



Deliverable 4.2.

Report on user involvement & management

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**Abstract**

The purpose of D 4.2

This task will specify the target groups and user recruitment process in detail. Furthermore, the end-users will be recruited and supervised by the responsible Ella4Life end-user partners in the Netherlands, Romania, Poland and Switzerland.

What is new in this Version

This is the final version of this deliverable. This document specifies the used target groups and the specific recruitment processes used within this project. The first version of this deliverable has been reviewed during the MTR in 2019 and the final version will be reviewed in June 2021.

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1 Executive Summary

The scope of the **Ella4Life project** is to facilitate elderly to stay healthier and live a higher quality life. The proposed integrated solution, Ella4Life, helps people in need, in daily activities or stay in contact with the professionals or informal caregivers and live a more pleasant life, independent and safe at home. Ella4Life is presented as a virtual avatar, integrating together the technology that Anne and Emma already offered and integrating the use of the bath sensor and the e-chair. In doing so, Ella4Life offers people one solution for care and cure as a best added value for the target group.

The main objective of the testing users' involvement & management phase is to specify the target groups and user recruitment process in detail. Furthermore, the end-users will be recruited and supervised by responsible Ella4Life end-user partners in Netherlands, Romania, Poland and Switzerland.

User involvement is a strategy to ensure that requirements and needs of elders are known and respected in every stage of the project. End-users have been involved in the development of the three different solutions and technologies (Anne, Emma, sensors) through previous organized focus groups. Their involvement has resulted in our conclusion that we need to cooperate to create an integral solution instead of three different ones. This document specifies the target groups and recruitment processes for the two test phases of Ella4Life.



2 Target groups

The users are defined as following: Senior adults who will benefit from the integrated solution Ella4Life, within the category 55 years and older, healthy or with a chronic disease or mental condition. This technology is not for hearing and speech impaired persons.

The end-users will form a natural reflection of the demographics of the participating countries. According to age criterion, we select persons aged 55 years and older, for three ranges: 55-65; 65-75 and 75+ years, preferably with a balanced distribution.

Gender, urban or rural residence, level of education and living status (i.e. single, married) are not relevant for our research and therefore will not be criteria for the users.

We are interested in people with at least minimum level of using ICT's (information and communication technology), mobile apps and online environment because Ella4Life solution is based on technology and person-computer interaction.

There are four end-user organizations from four countries.

- Livelife – Netherlands (coordinator of T4.2.)
- Ana Aslan International Foundation - Romania
- Muflon – Poland
- Vicino Luzern -Switzerland

Test phase 2019

The following applies to the test groups in the Netherlands, Poland and Romania. Ideally, each test group consists of 35 participants. Seventeen users will be asked to participate in each of the three testing phases. Due to the laboratory test in Switzerland, the number of persons may be lower. Therefore, additional individual tests are carried out in Switzerland. The exact composition of the test groups is described further below in this document under the respective country.

Test phase 2021

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic we had to change our initial approach for the final test phase. All participating countries suffered great restrictions regarding real life meetings and therefore we had to find a creative alternative for testing our solution together with our end users. More details regarding this test phase including the used alternative will be given further below in this document under the respective country.



3 User recruitment process

The group is recruited on a voluntary basis, persons who usually do not know each other but are able to share their experiences and express their opinion. People are approached to offer their perceptions and opinion about the integrated solution Ella4Life.

Each end-user organization will use their own communication channel and own tone of voice to recruit the users. The end-user organizations will also install a support desk which the users can contact in their own language when they have questions or concerns regarding the testing phase.

3.1 User recruitment Livelife – The Netherlands

Livelife delivers services every day 24/7 and we analyse and create new concepts based on customer experiences. Within our 389.000 members we have multiple strong communities which we can ask for feedback regarding this project.

2019 test phase Recruiting

Livelife used two channels to recruit our end-users:

- 1) E-mail to our clients/customers
- 2) Telephone call to members of our eHealth jury. These members are all 55+ and have experience with testing different solutions offered by Livelife.

Both channels were given a description of Ella4Life and explanation about the testing phase.

The selection of the *end-user group* which included those who meet the recruiting condition (age, health status, with at least a minimum level of using ICT's). Health checks should not be used to discriminate against people who are frail due to age or dealing with cognitive or mental health problems.

Participation & support. Users willing to participate in the test phase were given information about how we would install Ella4Life in their homes, how they could contact our support desk with questions and when and how they should fill in the questionnaires. Also, it was made clear they were free to leave the test phase whenever they felt like it without the need of giving an explanation; participation is on a voluntary basis.



2021 final test phase

Recruiting

Livelif used two channels to recruit 126 end-users:

- 1) E-mail to our clients/customers
- 2) Telephone call to members of our eHealth jury. These members are all 55+ and have experience with testing different solutions offered by Livelif.

End users recruited through both channels were given a description of Ella4Life including an URL to a video showing the integrated solution.

**The video is attached to this document.*

The selection of the end-user group which included those who meet the recruiting condition (age, health status, with at least a minimum level of using ICT's). Health checks should not be used to discriminate against people who are frail due to age or dealing with cognitive or mental health problems.

Participation & support. Users willing to participate in the test phase received an e-mail including a description of the integrated solution, a request to view the created video and fill in our questionnaire and information on how they could contact us when in need for help with either viewing the video or filling in the questionnaire.

The video demonstrated how the integrated solution works so that during the COVID-19 pandemic we could include our end users in our thought processes. At the end of the video the end users were kindly asked to fill in the questionnaire and give us their opinions. Also, it was made clear they were free to leave the test phase whenever they felt like it without the need of giving an explanation; participation is on a voluntary basis.

Our contact centre was available from Monday till Friday between 08:00 and 17:00 to help our end users.

3.2 User recruitment Vicino Luzern – Switzerland

Vicino Luzern fosters social contacts in the neighbourhood. The senior citizens' community is maintained and cared for through various offers in the neighbourhood. Vicino Luzern has recruited the end-users as follows:

Recruiting test phase 2019

Two channels were used for recruitment of end-users:

- 1) Vicino Luzern organises regular quarter meetings. Project Ella4Life was presented at such meetings in the pavilion (place in the middle of the quarter where people can contact Vicino). The people present were approached and asked whether they would participate in the field tests. The test group was formed out of the interested persons with those



persons who meet the target group.

- 2) Vicino Luzern used direct contact as the second channel. Vicino Luzern directly approached people from the contact network who fulfilled the requirements for participation in the field trials.

Participation

Through these two channels, Vicino Luzern was able to arouse the curiosity of persons from the quarter about the Ella4Life project and get them interested to participate the field trials. The participants were informed that they could withdraw from the field test at any time without any disadvantage or reason.

Recruiting test phase 2020-2021

Vicino used different channels for recruitment of end-users:

1. Targeted recruitment based on the Vicino locations:

Vicino was able to significantly expand its accessibility from 2020 onwards. The number of locations has tripled compared to 2019. Three locations and get-togethers have been created throughout the city. As a result, the accessibility for older people has also improved significantly.

Due to the pandemic, all locations must be completely closed for some months in spring 2020. The quarter meetings were no longer allowed. Personal contact was only possible by phone. Other communication channels, such as email, could not be used because very few people have an email address.

Vicino then tried to specifically find people who are known to suffer even more from loneliness because they can no longer use Vicino's low-threshold offer. People with restricted mobility were also specifically sought. The offer of the neighborhood aid, which Vicino founded from the beginning of the pandemic, was certainly helpful. Older people who no longer wanted to / could not go shopping were placed with volunteer helpers. Vicino was the mediator and was therefore able to reach people who were suitable for Ella4Life.

It turned out that over time, other needs, such as grocery shopping, came to the fore. Above all, the loneliness of older people living alone became clear. Here an attempt was made to connect people with one another using Ella4Life.

2. Recruitment based on the network of Vicino:

Vicino Luzern directly approached people from the contact network who fulfilled the requirements for participation in the field trials. Organizations such as Spitex, neighbourhood workers or direct contacts with general practitioners were specifically made aware of Ella4Life in order to find suitable people through these channels.

3. A completely new possibility for the inclusion of end users has arisen through the cooperation with the city of Lucerne on the subject of avoiding loneliness. After the first wave of Covid-19, the "Anlaufstelle Alter" was also a contact point to search for people who suffered severely from loneliness.



4. Together with the IhomeLab of the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences, a search was made for new users via the local print media. In addition, there were two interviews, one with a public broadcaster SRF1 and one with a local radio station. A total of 20 users could be recruited to participate in the Ella4Life.

5. Another attempt to recruit end users in the pandemic was made by a company in Winterthur (Switzerland) that sells IT hardware and software directly to end customers. This company has a large clientele of older people who purchase IT hardware and advice from them in their business. Unfortunately, it also turned out here that the potential use of the customer network in the pandemic time was not that easy.

Support

The participants were given an information brochure. This contained facts about the project, who is responsible for it and who carries out the field trials. Furthermore contact details of Vicino Luzern were given, who can be contacted at any time with questions about the project or the field trials. During the pandemic, all end users also received detailed documentation and operating instructions. Telephone support / advice was also possible at any time.

3.3 User recruitment Ana Aslan International Foundation – Romania

2019 test phase

Ana Aslan International Foundation fosters social connections and has a strong community of seniors. The recruitment process of end-users who accepted to participate on voluntary basis at the project had many steps, as follows:

Attracting people. Spreading information and notifying people about integrated solution Ella4Life and advantages of using it, via word of mouth and online channels. Elders were recruited through our database of seniors and Ana Aslan Senior Community on Facebook. We also informed the Associations of seniors, NGOs, Volunteer Centre and Senior Club, in order to attract people willing to participate into testing. We presented them the flyers and additional information about Ella4Life project. The **message** would be very clear and focused on: the need, describing the activity and the benefits. Also, we pay attention to the motivation to participate in the development of a new technology adapted for the elders, at the international level.

The selection of the end-user group which included those who meet the recruiting condition (age, health status, with at least a minimum level of using ICT's). Health checks should not be used to discriminate against people who are frail due to age or dealing with cognitive or mental health problems.



Engagement. We contacted them by e-mail or telephone call in order to keep them connected to our assignment. We emphasize that participation should be voluntarily: they are free to leave as they want and taking their informal consent for participation in the development of a new technology adapted for elders.

Informing seniors about testing and technical support.

We performed complex tasks in the most concrete activities so that volunteers can find out exactly what they have to do. We gave them more details about the process of testing, the aim (how does Ella solution work), the background information about components (Anne, Ella, sensors) and how they work together, the equipment they need (tablet, blood pressure monitor). Find out more about the testing tasks and schedule. Also, the support desk is available to offer them information, technical support and ask any questions they have.

Keep them up-to-date and informed about further future trials. A part of them should be involved in future field trials.

2020-2021 test phase

Recruiting

ANA Foundation used two channels to recruit 101 end-users:

1. Online testing
2. Face to face testing
3. Telephone called A 4 minutes long movie was made in order to test the Anne concept and an online questionnaire was conducted.

Each participant received a description of Ella4Life and explanation about the testing phase.

Short movie presentation

The first part of the movie tells the story of a 70 years old woman, called Cosmina, who lives alone in a big city in Romania, Timisoara. Cosmina used to be a doctor and when she has started to forget easy things, like the steps of a recipe, she realized that her brain had started the degeneration process: and that the broken synapses would lead to forgetfulness. She was aware of the fact that she would need to build up new synapses, to challenge her brain by learning new things, engaging in new activities and exposing herself to new memories and bewilderment in front of the world.

The second part of the movie is about how Cosmina uses Anne, and how Anne suggests new activities, how the medication reminder functions, how the radio and news functions works, the photo album and games. It aims to give an overview on how the app can be used.

The selection of the end-user group which included those who meet the recruiting condition (age, health status, with at least a minimum level of using ICT).



Participation & support. We have considered an experimental dataset covering different time spans, from a week to a one-encounter test, as well as, given the pandemic context, we have evaluated the interest in using Anne through an online test where a short presentation movie has been exhibited. We stressed the relevance of Anne's for those at an advance age or with a subjective cognitive impairment (SCI). It was made clear they were free to leave the test phase whenever they felt like it without the need of giving an explanation; participation is on a voluntary basis.

3.4 User recruitment Muflon – Poland

MUFLON sp.z o.o., carries out care activities (rehabilitation and sanatorium house) and care for the elderly in their homes in the Śląskie Voivodeship.

2020-2021 test phase

Recruiting

1. MUFLON sp. z o.o. used two channels (E-mail, telephone to our clients/customers) to recruit 100 end-users:
 1. Online testing - long movie was made in order to test the Ella4Life concept and an online questionnaire was conducted - 50 users
 2. Home testing - 50 users

It was not possible to direct recruitment among sanatorium residents according to lockdown with COVID-19 pandemic situation.

Both channels were given a description of Ella4Life and explanation about the testing phase.

The selection of the *end-user group* which included those who meet the recruiting condition (age, health status, with at least a minimum level of using ICT's). Health checks should not be used to discriminate against people who are frail due to age or dealing with cognitive or mental health problems.

Participation & support. Users willing to participate in the test phase were given information about how we would install Ella4Life in their homes, how they could contact our support desk with questions and when and how they should fill in the questionnaires. Also, it was made clear they were free to leave the test phase whenever they felt like it without the need of giving an explanation; participation is on a voluntary basis.



The contact person for Polish end-users is Ewa Polańska. It runs a tablet with the Anne application and acts as a helpdesk for Polish testers.

Polish testers are testing four components of the Ella4Life system: Anne4Care application (Surface Go tablet), Emma 6 application with Microlife pressure device (Android smartphones) and eBathtub and eChair sensor systems.

It is important to realize that the Polish senior is a specific entity that is significantly different from seniors from Western Europe. Both in terms of wealth, technological advancement, as well as life habits: including diet, physical activity, and social contacts. These differences will also require the development of appropriate information materials for testers and special training, both for final beneficiaries and employees of MUFLON sp.z o.o.

Ella4Life's film script - eBathtub & eChair

Scene 1:

Smiling, rested, Senior is walking on a park or beach on a sunny day.

Scene 2:

He sits down on a bench and looks at his electronic assistant Anne4Care. The assistant reminds him to take his medicine. So he takes a pill and swallows drinking mineral water from the tap (so that there is no surreptitious advertising).

Scene 3:

In the apartment after returning from a walk. He takes out a tablet and connects with a friend from Anne4Care contacts. They talk and joke. After the conversation is over, our hero starts the Memory game.

Scene 4:

After the game is over, he starts the family photo album and goes to the living room to sit in front of the TV on an armchair equipped with a super chair mat. Transfer to the computer screen with the ECG waveform and determined parameters HR, HRV.

Scene 5:

Bath in a bathtub with a super mat. It activates the mat by pressing the button and releases water into the bathtub.

Scene 6:

The hero reads the book. Suddenly the message take the pill is heard from the tablet. The Senior takes the pill, the Anna4Care screen goes to sleep and the Senior goes to sleep.



4 Definitions, Acronyms and Abbreviations

Ella4Life - Acronym of the current project: "Ella4Life – your Virtual Personal Assistant for home and on the road"

AAL Programme - Active Assistive Living Programme

ICT - Information and Communication Technology