Framework for Age Ready Cities

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Is Aging a Problem?

Aging is not a disease.

Aging becomes a problem when physical and social environment cannot accommodate the developmental needs of people (elders) in our society.
Common fears of elders...

- Social isolation
- Losing dignity and respect
- Not having positive social role
• By 2050 1 in 5 people will be over 60
• Over 60 population will be larger than the under-15 population in 2050
• 80% of world's older people will live in developing countries by 2050
• More than 180 million older people live in poverty
• 3 out of 5 people live in Urban areas

Number of people aged 60 or over:
World, developed and developing countries, 1950-2050


Note: The group of “developed countries” corresponds to the “developed regions” of the World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision, and the group “developing countries” corresponds to the “less developed regions” of the same publication.
Bad news?

- High proportion of elderly population
- Economical burden
- Shortage of caregivers
- Shortage of affordable housing for elders to age in place
- Poverty
- Inappropriate infrastructure
- More elders with disabilities and dementia living in the low income countries
Good news?

• Elders are Healthier
• Elders have experience and wisdom from their long life
• More elders who could contribute to society
• More elders for children
Two approaches to Aging

1. Disease focused
2. Person centered
Traditional view

Elders are vulnerable populations who need to be cared for by younger generations.

Aging society = Elders as burden to our society
Changing our view

• Elders are the valuable asset of our communities.

• Life experiences and wisdom benefit younger generations, and help strengthen the resiliency of their communities.
Challenges of living in cities

- Physiological, psychological, and cognitive vulnerabilities
- Changing patterns of spatial use
- Urban hazards and risks
  - Traffic congestion
  - Limited provision of public toilets and places to rest
  - Pedestrian crossing times
- Exclusions from organizations and institution
- Social isolations
- Poverty
- Adequate housing
- Safety/fear of crime
How can cities be improved for elders?

• Resources to maintain health and live independently
  – Economic security
  – Affordable/adequate housing
  – Adequate transportation
  – Participate in community life
  – Opportunities for meaningful employment and civic participation

• Affordable long-term care services

• Meaningful caregiver supports

• A society that understands the positive aspects of aging
• Livable cities
• Compact cities
• Smart cities
• Sustainable cities
• Resilient cities
• Healthy cities
WHO Age-Friendly Themes

Age-friendly city

- Transportation
- Housing
- Social participation
- Respect and social inclusion
- Civic participation and employment
- Communication and information
- Community support and health services
- Outdoor spaces and buildings
The majority of people with dementia will live most of their lives at home in their communities, either alone or with relatives or friends. The needs of this group have, however, been entirely ignored in mainstream urban design.
Key lessons: Local

- Move from just being “friendly” to being truly inclusive of all people
- Think beyond family and relatives
- Local environment and close proximities
- Shared community and interest between generations
- Older residents can act as a reference point for stability and continuity
- Make sure older people continue to play an active role in the community and don’t become isolated

Involve, Enable, and Inform elders
“nothing about us without us”
Key lessons: Policy

• Age-friendly initiatives mainly occurred in the developed world.
• Multi-stakeholder collaborations should be encouraged to optimize ageing strategies.
• Economic austerity has restricted the development of age-friendly programs.
• Urban regeneration and gentrification create problems for older people ‘ageing in place’.
• Developing cities for all ages should be a key goal for economic and social policy.
• Other variations might be required in the context of the rise of ‘mega-cities’ and ‘hyper-cities’, the latter with populations of 20 million or more.
• Methods for ‘age-friendly’ communities will need radical adjustment in the context of the ‘slum cities’.
How can we transform our cities?

- Physical environment
- Social environment
- Technologies
Lessons learned from the Heat waves

1995: Chicago
600 deaths, three-quarters were older people.
• Barriers to physical mobility
  – broken stairs
  – crumbling sidewalks
  – poor lighting
• Psychological impact of living amongst signs of disorder
• Indifferent government agencies who neglect the local infrastructure
• Decrease in trusting and reciprocal relationships in areas with high levels of crime (Klinenberg, 2002).

2003: France
• 15,000 deaths, most of whom were older people.
• The highest mortality rates were in urban areas.
• The quality of life of older people living in densely populated urban areas are “often not adapted to the needs of older people and they can be one of the primary causes of social exclusion.
• Spatial and mobility-related aspects are important dimensions of social inclusion
• Older people in inner cities often face many disadvantages related to access to services’ (Ogg, 2005: 35).
Crosswalk
Public bathrooms/toilets
Eliminating steps
Adding benches
Creating a place for people to gather
**Transition of Elder Care**

### Institutional
- Medical model
- Collective care
  - Efficiency
  - Convenience
  - Hygienic
  - Total safety

### Person-centered
- Socio-Medical Model
- Individualized care
  - Awareness and orientation
  - Safety and security
  - Privacy
  - Stimulation
  - Autonomy and control
  - Social contact
  - Home-like environment

### Community based
- Inclusive/Empowerment model
- Community care
  - Elders’ wisdom
  - Community ownership
  - De-marginalization
  - Multi-generational
  - Culturally appropriate
  - Non institutional
Being unwanted, unloved, uncared for, forgotten by everybody, I think that is a much greater hunger, a much greater poverty than the person who has nothing to eat. ~Mother Theresa
Community is something that we have to negotiate and create with others, not something that we can passively receive.
Questions?

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