected communities or stakeholder groups) could be easily lost. Therefore, this governance structure could further disempower groups who were already experiencing discrimination and prejudice.

In contrast, other campaigns adopted a bottom-up approach,[28] whereby campaign efforts to bring about change arose almost organically from innovators, early adopters and individuals working closely with the affected community and directed how the campaign was designed and delivered. An advantage of a bottom-up approach was that it gave voice and autonomy to those most affected. That said, in the absence of strong leadership and strategic planning, the disadvantage of bottom-up approaches was that the numerous different inputs could lack coordination.

In light of the challenges posed by both top-down and bottom-up governance structures, a number of campaigns appeared to adopt what has been described as a middle-out approach.[29] In this approach, change is led by middle managers, who respond to demands from the innovators within the community and also operate in the absence of strong leadership from a single organization or policy-making body.

> When you have the bottom-up [approach], you have many proposals coming from the bottom, from citizens and community, but you really don't have a strategic framework. So you have so many inputs, but then you don't have someone that coordinates it and put them together. When you have the top-down approach, you have the administration or a top organization that really tells people what to do, and so it's not an experience from the people, but it's just a regulation or a process that comes from the top. The middle-out approach is combining them [top down and bottom up] together, so the administration [campaign team] is really a sort of mediator and the facilitator. The definition we use is a "social broker", where you bring the input from the bottom, but then you include all of [the inputs] in a strategic framework, in a strategy that the city can supply for the future, so you have long-term objectives and policies.

> (CamminaMenti [move your mind], Age-Friendly Udine, interview with campaign focal point)

The middle-out approach required a willingness to share ideas and build collaborative relationships with community partners. This required trust and teamwork, and these were generally seen as advantages within the campaign. The advantages of this governance structure were that it enabled clear focus and leadership provided by the campaign team to be complemented by the flexibility to adapt at the local level and to tailor strategies based on the specific needs of the community it served. Organizations that used a matrix structure for management were well suited to adopting a middle-out approach, as they were often accustomed to working with various partners to enable the effective use of resources.

Despite its advantages, a middle-out governance structure also presented some challenges, especially in cases in which the organization's matrix failed to function properly. For instance, some campaign teams reported difficulties in managing conflicting opinions regarding campaign content and messaging (see Section 2.5.1.1). For example, one local campaign described how messaging that sought to raise awareness of ageism within a city was met with disapproval by those responsible for promoting tourism, who were tasked with projecting the city in a favourable way.

Disadvantages of the middle-out approach to campaigning arose within organizations when their own matrix failed to function appropriately. For example, findings from this research highlighted how important components of a campaign (e.g. the inclusion of minority groups) can be missed altogether when each different team (e.g. the communications team and the inclusion team) assume that responsibility rests with another team.

2.2.2 Moving forward

To foster community engagement in future campaigns, teams are encouraged to include representatives from affected communities as co-researchers and to pay close attention to intersectionality as they develop their campaigns and implement related activities.

2.2.2.1 Consider including representatives from affected communities as co-researchers

In addition to having representatives from affected communities participate in workshops, contribute ideas to marketing plans and provide feedback on the name of a campaign, the participatory dimension of a campaign can be further expanded by supporting representatives to become co-researchers. This would require developing their research skills and empowering them

to step beyond the role of a consultee or research participant and into that of an interviewer and researcher.

There are many advantages to involving older people as co-researchers.[26] Involvement can facilitate the participatory research process by greatly assisting with the recruitment of hard-to-reach groups so that their voices can also be heard and incorporated into the campaign. It can also challenge stereotypes about older people by making their involvement and participation in a campaign visible. This can counteract ageism and help fulfil the campaign's goals. There are also individual benefits to the co-researchers, including the development of new skills, knowledge and confidence. The campaign itself can also benefit from the additional human resources, particularly given the challenges to conducting research, outlined in Section 2.1. Further guidance on involving older adults as co-researchers in initiatives aspiring to bring about social change is offered by Buffel.[26]

2.2.2.2 Be attentive to intersectionality

Intersectionality refers to the complex ways in which older adults experience multiple forms of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination. A small number of campaigns reviewed in this research attempted to connect with minority groups through community partnerships (see Table 3). These efforts could be further developed in the future.

Being attentive to intersectionality in a campaign aiming to tackle ageism will require moving beyond simply incorporating voices into a campaign that reflect, for example, the age or race or gender dimensions of discriminatory experiences separately. Instead, campaigns to tackle ageism must be attentive to how these dimensions combine and relate in order to reveal the different ways that someone might experience discrimination because, for example, they are an older Black woman (rather than viewing older and Black and a woman as separate dimensions).[30]

It will also require making visible – via a campaign's goals and activities, including messaging and images (see Section 2.5.1.1) – bodies and stories that reflect diverse sexualities, genders and ethnicities as they relate to age. Being attentive to intersectionality also means supporting different cultures in developing policies and legislation that protect a full range of characteristics throughout the life course. Following a middle-out approach to governance (see Section 2.2.1.1) has the potential to raise awareness of how these characteristics might intersect with potentially damaging effects across different aspects of social life (e.g. health and social care,[31] travel and tourism,[32] political representation[33]).

2.3 Planning strategically

Campaign planning involves identifying both a directional focus and a goal, the actions needed to reach that goal and the indicators that can be used to measure progress.

Within the context of campaigns aiming to tackle ageism, strategic planning was sometimes used to set priorities, focus energy and resources, ensure that stakeholders and the campaign team were working towards common goals and establish agreement around the intended outcomes of the campaign and its activities. Moving forward, effective strategic planning should articulate not only

where the campaign is going and the actions needed to make progress, but also how it will be determined if the campaign has been successful (see Section 2.1.1.2).

2.3.1 Current practices

Two aspects of strategic planning that worked in previous and ongoing campaigns to tackle ageism included connecting the various components of a campaign to the ultimate goal of the campaign and establishing strategic partnerships with key decision makers or with broader areas of work. The former helped to bring directional focus and a sense of coherence to a campaign and the latter helped to foster sustainability for a campaign.

2.3.1.1 Connecting campaign components by using a golden thread

In relation to strategic planning, the notion of a golden thread being woven throughout a campaign refers to the different components being bound together in a manner that ensures alignment and directional focus. This likening to gold indicates the value of this feature in campaign planning. Indeed, resonating with sentiments offered by Officer and de la Fuente-Núñez,[3] Montague et al.[17] and Atkin,[18] this research indicated that successful campaigns displayed more of the following characteristics than those that were not successful:

- goal(s) that were achievable, measurable and contributed to accomplishing the overall mission;
- objectives that provided specific steps to be taken in order for the goal(s) to be met;
- messaging (content) and activities that were related to and appropriate to the objectives;
- monitoring of progress towards reaching the campaign's goal(s) and the ability to implement corrective action where necessary; and
- evaluation measures that could demonstrate the extent to which the goal(s) had been met (see Section 2.1.1.2).

Sufficient time needs to be allocated at the beginning of a campaign (i.e. before the launch) to design a strategy that incorporates a golden thread. In this regard, an example of good practice is presented in Table 4. As illustrated in the table, the Sóc gran, i què? local campaign included a goal that was achievable and measurable, identified the objectives that would help reach the desired goal, provided alignment between campaign objectives and messaging and activities, and incorporated monitoring activities throughout the campaign.

Table 4. The golden thread of the Sóc gran, i què? (I'm old, so what?) campaign, desk-based review

Sóc gran, i què? Project for the deconstruction of stereotypes and prejudices	
Campaign mission	Develop a participatory strategy of communication and awareness raising to deconstruct stereotypes and prejudices about older people.
Campaign goal	Raise the population's awareness of and empower older adults to question and dismantle, in a participatory way, the stereotypes and prejudices often suffered by older adults because of their age, claiming their rights to difference and equality and fighting against discrimination.

Example of an objective	Produce two videos that raise awareness about the stereotypes and prejudices towards older adults.
Example of a campaign message (takes the form of myth-busting)	Myth: Older people are all the same. The reality: Older age is a stage of life characterized by diversity and transformations. These vary depending on the circumstances of each person. The differences between older people are more varied than those between people at other life stages.
Example of a campaign activity	Videos were created with arguments that refuted stereotypes of and prejudices about older adults, for example, by asking, "Is there only one way to grow old?"
Example of measurement for evaluation	The use of the videos was assessed by monitoring the traffic over digital media and the project's website.

2.3.1.2 Resourcing and partnering for sustainability

Having the ability to think in creative and entrepreneurial ways was a necessary skill to ensure the ongoing resourcing and sustainability of campaigns. Working in partnership seemed an essential component of this, with a variety of external partners being engaged to fulfil a range of different roles. This research also found that positive and productive partnerships had mutual benefits for those involved (see Table 5).

Table 5. Examples of partnerships in which expertise was shared and had potential benefits for all parties

Campaign	Partnership	Potential benefits
Best Before Date, **Canada**	Peterborough Council on Aging with BrandHealth (advertising agency)	• Benefits to Peterborough Council on Aging: BrandHealth's pro bono production of the campaign's assets (film, posters, radio advert) • Benefits to BrandHealth: Expansion of its portfolio, strengthening of its relationship with Peterborough Council on Aging, enhanced reputation, high level of creative autonomy over the products (i.e. not constrained by a contract), with the result that the film subsequently won two Clio awards for health advertising
Old Enough to Know Better: Aging Well, **Age-Friendly Sarasota**	University of South Florida with Florida Studio Theatre	• Benefits to University of South Florida: Developed expertise in all aspects of theatre production, gained access to grants to support the arts for which the partnership was eligible to apply • Benefits to Florida Studio Theatre: Developed expertise in all aspects of research methodology (e.g. monitoring and evaluation, participatory action research) and subject specialization (e.g. gerontology), gained access to research grants that might further support the partnership

Beyond building strong partnerships and securing long-term financial resources,[19] it was important for campaigns to gain the support of key decision makers in order to be ensure sustainability. Embedding a campaign to tackle ageism within a broader localized programme of activity associated with ageing (e.g. the age-friendly cities programme) was one way of facilitating this support.

> You need the commitment of the administration. You need the commitment of the decision makers who take the decisions regarding health issues and community issues. You don't need really so much money. … But you need to have some political leadership and some technical staff that can coordinate all [of] the programme. Here in Udine, it's very easy because we have an office for the Healthy Cities initiatives, and we had also very strong political leadership in the commitments regarding health, regarding age-friendly environments, regarding all that has to do with the quality of life of older people. And then, of course, you must have this intersectoral [collaboration] between institutions so you can involve also the local health agency, but also other organizations that can contribute to the programme.
>
> (CamminaMenti, Age-Friendly Udine, interview with campaign focal point)

Across campaigns, relationships with decision makers in different sectors were wide reaching (e.g. spanning health care providers, schools, libraries, funders, media, transport services, universities) and typically long-standing. These relationships facilitated opportunities for campaigners to influence and interact with other sectors and decision makers, thereby sustaining awareness and maintaining the campaign's influence.[34]

Targeting decision makers was especially key for sustaining campaigns that took place within low- and middle-income countries, where there was often a dearth of local policies aimed at protecting the needs and rights of older adults.

> Well, for me, the sustainability, even though I have the money [in the budget], to me the sustainability is the influence, the government, the human rights institutions, and those older people's support groups because if, for example, that is why if you ask me [the] one thing [that] I prioritize, it will be the policy. Why? With the policy we will have the strategic plan, we will have [the] budget, and if it is the government then you can be assured that it will be sustained. So, again, if you work with those other public institutions like the national commission or the elderly council, you can be sure, because it is now institutionalized, you can be sure that it will be sustained even in the future.
>
> (Take a Stand Against Ageism, local HelpAge campaign partner, Nsindagiza, Rwanda, follow-up discussion)

2.3.2 Moving forward

Teams responsible for future campaigns are encouraged to try to bind together the different components of their campaign with a golden thread to ensure alignment and coherence in the goals, messages and activities of the campaign. They are further encouraged to involve key decision

makers and organizations that can contribute to the development and implementation of the campaign or support its continuity, or both.

2.3.2.1 Weave the golden thread

Campaigns benefit from their different components being bound together in a manner that ensures alignment and directional focus (e.g. their goal, objectives, messaging, activities, monitoring and evaluations). Goals must be achievable, measurable and supported by objectives that provide clear steps regarding how the goals can be met. The activities and messaging (see Section 2.5.1.1) should be connected to the objectives and facilitate monitoring and evaluation to enable the identification of progress and potential change.

Using a theory of change can be helpful in the process of weaving a golden thread through a campaign, from its mission to the final evaluation. Campaigns that have drawn successfully on a theory of change demonstrated a detailed awareness of all of the stages that must be completed to achieve the desired change.[35] This included developing an in-depth understanding of the preconditions that could enable and inhibit each stage, the activities that would produce these conditions, and an explanation of why selected activities were likely to work. Specifically, it has been argued that using a theory of change can enable campaign planners to:[35]

- establish common principles and vocabulary – This provides a common language that encourages and supports dialogue across different groups regarding what is being done and how it is being done;

- make implicit assumptions explicit – This prevents a campaign from being rooted in implicit assumptions that have not been openly vetted;

- identify resources and check them for adequacy – This includes the myriad of resources (e.g. financial, partner and infrastructure) that contribute to change. Long-term campaigns will need to consider how staff turnover or other changes will be accommodated;

- design more realistic plans of action that incorporate scheduled activities for monitoring (at multiple time points) and evaluation – This helps to develop a programme that is plausible, doable and testable;

- clarify lines of responsibility – This involves identifying who is accountable for meeting and tracking the different outcomes and communicating learning from these processes;

- maintain healthy scepticism – This helps campaign planners to revisit elements of the campaign that they believed would be crucial to ascertain if they actually made their anticipated contributions.

Failure to clearly articulate a theory of change – a common scenario in existing campaigns aiming to tackle ageism – means that planning almost inevitably becomes impromptu and at risk of undue influence from key individuals, which can ultimately lead an organization in directions not necessarily focused on the mission.[35] Moving forward, campaign teams are encouraged to develop a theory of change early on to help them identify the different stages (connected by a golden thread) that must be completed to achieve change and therefore fulfil the goals of the campaign.

2.3.2.2 Involve decision makers and key organizations

The long-term sustainability of campaigns aiming to tackle ageism can be enhanced through the support of key decision makers. These may be individuals holding ministerial positions or members of a local council or other governing authority. From the outset, it would be prudent for campaign teams to identify appropriate decision makers and consider the nature of their involvement. For example, the decision makers might be a specific target of a campaign. Alternatively, they might be invited to contribute to the development and implementation of the campaign as part of their involvement in a middle-out governance structure (see Section 2.2.1.2). Building relationships with a wide array of stakeholders can help to facilitate contact with, and interest from, appropriate decision makers. It is equally important to identify key organizations that can help sustain the campaign's efforts and provide needed resources.

2.4 Implementing key activities

A range of activities was undertaken by the different campaigns to help fulfil their goals (Table 6). While national or regional campaign activities included high-profile events and workplace-based activities, local campaigns typically included arts-based activities (e.g. the use of photography projects, exhibitions or selfies with seniors; film; drama; writing groups). All of the campaigns incorporated, to a greater or lesser degree, intergenerational activities. This reflected the increasing importance of building meaningful relationships between different generational groups as a means to combat misperceptions and reduce ageism (see Section 2.4.1.2).

Table 6. Overview of activities used in campaigns aiming to tackle ageism[a]

		Selfie with a Senior (local, Australia)	Best Before Date (local, Canada)	Gatineau, a City of All Ages (local, Canada)	Old Enough to Know Better: Aging Well (local, USA)	Sóc gran, i què? (I'm old, so what? local, Spain)	CamminaMenti (move your mind; local, Italy)	Disrupt Aging (national and regional, USA)	Get Old (national and regional, USA)	Take a Stand Against Ageism (national and regional, low- to middle-income countries, including local partners)
Type of activity	Intergenerational	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	Advocacy (e.g. for policy change)							*		*
	Workplace-based							*	*	
	Educational (e.g. computer classes)					*	*		*	*
	Arts-based (e.g. photography, film, drama)	*	*	*	*	*	*			*
	Regular interest or social group						*			*
	One-off, high-profile event (e.g. concert)				*	*	*	*	*	*

[a] A single activity can span more than one category in the table (e.g. intergenerational and arts-based).

2.4.1 Current practices

Many of the campaigns in this review included activities that involved engaged approaches to learning through, for example, role-play workshops or bringing different generations together in a joint activity, such as photography.

2.4.1.1 Fostering engaged learning

Many of the activities undertaken by the different campaigns required active participation from the target audience (i.e. discussing, making, sharing, listening, learning). For example, the documentary drama *Old Enough to Know Better: Aging Well* involved talk-back sessions with the audience led by the research and production teams following each performance. These encouraged playgoers to discuss their responses to the play and reflect on how the issues raised connected with their own lives.[22]

Self-reflection and empathy towards others were also facilitated by the consciousness-raising and role-play workshops held by local communities around the world as part of the regional Take a Stand Against Ageism campaign (Fig. 1). Consciousness-raising workshops, for example, aimed to raise awareness about ageism, encourage solidarity among older people and address internal ageism. They also helped older people to come to terms with the injustices they experienced in their day-to-day lives.

This engaged approach to learning about ageing and ageism (i.e. learning through practices and experiences) is the opposite of what is known as a banking approach to learning, whereby an expert delivers knowledge to an audience, failing to consider the audience's agency.[36] Communicating facts about ageing and ageism through posters or social media – particularly to those who do not engage directly with online conversations via likes, shares or retweets – was an example of the banking approach. Engaged learning, however, which can be encouraged through the arts (i.e. theatre, participatory workshops, role play, creative writing, writing groups, the production and exhibition of artwork, such as photography), reflects characteristics of transformative pedagogy.

Transformative pedagogy is an activist pedagogy that empowers learners to critically examine their beliefs, values and knowledge with the intention of developing a reflective knowledge base and a sensitivity towards multiple perspectives.[37] Research has shown how this approach to teaching and learning engages participants as "critical thinkers, participatory and active learners, and envisioners of alternative possibilities of social reality".[36] In this respect, campaign activities that adopted elements of transformative pedagogy held great potential for evoking a sense of social justice and contributing towards meeting campaign goals aligned with social change. For example, consciousness-raising workshops encouraged older people to work together and helped them see they were not alone in tackling ageism. Thus, these activities gave them strength and a shared sense of purpose.

Fig. 1. Consciousness-raising workshop, Rwanda, part of the Take a Stand Against Ageism campaign, HelpAge International. Photo credit: Fernand Mugisha/HelpAge International.

2.4.1.2 Including intergenerational activities

Activities that emphasized intergenerational relationships – either via campaign communications (see Section 2.5) or by bringing different age groups together for a specific project – seemed particularly beneficial and were often used across campaigns. For example, the core of the local campaign Selfie with a Senior was a photography activity that involved different generations. Improving relationships between younger and older adults was the main theme of the film produced by Gatineau, a City of all Ages. The participatory photography project led by Sóc gran, i què? aimed to engage younger and older people in debate, technical photography training, participatory photography, storytelling and a final exhibition, and it placed a critical emphasis on addressing stereotypes and prejudices that are generated and perpetuated in relation to older people.

2.4.2 Moving forward

Future campaigns may want to include activities that use transformative pedagogy and intergenerational contacts, as these can help audience members reflect on their own beliefs and attitudes about ageing and older adults.

2.4.2.1. Incorporate transformative pedagogy

Transformative pedagogy empowers learners to examine critically their beliefs and knowledge and to develop sensitivity to differing perspectives.[37] It is facilitated via an engaged approach to learning,[36] during which participants learn through exercises and presentations of experiences, such as role playing, films and case studies, followed by reflection and discussion.

Given the positive contributions that transformative pedagogy can make in matters of equality and social justice,[36] campaigns to tackle ageism would do well to include activities that adopt this approach. Workshops aimed at raising awareness of ageism, role-play activities, the presentation of documentary dramas (with talk-back sessions), writing groups and intergenerational activities have all displayed promise.

2.4.2.2 Continue to include intergenerational activities

Campaigns should continue to incorporate a variety of intergenerational activities to help foster meaningful relationships across different generational groups. The use of intergenerational activities to tackle ageism is supported by evidence showing that these activities have the capacity to improve age relations by enhancing generational intelligence.[38] However, research also shows that certain conditions need to be met for interventions involving intergenerational contact to be truly effective. For example, evidence suggests that programmes designed around encouraging longer-term, more sustained contact have resulted in participants having more positive attitudes towards older adults.[39] Evidence also suggests that interactions in which participants are encouraged to empathize with one another, given opportunities to disclose information of a personal nature to one another and focus on what makes each person unique will help to generate positive and meaningful interactions.[40] Intergenerational interventions during which skills are shared are increasingly effective when young and old are positioned on a level standing. That is, each generation teaches something to the other.

2.5. Communicating effectively

A central component of all campaigns was communication. This involved messaging and the use of images, which were shared with audiences using a variety of platforms. Moving forward, it is suggested that campaign teams invest time in identifying images for their campaign that reflect the diversity seen in older age. It is also suggested that they develop a communications strategy that includes details of which images and messages should be used, as well as which communication platforms should be favoured, how often they should be used, and at what stage within the campaign, based on the campaign's objectives and target audiences.

2.5.1 Current practices

The campaigns included in this review used a wide range of messaging and images as part of their communications strategy and found that certain types of messaging and images were more likely to be effective and help reach the campaign's goals, such as using personal stories or data to support a message. Campaign focal points also emphasized the importance of selecting the right communication platform to reach the target audience for the campaign, noting that different audiences may use different platforms.

2.5.1.1 Using effective campaign messaging and images

The messaging and images used across the campaigns were designed to engage the target audience and promote the fulfilment of the campaign's goals. Clear, simple messages seemed to be well received, particularly when they included a call to action (e.g. CamminaMenti translates as "move your mind"). Indeed, focal points involved in national and regional campaigns emphasized how campaign messaging was particularly effective when it focused on an action that was achievable and could be implemented with immediate effect.

The use of personal stories was also found to be beneficial because stories can evoke emotional responses in and engagement with an audience. There was evidence of this technique being used in some of the campaigns (e.g. through the use of drama in the *Old Enough to Know Better*: *Aging Well* and Sóc gran, i què? campaigns, and the personal stories accompanying participatory photography projects, again in the Sóc gran, i què'? campaign). Indeed, within the science of communication literature, it is well established that the way in which information is presented is crucial.[41,42] Storytelling contributes to human decision-making, can mobilize a large number of people behind an issue[43] and is an important medium through which everyday arguments take place about what is right, wrong, ought to be and could be.[44]

While it was important for campaign messages to be positive and to avoid perpetuating ageism by championing a single way of growing old, they also needed to be sensitive to the challenges and limitations of ageing. As an example of good practice, one of the messages in the Sóc gran, i què? campaign specifically countered the stereotype that older people are dependent on others, are always sick and are deteriorating. Rather than deny the likelihood of dependency in older age, it emphasizes dependency as something that everyone experiences throughout their life and that older adults are often the providers of care.

> We don't want to be all positive, but we don't want to dwell and focus on the negative, so it's finding that balance, I think. It's not about being unrealistic. ... It's not this completely aspirational, but it's not the negative side of what can be real. It's just finding people where they are. ... We want that to be what people take away, we want to be a positive message, but we also want to be realistic.
>
> (Get Old, Pfizer, interview with campaign focal point)

Using data to support a campaign message was seen to enhance its credibility and trustworthiness, but data had to be used sparingly to ensure that the message was not interpreted as being overly complicated and, as a consequence, failed to engage its intended audience (see Fig. 2). Aside from the Sóc gran, i què'? campaign, few used data within their messaging or images.

Fig. 2. The Sóc gran, i què'? (I'm old, so what?) campaign included data to enhance the credibility of the campaign's message. The 2-page leaflet counters the common stereotype that older adults are not sexually active. The right-hand column on the second page of the leaflet highlights findings from research conducted with adults older than 65 years:

- 62.9% think that sexuality does not cease to exist in older age;
- 1 in 3 people older than 65 years have had sex during the past month;
- 24% have had sexual intercourse during the past week.

Images were also widely used by campaigns to tackle ageism. Images featuring real people (e.g. as opposed to models) in real places (e.g. their homes, garden) doing real things (e.g. taking a walk, eating dinner) seemed to be particularly effective in enhancing the authenticity of the message being communicated (Fig. 3).

Fig. 3. Flyer from the Selfie with a Senior campaign shows an image emphasizing relationships and real people doing real things in real places

Psychological theory describes how individuals are bound by relational processes[45] and this helps to explain why images that depicted relationships (e.g. helping another person with shopping, fixing a bike together) were generally better received than those featuring individuals (Fig. 4). Some campaigns chose to emphasise cross-generational relationships in their imagery, which could be useful in promoting intergenerational contact and, ultimately, reducing age-related stereotypes.

Fig. 4. Poster from the campaign Gatineau, a City of all Ages, showing images emphasizing relationships

Images that were slightly provocative were also reported to evoke an emotional response, catching and holding the viewer's attention. For example, the images of a young child with a best before date (i.e. a date indicating when something is no longer useful or good) tattooed on his forehead served this purpose (Fig. 5).

Fig. 5. Example of provocative image seen in a poster from the Best Before Date campaign

The characteristics of effective messaging and the use of images in campaigns aiming to tackle ageism are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Characteristics of successful messaging and use of images in campaigns aimed at tackling ageism identified by this research project. Figure numbers are referred to where relevant

What works?	Campaign(s) and examples
Campaign messages are clear and simple.	"People don't have best before dates", from the Best Before Date campaign "Ageism is out of date!", from the Gatineau, a City of All Ages, campaign CamminaMenti (move your mind)
Messages concerning ageism are conveyed using personal stories.	The story of a person presented alongside their image in a participatory photography project in the Sóc gran, i què? (I'm old, so what?) campaign The documentary drama *Old Enough to Know Better: Aging Well*, from the campaign of the same name
Messages are credible, and evidence based. Images use data to show they are credible, but this is not overdone (i.e. they are data-light).	Information about sexuality among older adults presented in the Sóc gran, i què? campaign (see Fig. 2)
Images depict real people doing real things in real places.	Encouragement of cross-generational interactions in the Selfie with a Senior campaign (see Fig. 3) Images emphasize how individuals are seen differently when they are shown in relation to another person in the campaign Gatineau, a City for All Ages (see Fig. 4)
Images show people in a relationship rather than alone, particularly a cross-generational relationship.	Encouragement of cross-generational interactions in the Selfie with a Senior campaign (see Fig. 3) Images emphasize how individuals are seen differently when they are shown in relation to another person in the campaign Gatineau, a City for All Ages (see Fig. 4)
Messages and images are provocative and evoke an emotional reaction (e.g. annoyance, anger, pride, sense of empowerment).	Posters of people with dates tattooed on their foreheads from the Best Before Date campaign (see Fig. 5)

2.5.1.2 Selecting platforms for communication

A range of online and offline platforms were used to communicate messages across the different campaigns (see Table 8).

Table 8. Communication platforms used in campaigns aiming to tackle ageism

		Selfie with a Senior	Best Before Date	Gatineau, a City of All Ages	Old Enough to Know Better	Sóc gran, i què? (I'm old, so what?)	CamminaMenti (move your mind)	Disrupt Aging	Get Old	Take a Stand Against Ageism (including local partners)
Type of platform	Community organization (e.g. churches)		*		*		*			*
	Posters or billboards	*	*	*		*			*	
	Cinema (e.g. screened advert)			*						
	Short film (e.g. on YouTube)		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	Print media (e.g. newspaper, newsletter)	*		*			*	*	*	*
	Traditional media (e.g. radio, television)		*	*						
	Reference to campaign made on organization's website	*	*	*			*	*	*	*
	Dedicated website				*	*		*	*	*
	Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Social media was used by all campaigns included in the study, and when it was used in a planned and strategic manner, it proved to be an efficient means of communicating campaign messages, in terms of time and finances. Several teams even produced social media templates and guidance (see Fig. 6), which they reported helped to encourage the use of social media among less-confident users and also helped to promote a shared voice among different team members and stakeholders.

Fig. 6. Example of a social media asset produced by HelpAge International for their local partners to use to encourage activities for the national and regional campaign Take a Stand Against Ageism

Producing guidance about using social media within a campaign to tackle ageism had a number of advantages. For example, it improved the use (i.e. both the quantity and quality) of social media (e.g. the use of the correct hashtag is required to enable accurate collection of data for monitoring and evaluation purposes), increased the understanding and articulation of what the goals of the campaign were in relation to the activities being undertaken, ensured the use of a consistent voice by team members and stakeholder groups and encouraged the use of social media among those who may have been less confident.

Some of the campaigns used a designated Twitter or Facebook page, or both. Campaign focal points explained that when this was not the case, it was because social media had not been commonly used when the campaign took place (e.g. in 2013). In addition, some campaigns targeted age groups that had limited access to social media (e.g. older adults in lower-income countries). In these instances, it was good practice for campaigns to predominantly use offline forms of communication(see Table 8).

Platforms were often selected with a view towards financial resources or ease of access, so those already being used by the organization were also used for the campaign.

> I would say that it's the communication department that told us, "That's what we can do with the money you are giving us". So, basically, it's budgets. It's a budget, they look at the budget, and they say, "Okay, what can we buy with that?"
>
> (Gatineau, a City of All Ages, Ville de Gatineau, interview with campaign focal point)

This meant that there was often a missed opportunity to identify which platforms may have been better suited to reach the different target audiences.

2.5.2 Moving forward

Campaign teams wishing to design a new campaign to tackle ageism are encouraged to develop a communications strategy early and to carefully select campaign images and messages in order to avoid creating or perpetuating age-based stereotypes.

2.5.2.1 Develop a communications strategy

Findings from the desk review indicated that the majority of campaigns, particularly local campaigns, did not produce a detailed communications strategy to accompany their campaign. A communications strategy can help an organization communicate effectively and meet the goals of the campaign. The strategy should include details about which communication platforms will be favoured, based on the target audience (see Table 8), how often they should be used (e.g. should social media be posted once, twice or three times per week?) and at what stage within the campaign they will be used. Multiple and varied communication platforms should form part of future campaigns, and both online and offline modes of communication should be used as this can help maximize inclusivity and outreach in relation to the campaign's target audiences.

Various guides outline how to develop a communications strategy for any campaign.[46] The findings of this research complement these guides by indicating that a communications strategy for a campaign aiming to tackle ageism would benefit from having (i) templates and guidance for campaign partners and (ii) guidance on how to use and produce inclusive images.

2.5.2.2 Use appropriate images and messages

Future campaigns to tackle ageism may want to pay attention to the content and the composition of the words and images that they use. It will be equally important for campaign teams to strive to reflect the diversity that is the hallmark of older age to avoid perpetuating ageism.

Selecting images to use in a campaign to tackle ageism is an important task and can help or hinder the ability of the campaign to meet its goals. For example, emphasizing cross-generational relationships in images could be particularly useful because it can further promote intergenerational contact. This, in turn, has the potential to foster meaningful relationships between younger and older population groups and, ultimately, result in a reduction of age-related stereotypes.

In contrast, images that celebrate "heroes of ageing" can promote unrealistic examples of what ageing should entail. Likewise, using images that depict an extended midlife (i.e. the young old) can alienate older adults whose experiences differ, while also failing to acknowledge, include or celebrate deep old age (i.e. the oldest old). An overreliance on images that depict only able-bodied, affluent, heterosexual, white older adults will also fail to represent the vast diversity seen in older age.

To promote inclusivity and prevent unintended consequences within a campaign aiming to tackle ageism (e.g. by inadvertently reinforcing negative stereotyping), images must represent the diversity seen in older age. In this regard, the range of existing stock photographs of older adults is currently limited. Previous projects that have aimed to address this limitation have made some progress (e.g. see the British Society of Gerontology's photography competition Ageing: the bigger picture).[47] Similarly, when resources allow, campaign teams have employed their own photographer to produce images that align with the mission, vision and goals of their campaign or project (e.g. HelpAge International in their Take a Stand Against Ageism campaign). This is a productive way forward, yet it requires careful management to ensure that the investment results in usable images. To aid this process, HelpAge produced a photography toolkit that was distributed to their photographers.[48] In addition, they conform – and any photographer working on their behalf conforms – to the European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development's Code of Conduct on Images and Messages.[49] These are examples of good practice, which could be drawn upon in future campaigns aiming to tackle ageism.

3. Conclusions

This report provides new evidence relating to the processes of developing and implementing a campaign to tackle ageism at the local, national or regional level. The information presented here is based on a review of six local and three national or regional campaigns. Findings from current practice are discussed, and five key suggestions are presented for campaign teams to take forward in the development or revision of campaigns to tackle ageism. Specifically, teams are encouraged to use research throughout a campaign, engage the community and incorporate multiple voices into the campaign, plan strategically by mapping processes of change and engaging key decision makers and partners, implement key activities that prioritize engaged education and intergenerational contact, and communicate effectively through the use of simple and balanced messages and images and by selecting the most appropriate platforms for dissemination, based on the specific target audiences.

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Glossary

Activities
The physical "doings" of the campaign, referring to organized events planned to move the campaign towards achieving its goals and objectives

Ageism
The stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination directed towards people on the basis of their age

Baseline data
Data collected before the campaign, which serves as a basis for comparison with subsequently acquired data

Bottom-up approach to governance
Refers to a governance approach in which contributions to decision-making are invited from every member of the organization

Campaign
A planned set of activities that people carry out over a period of time in order to achieve something, such as social or political change

Community engagement
The process of developing relationships that enables stakeholders to work together in developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating a campaign

Communications strategy
The goals and methods of the campaign's outreach activities, including what messages will be shared and who the campaign is trying to reach

Engagement
Social media metric that indicates how much and how often others interact with content posted on social media, including actions taken on posts, tweets and stories

Framing
How the story of ageing is told, which can help get the message of the campaign across in the way it is intended

Goals
Longer-term milestones that the campaign, in executing its mission, must achieve to ensure it is getting closer to its vision

Influence
A metric of a social media campaign's ability to affect people's thinking in an online community

Initiative
A single activity aimed at achieving the campaign's goal(s)

Matrix management
An organizational structure in which individuals report to more than one manager

Messaging
A persuasive body of information that compels an audience to support a campaign or take action on its behalf

Middle-out approach to governance
Refers to a governance approach in which change is led by middle managers who have the initiative and flexibility to respond to the concerns of community innovators

Mission
Supports the campaign's vision in practical terms by indicating what the campaign is going to do and why.

Reach
Social media metric that indicates the potential audience for a message; based on total follower count (e.g. on Twitter or LinkedIn)

Selfie
A photographic self-portrait, typically taken with a smartphone

Stakeholders
Organizations, community groups and networks that have a shared interest in the vision of the campaign

Theory of change
A blueprint for the work ahead in reaching a set goal and established by mapping the process of change to anticipate its likely effects; the theory reveals what should be evaluated, when and how

Top-down approach to governance
Refers to a governance approach in which decision-making is generally reserved for higher positions in the organization

Transformative pedagogy
An activist pedagogy that empowers learners to critically examine their beliefs, values and knowledge with the intention of developing a reflective knowledge base and a sensitivity towards multiple perspectives; also known as engaged learning

Vision
A concise statement that paints a clear, broad picture of what the campaign aspires the future to be

Volume of mentions
A social media metric that indicates the size of a conversation; refers to the number of times a term or phrase is used across social media; helps to understand how much attention the subject is receiving

Annex 1. Social media metrics for monitoring and evaluating a digitally based campaign

Table A1.1. Social media metrics that can be used to evaluate a campaign's mentions, reach, engagement and influence

What is measured?	How is it measured?	What does it show?
Volume or number of mentions	By counting tweets, wall posts, likes and similar activities	The size of the conversation about the campaign. (i.e. the number of people talking about the campaign, the number of messages about the campaign)
Reach	By counting the number of clicks on a website, media posts By calculating the number of followers of a social media account from which the post originated plus the number of followers of accounts that share the original post	The spread of a social media conversation Potential audience size
Engagement	The sum of interactions (e.g. likes, comments, shares) made by others about the posts	How people are participating in the conversation about the campaign What they are doing to spread content and engage with the campaign
Influence	By online social capital (i.e. networks) and the potential ability to influence others (i.e. kinetic influence)	Who is talking about the campaign and what kind of impact do they have – that is, can they get others to participate in specific conversations?