
POSTER ABSTRACT

The Thursday Appetizer series: a community of practice for healthy and active aging in Barcelona. Identification of challenges to design innovative solutions that respond to the real needs of older persons.

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In response to major challenges facing the aging population, we have launched the Barcelona Aging coLLaboratory (BALL), an open-innovation ecosystem focused on promoting healthy and active aging through the co-creation, development, testing and evaluation of innovative products and services in real-life settings. In line with the quadruple helix innovation framework, BALL engages all relevant stakeholders -older persons, caregivers, health and social care providers, third sector institutions, research and universities, and private companies- in this process.

The point of entry by which BALL gives a voice to citizens, older persons and caregivers is the "Thursday Appetizer" series, which consists of participatory sessions during which seniors and other stakeholders work together on generating ideas and defining how to implement and evaluate them. The mission of the project is to identify aging-related challenges at local and global levels and to develop potential solutions. A 3-session pilot phase is currently underway, following a waterfall methodology, with each session conditioning the following one. The first session focused on identifying general challenges related to aging. We followed a brainstorming methodology and classified all challenges identified into four categories: digital gap (connectivity and access to information), loneliness, age discrimination and the defense of the rights of older people, and planning for healthy and active aging. The second session focuses on prioritizing one of these groups and exploring possible solutions to face that specific challenge, again adopting a brainstorming methodology. The third session, then, focuses on these solutions in greater depth, comparing and contrasting them and analyzing strengths and weaknesses and commonalities and differences, with the goal of eventually co-creating a specific product or service. If needed,

experts in the area of the challenge being tackled will be invited to participate in future “Thursday Appetizer” sessions.

Once the pilot stage is finished, we will provide feedback to participants by sending them a wrap-up of the three sessions, as well as a personalized thank you letter including information regarding resources appropriate to their needs. Furthermore, we will conduct an evaluation of the impact and viability of the pilot in order to co-design a scale-up strategy for 2023, along with participants and the rest of stakeholders. Results of this initiative will be openly published on the BALL website (www.ballaginglab.org) and disseminated in order to increase the social awareness and to attract additional participants. Our long-term objective is to turn the “Thursday Appetizer” series into the breeding ground of innovative products and services co-created by BALL. This way, we will ensure that the solutions we propose adequately respond to real needs from the very beginning.

By including the views of end users from the very beginning, we expect to shorten the delay between the detection of needs and the social return on innovation in aging.