Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide

World Health Organization

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Amman, Jordan
Cancún, Mexico
Dundalk, Ireland
Geneva, Switzerland
Halifax, Canada
Himeji, Japan
Islamabad, Pakistan
Istanbul, Turkey
Kingston and Montego Bay (combined), Jamaica
La Plata, Argentina
London, United Kingdom
Mayaguez, Puerto Rico
Melbourne, Australia
Melville, Australia
Mexico City, Mexico
Moscow, Russian Federation
Nairobi, Kenya
New Delhi, India
Ponce, Puerto Rico
Portage la Prairie, Canada
Portland, Oregon, United States of America
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Ruhr metropolitan region, Germany
Saanich, Canada
San José, Costa Rica
Shanghai, China
Sherbrooke, Canada
Tokyo, Japan
Tripoli, Lebanon
Tuymazy, Russian Federation
Udaipur, India
Udine, Italy

Finally, special gratitude is expressed to the older people in all research locations, as well as to the caregivers and service providers who were also consulted in many sites. In focus groups, these people articulated the model of an age-friendly city based on their experience that is at the heart of this Guide. These older people and those who interact with them in significant ways will continue to play a critical role as community advocates and overseers of action to make their cities more age-friendly.

Introduction: about this Guide

Population ageing and urbanization are two global trends that together comprise major forces shaping the 21st century. At the same time as cities are growing, their share of residents aged 60 years and more is increasing. Older people are a resource for their families, communities and economies in supportive and enabling living environments. WHO regards active ageing as a lifelong process shaped by several factors that, alone and acting together, favour health, participation and security in older adult life. Informed by WHO's approach to active ageing, the purpose of this Guide is to engage cities to become more age-friendly so as to tap the potential that older people represent for humanity.

An age-friendly city encourages active ageing by optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age.

In practical terms, an age-friendly city adapts its structures and services to be accessible to and inclusive of older people with varying needs and capacities.

To understand the characteristics of an age-friendly city, it is essential to go to the source – older city dwellers. By working with groups in 33 cities in all WHO regions, WHO has asked older people in focus groups to describe the advantages and barriers they experience in eight areas of city living. In most cities, the reports from older people were complemented by evidence from focus groups of caregivers and service providers in the public, voluntary and private sectors. The results from the focus groups led to the development of a set of age-friendly city checklists.

- Part 1 describes the converging trends of rapid growth of the population over 60 years of age and of urbanization, and outlines the challenge facing cities.
- Part 2 presents the "active ageing" concept as a model to guide the development of age-friendly cities.
- Part 3 summarizes the research process that led to identifying the core features of an age-friendly city.
- Part 4 describes how the Guide should be used by individuals and groups to stimulate action in their own cities.
- Parts 5–12 highlight the issues and concerns voiced by older people and those who serve older people in each of eight areas of urban living: outdoor spaces and buildings; transportation; housing; social participation; respect and social inclusion; civic participation and employment; communication and information; and community support and health services. In each part, the description of the findings concludes with a checklist of core age-friendly city features obtained by analysing the reports from all cities.

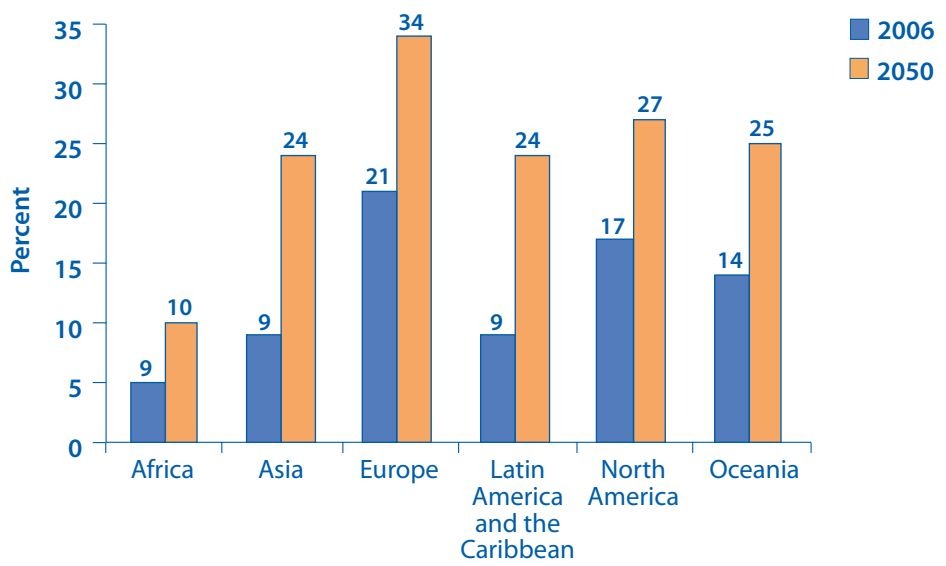
- Part 13 integrates the findings within the WHO active ageing perspective and highlights strong connections between the age-friendly city topics. These reveal the principal traits of the "ideal" age-friendly city and show how changing one aspect of the city can have positive effects on the lives of older people in other areas. Seized by the promise of more age-friendly communities, WHO collaborators are now undertaking initiatives to translate the research into local action, to expand the scope beyond cities, and to spread it to more communities. An age-friendly community movement is growing for which this Guide is the starting point.

Part 1. Global ageing and urbanization: meeting the challenge of humanity's success

The world is rapidly ageing: the number of people aged 60 and over as a proportion of the global population will double from 11% in 2006 to 22% by 2050. By then, there will be more older people than children (aged 0–14 years) in the population for the first time in human history (1). Developing countries are ageing at a much faster rate than developed countries: within five decades, just over 80% of the world's older people will be living in developing countries compared with 60% in 2005 (2).

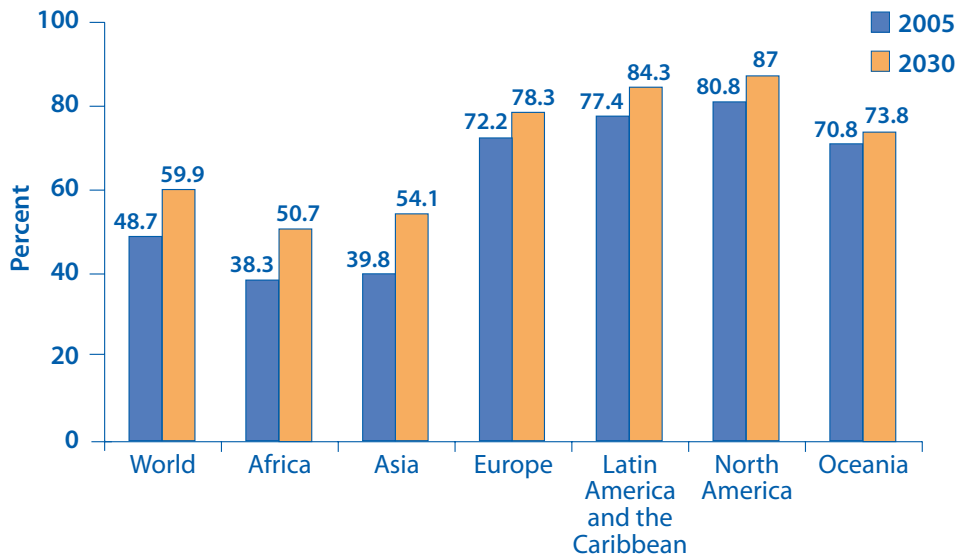
At the same time, our world is a growing city: as of 2007, over half of the global population now lives in cities (3). Mega-cities, that is, cities with 10 million inhabitants or more, increased tenfold from 2 to 20 during the 20th century, accounting for 9% of the world's urban population by 2005 (4). The number and proportion of urban dwellers will continue to rise over the coming decades, and particularly in cities with fewer than five million inhabitants (5). Again, this growth is happening much more rapidly in developing regions. By 2030, about three out of every five people in the world will live in cities and the number of urban dwellers in the less developed regions will be almost four times as large as that in the more developed regions (Fig. 2) (6).

Figure 1. Percent distribution of world population 60 or over by region, 2006 and 2050



Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs *(1)*.

Figure 2. Percentage of Urban Population in Major Areas



Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division *(6)*.

More older people are also living in cities. The proportion of the older adult population residing in cities in developed countries matches that of younger age groups at about 80%, and will rise at the same pace. In developing countries, however, the share of older people in urban communities will multiply 16 times from about 56 million in 1998 to over 908 million in 2050. By that time, older people will comprise one fourth of the total urban population in less developed countries (7).

Population ageing and urbanization are the culmination of successful human development during last century. They also are major challenges for this century. Living longer is the fruit of critical gains in public health and in standards of living. As stated in the WHO Brasilia Declaration on Ageing (8) in 1996, "healthy older people are a resource for their families, their communities and the economy". Urban growth is associated with a country's technological and economic development. Vibrant cities benefit a country's entire population – urban and rural. Because cities are the centre of cultural, social and political activity, they are a hothouse for new ideas, products and services that influence other communities and therefore the world. Yet to be sustainable, cities must provide the structures and services to support their residents' wellbeing and productivity. Older people in particular require supportive and enabling living environments to compensate for physical and social changes associated with ageing. This necessity was recognized as one of the three priority directions of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing endorsed by the United Nations in 2002 (9). Making cities more age-friendly is a necessary and logical response to promote the wellbeing and contributions of older urban residents and keep cities thriving. And

Part 2. Active ageing: a framework for age-friendly cities

The idea of an age-friendly city presented in this Guide builds on WHO's active ageing framework (10).

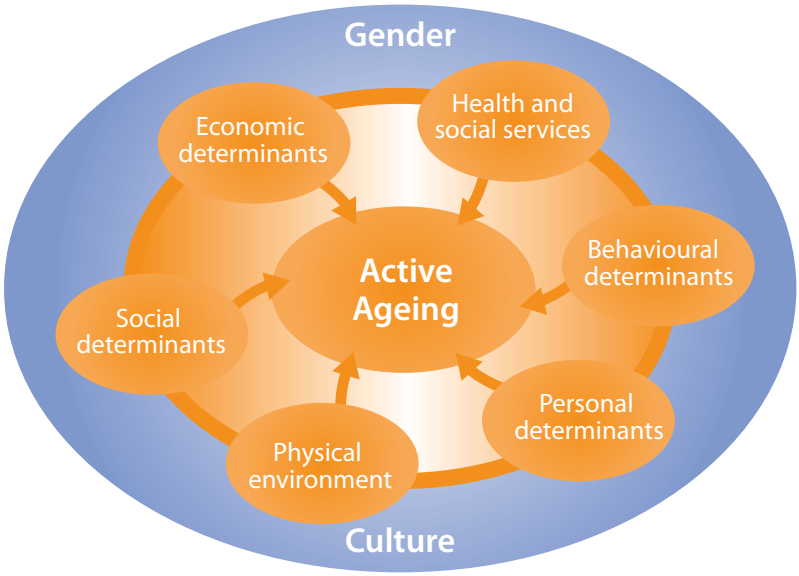
Active ageing is the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age.

In an age-friendly city, policies, services, settings and structures support and enable people to age actively by:

- recognizing the wide range of capacities and resources among older people;
- anticipating and responding flexibly to ageing-related needs and preferences;
- respecting their decisions and lifestyle choices;
- protecting those who are most vulnerable; and
- promoting their inclusion in and contribution to all areas of community life.

Active ageing depends on a variety of influences or determinants that surround individuals, families and nations. They include material conditions as well as social factors that affect individual types of behaviour and feelings (11). All of these factors, and the interaction between them, play an important role in affecting how well individuals age. Many aspects of urban settings and services reflect these determinants and are included in the characteristic features of an age-friendly city (Fig. 3).

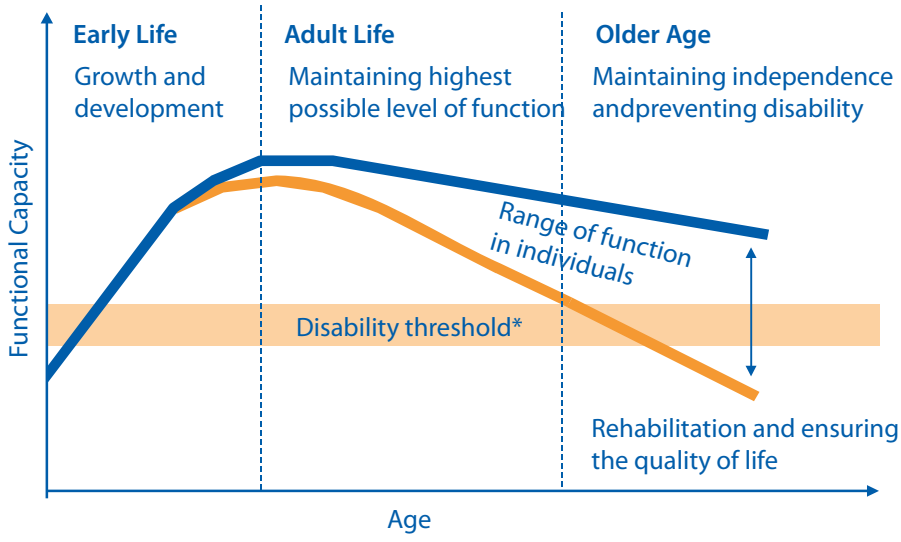
Figure 3. Determinants of Active Ageing



These determinants have to be understood from a life course perspective that recognizes that older people are not a homogeneous group and that individual diversity increases with age. This is expressed in Fig. 4, which illustrates that functional capacity (such as muscular strength and cardiovascular output) increases in childhood, peaks in early adulthood and eventually declines. The rate of decline is largely determined by factors related to lifestyle, as well as external social, environmental and economic factors. From an individual and societal perspective, it is important to remember that the speed of decline can be influenced and may be reversible at any age through individual and public policy measures, such as promoting an age-friendly living environment.

Because active ageing is a lifelong process, an age-friendly city is not just "elderly-friendly". Barrier-free buildings and streets enhance the mobility and independence of people with disabilities, young as well as old. Secure neighbourhoods allow children, younger women and older people to venture outside in confidence to participate in physically active leisure and in social activities. Families experience less stress when their older members have the community support and health services they need. The whole community benefits from the participation of older people in volunteer or paid work. Finally, the local economy profits from the patronage of older adult consumers. The operative word in age-friendly social and physical urban settings is enablement.

Figure 4. Maintaining functional capacity over the life course



Source: Kalache & Kickbusch (12).

Part 3. How the Guide was developed

Cities in all WHO Regions

A total of 35 cities from all continents participated in the WHO project leading to the Guide, and 33 of these cities participated in focus group research thanks to the collaboration of government officials and nongovernmental and academic groups (1). These cities represent a wide range of developed and developing countries (Fig. 5). They reflect the diversity of contemporary urban settings, including six current mega-cities with over 10 million inhabitants (Mexico City, Moscow, New Delhi, Rio de Janeiro, Shanghai and Tokyo), "almost mega-cities" such as Istanbul, London and New York, as well as national capitals, regional centres and small cities.

Bottom-up participatory approach

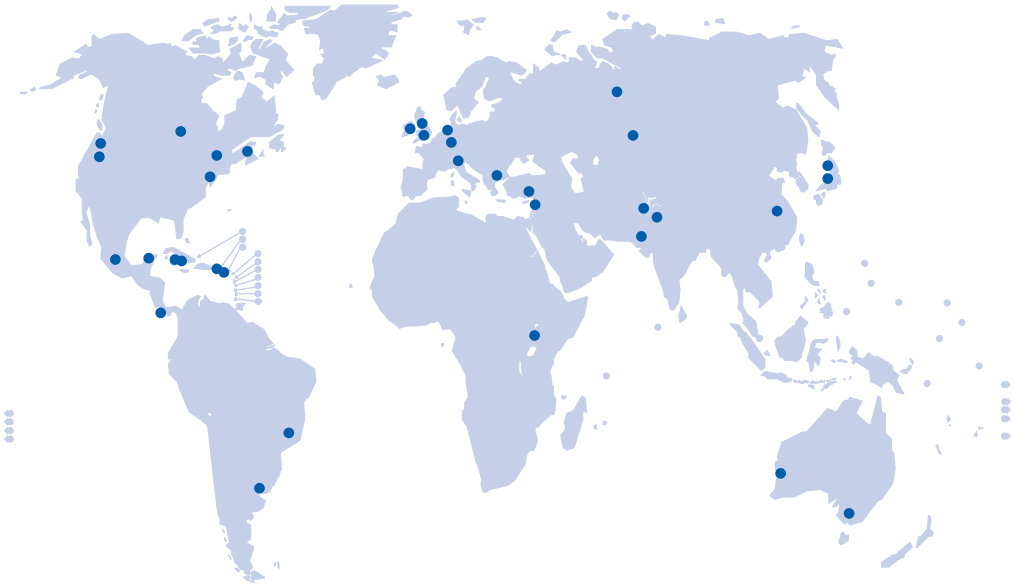
The bottom-up participatory approach (13) involves older people in analysing and expressing their situation to inform government policies. It is recommended by the United Nations for empowering older people to contribute to society and to participate in decision-making processes. Because older people are the ultimate experts on their own lives, WHO and its partners in each city have involved older people as full participants in the project. Project leaders sought the first-hand experience of older people. What are the age-friendly features of the city they live in? What problems do they encounter? What is missing from the city that would enhance their health, participation and security?

Focus groups were set up with older people aged 60 years and older from lower- and middle-income areas. A total of 158 such groups, involving 1485 participants, were organized between September 2006 and April 2007. Older people were the main source of information in all the 33 cities that conducted focus groups. To obtain the views of people who would be unable to attend focus groups owing to physical or mental impairment, most cities also held a focus group with caregivers who talked about the experience of the older people for whom they were caring.

To complement the information from older people and caregivers, most cities also conducted focus groups with service providers from the public, voluntary and commercial sectors. In all, 250 caregivers and 515 service providers were included in the consultations. These people made observations based on their interactions with older people. The caregivers and service providers sometimes provided information that older people did not report, but the information from both groups was always consistent with the views expressed by

1. Edinburgh contributed information on the city's age-friendliness, based on a large survey and individual interviews collected a few months prior to the WHO project. The information from Edinburgh, using a different but complementary methodology, provided additional confirmation of the findings from focus groups. New York City was closely involved in the data analysis and in the development of the next phases of the Global Age-Friendly Cities project.

Figure 5. World map of age-friendly partner cities



Americas
Argentina, La Plata
Brazil, Rio de Janeiro
Canada, Halifax
Canada, Portage la Prairie
Canada, Saanich
Canada, Sherbrooke
Costa Rica, San Jose
Jamaica, Kingston
Jamaica, Montego Bay
Mexico, Cancun
Mexico, Mexico City
Puerto Rico, Mayaguez
Puerto Rico, Ponce
USA, New York
USA, Portland

Africa
Kenya, Nairobi

Eastern Mediterranean
Jordan, Amman
Lebanon, Tripoli
Pakistan, Islamabad

Europe
Germany, Ruhr
Ireland, Dundalk
Italy, Udine
Russia, Moscow
Russia, Tuymazy
Switzerland, Geneva
Turkey, Istanbul
UK, Edinburgh
UK, London

South-east Asia
India, New Delhi
India, Udaipur

Western Pacific
Australia, Melbourne
Australia, Melville
China, Shanghai
Japan, Himeji
Japan, Tokyo

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older people.

Discussion topics

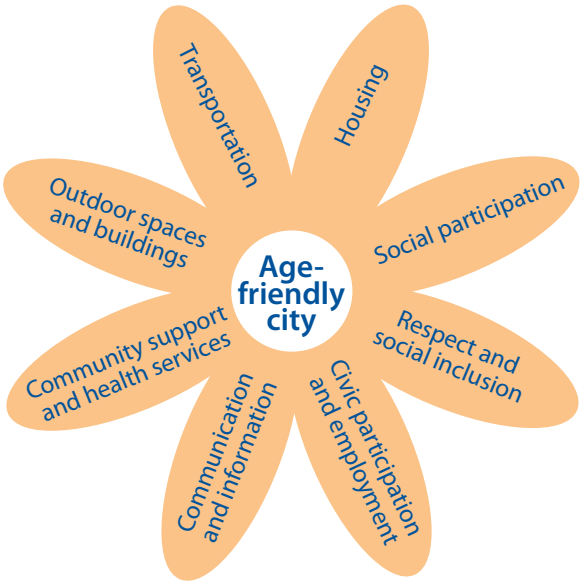
A total of eight topics were explored in the focus groups to give a comprehensive picture of the city's age-friendliness. The topics cover the features of the city's structures, environment, services and policies that reflect the determinants of active ageing. The topics had been identified in previous research with older people on the characteristics of elderly-friendly communities (14,15). The same basic questions

about each area were asked in the focus groups in all cities.

The first three topics were outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, and housing. As key features of a city's physical environment, they have a strong influence on personal mobility, safety from injury, security from crime, health behaviour and social participation. Another three topics reflect different aspects of the social environment and of culture that affect participation and mental wellbeing. Respect and social inclusion deals with the attitudes, behaviour and messages of other people and of the community as a whole towards older people. Social participation refers to the engagement of older people in recreation, socialization, and cultural, educational and spiritual activities. Civic participation and employment addresses opportunities for citizenship, unpaid work and paid work; it is related to both the social environment and to the economic determinants of active ageing. The last two topic areas, communication and information and community support and health services, involve both social environments and health and social service determinants. The cross-cutting active ageing determinants of culture and gender were included only indirectly in this project, because their influence on active ageing extends far beyond urban living. Owing to their overriding influence, these determinants merit specially focused initiatives.

As with the determinants of active ageing, these eight aspects of city life overlap and interact. Respect and social inclusion are reflected in the accessibility of the buildings and spaces and in the range of opportunities that the city offers to older people for social participation, entertainment or employment. Social participation, in turn, influences social inclusion, as well

Figure 6. Age-friendly city topic areas



as access to information. Housing affects needs for community support services, while social, civic and economic participation partly depend on the accessibility and safety of outdoor spaces and public buildings. Transportation and communication and information particularly interact with the other areas: without transportation or adequate means of obtaining information to allow people to meet and connect, other urban facilities and services that could support active ageing are simply inaccessible. Fig. 6 depicts the age-friendly city topic areas.

Identifying age-friendly features

For each topic, the reports of age-friendly aspects of the city, the barriers and gaps, and the suggestions for improvement voiced by focus group participants in all cities were transcribed and grouped into themes. The themes that were mentioned in each city were recorded to form a picture of what was most important overall and in different regions and cities. Based on the themes, a checklist of the core features of an age-friendly city was developed in each area of city living. The checklist is a faithful summary of the views expressed by the focus group participants worldwide.

Part 4. How to use the Guide

Core age-friendly features

The purpose of this Guide is to help cities see themselves from the perspective of older people, in order to identify where and how they can become more age-friendly. The following parts of the Guide describe, for every area of city life, the advantages and barriers that older people experience in cities at different stages of development. The checklist of core age-friendly features concluding each part applies to less developed as well as more developed cities. It is intended to provide a universal standard for an age-friendly city.

The age-friendly features checklist is not a system for ranking one city's age-friendliness against another's; rather, it is a tool for a city's self-assessment and a map to chart progress. No city is too far behind to make some significant improvements based on the checklist. Going beyond the checklist is possible, and indeed some cities already have features that exceed the core. These good practices provide ideas that other cities can adapt and adopt. Nevertheless, no city provides a "gold standard" in every area.

The checklists of age-friendly urban features are neither technical guidelines nor design specifications. Other technical documentation is available to help implement changes that may be required in individual cities (16,17).

Who will use the Guide?

The Guide is intended to be used by individuals and groups interested in making their city more age-friendly, including governments, voluntary organizations, the private sector and citizens' groups. The same principle followed in creating the Guide applies to using it; that is: involve older people as full partners at all stages. In assessing the city's strengths and gaps, older people will describe how the checklist of features matches their own experiences. They will provide suggestions for change and they may participate in implementing improvement projects. The situation of older people articulated through this bottom-up approach provides the essential information to be distilled and analysed by gerontology experts and decision-makers in developing or adapting interventions and policies. In the follow-up stages of "age-friendly" local action, it is imperative that older people continue to be involved in monitoring the city's progress and acting as age-friendly city advocates and advisers.

Part 5. Outdoor spaces and buildings

Overview of findings

The outside environment and public buildings have a major impact on the mobility, independence and quality of life of older people and affect their ability to "age in place". In the WHO project consultation, older people and others who interact significantly with them describe a broad range of characteristics of the urban landscape and built environment that contribute to age-friendliness. The recurring themes in cities around the world are quality of life, access and safety. Improvements that have been made or that are under way in cities at all stages of development are welcomed by those consulted, who also point out other changes that ought to be made.

1. Pleasant and clean environment

The beauty of the city's natural surroundings is a feature that people in many cities mention spontaneously as an age-friendly feature. For example, in Rio de Janeiro and Cancún, living close to the ocean is seen as a definite advantage, as is living close to the river in Melville and London. In Himeji, older people value the quiet and peacefulness of their environment. At the same time, older people do express complaints with respect to their city's cleanliness and to disturbing noise levels and odours.

> *You get out of your bed at four o'clock in the morning instead of six o'clock because there is too much noise outside.*
>
> Older person, Istanbul

In Tripoli, the smell of smoke from narguileh (oriental water pipes) is said to be "suffocating", especially in the evenings and during Ramadan. In Jamaica, concern is expressed at the loudness of music, compounded by the explicit language used in the songs. In a number of cities, the perceived dirtiness of the city detracts from older residents' quality of life. To address these problems, people in Mexico City suggest that a "clean street" campaign be organized, while in Jamaica, regulations addressing noise levels are recommended.

The size of the city is thought to be a problem in some cities. The increasing numbers of people in Tokyo are thought to be linked to a reduction in community cohesiveness. Nairobi is considered to be overcrowded and difficult for older people to get around.

2. Importance of green spaces

Having green spaces is one the most commonly mentioned age-friendly features. However, in many cities there are barriers that prevent older people from using green spaces. In New Delhi, for example, some green spaces are said to be poorly maintained and have become "dumps", and in Himeji, some parks are considered to be unsafe. Concern is expressed in Melville about the inadequate toilet facilities and lack of seating. In Moscow it is reported that there is no protection from the weather, while in Udaipur difficulties in getting to the parks are highlighted. Another issue of concern is hazards resulting from shared use of the park.

> *It may be a limiting factor to an older person going into a park that might be a shared activity area with bikes whizzing by, or skateboards or roller-bladers, or large bounding four-legged beasts.*
>
> Service provider, Melbourne

Different suggestions are offered to resolve these problems. Caregivers in Halifax see a need for small, quieter, contained green spaces in the fringe areas of the city rather than the large busy parks used by children and skateboarders. Older people in Amman recommend special gardens for their age group, while older people in New Delhi suggest demarcated areas in parks for older people. Better park maintenance is called for in several locations.

3. Somewhere to rest

The availability of seating areas is generally viewed as a necessary urban feature for older people: it is difficult for many older people to walk around their local area without somewhere to rest.

> *There are very few seating areas … you get tired and need to sit down.*
>
> Older person, Melville

Older people and caregivers in Shanghai appreciate the relaxing rest areas in their city. In Melbourne, the redevelopment of outdoor seating areas is viewed positively. Yet there is some concern about encroachment into public seating areas by people or groups who are intimidating or who display antisocial behaviour. In Tuymazy, for example, it was requested that the public seating be removed for this very reason.

4. Age-friendly pavements

The condition of pavements has an obvious impact on the ability to walk in the local area. Pavements that are narrow, uneven, cracked, have high curbs, are congested or have obstructions present potential hazards and affect the ability of older people to walk around.

> *I had a fall due to the pavement. I broke my shoulder.*
>
> Older person, Dundalk

Inadequate pavements are reported as an almost universal problem. In many cities, such as Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro and those in Jamaica, pedestrians are forced to

share the pavements with street vendors. In other cities, such as La Plata, Moscow, Ponce and the Ruhr metropolitan region, cars parked on the pavement force pedestrians to walk on the road. The weather may compound the difficulties experienced by older people using pavements. In Sherbrooke, for example, concern is expressed about snow not being cleared from the pavements and in Portage la Prairie, the risk of falls is considered greater after it has snowed.

Approval is expressed for improvements that some cities are making to the design and maintenance of pavements. The following features to make pavements age-friendly are often suggested:

- a smooth, level, non-slip surface;
- sufficient width to accommodate wheelchairs;
- dropped curbs that taper off to be level with the road;
- clearance from obstructions such as street vendors, parked cars and trees; and
- priority of access for pedestrians.

> *I don't live downtown, I live in La Loma, but we have the same problem with the sidewalks and stuff. It is hard for me to walk, I use a cane, and I'm all the time looking down, as a friend of mine used to say. Now when I'm walking round downtown and ask for help to go across 7th street, I always see if I can find a young person or so, and people come to me, so I can't complain about that, about people helping.*
>
> Older person, La Plata

5. Safe pedestrian crossings

The ability to cross the road safely is an often mentioned concern, and it is reported that several cities have taken steps to improve the conditions for people crossing the road: traffic lights at pedestrian crossings in Cancún; traffic islands in La Plata; pedestrian crossings in Mayaguez, and non-slip strips on pedestrian crossings in Portland. Amman has built bridges and tunnels to assist pedestrians to cross roads.

In quite a few cities, it is reported that the pedestrian crossing lights change too quickly. In Melville, it is suggested that the crossing lights have a visual "countdown" so that pedestrians know how much time they have to cross the road. The auditory signals at pedestrian crossings are much appreciated in Istanbul, and in Portland and Udine, auditory as well as visual cues at crossings are recommended.

> *Cross lights are made for Olympic runners.*
>
> Older person, Halifax

Another common concern is that drivers fail to follow traffic signals and do not give way to pedestrians.

> *… there are pedestrian crossings but motorists have no respect for pedestrians. They see you on the thing and they come right up on you. If your heart is not strong you drop down.*
>
> Older person, Jamaica

In most of the cities, the volume and speed of road traffic is said to present barriers for older people, both as pedestrians and as drivers. In Udaipur, it is reported that the traffic is chaotic and older people fear going out because of heavy traffic; some will not go out unless they are accompanied. (The difficulties encountered by older drivers are discussed in Part 7.)

6. Accessibility

In both developed and developing countries, people think that their city was not designed for older people.

> *I only go into town when I have something specific to do. I go there and finish what I am doing and come straight back home. Why would I want to walk around the city? I am not a young person.*
>
> Older person, Nairobi

In many cities, reference is made to barriers to physical access, which can discourage older people from leaving their homes. In Rio de Janeiro, it is pointed out that the concrete ladders to access the favela (shanty town) are difficult for older people to use. The lack of ramps in some areas is an issue in Sherbrooke. The common recommendation for addressing these concerns is education, particularly for urban planners and architects, about the needs of older people.

7. A secure environment

Feeling secure in one's living environment strongly affects people's willingness to move about in the local community, which in turn affects their independence, physical health, social integration and emotional well-being. Many cities are considered to be generally safe from harm by others, but others clearly are not. Regardless of the actual level of danger, concerns about security are expressed nearly everywhere, including matters such as street lighting, violence, crime, drugs and homelessness in public places. Going out at night is especially fearful for many older people.

> *We are not going out in the evenings. I don't go anywhere … they might kill you.*
>
> Older person, Tuymazy

It is acknowledged that some cities have taken measures to improve security; for example, it is pointed out that Geneva and Sherbrooke have installed surveillance cameras.

A suggestion made in La Plata to improve security is to involve the community, such as promoting self-organized groups among older people for greater outdoor safety as well as providing more police. In Dundalk, it is suggested that the government provide a grant to enable older people to improve their personal security.

Earthquakes occur frequently in Turkey, and older people in Istanbul are concerned that the city is not designed to minimize the risk of injury resulting from earthquakes.

> *We should have an empty space to feel safe from the earthquakes, but they don't give us, they tell us to use the streets.*
>
> Older person, Istanbul

8. Walkways and cycle paths

Walkways and cycle paths are seen as part of a health promoting, age-friendly environment, yet there are hazards noted as well. In Geneva, cyclists are thought by some to be a danger to older people. In Udine, it is suggested there should be two pathways – one for cyclists and one for pedestrians. Older people in Cancún, Portland and Saanich value the walking trails provided in their cities. The need to ensure walkways have a smooth surface is highlighted by caregivers in Halifax, and the need to ensure they are easy to access with sufficient wheelchair access points is mentioned by older people and caregivers in Portage la Prairie. Older people in Udine advise developing a system of walkways to move through the area, and in Halifax, walkways in car parks are called for to ensure the safety of pedestrians. Adding public toilets near walkways is another idea put forward in Saanich.

9. Age-friendly buildings

In many cities, including Himeji, Mayaguez, Melbourne and New Delhi, reference is made to new buildings being accessible and improvements being made to make buildings more accessible. Generally, the features that are considered necessary for buildings to be age-friendly are:

- elevators
- escalators
- ramps
- wide doorways and passages
- suitable stairs (not too high or steep) with railings
- non-slip flooring
- rest areas with comfortable seating
- adequate signage
- public toilets with handicap access.

In two cities, however, barriers to older people using elevators are mentioned. In Nairobi, older people have a fear of using elevators and need to be accompanied; while in Tripoli, older people are reluctant to use elevators as electricity failures are common and they fear being stranded.

While there is widespread recognition of the importance of having accessible buildings, it is also widely acknowledged that many buildings, particularly old buildings, are not accessible. In some cases, it is not possible to make old buildings more accessible. Most of the cities see a need to improve the accessibility of their buildings, particularly to facilitate wheelchair access.

Some positive and negative attributes of

large shopping centres are also mentioned. In Dundalk and Melville, some shopping centres provide wheelchairs for their customers and have wheelchair access. In Melbourne, the need to walk long distances is seen as a barrier to using large shopping centres. In Istanbul, shopping centres have escalators but older people find them difficult to use.

It is considered that buildings, including shops, should be located close to where older people live to enable them to have easy access to these services and facilities. Older people in Tuymazy appreciate living close to stores and markets. The clustering of businesses in Sherbrooke allows older people to do their transactions within a small radius of their homes.

10. Adequate public toilets

The availability of clean, conveniently located, well-signed, handicap-accessible toilets is generally regarded as an important age-friendly feature of the built environment. In Islamabad, appreciation is expressed for the recently introduced public toilets, which are increasing in number.

A number of barriers are identified in relation to public toilets. In Halifax, it is noted that the toilet doors are heavy. In Himeji, public toilets are small and not all are the type with seats. In La Plata, caregivers point out that there are no toilets accessible to people with disabilities.

11. Older customers

Good customer service that appreciates the needs of older people is considered to be an age-friendly feature. Preferential treatment is given to older people in Cancún, and in Jamaica, some businesses provide wheelchairs for older customers. In Mexico City, priority service is provided to older people by law. In Portland, an "elderly-friendly" business guide and audit system has been developed by a voluntary group.

One of the barriers identified in a number of cities is the long queues or waiting times older people face to be served. It is suggested that special service arrangements be made for older people, such as separate queues or service counters. Older people in Islamabad recommend giving older women priority in queues. In Sherbrooke, it is suggested that seats be placed in businesses, such as banks, where older people are required to wait.

Another barrier identified in some cities, including London and Tokyo, is the disappearance of the local shop or convenience store. With their closing, older people lose a potential source of social contact and are required to travel further to shop.

Age-friendly outdoor spaces and buildings checklist

Environment

- The city is clean, with enforced regulations limiting noise levels and unpleasant or harmful odours in public places.

Green spaces and walkways

- There are well-maintained and safe green spaces, with adequate shelter, toilet facilities and seating that can be easily accessed.
- Pedestrian-friendly walkways are free from obstructions, have a smooth surface, have public toilets and can be easily accessed.

Outdoor seating

- Outdoor seating is available, particularly in parks, transport stops and public spaces, and spaced at regular intervals; the seating is well-maintained and patrolled to ensure safe access by all.

Pavements

- Pavements are well-maintained, smooth, level, non-slip and wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs with low curbs that taper off to the road.
- Pavements are clear of any obstructions (e.g. street vendors, parked cars, trees, dog droppings, snow) and pedestrians have priority of use.

Roads

- Roads have adequate non-slip, regularly spaced pedestrian crossings ensuring that it is safe for pedestrians to cross the road.
- Roads have well-designed and appropriately placed physical structures, such as traffic islands, overpasses or underpasses, to assist pedestrians to cross busy roads.
- Pedestrian crossing lights allow sufficient time for older people to cross the road and have visual and audio signals.

Traffic

- There is strict enforcement of traffic rules and regulations, with drivers giving way to pedestrians.

Cycle paths

- There are separate cycle paths for cyclists.

Safety

- Public safety in all open spaces and buildings is a priority and is promoted by, for example, measures to reduce the risk from natural disasters, good street lighting, police patrols, enforcement of by-laws, and support for community and personal safety initiatives.

Services

- Services are clustered, located in close proximity to where older people live and can be easily accessed (e.g. are located on the ground floor of buildings).
- There are special customer service arrangements for older people, such as separate queues or service counters for older people.

Buildings

- Buildings are accessible and have the following features:
  - elevators
  - ramps
  - adequate signage
  - railings on stairs
  - stairs that are not too high or steep
  - non-slip flooring
  - rest areas with comfortable chairs
  - sufficient numbers of public toilets.

Public toilets

- Public toilets are clean, well-maintained, easily accessible for people with varying abilities, well-signed and placed in convenient locations.

Part 6. Transportation

Overview of findings

Transportation, including accessible and affordable public transport, is a key factor influencing active ageing. It is a theme running through many other areas of discussion. In particular, being able to move about the city determines social and civic participation and access to community and health services.

People consulted in the WHO project therefore have a lot to say on the topic, covering every aspect of infrastructure, equipment and service for all means of urban transportation.

> *For many older people, their lives are guided by the available transport system.*
>
> Service provider, Dundalk

1. Availability

Public transport services are said to be available in almost all of the cities, although not in all areas. Cities in developed countries and those with a transition economy (e.g. the Russian Federation) are more likely to indicate that their public transport system is well-developed or satisfactory. A range of transport services are available in many cities, including buses (private and public), trains, trams, trolleybuses, rickshaws (private and public), shuttle buses and minibuses, community (voluntary) transport services, services specifically for disabled or frail older people, taxis, and personal drivers. Yet in cities at all stages of development, there are gaps reported that need to be addressed to make the community more age-friendly.

2. Affordability

Cost is viewed as a significant factor affecting older people's use of public transport. In some cities, free or subsidized public transport for older people is said to be provided. Geneva reportedly offers free transport for someone accompanying an older person, and in Dundalk, people 75 years and older are entitled to a Companion Pass. In some cities, however, the cost of public transport is considered to be too expensive. Older people in Nairobi complain about the arbitrary price increases charged because of bad weather, public holidays and peak travel periods. Difficulties getting subsidized or free fares are mentioned. In Himeji, it is said that the eligibility age for the complimentary pass is too high, while in New Delhi, the application process for concession travel is considered to be cumbersome. In Rio de Janeiro, free transport is not provided to the older people who live in the favela, as public transport does not service this area. In Geneva, discounted travel can only be obtained if older people purchase a railway season ticket. Subsidized fares can-

not be used for private transport services in some cities, although in Dundalk, free travel passes are accepted on some private bus services.

People in some cities suggest that free transport or subsidized transport be provided or extended for older people. In Mexico City, it is suggested that free transport be provided for older people to attend specific events.

3. Reliability and frequency

Having frequent and reliable public transport services is identified as an age-friendly feature. Some older people, especially in developed countries, indicate that the frequency of their city transport services is good.

Nevertheless, there are a number of reports from cities at varying stages of development that public transport services are not frequent or reliable enough. In Istanbul, older people indicate that travelling by public transport takes a very long time as it is not frequent. In Melbourne, some areas are said to have no bus service from Saturday afternoon until Monday morning. In the Ruhr metropolitan area, older people consider that public transport to the outer areas of the city and at night is not frequent enough. In some cities, it is suggested that public transport be more frequent, particularly at night and at weekends.

In a few cities, such as Geneva, London, Moscow and Tokyo, people indicate that their public transport services are reliable but this is not always the case in other similarly developed cities. This was not an age-friendly feature reported in developing cities. In Amman, there is no fixed timetable for the buses, and in Islamabad, there is no fixed timetable for public service vehicles. In La Plata, the buses are unreliable as the routes are often changed.

4. Travel destinations

The ability to use public transport depends very much on being able to get to where you want to go. People in quite a few cities state that their public transport services provide good coverage of at least some areas, enabling people to get to their desired destination. But concern is expressed in other cities in both developed and developing countries about the adequacy of public transport routes; people complain that several areas of the city are not covered, or it is difficult to cross the entire city, or there are poor connections between buses and other means of transport. In addition, important destinations of older people are not well-served. For instance, the bus in Dundalk does not travel to one of the nursing homes, and in Mayaguez, there is limited transportation to the seniors' centres. In Tuymazy, access by public transport to public gardens is considered insufficient.

> *The thing with public transit, there are big holes ... if you want to go downtown you're in great shape, if you want to go across town you're going to have to struggle.*
>
> Older person, Portland

5. Age-friendly vehicles

Boarding and disembarking from vehicles is another major issue raised. A number of cities are reported to have some public transport vehicles that are modified to provide easier access for older people: in Shanghai, modified seating is provided; in Saanich, there are some accessible buses; and in Udaipur, a public bus service is starting soon with low-floor buses. In Geneva, some buses have raised platforms and low floors.

People commonly observe that the design of public transport vehicles presents barriers to older people. In Udine, for example, the older people say that it is difficult to use buses owing to the high steps on the buses, and in Ponce, buses are not adapted for wheelchair access.

Residents in a small number of cities also mention other features that discourage the use of public transport. In New Delhi, older people point out that the bus route numbers are not clearly displayed on public service buses. The service providers in Dundalk question the roadworthiness of some buses, and in La Plata, older people express concern about the deteriorated condition of some buses.

6. Specialized services for older people

Older people who have difficulties using public transport need to have specially adapted means of transport. These are mentioned as an age-friendly feature in some cities in developed countries, but in others there are few such options available. Recommendations are made to provide services for people with disabilities. For example, in Rio de Janeiro, caregivers mention that taxis are the only available means of transport for older people with disabilities, but that their wheelchairs cannot fit into the boot of the vehicle because the petrol tank is located there. In Mexico City, caregivers suggest the provision of adapted buses specifically for disabled people and their caregivers.

7. Priority seating and passenger courtesy

A few cities indicate that having priority seating on public transport for older people is an age-friendly feature and in some cities, such as Islamabad, passengers do respect the priority seating for older people. This courtesy is not common, however, and public education on courtesy in public transportation is recommended by, for example, older people in Moscow.

8. Transport drivers

In some cities, courteous transport drivers are described as an age-friendly feature facilitating the use of public transport. In many others, however, concern is expressed about the insensitivity of drivers, particularly bus drivers, towards older people.

One of the major concerns raised is that drivers do not wait for older people to be seated before starting off.

> *I can get on the bus but the minute the man takes off the bus rocks and I'm flat on my face.*
>
> Older person, Saanich

In Rio de Janeiro, it is pointed out that many middle class older people take a taxi or the metro rather than ride in a bus, because they are afraid of falling in a bus.

A particular problem identified in developing cities, such as Amman, is drivers' reluctance to pick up older people. In Delhi and Geneva, older people highlight the difficulties caused when bus drivers do not stop close enough to the curb to enable them to get on and off the bus safely. People in Dundalk mention that bus drivers stop at unmarked locations, which is often dangerous, particularly at road corners. In Geneva and Ponce, some bus drivers are said to be to be impolite.

Other identified barriers include careless driving and disregard for the rules of the road.

> *They drive like mad … with very loud music.*
>
> Older person, Mexico City

A final issue identified in a few developing cities is exploitation by drivers. For example, in New Delhi, some rickshaw drivers overcharge their passengers, and in Nairobi, fares are changed very arbitrarily.

Not surprisingly, in quite a few cities it is suggested that drivers should be educated to be sensitive to the needs of older people. The driver training programme that has been implemented in Sherbrooke is regarded as a benefit for older passengers.

In a small number of cities, it is suggested other transport staff, for example counter staff, should also be educated about the needs of older people and how this affects their use of transport services.

9. Safety and comfort

Whether or not people feel safe using public transport has a significant effect on their willingness to use these services. In a few cities, it is reported that public transport is safe. In Cancún it was mentioned that there is less crime on public transport services than in other cities, and in Melbourne and Moscow, public transport is deemed to be safe. Yet even in places where some people consider public transport safe to use, for example London, it is still suggested that steps be taken to further improve safety. In the many cities where reservations about the safety of public transport are expressed, the issues are theft or antisocial behaviour.

> *The main problem is getting on and off the buses. Which of your pockets are you going to control? While you are looking after your pocket, you see that your purse has gone.*
>
> Older person, Istanbul.

In many cities, crowded public transport, particularly during peak times (the "rush hour"), also presents safety issues for older people. This problem is more commonly identified in developing cities and in the Russian cities. For example, in Jamaica, pushing and shoving is reported to be a problem for older people at bus stops and on boarding buses. In Moscow, it is pointed out that crowding makes it difficult to breathe in the railway station.

A few developed cities, like Dundalk, Portland and Saanich, also mention difficulties related to overcrowded public transport.

> *You can't breathe on it [train from Dublin]. If you collapsed nobody would know – you're wedged up!*
>
> Older person, Dundalk

In Nairobi, older people note with satisfaction that overcrowding problems have significantly improved since the introduction of legislation, the Michuki Rules, to ensure the required seating capacity is not exceeded. In Tuymazy, providing more buses during peak times is suggested, while in Saanich, it is recommended that older people be encouraged to use public transport outside peak times.

10. Transport stops and stations

The design, location and condition of transport stops and stations are significant features as well. In Shanghai, older people and caregivers value the benches, shelter and lighting provided at some transport stops. In Ponce, the bus stops and terminal are kept in good condition. In Portland, convenient access to transport stops is viewed with satisfaction.

The location of transport stops presents some difficulties for older people. Problems are encountered in Melbourne when there are few bus stops and the distance between the stops is too great. In Melville, older people express concern about having to cross a major road to get to the bus stop. In Saanich, some older people mention that bus stops are too far from their homes.

In some cities, there are issues of safety at transport stops. In Moscow, it is reported that there are pickpockets in the crowds at the transport stops, and in Melbourne, there are complaints about vandalism at bus stops. In Melville, a programme by which children decorate bus stops is believed to have reduced vandalism.

In San José, the lack of shelter at transport stops is perceived as a disadvantage, as is the lack of seating at transport stops in Shanghai. In Tokyo, however, it is pointed out that placing benches at bus stops makes it difficult for people with disabilities to walk around them, because the streets are very narrow.

People in many cities consider that railway stations and bus terminals should be easy to get to and should have an age-friendly design with ramps, escalators, elevators, public toilets and clearly visible signage. In Tokyo, older people and caregivers value the lift that was installed in the metro station. In the Ruhr metropolitan region, older people consider the lack of facilities as the main railway station to be a barrier to transporting luggage and wheelchairs up to the platforms. In New Delhi, older people point out that the metro station is not located close to where they live and that signage at the station is inadequate.

11. Taxis

Taxi services are viewed as an age-friendly transportation option in a number of cities. In Cancún, taxis are considered to be affordable. In Dundalk, older people value the discounted fares provided by taxi services. In Melville, caregivers appreciate the government subsidy scheme for the use of taxis. In Halifax, it is said that some taxi drivers are very helpful to older people, and in Tripoli, it is reported that taxis provide a good and convenient service.

In other cities, barriers are identified in the use of taxis. Cost is one barrier and lack of disability access is another. In Portage la Prairie, caregivers are concerned that taxi drivers will not take wheelchair customers. In Halifax, the design of the taxi is a problem because there is no room to transport a walking frame. In Tuymazy, it is suggested that taxis should have large boots to accommodate wheelchairs.

12. Community transport

The availability of community transport services (i.e. free transportation provided by the voluntary or private sector) is considered to be an age-friendly service more often mentioned by people in developed than in developing cities. In Ponce, for example, there is free transportation provided by seniors' centres to attend medical appointments, and in Portage la Prairie community volunteer drivers and the shuttle service provided by grocery stores are valued services. In London, a suggested service is community transport with fully accessible buses and drivers trained to serve older people.

13. Information

In a few cities, there is mention of the importance of having information on transport options, on how to use transport services, and on timetables. In Portland, for example, programmes are provided to teach older people how to use public transport. In Melville, it is suggested that older people who can no longer drive be offered a course on how to use public transport. In Himeji, it is suggested that bus timetables indicate whether the bus is one that is accessible to people with disabilities. Older people in Tokyo identify the need for timetables to be in larger print and conveniently located.

14. Driving conditions

Driving as an essential transportation option for older people is discussed in a few locations. For example, it is observed that Melville is a city designed for cars, and in Himeji, cars are considered a necessity in the suburbs. In Ponce, cars are viewed as necessary because of the limited transport options available.

People in a few cities indicate that it is easy to drive around the city, a feature more likely to be mentioned by those in developed countries. In Portage la Prairie, the traffic is said to be light and driving easy. In Saanich, the older people appreciate the advance warnings of crossroads. In Tokyo, older people mention that the road signals and signs are easy to see. The streets of Tripoli are considered to be well-marked, and in Shanghai, the traffic management is viewed as good.

People in many more cities in countries at all stages of development report barriers to city driving. These include heavy traffic, poor condition of roads, ineffective traffic calming devices, inadequate street lighting, inadequate signage that is obscured or poorly positioned, and the disregard for traffic rules and regulations. For example, in Rio de Janeiro, the heavy traffic is viewed as a barrier. In Cancún the older people complain that the roads have holes and are generally in a bad condition. In Melville, concerns are raised about ineffective traffic calming devices such as roundabouts, which are either too small or are placed in inappropriate places. In Mayaguez, older people report that streets are not well-lit. In Halifax, the street signage is considered too small, too high and often obscured. Older people in Udine report that drivers do not respect traffic regulations. In Sherbrooke, other drivers are said to be often aggressive.

15. Courtesy towards older drivers

In addition to the barriers identified above, the disrespect shown to older drivers discourages a number of them.

> *I dislike driving. People curse you, make signs at you if you go slow. They are impolite.*
>
> Older person, Tripoli

In La Plata, it is stated that older drivers are abused because they drive too slowly. In Cancún, older people feel unsafe when driving owing to their own vision problems and the aggressive traffic. In Tuymazy, service providers comment that older people are not confident driving on the roads.

In some cities, such as Portage la Prairie, where driving is an essential transport option, concerns are raised about the difficulties that older people face when giving up their licences. To ensure older people are confident drivers, refresher courses are recommended in some cities such as including Geneva and Portland. The special lessons given to older people in Himeji when they need to renew their licence is viewed as an age-friendly advantage.

16. Parking

Priority parking bays for older and handicapped people in close proximity to buildings, together with drop-off and pick-up bays, were seen as age-friendly features. In Amman, older people value the bays for the handicapped provided by stores. In Dundalk, free parking is appreciated. In Portage la Prairie, the large car park is considered an age-friendly asset for drivers.

In many cities, however, inadequate and costly parking facilities are identified as barriers for older people. Other problems are mentioned too. In Mayaguez, it is said that there are not enough drop-off and pick-up points for older people with disabilities, while in Portage la Prairie, it is pointed out that the parking bays are not wide enough for loading wheelchairs. In Saanich, the lack of handicap parking bays is raised as an issue. In Melbourne, concern is expressed about the inability to find parking close to buildings. One other concern expressed is the lack of respect for priority handicap parking bays.

> *They make disabled bays that are totally and utterly ignored.*
>
> Older person, London

Age-friendly transportation checklist

Affordability

- Public transportation is affordable to all older people.
- Consistent and well-displayed transportation rates are charged.

Reliability and frequency

- Public transport is reliable and frequent (including services at night and at weekends).

Travel destinations

- Public transport is available for older people to reach key destinations such as hospitals, health centres, public parks, shopping centres, banks and seniors' centres.
- All areas are well-serviced with adequate, well-connected transport routes within the city (including the outer areas) and between neighbouring cities.
- Transport routes are well-connected between the various transport options.

Age-friendly vehicles

- Vehicles are accessible, with floors that lower, low steps, and wide and high seats.
- Vehicles are clean and well-maintained.
- Vehicles have clear signage indicating the vehicle number and destination.

Specialized services

- Sufficient specialized transport services are available for people with disabilities.

Priority seating

- Priority seating for older people is provided, and is respected by other passengers.

Transport drivers

- Drivers are courteous, obey traffic rules, stop at designated transport stops, wait for passengers to be seated before driving off, and park alongside the curb so that it is easier for older people to step off the vehicle.

Safety and comfort

- Public transport is safe from crime and is not overcrowded.

Transport stops and stations

- Designated transport stops are located in close proximity to where older people live, are provided with seating and with shelter from the weather, are clean and safe, and are adequately lit.
- Stations are accessible, with ramps, escalators, elevators, appropriate platforms, public toilets, and legible and well-placed signage.
- Transport stops and stations are easy to access and are located conveniently.
- Station staff are courteous and helpful.

Information

- Information is provided to older people on how to use public transport and about the range of transport options available.
- Timetables are legible and easy to access.
- Timetables clearly indicate the routes of buses accessible to disabled people.

Community transport

- Community transport services, including volunteer drivers and shuttle services, are available to take older people to specific events and places.

Taxis

- Taxis are affordable, with discounts or subsidized taxi fares provided for older people with low incomes.
- Taxis are comfortable and accessible, with room for wheelchairs and/or walking frames.
- Taxi drivers are courteous and helpful.

Roads

- Roads are well-maintained, wide and well-lit, have appropriately designed and placed traffic calming devices, have traffic signals and lights at intersections, have intersections that are clearly marked, have covered drains, and have consistent, clearly visible and well-placed signage.
- The traffic flow is well-regulated.
- Roads are free of obstructions that might block a driver's vision.
- The rules of the road are strictly enforced and drivers are educated to follow the rules.

Driving competence

- Refresher driving courses are provided and promoted.

Parking

- Affordable parking is available.
- Priority parking bays are provided for older people close to buildings and transport stops.
- Priority parking bays for disabled people are provided close to buildings and transport stops, the use of which are monitored.
- Drop-off and pick-up bays close to buildings and transport stops are provided for handicapped and older people.

Part 7. Housing

Overview of findings

Housing is essential to safety and well-being. Not surprisingly, people consulted by WHO in all regions have much to say on different aspects of housing structure, design, location and choice. There is a link between appropriate housing and access to community and social services in influencing the independence and quality of life of older people. It is clear that housing and support that allow older people to age comfortably and safely within the community to which they belong are universally valued.

1. Affordability

There is general agreement among the cities that the cost of housing is a major factor influencing where older people live and their quality of life. While in some cities the cost of housing, including rent, is considered to be affordable, in others housing is regarded as expensive, making it difficult for older people to move to more appropriate housing.

> *I have my retirement salary but how can I live with this little money? It comes into my house and it goes away in a few seconds.*
>
> Older person, Istanbul

For example, in Geneva it is reported that some older people are living in houses that are too big for them but, because they are pensioners, they cannot afford to move. Similarly, in Tuymazy, it is stated that the cost of moving house is too expensive and not possible for retirees. Free or low-cost public housing is regarded as a definite age-friendly advantage in some cities, such as London. In other cities, such as Islamabad, the lack of low-income housing is seen as a barrier. The need to have information about subsidized housing is highlighted in Portage la Prairie.

> *I've got a terraced house, council, rent-free. I love it.*
>
> Older person, London

In cities in countries at all stages of development, it is recommended that affordable housing be available for older person. Ideas include a lower level of tax on housing for older people in Amman, and having a housing subsidy for public and private housing in Himeji.

2. Essential services

In a small number of cities, essential services are found to be inadequate or very expensive. In Islamabad, houses in low-income areas have no electricity, gas or water supply. In Moscow, the public utility services are considered to be expensive. In Dundalk and Istanbul, older people are concerned by the high costs of heating and think that the government should assist with heating costs. In Jamaica, older people on a low income find it difficult to pay the high utility costs and suggest that these costs should be reduced.

> *When they send me the water bill it costs me $1000. I can't afford it so I don't use the shower and sometimes there is no water.*
>
> Older person, Jamaica

In Rio de Janeiro, older people value the improvements that have been made in water, sanitation and electricity services, and in Istanbul, the older people appreciate the good water supply.

3. Design

Several aspects of housing design are considered to affect the ability of older people to live comfortably at home. In general, it is considered important for older people to live in accommodation that is built from adequate materials and structurally sound; has even surfaces; has an elevator if it is multi-level accommodation; has appropriate bathroom and kitchen facilities; is large enough to move about in; has adequate storage space; has passages and doorways large enough to accommodate a wheelchair; and is appropriately equipped to meet the ambient environmental conditions.

Problems with housing construction are mentioned in a few cities. In Mexico City, people identify the need for supervised construction to ensure that the housing is structurally sound. Poverty is said to result in poorly constructed or maintained housing in Istanbul, and in Nairobi, the lack of available construction materials is a source of concern. In Islamabad, some housing is not earthquake-proof.

A number of structural features are identified as barriers. Home layout that impedes mobility is a problem identified in Dundalk. In La Plata, stairs and uneven floors are experienced as barriers. In Moscow, the need for purpose-built bathrooms and toilets for older people is reported. In New Delhi, it is considered that kitchens need to be better designed. In Mexico City, the need to have railings and elevators in multi-level buildings is mentioned, and people in Tokyo point out the need for passages and doorways to accommodate wheelchairs.

In a small number of cities, housing is not appropriately equipped for the weather conditions. In particular, air-conditioning is a reported need in Cancún and in some areas of Melville, where the roof design of new houses makes it hotter inside.

In many cities, there is recognition of the measures that have been taken to improve housing design to accommodate older people. In Mexico City, for example, 1% of all houses built must be suitable for older people. In Halifax, some condominiums are age-friendly and have access ramps, elevators, parking, gym facilities and wide doorways.

Nevertheless, people frequently feel that more needs to be done to ensure housing is appropriate for older people. In Himeji, more age-friendly housing is recommended, while in Melbourne, incentives to encourage architects and property developers to build age-friendly housing are suggested. People in New Delhi recommend that age-friendly features be incorporated into building by-laws. In Saanich, builders include adapted or adaptable features into their plans, such as lower placement of light switches, installation of showers rather than bathtubs, and stairways that can be converted to accommodate a chairlift.

4. Modifications

The ability to modify one's house or apartment also affects the ability of older people to continue to live comfortably at home. Caregivers in Dundalk appreciate the chairlifts that were installed to assist older people. In Mayaguez, apartments for disabled older people have the adaptations required. In a small number of cities, such as Himeji and Dundalk, financial assistance is provided for home modifications.

A number of difficulties are identified in relation to home modifications. In Halifax, retrofitting a home is considered to be expensive and difficult. Restrictions on the remodelling of public housing are mentioned in Himeji and New Delhi. In Portland, rented accommodation that has been remodelled is required to be returned to its original state. In Melbourne, it is pointed out that assistance equipment is not used because it does not fit into the home and many caregivers are unable to afford the necessary renovations. In Sherbrooke, the need to adapt housing for specific conditions is mentioned.

Besides identifying the need to ensure older people are aware of the possible options for modifying their homes, it is suggested in many cities that older people need to be able to obtain the necessary equipment. In Tuymazy, caregivers identify their need for information on different types of equipment and possible adaptations and on equipment that is easy to obtain. In Udaipur, difficulties in obtaining hand rails, ramps and toilets are mentioned.

5. Maintenance

Being unable to maintain one's home is as a major barrier for some older people. In Cancún, older people say they are unable to make repairs owing to the cost involved. In Melbourne, they are likewise concerned about costs of maintenance and suggest that the local municipality provide a home maintenance service for a nominal fee. In Rio de Janeiro, the high cost of condominium maintenance fees is considered to be a

barrier, although it is pointed out that it is possible to sublet condominiums to assist with the cost of the maintenance fees.

In Dundalk, the older people value the grants provided for home repairs but complain about difficulties in organizing the service people to undertake the repairs.

> *Went away in the middle of it and didn't come back for months to finish it.*
>
> Older person, Dundalk

In Melville, concern is raised about having strangers coming into the home to do maintenance work, and it is suggested that the local municipality maintain a list of dependable repair services that are prepared to deal with older people. In Portland, caregivers appreciate the system used for screening contractors and other repair and maintenance services.

Problems are also identified regarding the maintenance provided in public housing and rented accommodation. In London, concern is raised about repairs not being done in a timely manner. In Tripoli, older people indicate that landlords purposely neglect maintenance so that the older people leave. In Delhi, it is reported that common areas like staircases are often neglected, dirty and dark.

Nevertheless, staff in collective dwellings, such as concierges and caretakers, sometimes play an important role in ensuring well-being. In Geneva, the older people mentioned the importance of the concierge in establishing contact among residents and taking care of repairs.

6. Access to services

The provision of services to older people in their homes is particularly important. In Udine, it is stated that older people do not consider moving house. In Tuymazy, the service providers similarly indicate that older people are very attached to their homes and do not want to move. In Saanich, receiving home assistance is considered preferable to moving house.

In a few cities, difficulty in obtaining services at home, including their cost, is considered a disadvantage. In the Ruhr metropolitan region, services such as cleaning and gardening are seen to be scarce and expensive. Older people in Saanich report that there are not enough cleaning and gardening services available.

Living close to services and facilities is also seen as an age-friendly feature. This is more commonly mentioned by people in cities in developed countries, such as Melville, Portage La Prairie and Tokyo. In San José, older people valued living in close proximity to public, commercial and religious services. In a number of cities, such as Nairobi, Udaipur and Udine, not living in close proximity to such services is seen as a problem.

Nevertheless, caution is also expressed about remaining at home and being unable to look after oneself adequately. In Mexico City, the need to educate older people about the risks of living at home is raised, and in Saanich, the idea is advanced on providing information on home services for older people by publishing a directory of home support services

7. Community and family connections

Familiar surroundings, whereby people feel part of the local community, contribute to the age-friendliness of a city. For this reason, older people are reluctant to move. In Udine, older people mention they have a kind of "psychological safety" in their environment. In Tripoli, older people highlight the importance of their neighbours. In Dundalk, service providers recognize the need to locate new homes close to where older people have lived in order to retain links with family and the community. In Himeji, concern is expressed that older people lose their connection with the community when they move to another facility.

Changes to the city affect these feelings of familiarity with the community. In Tokyo, the lack of personal contact with neighbours that results from the development of high-rise buildings is regarded as an age-friendly barrier. In Sherbrooke, older people express concern about the lack of multigenerational spaces for interaction. In Geneva, the lack of contact with younger people in apartment buildings is seen as a disadvantage. In Udaipur, caregivers are concerned that modern flats without front verandas leave no room for community interaction. The importance of design that facilitates community interaction is mentioned in Dundalk as well, where it is suggested that houses should overlook communal facilities to reduce the sense of isolation.

8. Housing options

A range of housing options in the local area to accommodate changing needs is regarded as an important age-friendly feature. In some cities, there are a number of such housing options. In Melville, for example, older people have the choice of moving into smaller accommodation, seniors' housing or care facilities. In many locations, however, the need for more housing options for older people is stressed. In Halifax, for example, it was mentioned that some older people were concerned about not being able to find accommodation in their local area and did not have good knowledge about the housing options in their area.

In some cities, dedicated seniors' housing options are provided. In Melville, seniors' housing complexes provide a range of services, amenities and activities.

> *You've got a lot of social activities, you can be busy the whole time or you can just close your door and not join in, it's your choice.*
>
> Older person, Melville

Dedicated seniors' housing seems to be in short supply in many cities and waiting times can be long, as mentioned in Halifax and Himeji. Seniors' housing also needs to be affordable to be age-friendly. Older people in Saanich express concern about the cost of seniors' housing. There is also a clearly expressed preference in a few cities for seniors' housing to be integrated into the local community. In Melville, it is suggested that small clusters of seniors' housing with small gardens be made available throughout the city, so that older people are not isolated from the community and particularly from children. In Portland, the need for multigenerational housing is identified. In the Ruhr metropolitan region and Sherbrooke, concern is expressed about creating ghettos of older people in large seniors' housing complexes.

9. Living environment

It is important for older people to have sufficient space and privacy at home. In a handful of developing cities and in Tuymazy, overcrowding is identified as a barrier for older people. In Delhi, for example, as the average family size has increased houses have become overcrowded and older people do not have sufficient space. In San José, overcrowding has resulted from the high housing costs that forces family members to live together.

Feeling safe in the home environment is another theme. In many cities, older people feel insecure and particularly fear living alone. Measures have been taken in some cities to improve the security in older people's homes. In Dundalk, for example, surveillance cameras are used in some homes; in Geneva, there is secure access to apartment buildings; in Saanich, older people are provided with free home security checks; and in Shanghai, there is a local security patrol. In Himeji, some apartments have emergency call monitoring devices to keep older people safe.

Nevertheless, there is an expressed need for more to be done to ensure that older people feel secure at home. In Udaipur, more information about home security is recommended, and in Saanich, it is suggested that emergency alarms be installed.

In some cities, the homes of older people are not located in environments that are safe from natural disasters. In La Plata, some homes are in flood-prone areas, and in Islamabad, older people are concerned about earthquakes.

Age-friendly housing checklist

Affordability

- Affordable housing is available for all older people.

Essential services

- Essential services are provided that are affordable to all.

Design

- Housing is made of appropriate materials and well-structured.
- There is sufficient space to enable older people to move around freely.
- Housing is appropriately equipped to meet environmental conditions (e.g. appropriate air-conditioning or heating).
- Housing is adapted for older people, with even surfaces, passages wide enough for wheelchairs, and appropriately designed bathrooms, toilets and kitchens.

Modifications

- Housing is modified for older people as needed.
- Housing modifications are affordable.
- Equipment for housing modifications is readily available.
- Financial assistance is provided for home modifications.
- There is a good understanding of how housing can be modified to meet the needs of older people.

Maintenance

- Maintenance services are affordable for older people.
- There are appropriately qualified and reliable service providers to undertake maintenance work.
- Public housing, rented accommodation and common areas are well-maintained.

Ageing in place

- Housing is located close to services and facilities.
- Affordable services are provided to enable older people to remain at home, to "age in place".
- Older people are well-informed of the services available to help them age in place.

Community integration

- Housing design facilitates continued integration of older people into the community.

Housing options

- A range of appropriate and affordable housing options is available for older people, including frail and disabled older people, in the local area.
- Older people are well-informed of the available housing options.
- Sufficient and affordable housing dedicated to older people is provided in the local area.
- There is a range of appropriate services and appropriate amenities and activities in older people's housing facilities.
- Older people's housing is integrated in the surrounding community.

Living environment

- Housing is not overcrowded.
- Older people are comfortable in their housing environment.
- Housing is not located in areas prone to natural disasters.
- Older people feel safe in the environment they live in.
- Financial assistance is provided for housing security measures.

Part 8. Social participation

Overview of findings

Social participation and social support are strongly connected to good health and well-being throughout life. Participating in leisure, social, cultural and spiritual activities in the community, as well as with the family, allows older people to continue to exercise their competence, to enjoy respect and esteem, and to maintain or establish supportive and caring relationships. It fosters social integration and is the key to staying informed. Yet the older people consulted by WHO indicate clearly that the capacity to participate in formal and informal social life depends not only on the offer of activities, but also on having adequate access to transportation and facilities and on getting information about activities.

> *When I see my group colleagues, I feel very well.*
>
> Older person, Mexico City

In most cities, older people report that they participate actively in their communities but feel there could be more possibilities for participation. They suggest having more and varied activities closer to where they live. They would like activities that foster integration within the community and with other age groups and cultures. The biggest concerns are affordability and accessibility, especially for people with disabilities, and awareness of activities and events. Having appropriate support in place to enable accessibility, particularly for people with mobility issues, is important everywhere, and even more so in developing countries and those with economies in transition.

1. Accessible opportunities

Older people may be aware of events and activities that exist in their community, but in the experience of many participants in the project these activities are inaccessible. Personal safety, particularly at night, is mentioned as one barrier in both developed and developing cities, including Halifax, La Plata, London and Rio de Janeiro. In many cities, the locations are too distant and transportation is difficult. Another common problem is the accessibility of the buildings, especially for people with impaired mobility, and the lack of adequate facilities such as toilets, appropriate seating or smoke-free air. Another barrier mentioned is restricted admission, such as the requirement to be a member of an organization.

> *They [older people with disabilities] find it difficult to adjust as there are no proper arrangements for their sitting, toilet, etc. Recreation for most of them would be talking to their friends or relatives on the phone or occasional visits.*
>
> Caregiver, New Delhi

Efforts in several cities to accommodate older people are recognized by the older people themselves and those who interact

with them. The municipal government in Mayaguez reportedly organizes a variety of activities at hours that are suitable for older people and provides transportation. An older person in Geneva notes that amenities are provided for people who are hard of hearing. The availability of community transport is reported from both Melbourne and Melville, conveniently located activities from Portland, and convenient timing of events and activities from Tripoli. Participants in Dundalk suggest that allowing older people to bring a friend to events would help them participate.

2. Affordable activities

Activities that are free or at least affordable facilitate participation by older adults. The cost of activities is a frequently mentioned problem, especially in cities in developing countries and those with economies in transition. In some areas, a variety of options exist only for people with adequate incomes, and recreation and leisure activities are only available to the rich. Participants in Islamabad note, however, that participation in activities is affordable. Rio de Janeiro offers many free leisure activities, and Mexico City has free or low-cost cultural events. In Dundalk, Geneva and London, it is mentioned that because of high insurance costs, non-profit organizations are obliged to charge prices for activities that they know may discourage participation.

3. Range of opportunities

The existence of a variety of opportunities that interest a broad range of older people encourages more participation. Many cities offer activities in major urban centres, but fewer opportunities exist for people who live outside those centres. There may also be fewer options for people who are frail or disabled. Sometimes the schedules of activities are rigid and older people need to make a choice between meeting their personal needs, such as a regular nap in the afternoon, and participating in an activity. Locations where activities do occur may not appeal to older people because of noise levels or an emphasis on youth programmes. A variety of both targeted and integrated activities provides a broad and diverse range of choice for more people. The range can include organized events such as those in Himeiji, which are targeted to people over 80. In Jamaica, older people mention sporting events in which older people can compete at various levels. Portage La Prairie offers communal meals and social contact as part of the attraction. Outdoor activities, such as a walk in a garden in Nairobi and a fine-weather stroll in Moscow, are seen as simple and low cost ways of encouraging social participation

It is reported from Udine that buildings are offered to older people for activities such as theatre, clubs, and Third Age University. In Tuymazy, there is a chess club, a historical re-enactment society and a club for the over-60s. Participants from Cancún say they enjoy a “golden age” club, craft classes at the local monastery, and talks, music and dancing. All of the larger cities in the developed regions, and the majority of cities in the developing countries, are said to offer a variety of activities.

Religious activities and socializing within faith communities is an important form of participation for older people in most of the cities. Older people may be well-known and esteemed within their local faith community. These communities are usually welcoming and inclusive too, facilitating participation by people who may be at risk of becoming isolated. It is reported from Halifax, for example, that churches contribute to older people's lives through activities such as card games, group meals, drives to church, and outreach to isolated people. In Islamabad, it is noted that going to mosque more than once a day contributes to social participation.

> *At church we are listened to because of our experience. People look up to us.*
>
> Older person, Jamaica

Cultural, educational and traditional activities also remain important to older people in many locations. Continuing education through Third Age Universities or through courses at local community or seniors' centres provides ongoing engagement and learning. Going to weddings and funerals are opportunities to socialize. Older people in Islamabad report enjoying frequent traditional events such as weddings.

4. Awareness of activities and events

Several participants point out that older people need to know about activities and opportunities in order to participate.

> *I think where it falls down is on awareness – people knowing about what options are out there.*
>
> Service provider, Saanich

In Dundalk, it is reported that organizations promote their activities by sending information to older people before they retire. People who attend religious services and other scheduled activities regularly tend to hear about other activities through word of mouth. In San José, occupational associations promote their activities. A service provider in Shanghai suggests more older people can be engaged if there is enough publicity to attract participants.

5. Encouraging participation and addressing isolation

A consistent message from cities around the world is that social participation is easier when the opportunities are close to home and there are many of them. People in La Plata are dissatisfied with the lack of community centres in all neighbourhoods, and in Udaipur, it is suggested that community centres be provided within distances that are walkable for older people. Participants in Dundalk and Shanghai advise using facilities in the community, such as schools and recreation centres, for all community members, including older people. This suggestion is echoed in Islamabad: a greater variety of leisure time activities in more locations.

Concerted efforts to encourage and motivate older people to participate can sometimes make the difference between participation and isolation. Many people who are involved with groups and clubs for older people are very satisfied with their activities. However, some people express reluctance to join associations and clubs for a variety of reasons: they may not know anyone, they may feel that they have to associate with a particular political view, or they find that the activities of that club are not appealing.

> *Older people are reluctant to do anything. Many were asked to join the club and refused.*
>
> Service provider, Himeji

Various reasons are given to explain why isolated older people find it more difficult to associate with others. Their social contacts have become eroded after the death of their spouse and then gradually other family members and friends. Their health may be declining, limiting their ability to participate. Owing to societal changes, more women are in the workforce and are therefore not at home during the day to visit older people. Outreach to isolated older people in their homes provides a social connection and a way of encouraging them to participate. In both Melbourne and Shanghai, it is reported that organizations take the initiative to seek out older people and invite them to activities.

> *I think there are lots of opportunities if people are connected and have someone to go with, but I think we can hear from the lonely people and the marginalized through organizations to rebuild social networks or make some connections.*
>
> Service provider, Halifax

Caregivers, many of whom are older people themselves, are particularly vulnerable to feeling isolated because their world is so centred on the person for whom they care. Participants suggest more programmes and options whereby older people with disabilities can socialize outside the home without requiring the presence of their caregiver. Provision of day programmes and respite options are suggested as ways of helping older caregivers and their charges to continue to connect with society.

> *Few men participate; they do not accept their age and/or they feel uncomfortable surrounded by so many women.*
>
> Older person, Cancún

The lack of social participation by men is raised in several cities, including Cancún and Geneva. In some cities, nevertheless, there are activities intended to appeal to men: in Melville, for example, there is a "Men's Shed" offering activities for men of various ages. Older people in Istanbul mention that mosques are good places for men to participate in society. Participants in Mexico City suggest more activities specifically for men, such as workshops or playing dominos or cards.

Some older people choose not to participate, and respect for those who prefer to disengage is advised by participants in Portland.

6. Integrating generations, cultures and communities

Older people want opportunities to socialize and integrate with other age groups and cultures in their communities, activities and families.

> *Older people feel they can participate in different areas and with people of all ages, depending on the personal initiative and desire.*
>
> La Plata, Argentina

Intergenerational activities are considered to be more desirable than activities for older people alone. These opportunities can be provided by sharing spaces and facilities, such as in Saanich, where a seniors' centre is located in an unused part of an elementary school. In Ponce, some activities involve older people in school settings. Programmes provided at community and recreation centres are suggested for encouraging participation by people of different ages and levels of ability.

If older people are unable to participate in activities outside of their homes, watching television remains their only source of leisure and connection with society. The need to integrate options for all generations and ages is reflected in the concerns of older people in some cities about the poor range of programming choices available on television, with little that appeals to them.

> *TV viewing is one option, but the kinds of programmes that are being dished out these days on TV are not meant for family audiences.*
>
> Older person, Udaipur

Older people in many areas want to participate in their families in a meaningful way. In Amman, for example, older people state that they do not want to be isolated from their families. However, families may not give enough consideration to older people, especially if there are expectations for grandparents to care for grandchildren or if there is little time to devote to activities with or for an older family member.

Better integration of generations is seen as a way to counter ageism in society, which can also mar older people's experience when participating, or even discourage their participation. Older people express the desire for more public education about their experiences and the reality of aging, and consider that other generations would be more patient and respectful if they understood each other better.

Intergenerational opportunities enrich the experience for all ages. Older people pass on traditional practices and knowledge and experiences, while younger people offer information about newer practices and help older people navigate in a rapidly changing society. Older people in Nairobi are engaged in traditional dances and skills, enabling them to pass that knowledge to others.

> *[Older people] are a source of "lived tradition".*
>
> Caregiver, Nairobi

The constitution and design of a neighbourhood can encourage the integration of people from various backgrounds, ages and cultures. Many neighbourhoods in cities around the world are changing. Younger people may not live in the same neighbourhood as their older family members. People may not have the same neighbours throughout their lifetimes, and many cities have growing populations of immigrants who may not share the same language and background as the majority population.

> *Villages became empty. They moved to the cities. Now the villagers become older in cities.*
>
> Older person, Istanbul

An open and welcoming neighbourhood in the Ruhr metropolitan region provides a basis for newcomers to integrate. Newcomers in cities around the world are at risk of becoming isolated, and older people in this project recognize the need to better integrate their activities to encourage more participation by people from other places and cultures.

> *I wish there were a way to foster more multicultural community activities in neighbourhoods where there's a diverse population.*
>
> Older person, Portland

> *The solution must be for older residents to strive to accept new residents as their companions. Also, it will be good for neighbours to exchange greetings among themselves.*
>
> Older person, Tokyo

Age-friendly social participation checklist

Accessibility of events and activities

- The location is convenient to older people in their neighbourhoods, with affordable, flexible transportation.
- Older people have the option of participating with a friend or caregiver.
- Times of events are convenient for older people during the day.
- Admission to an event is open (e.g. no membership required) and admission, such as ticket purchasing, is a quick, one-stop process that does not require older people to queue for a long time.

Affordability

- Events and activities and local attractions are affordable for older participants, with no hidden or additional costs (such as transportation costs).
- Voluntary organizations are supported by the public and private sectors to keep the costs of activities for older people affordable.

Range of events and activities

- A wide variety of activities is available to appeal to a diverse population of older people, each of whom has many potential interests.
- Community activities encourage the participation of people of different ages and cultural backgrounds

Facilities and settings

- Gatherings, including older people, occur in a variety of community locations, such as recreation centres, schools, libraries, community centres in residential neighbourhoods, parks and gardens.
- Facilities are accessible and equipped to enable participation by people with disabilities or by those who require care.

Promotion and awareness of activities

- Activities and events are well-communicated to older people, including information about the activity, its accessibility and transportation options.

Addressing isolation

- Personal invitations are sent to promote activities and encourage participation.
- Events are easy to attend, and no special skills (including literacy) are required.
- A club member who no longer attends activities is kept on the club's mailing and telephone lists unless the member asks to be taken off.
- Organizations make efforts to engage isolated seniors through, for example, personal visits or telephone calls.

Fostering community integration

- Community facilities promote shared and multipurpose use by people of different ages and interests and foster interaction among user groups.
- Local gathering places and activities promote familiarity and exchange among neighbourhood residents.

Part 9. Respect and social inclusion

Overview of findings

Older people report experiencing conflicting types of behaviour and attitudes towards them. On the one hand, many feel they are often respected, recognized and included, while on the other, they experience lack of consideration in the community, in services and in the family. This clash is explained in terms of a changing society and behavioural norms, lack of contact between generations, and widespread ignorance about ageing and older people. It is clear from the consultation that the respect and social inclusion of older people depend on more than societal change: factors such as culture, gender, health status and economic status play a large role. The extent to which older people participate in the social, civic and economic life of the city is also closely linked to their experience of inclusion.

1. Respectful and disrespectful behaviour

Project participants primarily comment on the behaviour of people towards them that shows respect and courtesy, or the opposite. As a whole, older people are respected in the cities that have been studied: most of the older people and other participants in the focus groups recall the respect and kindness expressed in everyday life towards older adults.

> *You walk down the street and people smile at you, you go into a shop and you're served, the kids even say hello to you even if they don't know you.*
>
> Older person, Melbourne

In Jamaica and in Ponce, for example, older people feel they are given priority service in businesses and public places. In Islamabad and Moscow, it is said that people give up their seats on buses to older adults. Examples of age-friendly services are mentioned in some cities: in Portage la Prairie, ballot papers are taken to the homes of older people who are unable to go to polling stations, and headsets are provided in churches for people with hearing impairments. In Mexico City, there is mention of a bank whose employees are trained to treat older people well, and at the end of each month time is reserved exclusively to serve older people. It is also reported that in some businesses in Jamaica, older people can sit and wait to be served directly by employees assigned to the sitting areas. Also, in Tokyo, older people note that businesses treat them well because most customers are older. In addition, older people feel particularly respected and included in seniors' clubs. It is also noted that when older people themselves are respectful and pleasant, they often receive the same response from others.

Nevertheless, participants in several cities also report disrespectful behaviour towards older people. People are seen to be impatient with older people who are slower doing things, and rude gestures are made towards older drivers. In Sherbrooke, they feel they are treated like children. Older adults in Amman also feel they are criticized by young people for their different clothes and way of talking. Some young people are said to lack good manners (Tokyo and Udine), not to give up their seats on buses (Portland) and to be verbally or physically aggressive towards older people (Halifax, New Delhi and San José).

> *They look at you as if your "use-by" date has passed and they don't want to serve you.*
>
> Older person, Melville

Commercial and professional services are also said to be disrespectful or inconsiderate of older people's needs in some cities. A caregiver in Amman noted that food in restaurants is not suitable for older people. Poor service in shops is noted in Melville. In La Plata and Mayaguez, banks clerks and employees in public agencies are said to not listen to the needs and complaints of older people. In San José, the example is given of doctors having their prescriptions prepared even before seeing older patients. Other concerns about service providers are expressed in, for instance, Nairobi, Ponce and Saanich.

> *Some old people keep going from one office to another without getting the information they are looking for because nobody takes time and has the courtesy to listen to them.*
>
> Service provider, Mayaguez

Suggestions for promoting age-friendly services focus on training service providers to understand how they can better respond to the needs of older people.

2. Ageism and ignorance

In a society that glorifies youth and change in its popular imagery, the common negative images of age and ageing are often evoked to explain disrespectful behaviour. Among the ageist biases reported, older people are considered to be useless, less intelligent, stingy and a burden. As a group, there is a perception in developed countries that they are demanding and a drain on public resources. Older people who are ill or who have disabilities are more likely than those who are healthy to be viewed negatively.

> *You are far more respected if you are healthy and not dependent on anyone, even by your own child.*
>
> Older person, Tripoli

Disrespectful behaviour and ageism are believed to result from ignorance of good manners in some cities, the impersonality of large and growing cities, the lack of interaction between generations, and the general lack of public knowledge about

ageing and older people. In Melbourne and New Delhi, it is also recognized that there is a gap between contemporary norms of individualism and the expectations of older people.

3. Intergenerational interactions and public education

> *There is a big disadvantage today … kids don't have that privilege, getting to be with old people … it pays an awful price.*
>
> Older person, Portland

In nearly all the cities in the project, participants underlined the great need to facilitate and organize encounters between the generations, such as: working together; participating in intergenerational planned events; older people participating in civic or historical education at school, or taking care of children in public spaces; and young people helping of old people on a voluntary basis. Every solution that promotes intergenerational activities is welcomed in most cities. In Geneva, older people mention that they themselves should take the first step in meeting the younger generation.

A common view is that public awareness about ageing and its issues is greatly lacking, and that education about ageing should begin early and extend to all groups in society.

> *What you run into is the attitude towards seniors that needs to be readjusted. I find that's the biggest problem, and I don't know how to educate younger people to respect seniors.*
>
> Older person, Portage la Prairie

Many express the opinion that community education should begin in primary school, so that people learn cultural values and to appreciate older people. In the view of participants, education about ageing should include acquiring some understanding of the difficulties caused by physical aging and common impairments. As stated in Jamaica, people would be able to prepare themselves for that period of life by means of such education. Almost all of the focus groups insist on the importance of inculcating respect for older adults; in Udaipur, summer camps concentrating on social values are suggested as a way to do this. Education about ageing through age-friendly advertising in the media is proposed as well; examples are given in Melville of a television programme showing a young person relating to an older person, or of newspapers writing profiles of local older people who have done a lot for the community. Advertisements and posters with attractive depictions of ageing are also mentioned, as well as presentations of older people in realistic and non-caricatured ways.

4. Place within the community

> *We don't listen to the voices of the elderly in our societies.*
>
> Caregiver, Sherbrooke

The role that older people play in the community contributes to the respect and inclusion they enjoy. In a few cities, such as Moscow and Tokyo, it is reported that they still maintain an active local leadership role and have an impact on public decisions. More often, however, participants talk about the loss of these leadership responsibilities, and even reluctance to listen to advice from older people, as reported in Melville. In Mayaguez, participants note that the community is no longer used to taking older people's opinions into account, and now even decisions concerning older people are taken without consulting them.

Social engagement by older people positively contributes to their esteem in the community. Older people seem to be very often involved in volunteer services, in which they may play an active role, as in Halifax and Melbourne. Some jobs are reserved for older people, such as in the supermarkets in Cancún. In Himeji, a programme called "Ask Older People" is cited as an example of age-friendly inclusion: this programme involves older people in activities in which they have experience, such as gardening, organizing events or talking at elementary schools. In Saanich, programmes that connect older people with schools are reported.

> *We rely on … the elderly as volunteers and we certainly value their opinion and their input.*
>
> *Service provider, Saanich*

Older adults are sometimes on committees and boards of associations and organizations, although in Sherbrooke it is said that they still need to be better represented in these areas. A point that is often raised is that older people, their capacities and their life experience have to be trusted and used in decision-making. Their resources have to be valued by the community, as suggested in Dundalk and Mexico City. Service providers in Portland add that older people can be important eyes and ears of a community.

5. Helpfulness of the community

> *You know, people know one another, it's not a big city. And this is it, when you know one another, you help one another.*
>
> Older person, Portage la Prairie

Many comments concern the helpfulness of people in the city towards older people and the reasons why communities are more or less inclusive. Smaller communities, where people have lived for a long time and know each other, are seen to be friendlier and more inclusive: examples are Dundalk, Portage la Prairie and the Copacabana district of Rio de Janeiro.

> *People would notice if you weren't at mass.*
>
> Older person, Dundalk

In other, larger cities, comments are made to the effect that the city is "too big" and impersonal, as in Istanbul. Neighbourhoods are seen to not be cohesive in Islamabad and Mexico City, and in London, the neighbours seem to change so quickly that people no longer have the time to meet and get to know one another. Nevertheless, more inclusive communities can be fostered. Some of the focus groups propose promoting better organized neighbourhoods with, for example, local street committees (San José and Tuymazy). The creation of places for neighbourhood meetings is suggested in Istanbul; this is reported to be already in place in La Plata, where a part of the city hall is designated for older people's meetings.

6. Place in the family

In some cities, such as Amman and Udaipur, it is considered an advantage for older people to live with their family. Remaining with the family signifies being cared for, having affection and maintaining social status in the view of people from Tripoli. In Udaipur, older people are not only consulted by their families when decisions are made, but their views are accepted. Some older people mention that they have left their community of origin to go and live with their children in Cancún. Family members are said to be helpful and supportive, but at the same time it is noted that family relationships are changing. Comments are made, for instance in Istanbul and New Delhi, that families are more scattered because children move away, and that younger generations do not have much time to spend with older family members. As a consequence, it is reported from New Delhi that older people are gradually marginalized in their own families. In Islamabad, older people report that older women are not always consulted in family matters. In New Delhi, grandparents are said to become reduced to the state of servants of their grandchildren. In San José, some families even require the grandparents to work for money. Service providers in a few cities mention problems of abandonment or abuse of older people.

7. Economic exclusion

> *I'm feeling intimidated when I am in a store because I cannot afford to buy what I need.*
>
> Older person, Tuymazy

In several countries, the majority of older people have rather low incomes, and poverty at any age excludes people from society. In the Russian Federation, many older people report that they feel excluded from the society because of their low income: retired people fully depend on the small government allowances. It is reported in Jamaica and Mexico City that people often get very little personal financial aid from the government, and that there is too much bureaucracy involved in obtaining entitlements. In Cancún, older people say that they do not feel included in government programmes.

> *For the first time, somebody thought about the needs of those who don't have any income [about the "Si Vale card"].*
>
> Older person, Mexico City

In Mexico City, people highly appreci-

ate the economic support adapted to the economic condition of older people. This includes an ID card allowing them access to lower prices and even free services, and a "Si Vale card" guaranteeing the poorest an income of US$ 80 per month.

Age-friendly respect and social inclusion checklist

Respectful and inclusive services

- Older people are consulted by public, voluntary and commercial services on ways to serve them better.
- Public and commercial services provide services and products adapted to older people's needs and preferences.
- Services have helpful and courteous staff trained to respond to older people.

Public images of ageing

- The media include older people in public imagery, depicting them positively and without stereotypes.

Intergenerational and family interactions

- Community-wide settings, activities and events attract people of all ages by accommodating age-specific needs and preferences.
- Older people are specifically included in community activities for "families".
- Activities that bring generations together for mutual enjoyment and enrichment are regularly held.

Public education

- Learning about ageing and older people is included in primary and secondary school curricula.
- Older people are actively and regularly involved in local school activities with children and teachers.
- Older people are provided opportunities to share their knowledge, history and expertise with other generations.

Community inclusion

- Older people are included as full partners in community decision-making affecting them.
- Older people are recognized by the community for their past as well as their present contributions.
- Community action to strengthen neighbourhood ties and support include older residents as key informants, advisers, actors and beneficiaries.

Economic inclusion

- Economically disadvantaged older people enjoy access to public, voluntary and private services and events.

Part 10. Civic participation and employment

Overview of findings

Older people do not stop contributing to their communities on retirement. Many continue to provide unpaid and voluntary work for their families and communities. In some areas, economic circumstances force older people to take paid work long after they should have retired. An age-friendly community provides options for older people to continue to contribute to their communities, through paid employment or voluntary work if they so choose, and to be engaged in the political process.

Many older people would like to continue working and some, in fact, do so. In addition, older people participating in the WHO project expressed a desire and a willingness to work as a volunteer in their communities. Older people in most cities have access to employment and volunteer opportunities and in general feel respected for their contributions. Older people would like to have more opportunities for employment, and would like to see current employment and volunteer opportunities better tailored to their needs and interests. They would also like to see more efforts made to encourage civic participation and feel there are barriers to participation, including physical barriers and cultural stigmatization, surrounding participation by older people.

1. Volunteering options for older people

> *It's been scientifically proven that volunteering can help you stay healthy and live longer.*
>
> Older person, Halifax

In many of the participating cities, older people are very actively involved in voluntary activities and enjoy many benefits from volunteering, including a sense of self worth, of feeling active, and of maintaining their health and social connections. Participants in some cities report that there is a well-developed volunteer infrastructure, such as volunteer resource centres or well-established voluntary organizations. In most cities, participants say there are many opportunities to volunteer.

In Ponce, older people like feeling useful through volunteering, and in Udine it is noted that voluntary work is rewarding and prevents isolation. Older people in Geneva volunteer within clubs and organizations.

Despite the importance of volunteering, participants note many barriers for older people, such as finding out about volunteer opportunities, particularly those that would be most suited to them. Participants want more opportunities and a greater range of options. Creating central registers is suggested as a way to address this. In Melbourne, there is a project under way to use the Internet to match volunteers to opportunities, and a site that lists volunteer opportunities exists in Portland. Older residents in Melville and Udaipur suggest creating a central database or register of volunteers, and participants in New Delhi suggest this could be run by an organization such as HelpAge India. .

In addition, older people face problems getting to and from voluntary jobs, and some report physical limitations in completing the tasks assigned to them. In more developed countries, some older people and service providers report that un-reimbursed expenses (such as for petrol) or liability issues (on the part of the voluntary organizations) impede their ability or willingness to volunteer.

Several participants mention a general decline or change in the voluntary sector that affects older volunteers. This includes a feeling that the ethic of volunteering is diminishing and that younger people are failing to replace older people. In Halifax, an older person considers that increasing paperwork and insurance costs are contributing to the decline in the body of volunteers. In Dundalk, it is suggested that insurance costs be waived for older volunteers.

Suggestions for improving volunteering call for strengthening voluntary organizations generally, establishing elderly volunteer corps, and reimbursing volunteers for expenses related to their work. Participants in Islamabad call for establishing a volunteer corps of older people to work with the disadvantaged. In Mayaguez, incentives for older volunteers are suggested, and a service provider in Mexico City recommends that volunteers should be reimbursed for their expenses. In Himeji, financial support for voluntary organizations is suggested. In Shanghai, it is felt that a rewarding and supportive social atmosphere would encourage more people to volunteer. In Tokyo, invitations are suggested as a way to encourage older people to volunteer.

2. Better employment options and more opportunities

> *My mother often talks about working, but I know she can't manage. It's just that they like their own money.*
>
> Caregiver, Jamaica

> *We need to assist the old people to remain employed. To work is a gift of health and of life.*
>
> Service provider, Tripoli

Participants in many cities report that they are eager and willing to work and have the experience and qualifications to work. However, older people face a variety of barriers in finding work or staying employed. Policies that make retirement mandatory by a certain arbitrary age, which varies among countries, are rejected by focus group participants. Some countries have policies whereby any money earned after the "retirement" age is deducted from government income support programmes or pensions, thus creating another barrier for older people who want to continue working.

In several places, older people report that they are simply too frail to work, have difficulty getting to and from work, or do not feel safe travelling to or while at work. Several cities note that the only job opportunities available to older people are often menial, low-paid or generally undesirable. In some areas, older people assist their families by caring for grandchildren, and in Mexico City it is felt that doing this kind of work prevents older people from obtaining proper employment.

In places of low income and limited government support, some older people feel that they need to work whether they want to or not. In some cities (e.g. Moscow, Nairobi and Ponce), focus group participants comment that the general level of unemployment and competition for jobs affect their ability to find work.

> *I cannot think of working. Why? Because you know, unemployment is high even in youth, so how can I want to work?*
>
> Older person, Istanbul

Despite these barriers, older people are still working in a number of cities. Older people in Tripoli note many benefits of continuing to work, including income, combating attitudes that older people are dependent, and continued social connections. Many older people in Himeji are willing to work, and would like to see more opportunities for employment. Older people in Amman suggest that the time and experience of older people should be used as long as they are able to work, and that incentives be provided to encourage participation.

A few places, largely in developed countries, do have policies, and some mention specific companies that promote and value older workers. In Mayaguez, service providers note that there is little absenteeism among older workers, and they also tend to be punctual. In Melville, it is felt that workplaces are changing and that there is a more positive attitude to retaining older workers.

Participants have a number of suggestions for how to improve and create new opportunities for employment for older people. These include offering incentives to employers who hire older people, having government-sponsored employment programmes, creating public/private partnerships, and hiring older people to do public sector jobs.

Eliminating mandatory retirement, or age restrictions for employment, is suggested in the places where such legislation exists. Allowing people to work beyond the retirement age is suggested in Dundalk, and eliminating the legal age restriction for employment is proposed in Islamabad. Service providers in Sherbrooke feel there should be greater flexibility in legislation and policies to enable retired people to return to work. One older person in Istanbul suggests banning early retirement.

There were also a number of suggestions for improving the type or conditions of work. In some places, respondents feel that the problem was not having the information and tools to match the skills and needs of older workers with those of employers. Suggestions to remedy the situation include better advertising of positions, creating databases to match older worker with jobs, and developing a register listing older people's skills for potential employers to consult. In Istanbul, it is felt there should be more support for women working at home, and in New Delhi, sensitizing employers to the needs of older people is suggested.

3. Flexibility to accommodate older workers and volunteers

> *I don't want something I have to be there every week at 9:00; I got enough of that working.*
>
> Older person, Portland

Flexibility in opportunities for older people in paid and voluntary work is cited as a way to better tailor such opportunities to older people.

There are reports of rigid schedules, and a feeling that voluntary jobs have become too professionalized. Participants propose that opportunities for paid and voluntary work should be structured in ways that accommodate older workers. Volunteering should be more flexible and better suited to the needs of older people. At several places, there is a mention of more flexibility from employers in terms of hours and seasonal or temporary employment, and adjustment according to the physical demands of the job.

Older people in Geneva feel that voluntary opportunities should be flexible and match the ability of those volunteering, taking into account the needs of older people who may tire more quickly. Service providers in Himeji feel that corporations should develop an environment whereby older people can work without difficulty, and many corporations have this as a goal for the future.

Lighter workloads and more flexible sick leave for older employees are suggested in Halifax. Participants in London suggest small projects that are interesting to older people and that make use of their skills. In Nairobi, Ponce and Tuymazy, participants call for part-time opportunities. In Tokyo, there is a human resource service for temporary work, which may suit the needs of older people. Older people in Tuymazy consider that consulting work is particularly suited to older people.

4. Encouraging civic participation

Reports about the level of civic engagement vary. In general, older people are interested in and willing to participate in civic functions. In some places, elders already have an active voice through community boards or seniors' boards. Some cultures reportedly value the experience and expertise of seniors and routinely put them in positions of authority, though some felt these positions were largely symbolic. In Melville, there are special-interest groups in which older people participate, and in Mayaguez, there is a high proportion of elders in the city legislature. Participants in Tripoli report that older people serve on boards of trustees, and in Halifax, older people are involved in helping with elections.

Despite these reports of civic engagement, a significant proportion of cities also report that opportunities for older people to engage in civic affairs are limited. Some cities mention logistical barriers, such as lack of transportation to civic functions, lack of physical accommodation, and safety concerns at large civic events.

Suggestions for improving civic engagement include reserving seats for older people, improving accessibility at civic events (e.g. physical accessibility and providing aids for the hard of hearing) and developing or reinstating community boards and other participatory bodies. Participants in Dundalk consider that better information about civic activities would lead to more participation. In Portland, it is suggested that older people become involved by voicing their concerns to government officials. Older people in La Plata call for more opportunities for political participation by older people, and a role for older people in solving the problems of the community. In Tokyo, it is suggested that older people be allocated the specific civic role of taking care of the concerns of other older people, and participants in Saanich suggest that older people be engaged in planning for older people.

5. Training

> *Now volunteering is a professionalized thing. To be a volunteer you have to go through training.*
>
> Service provider, London

Training is seen as a way to enable older people to connect with the workforce and to participate as volunteers. Some cities report that elders feel they lack the job skills (largely surrounding the use of technology) needed to compete in the workplace. A few cities report that older people would like opportunities for training or retraining (although this is a suggestion more commonly made by service providers than the elderly themselves). In New Delhi, pre-retirement training and retraining is suggested. In Amman, training older people for light jobs that can provide some pay is called for. In Tuymazy, it is felt that training for older workers should focus on self-employment and small business opportunities.

6. Entrepreneurial opportunities

Some participants suggest creating entrepreneurial opportunities for older people as a way for them to earn money and participate in the workforce. Financing or otherwise supporting self-employment opportunities are suggested as ways of helping to support older people, and such ideas tend to come from cities that also report general unemployment or low-income support for older people (e.g. Cancún, Mexico City, New Delhi, Ponce, Tripoli, Tuymazy and Udine).

Older people in several cities are actively involved in a variety of self-employed activities, such as handicrafts and gardening. In San José, older people find opportunities as street vendors. There are opportunities for selling hand-made crafts in Cancún, although older people there suggest that having a location for a market would assist them. In Tripoli, it is suggested that non-governmental organizations could assist older people with small and home-based businesses, and that farming could be encouraged as an option for older people, while in Tuymazy, farmers' markets are proposed as a way for older people to generate income.

7. Valuing older peoples' contributions

Reports of age discrimination in the workforce are widespread. This is manifested in a variety of ways, ranging from feelings of disrespect by other workers to a flat refusal by employers to hire older workers. In some cities it is apparently culturally unacceptable for older people to work after the retirement age. Some of these prejudices come from the older people themselves; some report that they simply do not want to work after having worked all their lives

There are reports of older people being treated disrespectfully. Others mention that it is difficult to work for people younger than themselves, to take positions that they consider to be beneath them, or to work in environments where they feel they are being patronized.

The degree to which older volunteers feel their contributions are appreciated and recognized also varies. Certificates of appreciation are given out in Geneva. In Nairobi, service providers feel that older people are seen as leaders because of their experience and trustworthiness.

In Udine, it is considered that there should be more appreciation for the experience of elders. Some suggest sensitivity training for employers about the needs and qualification of older workers. In Mexico City, it is felt that societal recognition of the value of older peoples' expertise and presence in the workforce should be increased. Older people in Jamaica suggest employing older people to teach younger people about the culture of aging, addressing both participation and ageism.

Age-friendly civic participation and employment checklist

Volunteering options

- There is a range of options for older volunteers to participate.
- Voluntary organizations are well-developed, with infrastructure, training programmes and a workforce of volunteers.
- The skills and interests of volunteers are matched to positions (e.g. register or database).
- Volunteers are supported in their voluntary work, for example by being provided with transportation or having the cost of parking reimbursed.

Employment options

- There is a range of opportunities for older people to work.
- Policy and legislation prevent discrimination on the basis of age.
- Retirement is a choice, not mandatory.
- There are flexible opportunities, with options for part-time or seasonal employment for older people.
- There are employment programmes and agencies for older workers.
- Employee organizations (e.g. trade unions) support flexible options, such as part-time and voluntary work, to enable more participation by older workers.
- Employers are encouraged to employ and retain older workers.

Training

- Training in post-retirement opportunities is provided for older workers.
- Retraining opportunities, such as training in new technologies, is available to older workers.
- Voluntary organizations provide training for their positions.

Accessibility

- Opportunities for voluntary or paid work are known and promoted.
- Transportation to work is available.
- Workplaces are adapted to meet the needs of disabled people.
- There is no cost to the worker of participating in paid or voluntary work.
- There is support for organizations (e.g. funding or reduced insurance costs) to recruit, train and retain older volunteers.

Civic participation

- Advisory councils, boards of organizations, etc. include older people.
- Support exists to enable older people to participate in meetings and civic events, such as reserved seating, support for people with disabilities, aids for the hard of hearing, and transportation.
- Policies, programmes and plans for older people include contributions from older people.
- Older people are encouraged to participate.

Valued contributions

- Older people are respected and acknowledged for their contributions.
- Employers and organizations are sensitive to the needs of older workers.
- The benefits of employing older workers are promoted among employers.

Entrepreneurship

- There is support for older entrepreneurs and opportunities for self-employment (e.g. markets to sell farm produce and crafts, small business training, and micro-financing for older workers).
- Information designed to support small and home-based business is in a formats suitable for older workers.

Pay

- Older workers are fairly remunerated for their work.
- Volunteers are reimbursed for expenses they incur while working.
- Older workers' earnings are not deducted from pensions and other forms of income support to which they are entitled.

Part 11. Communication and information

Overview of findings

Focus group participants strongly agree that staying connected with events and people and getting timely, practical information to manage life and meet personal needs is vital for active ageing. Participants in most cities in the developed world say there is a variety of information from many different general and specialized media for older people, while in cities in developing countries, people in the focus groups emphasize a few community-wide media, mostly television, radio and newspapers. Yet the fear of missing information and of being left out of the mainstream is voiced almost everywhere. Rapidly evolving information and communication technologies are both welcomed as useful tools and criticized as instruments of social exclusion. Regardless of the variety of communication choices and the volume of information available, the central concern expressed in the focus groups is to have relevant information that is readily accessible to older people with varying capacities and resources.

> *It becomes worst [sic] as you get older … as your faculties begin to fade, this kind of thing appears to cause more in terms of stress.*
>
> Older person, Halifax

1. Widespread distribution

In all cities, local community-wide media are singled out as providers of useful information. In developing countries and in the Russian Federation, the communication media familiar to older people tend to be limited to radio, television and newspapers. In developed countries, an abundance of general and targeted information of interest to older people is described, from diverse sources including the Internet. Valued everywhere is information that reaches older people in their daily lives and activities, through direct personal delivery, telephone and distribution in key locations: community centres and bulletin boards, public services, libraries, stores, doctors' offices and health clinics. Older people in Istanbul report that the telephone is the most universal and reliable way of communicating with them. Governments and voluntary organizations are seen to have a major role in ensuring that information is widely available: systematic, effective public distribution services are valued as an age-friendly feature. In Himeji, there is said to be a well-structured distribution of municipal information to residents' associations, who pass it on to district leaders who then deliver it to every household. In cities where the private sector has yet to become aware of this growing grey market, such as Tripoli, business too is mentioned as a potential funder of information dissemination for older people. Distributing a local directory of "age-friendly" services, suggested by older people in Saanich, could appeal to a chamber of commerce, for example.

Affordable access to communication channels and information is essential. Radio is the mainstay of communication for older people in Nairobi because it is cheap; in Udaipur, local notice boards are important in reaching people from lower socioeconomic groups. To ensure information access in Tuymazy, free newspaper subscriptions are provided to retirees by former employers. In Dundalk, the cost of a home telephone line is publicly subsidized for people over the age of 70. Free publications and public access to newspapers, computers and the Internet in community centres and libraries, at no or minimal cost, are age-friendly features in other cities..

2. The right information at the right time

> *Much information is available, but finding needed information is complicated.*
>
> Caregiver, Moscow

Regardless of the number and variety of information sources, the preoccupation with getting relevant and timely information is shared in cities at varying stages of development. In some developed cities, such as Geneva, managing the information overload is difficult and important information may be missed. A frequent barrier is lack of awareness of available information or services, or not knowing how to locate needed information. The result is that older people may not receive benefits or services to which they are entitled or learn about them too late to apply. Knowing how to deal with intrusive telemarketing and identify frauds and scams is another concern, voiced in a few developed cities only. Older city dwellers in developing countries more often face the problem of insufficient up-to-date information on important matters, such as health, legal rights, benefit entitlements, services and community events. It is noted in La Plata that the general community media do not cover topics important for older people in enough detail to be useful.

A frequent suggestion for making communication more age-friendly is to provide more information targeted to older people through dedicated newspapers or regular columns in the general press, as well as through specialized radio and television programmes. Another idea is to have communication channels broaden their programming and coverage of issues to include the interests of an older adult audience. Older people in some cities complain that television in particular seems to exclude their interests and tastes.

People want information to be coordinated in one easy-to-access service that is widely known throughout the community. In Portland, the local county has a live 24-hour telephone information service. Older people consulted in New Delhi suggest that a central and respected voluntary organization, such as HelpAge India, collect and organize a database of information relevant to older people and make it available by telephone. In Islamabad, a community information room with newspapers and television is recommended.

3. Will someone speak to me?

> *Older people call into radio programmes at all hours.*
>
> Service provider, Mayaguez

No matter how developed the city, word of mouth is the principal and preferred means of communication for older people, both through informal contacts with family and friends and through clubs, associations, public meetings, community centres and places of worship. Radio is a very popular information source in many cities, with broadcasting in vernacular languages or with open-line programmes whereby callers ask questions to experts or participate in on-line discussions. The interpersonal dimension of communication is very important, and it is repeated that staying active and involved in the community is the best way to remain informed. Regret is expressed about losing opportunities to interact with others as a result of changes, such as new high-rise buildings in the neighbourhood, the closing of community post offices, and automating banking and other services. Oral communication is especially important for older people who are visually impaired and for those who are not literate. Illiteracy rates are very high in the older adult population in developing countries, and in developed countries, older people on average have a lower level of literacy than younger people. The "grapevine" works too because people trust the person providing the information and because they can ask questions until they get what they want to know. Receiving the attention of a real person who is helpful, clear and unhurried is highly valued by older people around the world.

> *Every district has a mosque. The Arabic word for mosque is a synonym for the place that brings people together.*
>
> Older person, Tripoli

Age-friendly communication everywhere recognizes and uses these informal channels to reach older people. One way is to regularly provide relevant information in places where older people normally gather; another is to create social occasions to offer information of interest to them. In Rio de Janeiro, for instance, it is proposed using the auditorium of the health care centre for educational lectures. A third strategy is to inform individuals who will in turn pass on the information to others, one-to-one. These "key informants" can be volunteers, as suggested in Jamaica, social and health service providers or people in service industries – estate agents, hairdressers, postal workers, or the doormen in apartment buildings in Rio de Janeiro who know each resident and are a recognized source of informal information and support.

The problem of reaching those who are socially isolated – older people who are out of touch with the world because they live alone with significant impairments and have minimal family support – arises in richer and poorer cities alike. E-mail and the Internet is one solution that is men-

tioned, but rarely. One-to-one outreach by trusted individuals is the favoured approach, through volunteers who visit or telephone or through social service workers. Anticipating the locations outside the home where older people at risk of social isolation may be found is also suggested: the use of the district health clinic as a distribution point for information about services for older people with health problems is suggested in San José.

4. Age-friendly formats and design

> *I got a letter yesterday. They're checking up, apparently, on what benefits you're getting …You've got to read it about four times to really understand.*
>
> Older person, London

The single biggest universal barrier to communicating with older people is the visual and auditory presentation of information. Font size on text materials, mainly hard copy but also visual displays such as television, is too small to read. Product labels and instructions, particularly for medications, are hard to decipher. Page layout is often confusing, with too much information in a small space. Auditory information is spoken too quickly and commercials on radio and television make older people lose their train of thought. The language used is often too complicated, with many unfamiliar terms. Official forms – which are vital for receiving services and benefits – are especially difficult to understand.

> *Write simple, short with big letters.*
>
> Service provider, Mexico City

Service automation adds a further layer of complexity to daily transactions. Visual displays and buttons on mobile telephones and electronic equipment are too small, while automated banking, postal, parking and other ticket machines are all different, are poorly lit and have unclear instructions. For people in a wheelchair, the panels are too high to reach. To make telephones accessible to illiterate older people so they can call family or services, a suggestion made in Amman, is to colour-code the telephone buttons and the telephone numbers.

Automated answering services are a general source of complaint: there is too much information given too quickly, the choices are confusing, and there is often no opportunity to speak to a live person.

5. Information technology: boon and bane

Information technology, especially computers and the Internet, is appreciated by some older people for its comprehensiveness and convenience. In Tripoli, older people say the Internet is a good way for them to stay in touch with children who live far away, perhaps in other countries.

Nevertheless, many older people experience a sense of exclusion because they do not use computers and the Internet. The conversion of direct services and documentation to computer technology increases feelings of exclusion. In developing countries and

the Russian Federation, computers are too costly for many older people or just not widely available in the community. In other places, physical access to computers is possible but older people are totally unfamiliar with the technology and are afraid they cannot learn. Affordable public access to computers for older people in community centres, older people's clubs, public services and libraries is an important age-friendly feature. Computer training, preferably adapted to individual needs and pace of learning and given by a trusted person, is strongly advised. In Halifax, for example, older people mention a permanent Internet tutor who is available to help out older people individually, visiting them in their homes if requested.

6. A Personal and collective responsibility

Like other citizens, older people have a personal responsibility to keep abreast of new information by staying involved in community activities, and to make an effort to adapt to change and take the risk to learn. Collectively, governments, voluntary organizations and the private sector are responsible for removing the communication barriers that progressively cut older people off from others, particularly barriers related to poverty, low literacy and diminished capacity.

Age-friendly communication

Information offer

- A basic, universal communications system of written and broadcast media and telephone reaches every resident.
- Regular and reliable distribution of information is assured by government or voluntary organizations.
- Information is disseminated to reach older people close to their homes and where they conduct their usual activities of daily life.
- Information dissemination is coordinated in an accessible community service that is well-publicized – a "one-stop" information centre.
- Regular information and programme broadcasts of interest to older people are offered in both regular and targeted media.

Oral communication

- Oral communication accessible to older people is preferred, for instance through public meetings, community

and information checklist

centres, clubs and the broadcast media, and through individuals responsible for spreading the word one-to-one.

- People at risk of social isolation get information from trusted individuals with whom they may interact, such as volunteer callers and visitors, home support workers, hairdressers, doormen or caretakers.
- Individuals in public offices and businesses provide friendly, person-to-person service on request.

Printed information

- Printed information – including official forms, television captions and text on visual displays – has large lettering and the main ideas are shown by clear headings and bold-face type.

Plain language

- Print and spoken communication uses simple, familiar words in short, straightforward sentences.

Automated communication and equipment

- Telephone answering services give instructions slowly and clearly and tell callers how to repeat the message at any time.
- Users have the choice of speaking to a real person or of leaving a message for someone to call back.
- Electronic equipment, such as mobile telephones, radios, televisions, and bank and ticket machines, has large buttons and big lettering.
- The display panel of bank, postal and other service machines is well-illuminated and can be reached by people of different heights.

Computers and the Internet

- There is wide public access to computers and the Internet, at no or minimal charge, in public places such as government offices, community centres and libraries.
- Tailored instructions and individual assistance for users are readily available.

Part 12. Community support and health services

Overview of findings

Health and support services are vital to maintaining health and independence in the community. Many of the concerns raised by older people, caregivers and service providers in the focus groups deal with the availability of sufficient good quality, appropriate and accessible care. Participants in the WHO consultation report their experiences from the context of very different systems with very different expectations; but nevertheless older people everywhere voice a clear desire for basic health and income support. Health care costs are perceived as too high everywhere, and the desire for affordable care is consistently expressed.

> *I've run into so many seniors that put off going to the doctor, and their health just deteriorates and deteriorates, because they don't have the money.*
>
> Older person, Portland

In many cities in developing countries, a basic shortage of necessary services and supplies is observed, and in others, services are found to be poorly distributed. Some of the most developed countries have, at the same time, the greatest volume and range of health and community support services and the greatest number of complaints. While this certainly reflects dissatisfaction with existing services, it also shows that older people in these cities have a level of access to services that may be lacking in other parts of the world.

In most collaborating cities, the supply, organization and financing of many health and social services are decided by the state or national government rather than the city. Also, the supply and professional training of health and social workers are outside the city's control. Nevertheless, health and social services are delivered within a city by local people in local establishments, and community-based for-profit and voluntary groups play an important role in delivering support and care. Public decision-makers and the private and voluntary sectors at the city level do have an influence on the number, range and location of services and on other aspects of the accessibility of facilities and services in their territory. Local service authorities also provide staff training and set service performance standards. Civil society plays a role in providing financial support and voluntary work. In reporting the findings and developing a checklist of community and health service features in an age-friendly city, the Guide focuses on those aspects of community support and health services that are within the scope of an age-friendly city's influence.

Health service issues dominate the focus group discussions in the majority of cities, reflecting their importance for active ageing. Access to health care as well as to a range of health services that are not strictly medical are major themes. Although less attention is paid in general to community support and social services, the key attributes of an age-friendly city can be identified from the comments made by the participants.

1. Accessible care

Having well-located, easily accessible health services is fundamentally important for older people in every collaborating city. Older people in cities such as Amman, Rio de Janeiro, Sherbrooke and Tokyo value having health services near by, and in Geneva and Shanghai, older people appreciate good transportation to health facilities. Services that are far away or difficult to reach are often seen as barriers. Public transportation is considered inadequate in some places and in others, such as Delhi and Mexico City, transportation for people with disabilities is reported to be a particular problem. Access to health care in emergency situations is a frequent concern. Besides particular complaints, such as a lack of emergency care in some cities, those consulted also mention that ambulance services are either insufficient (Ponce) or too slow because of heavy traffic (Moscow). Ways to minimize geographical barriers include the idea of co-locating or decentralizing services so they are available in all neighbourhoods. Other ideas are to offer transportation by volunteers and to provide health emergency telephone services, as in Himeji, for older people living alone.

Barrier-free structures and mobility within health facilities is important, as is the safety of the buildings. Among the barriers noted are poorly maintained elevators and ramps in Udaipur, poor building access for people with disabilities and a lack of wheelchairs or walking frames for patients in Cancún, and overcrowded facilities in many other cities. Safety concerns or lack of space in nursing homes are raised in Amman, La Plata and Portage la Prairie.

Another frequently mentioned barrier to accessing care is insufficient knowledge about the health services available in the city. As observed in Melbourne, if services are not known about they are not used. Better advertising of local health services, educating older people on the health system, coordination of information, and health information telephone services are suggested as possible solutions.

Finally, the attitudes of health service providers towards older people are frequently mentioned. Tuymazy is one of the few places reporting the polite and friendly behaviour of clinic receptionists and nurses. Negative attitudes and poor communication by health providers are common complaints about care. Problems voiced include indifference, disrespect, uncaring attitudes, and treating older people as a burden or as a drain on resources. General suggestions offered for improving the attitudes and behaviour of service providers are to improve their communication skills and to train health professionals to treat older people better. In Amman, it is suggested that young people be encouraged to do voluntary work caring for older people.

> *When they came to wash and change her they treated her like a piece of furniture – no dignity, no respect.*
>
> Older person, London

2. A wider range of health services

In all cities, people's views reflect the need for a wide range of health services for older people. The availability of various specific forms of care for older people emerges either as an asset or as a gap in the urban landscape: geriatric clinic services and hospital beds, adult day centres, care for the demented, mental health services, respite care and training for caregivers, rehabilitation and palliative care are mentioned. Along with services, a greater supply of equipment is recommended, such as wheelchairs, walking frames and hearing aids. However, the health services that receive the most attention worldwide are disease prevention and health promotion, home care, and nursing (long-term care) homes.

3. Ageing well services

Older people and others in several cities either report a lack of services or programmes for disease prevention and health promotion or include them in their suggestions for improvement. In the list of important services are preventive screening, physical activity, education on injury prevention, nutritional guidance, and mental health counselling. Age-friendly features reported in the Ruhr metropolitan area include self-help groups or organizations offering sports activities for fitness and rehabilitation, and regular health checks at home. Older people in Mexico City are pleased with the targeted vaccination campaign and free eyeglasses. Participants in Saanich suggest expanding seniors' centres into community wellness centres, and people in Tuymazy propose providing older people with subsidized access to health resorts (spas). In Islamabad and Mexico City, it is seen as a good idea to provide services in the local neighbourhoods rather that at a central point.

4. Home care

One very consistent theme is the need for a wide range of home support and care services – from help with shopping and/or providing meals to home visits from doctors and other service providers. With few exceptions, the focus group participants want services that would allow them to tend to their health and personal care needs in their own homes. Barriers experienced in getting home care services include a general lack of such services, poor organization of services, restrictive eligibility criteria, high cost, and high turnover in home care staff. Suggestions for improving home care services depend very much on the context. In several cities, especially in developing countries, the message is simply "provide home care". In other cities, comments focus on how to improve the number or range of services (e.g. physiotherapy and psychological counselling) or their quality (e.g. providing care soon after discharge from hospital, increasing the number of case managers, and always being cared for by the same person). In some places, comments deal with ways of managing costs, such as through insurance coverage or by using the services of a housekeeping cooperative enterprise,

as mentioned in Sherbrooke. In Shanghai, caregivers report that people over 80 years of age, the widowed, people on a low income and the disabled are entitled to one hour per day of free housekeeping.

5. Residential facilities for people unable to live at home

A common concern is the lack of adequate and affordable options in the city to care for older people no longer able to live in their own homes. Lack of vacancies and high cost are the most frequent complaints. Caregivers in Portage la Prairie observe that there is insufficient storage space for personal effects in nursing homes, and older people in Geneva suggest that nursing homes be located in the centre of the city or have easy access to the centre. Serious concerns are expressed in a few cities about safety, substandard care in homes for poor older people, insufficient personnel, and suspected general sedation of residents. Ideas for alternative models are proposed: caregivers in Amman suggest establishing small homes housing a few residents instead of the "huge" nursing homes; service providers in Jamaica and older people in Udine similarly call for such group homes offering housekeeping and some health and personal care.

6. A network of community services

The scope of community social services and the way in which they are provided vary enormously among cities. In some cities, particularly in developed countries, social services are delivered, or funded, by the government. Elsewhere, support services are reported to be provided primarily by families, religious institutions, charitable organizations or community groups. Among the appreciated services offered by the community are cheaper meals for older people in restaurants in Rio de Janeiro and Geneva, help with pensions and other entitlements in Jamaica, and a system for screening contractors and handyman services in Portland to ensure they are legitimate. Community centres and centres for older people are regarded as ideal locations for social services because of their convenience, familiarity and accessibility.

Several barriers are noted, with more frequent and more acute problems in less developed regions: services are insufficient, too costly, difficult to access or of poor quality. As with health services, some participants say that they simply do not have good information about what is available or how to access it. Lack of coordination among services, causing needlessly complicated application formalities and gaps in services, is also frequently raised as a problem. Suggestions for improving community social services are varied. Improving coordination among services, adding more case managers and integrating service teams are ideas proposed in cities with well-developed but somewhat fragmented service networks. Reducing or facilitating administrative formalities are mentioned in the majority of cities, regardless of region. Co-locating social and health services in community or older people's centres and providing more funding for services are other recommendations.

Many social services are said to be needed or improved, often to protect and care for older people with low incomes who constitute the majority in many cities. In addition to enhancing basic income support, older people think their cities should establish or strengthen: shelter and protection for homeless and destitute older people and people who have been abused; meals services and programmes; discounts on utilities for people with low incomes; registers of older people living alone; assistance in obtaining pensions and other entitlements; and spiritual support. A good example described in Mexico City is an ID card for older people, giving the holder access to lower prices and some free services.

7. Volunteers wanted

A consistent theme is the need for volunteers to help fill gaps in the health and social services. More volunteers are wanted to assist older people in clinics and hospitals, as well as to deliver social services and home care, to provide transportation for shopping and appointments, or simply to walk the pets of older people who are no longer able to do so themselves. Suggested sources of voluntary help are the "50+" associations of young retirees, students in social and health services, and schoolchildren. Intergenerational volunteering is an idea repeated in several cities. Strong voluntary networks are easier to mobilize in established communities where people feel socially connected: a barrier mentioned in Islamabad is that the city is relatively new and people do not know each other well.

> *The doorman is really nice, he looks after four older people in my building. He bathes them, he is a cleaning man and in his lunch time he helps people.*
>
> Older person, Rio de Janeiro

8. Other issues

Two other concerns are raised in a few cities: taking account of older people in emergency situations and the lack of cemetery space. Although these issues are seldom mentioned, they are nevertheless important in expanding cities. Participants in two locations perceive a gap in support for older people in emergencies, such as natural disasters and human conflicts. In Jamaica, where hurricanes are frequent, older people comment that churches play a vital role in providing care during disasters. Service providers in Amman suggest that the city develop emergency and disaster plans that include older people. Although it is not proposed in this context, a useful suggestion for emergencies made in Dundalk is to have a community register of older people living alone. The lack of sufficient cemetery space is mentioned very briefly in Cancún and Melbourne; as a solution, service providers in the latter city suggest having a "vertical" or layered cemetery.

Age-friendly community and health services checklist

Service accessibility

- Health and social services are well-distributed throughout the city, are conveniently co-located, and can be reached readily by all means of transportation.
- Residential care facilities, such as retirement homes and nursing homes, are located close to services and residential areas so that residents remain integrated in the larger community.
- Service facilities are safely constructed and are fully accessible for people with disabilities.
- Clear and accessible information is provided about the health and social services for older people.
- Delivery of individual services is coordinated and with a minimum of bureaucracy.
- Administrative and service personnel treat older people with respect and sensitivity.
- Economic barriers impeding access to health and community support services are minimal.
- There is adequate access to designated burial sites.

Offer of services

- An adequate range of health and community support services is offered for promoting, maintaining and restoring health.
- Home care services are offered that include health services, personal care and housekeeping.
- Health and social services offered address the needs and concerns of older people.
- Service professionals have appropriate skills and training to communicate with and effectively serve older people.

Voluntary support

- Volunteers of all ages are encouraged and supported to assist older people in a wide range of health and community settings.

Emergency planning and care

- Emergency planning includes older people, taking into account their needs and capacities in preparing for and responding to emergencies.

Part 13. Wrapping up and moving forward

Active ageing in an age-friendly city

The starting point for this Guide was the concept that an age-friendly city encourages active ageing by optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age. The assets and barriers reported by approximately 1500 older people and 750 caregivers and service providers consulted in this global project confirm this idea and provide many examples to show how the features of city reflect the determinants of active ageing in many interconnected ways. The city's landscape, buildings, transportation system and housing contribute to confident mobility, healthy behaviour, social participation and self-determination or, conversely, to fearful isolation, inactivity and social exclusion. A wide range of opportunities for age-integrated as well as age-targeted social participation fosters strong social connections and personal empowerment. Empowerment and self-worth are reinforced by a culture that recognizes, respects and includes older people. Relevant information in appropriate formats also contributes to personal empowerment, as well as to healthy types of behaviour. Accessible and well-coordinated health services have an obvious influence on older people's health status and health behaviour. Although opportunities for paid work in urban settings are related to the economic determinants of active ageing, more important still are policies that reduce economic inequalities in access to all the city's structures, services and opportunities.

Design for diversity has emerged as a prime characteristic of an age-friendly city that is repeated often across many topic areas. Within the WHO life course perspective for active ageing described in Part 2, design for diversity is the key to supporting optimal capacity among high-functioning individuals and enabling older people to function who would otherwise become dependent. According to the project participants, it should be normal in an age-friendly city for the natural and built environment to anticipate users with different capacities instead of designing for the mythical "average" (i.e. young) person. An age-friendly city emphasizes enablement rather than disablement; it is friendly for all ages and not just "elder-friendly". There should be enough public seating and toilet facilities; dropped curbs and ramps to buildings should be standard features, and lights at pedestrian crossings should be safely timed. Building and housing design should be barrier-free. Information materials and communication technologies should be adapted to suit diverse perceptual, intellectual and cultural needs. In a word, spaces and structures must be accessible.

Acknowledging and respecting diversity should characterize social and service relationships no less than physical structures and materials. The participants in this WHO project make it clear that respect and consideration for the individual should be major values on the street, at home and on the road, in public and commercial services, in employment and in care settings. In an age-friendly city, users of public spaces should be considerate in sharing the amenities, and priority seating in public transport and special needs stopping and parking areas should be respected. Services should employ friendly staff who take the time to give personal assistance. Tradespeople should serve older people as well and as promptly as other clients. Employers and agencies should offer flexible conditions and training to older workers and volunteers. Communities should recognize older people for their past contributions, not only for their current ones. Because education fosters awareness, schoolchildren should be taught about ageing and older people and the media should portray them in realistic and non-stereotypical ways.

The life course approach includes all ages within the process of promoting active ageing. It also embraces the value of intergenerational solidarity. In the view of the project participants, another important characteristic of an age-friendly city is that it should foster solidarity between generations and within communities. An age-friendly city should facilitate social relationships – in local services and in the activities that bring together people of all ages. Opportunities for neighbours to get to know each other should be fostered; they should watch out for each other's safety and help and inform each other. Thanks to a network of trusted family, friends, neighbours and service providers, older members of the community should feel integrated and safe. Moreover, there should be personalized outreach to older people at risk of being socially isolated, and the economic, linguistic or cultural barriers experienced by many older people should be minimized.

Integrated and mutually enhancing urban features

The strong connections among the different aspects of city living made by people consulted in the WHO project clearly show that an age-friendly city can only result from an integrated approach centred on how older people live. Taking this approach means coordinating actions across different areas of city policy and services so that they are mutually reinforcing. Based on the reports of the older people and others in the project, joint action that respects the following relationships appears especially important.

- Housing must be considered in connection with outdoor spaces and the rest of the built environment such that older people's homes are located in areas safe from natural hazards and are close to services, other age groups and civic attractions that keep them integrated in the community, mobile and fit.
- Transportation services and infrastructures must always be linked to opportunities for social, civic and economic participation, as well as to access to essential health services.

- Social inclusion of older people must target social arenas and roles that carry power and status in society, such as decision-making in civic life, paid work and media programming.
- Because knowledge is key to empowerment, information about all aspects of city living must be accessible to everyone at all times.

Beyond the age-friendly city guide and checklists

This project is a starting point for many more community development and research activities, as well as for the establishment of a larger global network of age-friendly communities. The next steps for collaborating cities and for WHO will be to confirm the validity of the checklists. One city has already conducted site visits to verify the barriers in the natural and built environments and in services that were reported by older people. Others are returning to the original focus group participants to determine whether the features in the Guide accurately capture what they said, or are setting up focus groups with older people in other locations to assess the level of agreement between their views and the checklists. Another approach to validation will involve experts in the field of ageing, who will compare the checklists based on the views of older people with evidence from gerontological research and practice.

At the same time, many other cities have expressed an interest in using the WHO Guide and checklists to initiate age-friendly city development. Currently being considered are country-level networks, for example in Japan and Spain, as well as regional "hubs" in the Middle East, in Canada and in Latin America and the Caribbean. To facilitate the spread of age-friendly cities, translation of the Guide into several languages is under way, including Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Portuguese and Spanish. Because the age-friendly cities idea has much in common with the successful and effective Healthy Cities concept, an active and mutually beneficial link between the two networks is being pursued. Within WHO, the Ageing and Life Course programme will continue to provide an institutional "home" for the WHO age-friendly city initiative.

Focus group participants reported several examples of age-friendly practices in their cities. Some of these have been very briefly mentioned in this Guide. Another important step will be to obtain further information about these initiatives from the project leaders and to publish an inventory of these good practices. A conference to exchange local and international age-friendly city initiatives was held in June 2007 in the Ruhr metropolitan area, sponsored by the State Government of North Rhine Westphalia, to mark the selection of the city of Essen as a European Capital of Culture for 2010. A further best practices meeting is being planned for Istanbul, also in connection with the selection of this city as the other 2010 European Capital of Culture. To generate more good practices from the WHO research, experts and service providers will

be invited to identify interventions corresponding to the age-friendly features in the checklists. The current checklists also will be tested in at least one location for their usefulness in creating age-friendly interventions.

The research leading to the Guide has yielded many rich findings worldwide, as well as connections among researchers concerned with ageing and the environment. With the support of the Institute of Aging of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, collaboration among researchers is being encouraged to advance knowledge about ageing in urban settings. Technical research papers are planned that will describe more fully the concept and methodology of the WHO-led research, more closely examine age-friendly settings in relation to active ageing, and reveal evidence of the convergences between ageing, urbanization and globalization – the major forces shaping the 21st century that are central to this project.

As stated earlier, the present research did not focus specifically on the cross-cutting active ageing determinants of gender and culture, although their effects are mentioned sporadically in this Guide. For example, it is observed in many cities that men are less engaged in social activities than women, and the situation of many older women is described in the barriers faced by economically disadvantaged groups in many areas of urban living. Further focused research, involving collaboration among cities in different regions of the world, will be conducted to address these specific determinants, beginning with an initiative led by the New York Academy of Medicine on the theme of "ageing in a foreign land".

Finally, non-urban communities must also become more age-friendly. In many countries, older people constitute a high percentage of the population in rural and remote areas as a consequence of the emigration of younger people. Canadian federal and provincial governments are leading a project to identify the age-friendly community features in several small towns and villages, and the results will eventually be shared worldwide.

There is already much enthusiasm for disseminating and adopting the Guide and checklist. New initiatives and collaborators in a worldwide network are welcome. Active ageing in supportive, enabling cities will serve as one of the most effective approaches to maintaining quality of life and prosperity in an increasingly older and more urban world.

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