

W.H.O Age Friendly Cities

Overview

- 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 operative word in age-friendly social and physical urban settings is enablement.
- The purpose of this Guide is to engage cities to become more age-friendly.
- In practical terms, an age-friendly city adapts its structures and services to be accessible to and inclusive of older people.
- By 2030, about three out of every five people in the world will live in cities.
- 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.
- To be sustainable, cities must provide the structures and services to support their residents' wellbeing and productivity.
- The outside environment and public buildings have a major impact on the mobility, independence and quality of life.
- Decline can be influenced at any age through individual and public policy measures, such as promoting an age-friendly living environment.

Living Environment

- In many cities, older people feel insecure and particularly fear living alone.
- 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.
- Design for diversity has emerged as a prime characteristic of an age-friendly city.
- 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.
- In an age-friendly city the natural and built environment anticipates users with different capacities.
- An age-friendly city emphasizes enablement rather than disablement.
- Age-friendly cities can only result from an integrated approach centred on how older people live.

Age Friendly Buildings

- The features that are considered necessary for buildings to be age-friendly are ;
 - 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.
 - elevators
 - escalators
 - ramps
- In cities we see a need to improve the accessibility of the buildings, particularly to facilitate wheelchair access.
- When located close to where older people live to enable them to have easy access to these services and facilities.

Age Friendly Footpaths

- The condition of pavements has an obvious impact on the ability to walk in the local area.
- Features to make pavements age-friendly are;
 - 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.

Safe Pedestrian Crossings

- It is suggested that the crossing lights have a visual countdown.

Walkways and cycle paths

- Walkways and cycle paths are seen as part of a health promoting, age-friendly environment.

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.

Age Friendly 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.

Age Friendly Housing

- 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.
- 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
- In cities at all stages of development, it is recommended that affordable housing be available for older person.

Housing Options

- A range of housing options in the local area to accommodate changing needs is regarded as an important age-friendly feature.
- The need for more housing options for older people is stressed.
- Seniors' housing also needs to be affordable to be age-friendly.
- Concern is expressed about creating large seniors' housing complexes.

Access to Services

- The provision of services to older people in their homes is important.
- Older people are very attached to their homes and do not want to move.
- Living close to services and facilities is also seen as an age-friendly feature.

Design

- Several aspects of housing design are considered to affect the ability of older people to live comfortably at home including ;
 - Appropriate bathroom and kitchen facilities.
 - Appropriate storage space.
 - Large enough doors, hallwayss and rooms to accommodate a wheelchair.

Modifications

- The ability to modify one's house or apartment also affects the ability of older people to continue to live comfortably at home.
 - Chairlifts are a good example in assisting to help older people to continue to live independently in their homes.
- Financial assistance provided for home modifications would be of benefit to the older community.

Maintenance

- It is suggested that the local municipality maintain a list of dependable repair services that are prepared to deal with older people.