Age-Friendly Cities and Communities: WHO and Canadian Initiatives

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• Louise Plouffe, Ph.D.
Outline

- WHO Age-Friendly Cities Guide: Purpose, concept, methodology, results
- WHO Age-Friendly Cities Global Network Implementation
- Development of Age Friendly Communities (AFC) in Canada
- AFC Strategic Directions
What is an Age-Friendly City?

- Inclusive and accessible urban environment that promotes *active ageing*
Project Goal

• Identify the essential features of an age-friendly city:
  ✓ Raise public awareness
  ✓ Stimulate and guide local action
Originality of the WHO Age Friendly Cities Project

• Many similar initiatives already (Livable Communities; AdvantAge; elder-friendly communities)

• But:
  – Global – Involves cities in developing and developed countries as equal partners
  – Founded on WHO *Active Ageing* policy framework
"Active ageing is the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age."
Active Ageing is a life-long process

Early Life
- Growth and development

Adult Life
- Maintaining highest possible level of function

Older Age
- Maintaining independence and preventing disability

Disability threshold

Range of function in individuals

Rehabilitation and ensuring the quality of life

Source: Kalache and Kickbusch, 1997
Influenced by interacting determinants
Figure 6. Age-friendly city topic areas
Research Protocol

• Identify age-friendly features and barriers across the eight domain

• Focus groups with older persons \( (n = 8-10) \) essential
  - Age 60-74 and 75+
  - Lower and middle SES (neighbourhood)

• Focus groups with caregivers as proxies for severely disabled older persons

• Focus groups with service providers (public, private and voluntary sectors)
Age-Friendly Collaborating Sites

**AMERICAS**
- Argentina, La Plata
- Brazil, Rio de Janeiro
- Canada, Halifax
- Canada, Portage La Prairie
- Canada, Saanich
- Canada, Sherbrooke
- Canada, Ottawa
- Costa Rica, San Jose
- Jamaica, Kingston
- Jamaica, Montego Bay
- Mexico, Cancun
- Mexico, Mexico City
- Puerto Rico, Mayaguez
- Puerto Rico, Ponce
- USA, Portland, Oregon

**AFRICA**
- Kenya, Nairobi

**EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN**
- Jordan, Amman
- Lebanon, Tripoli
- Pakistan, Islamabad

**SOUTH-EAST ASIA**
- India, New Delhi
- India, Udaipur

**WESTERN PACIFIC**
- Australia, Melbourne
- Australia, Melville
- China, Shanghai
- Japan, Himeji
- Japan, Tokyo

**EUROPE**
- Germany, Ruhr
- Ireland, Dundalk
- Italy, Udine
- Russia, Moscow
- Russia, Tuymazy
- Switzerland, Geneva
- Turkey, Istanbul
- UK, Edinburgh
- UK, London
Guide and Checklist Released
October 2007

Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide

Checklist of Essential Features of Age-friendly Cities

- The checklist of essential age-friendly city features is based on the results of the WHO Global Age-Friendly Cities project consultation in 50 cities in 22 countries.
- This checklist is intended to be used by individuals and groups interested in making their city more age-friendly.
- The checklist, along with detailed case studies, is included in the WHO Global Age-Friendly Cities Guide.

Outdoors spaces and buildings:
- Public areas are clean and pleasant.
- Green spaces and outdoor seating are sufficient in number, well maintained and safe.
- Pavements are well maintained, free of obstructions and designed for pedestrians.
- Pavements are non-slip, wide enough for wheelchairs and have dropped curbs to road level.
- Pedestrian crossings are sufficient in number and safe for people with different levels and types of disability, with marked crossings, visual and audio cues and adequate crossing times.
- Crosses give way to pedestrians at intersections and pedestrian crossings.
- Cycle paths are separate from pavements and other pedestrian walkways.
- Outdoor safety is promoted by good street lighting, police patrol and community education.

Transportation:
- Public transportation costs are reasonable, clearly displayed and affordable.
- Public transportation is reliable and frequent, including at night and on weekends.

Services are oriented toward older people.
- Special customer service arrangements are provided, such as separate areas or service counters for older people.
- Buildings are well-lit inside and outside, with sufficient seating and tables, accessible elevators, ramps, railings and stair, and non-slip floors.
- Public toilets are clean and there are sufficient in number, clean, well maintained and accessible.

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WHO Ageing and Life Course Programme
What did older people say is, and is not, ‘age-friendly’?
"There are few seating areas. You get tired and you need to sit down." (Melville, AU)
• "The lives of many seniors revolve around the existing transportation system" (Dundalk, Ireland)
Much information is available but finding needed information is complicated (Moscow, Russia)

"As your faculties begin to fade, this kind of thing appears to cause more in terms of stress" (Halifax, Canada)
Age-friendly social environments

People would notice if you weren't at mass (Dundalk, Ireland)

Older people feel they can participate in different areas and with people of all ages (La Plata, Argentina)

The doorman is really nice, he looks after 4 people in my building (Copacabana, Brazil)
Age un-friendly social environments

The solution must be for older residents to strive to accept new residents as their companions“ (Tokyo, Japan)

I feel intimidated in a store where I can’t afford to buy what I need.
We don’t go outside at night— they might kill you. (Tuymazy, Russia)

“Villages became empty. Now the villagers become older in cities“ (Istanbul, Turkey)

They look at you as if your “use-by” date has passed and won’t serve you (Melville, Australia)
WHO Global Network of Age Friendly Cities

- Global movement of cities engaged in age-friendly development using the WHO approach.
- Goals:
  - Provide technical support and training
  - Linkage
  - Exchange of information and best practices
  - Foster appropriate, sustainable and cost-effective interventions
- Individual municipalities and state-sponsored networks linking to WHO
  - e.g., France, Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Canada
WHO Network Criteria

- Municipal commitment
- 4-stage, 2yr process
  - Establish mechanisms to involve older people throughout
  - Develop a baseline assessment in the 8 WHO domains
  - Develop a 3 yr action plan
  - Identify indicators to monitor progress
Canada has been engaged since the beginning

- PHAC funding to WHO to develop the *Guide*
- 4 Canadian cities in original WHO project (Saanich, BC, Portage la Prairie, Sherbrooke, Halifax)
- F/P/T governments developed companion *Age Friendly Rural and Remote Communities Guide* with 10 communities in 8 provinces
Why Canada’s interest?

- Alignment of WHO project with healthy aging/active aging policy directions in several jurisdictions
- Opportunity to increase visibility and credibility by association with WHO
Age-Friendly Communities in Canada

- Officially Recognized AFC

![Map of Canada showing the distribution of Age-Friendly Communities](image-url)
Age-Friendly Saanich: a practical AFC example

Implemented:

• New design guidelines for major retail centres
• Bench dedication program
• Sidewalk improvements
• Improved access to transit
• Adaptable housing regulations;
• Improved housing options (affordable, intergenerational, service proximity);
• Volunteer opportunities for older residents
• Emergency preparedness training and promotion
• Seniors’ Day open house at City Hall
• Enhanced voting opportunities for older people
### AFC Strategic Directions

#### Positive health outcomes for older Canadians and reduced health inequalities

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<td>Age friendly in mainstream in most Canadian communities</td>
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<th>Intermediate results</th>
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<td>Demonstrated AFC capacity and action</td>
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<td>Inter-organizational, inter and intra-sectoral and multi-sectoral engagement</td>
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Strategic Engagements

- Federal: AFC Reference Group, with F/P/T, municipalities, seniors, NGO, academic
- Provinces: OGD, municipal planning, business, public health, NGOs, seniors, academic
Policy Development

Current focus
- AFC implementation milestones
- Pan-Canadian AFC Recognition Program
- Branding

Emerging
- Apply AFC to target public health and aging issues, eg falls prevention, older immigrant services.
- Align age-friendly approach with other community initiatives, eg, child health
AFC Milestones

- Council resolution to embark on an AFC initiative;
- Establishment of an advisory committee (with active engagement of seniors);
- Development of an action plan;
- Public posting of the action plan;
- Commitment to measuring activities and reporting publicly on action plan outcomes (e.g., ongoing or every 3-5 years).
An AFC recognition framework would:
- Outline roles and responsibilities of partners
- Provide context and overall vision
- Demonstrate commitment of provinces, territories and the Public Health Agency of Canada to working together to advance AFC
- Respect provincial and territorial authority to scope and administer their own recognition initiative
Knowledge Development and Exchange

- AFC Community of Practice
- Research, knowledge syntheses and KT
- Community outcome indicators: measure changes and impacts
Last words

• Design for the young and you exclude the old; design for the old and you include the young.

— Bernard Isaacs, Birmingham Centre for Applied Gerontology

Louise.a.plouffe@phac-aspc.gc.ca