

Islands District Council Action Plan for Improving the Age-friendliness of Islands District, Hong Kong

Background

In response to the global ageing population, the World Health Organization (the “WHO”) devised the concept of “Global Age-friendly Cities” in 2005 to encourage cities all around the world to develop a healthy and comfortable living environment with age-friendly facilities and provide sufficient community support and health care services which benefit the older people, family and society. In order to proactively tackle the challenges of an ageing population and promote the concept of an age-friendly city, the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust launched the Jockey Club Age-friendly City Project (“Project”) in 2015 in partnership with four gerontology research institutes of local universities, including CUHK Jockey Club Institute of Ageing, Sau Po Centre on Ageing of the University of Hong Kong, Asia-Pacific Institute of Ageing Studies of Lingnan University (“LU APIAS”), and Institute of Active Ageing of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. The four institutes have formed professional teams under this project to support eighteen districts in Hong Kong to adopt a bottom-up and district-based approach to develop age-friendly communities.

Under the Project, LU APIAS conducted a baseline assessment, which comprised questionnaire surveys, focus group interviews and field observation from July 2015 to February 2016 in order to provide relevant information to the Islands District Council and other district stakeholders on the existing age-friendliness of the Islands District, Hong Kong (“District”). Senior residents in the District have also been recruited as ambassadors to spread the messages of age-friendly city. Training workshops and seminars have been arranged to equip them with necessary skills and knowledge to perform qualitative research by making assessment in the District with reference to the eight domains of the “Age-friendly City”. Meanwhile, the residents are encouraged to express their views regarding age-friendly facilities and measures in the community. LU APIAS has compiled the results of baseline assessment, including questionnaire surveys, focus groups and observations by the ambassadors, into a baseline assessment report. The report, together with this action plan for improving the age-friendliness of the District, will be submitted to WHO for joining its Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities.

Islands District as a member of WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities – Cycle of four stages

The following four stages recommended by WHO will be implemented in the District:-

<p>Stage 1: Planning (2016-2017)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kick-off of the Jockey Club Age-friendly City Project • Recruit and train the elderly to be age-friendly city ambassadors • Collect feedback and information from elderly participants • Develop and implement a 3-year district-wide action plan • Discuss baseline assessment findings and action plan through Islands Healthy City and Age-friendly Community Working Group under Islands District Council, and set indicators to monitor progress of the plan
<p>Stage 2: Implementation (2017-2019)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement action plan • Monitor progress of action plan using specified indicators • Establish appropriate mechanisms to involve older people • Submit best practice to WHO annually
<p>Stage 3: Progress Evaluation (2019-2020)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Council to review the action plan and draft a long-term action plan to continue the work of age-friendly city in the District
<p>Stage 4: Continual Improvement (2020)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular meetings of the Islands Healthy City and Age-friendly Community Working Group to review and discuss the age-friendly city development • Regular report to WHO

Age-friendly city in Islands District, Hong Kong

The *Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide* outlines the following eight domains of an age-friendly city:

- (1) Outdoor spaces and buildings
- (2) Transportation
- (3) Housing
- (4) Social participation
- (5) Respect and social inclusion
- (6) Civic participation and employment
- (7) Communication and information
- (8) Community support and health services

Funded by the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, a baseline assessment was conducted by LU APIAS from July 2015 to February 2016. A total of 500 residents were interviewed through questionnaire surveys and five focus groups were conducted. Comments on the progress of age-friendliness improvements and suggestions were collected. LU APIAS analysed the age-friendliness of the existing environment and services to the elderly and gave recommendations for future improvements. A bottom-up participatory approach has been adopted to involve older people in the District to give their feedback and suggestions since they are the ultimate beneficiaries under the Project.

Under the Project, elderly ambassadors attended a series of training workshops on the concept of age-friendly city and ways to assess the eight domains of age-friendly city which enabled them to conduct site investigations in the District. Results of questionnaire surveys, focus group interviews and observations by ambassadors have resulted in suggestions on enhancing the age-friendliness of the District, listed in accordance with the eight domains of age-friendly city. NGOs and government departments will be invited to provide updates on the action plan and follow-up actions taken, as the District continues to work towards being an age-friendly city.

Islands District Council
Action Plan and Timeline for Improving Age-friendliness of Islands District, Hong Kong

Rating based on the questionnaire results (score from 1 to 6)

✓ = Fair (scored 2.5 to 3.5 out of 6)

✓✓ = Average (scored 3.51 to 4.5 out of 6)

✓✓✓ = Good (scored 4.51 to 6 out of 6)

- = not applicable or cannot be indicated from the questionnaire survey

Remarks:

* The rating is based on the mean scores of corresponding items from the questionnaire results.

* Suggestions and follow-up actions are based on comments collected from focus groups.

	Age-friendly City Domains	WHO Checklist		Suggestions and Follow-up actions	
				Short Term	Long Term
1	Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	1.1 Public areas are clean and pleasant.	✓✓	1. Provide suggestions for suitable minor works programmes, such as road repair works and installation of direction signs and shelters.	1. Assess and review the sufficiency of existing facilities and infrastructure in the district with relevant government bureaux/ departments to cater for residents' needs.
1.2 Green spaces and outdoor seating are sufficient in number, well-maintained and safe.		✓✓			
1.3 Pavements are well-maintained, free of obstruction and reserved for pedestrians.		-			
1.4 Pavements are non-slip, wide enough for wheelchairs and have dropped curbs to road level.		-			

	Age-friendly City Domains	WHO Checklist		Suggestions and Follow-up action	
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1	Outdoor Spaces and Buildings (Con't)	1.5	Pedestrian crossings are sufficient in number and safe for people with different levels and types of disability, with nonslip markings, visual and audio cues and adequate crossing time.	-	<p>2. Relay views to the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) with a view to improving the problem of shop front extensions.</p> <p>2. Provide suggestions of suitable locations for the “Universal Accessibility Programme” of the Government, through which barrier-free access facilities will be installed at suitable locations.</p> <p>3. Encourage and appeal to the private sector for providing specialised customer services (e.g. banking services) for older people in the district through appropriate publicity and public education programmes.</p>
		1.6	Drivers give way to pedestrians at intersections and pedestrian crossings.	✓✓	
		1.7	Cycle paths are separate from pavements and other pedestrian walkways.	✓	
		1.8	Outdoor safety is promoted by good street lighting, police patrol and community education.	✓✓	
		1.9	Services are situated in close proximity and are accessible.	✓✓	
		1.10	Special customer service arrangements are provided, such as separate queues or service counters for older people.	✓	
		1.11	Buildings are well-signed outside and inside, with sufficient seating and toilets, accessible elevators, ramps, railings and stairs, and non-slip floors.	✓✓	
		1.12	Public toilets outdoors and indoors are sufficient in number, clean, well-maintained and accessible.	✓✓	

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2	Transportation	2.1	Public transportation is affordable and related information is consistent and clearly displayed.	✓✓	<p>1. Continue to provide advice on traffic and transport matters through the Traffic and Transport Committee under the Islands District Council.</p> <p>2. The Traffic and Transport Committee under the Islands District Council to support community activities promoting road safety.</p>	<p>1. Discuss the possibility of introducing transportation service within sub-communities and on outlying islands through the Traffic and Transport Committee of the Islands District Council or meetings with the relevant government departments.</p> <p>2. Work with the relevant government departments to evaluate the capacity of transportation on Lantau Island, especially in the restricted traffic zones during holidays.</p>
		2.2	Public transportation is reliable and frequent, including at night and during weekends and holidays.	✓✓		
		2.3	All city areas and services are accessible by public transport, with good connections and well-marked routes and vehicles.	✓✓		
		2.4	Vehicles are clean, well-maintained, accessible, not overcrowded and have recognized priority seating.	✓✓		
		2.5	Specialized transportation is available for disabled people.	✓		
		2.6	Drivers stop at designated stops and beside the curb to facilitate boarding. Drivers also wait for passengers to be seated before driving off.	✓✓		
		2.7	Transport stops and stations are conveniently located, accessible, safe, clean, well-lit and well-marked, with adequate seating and shelter.	✓✓		

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2	Transportation (Con't)	2.8	Complete and accessible information is provided to users about routes, schedules and special needs facilities.	✓✓	
		2.9	A voluntary transport service is available where public transportation is limited.	✓	
		2.10	Taxis are accessible and affordable, and drivers are courteous and helpful	✓✓	
		2.11	Roads are well-maintained, with covered drains and good lighting.	✓✓	
		2.12	Traffic flow is well-regulated.	✓✓	
		2.13	Roadways are free of obstruction that block drivers' vision.	✓✓	
		2.14	Traffic signs and intersections are visible and well-placed.	✓✓	
		2.15	Driver education and refresher courses are promoted for all drivers.	-	
		2.16	Parking and drop-off areas are safe, sufficient in number and conveniently located.	-	
		2.17	Priority parking and drop-off spots for people with special needs are available and respected.	-	

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3	Housing	3.1	Sufficient, affordable housing is available in areas that are safe and close in proximity to services and the rest of the community.	✓✓	<p>1. Provide home modification services and promote the existing maintenance services to older people in need through appropriate community programmes</p> <p>2. Relay views to the relevant government departments regarding law enforcement on illegal dumping of waste.</p>	<p>1. Relay views to the relevant government departments regarding evaluation of housing design and policy for the elderly (e.g. promote the Harmonious Families Priority Scheme (HFPS) of Housing Department, which offers priority to applicants of public rental housing with elderly family members, to live in one flat or two nearby flats according to their choice of district and the number of flats available for their family situations; provision of maintenance services to elderly residents) residing in public housing estates</p>
		3.2	Sufficient and affordable home maintenance and support services are available.	✓		
		3.3	Housing is well-constructed and provides safe and comfortable shelter from the weather.	✓✓		
		3.4	Interior spaces and level surfaces allow freedom of movement in all rooms and passageways.	✓✓		
		3.5	Home modification options and supplies are available and affordable, and providers understand the needs of older people.	✓		
		3.6	Public and commercial rental housing is clean, well-maintained and safe.	-		
		3.7	Sufficient and affordable housing for frail and disabled older people, with appropriate services, is provided locally.	✓		

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4	Social Participation	4.1	Venues for events and activities are conveniently located, accessible, well-lit and easily reached by public transport.	-	<p>1. Encourage NGOs to consider the preferences and needs of different genders while planning social activities.</p> <p>2. Encourage service providers and NGOs to continue the existing promotion or activities to strengthen neighbourhood support networks.</p>	<p>1. Encourage the local elderly centres and NGOs to evaluate the existing barrier-free facilities in the centres.</p> <p>2. Discuss with the relevant government departments regarding the possibility of establishing elderly centres and elderly gathering spots on outlying islands.</p>
		4.2	Events are held at times convenient for older people.	-		
		4.3	Activities and events can be attended alone or with a companion.	✓✓✓		
		4.4	Activities and attractions are affordable, with no hidden or additional participation costs.	✓✓		
		4.5	Good information about activities and events is provided, including details about accessibility of facilities and transportation options for older people.	✓✓		
		4.6	A wide variety of activities is offered to appeal to a diverse population of older people.	✓✓		
		4.7	Gatherings engaging older people are held in various local community spots, such as recreation centres, schools, libraries, community centres and parks.	✓✓		
		4.8	There is consistent outreach to include people at risk of social isolation.	✓✓		

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5	Respect and Social Inclusion	5.1	Older people are regularly consulted by public, voluntary and commercial services on how to serve them better.	✓✓	<p>1. Encourage NGOs to organise activities to promote intergenerational harmony</p> <p>2. Local NGOs to carry out more age-friendly city ambassador trainings for promoting respect and social inclusion.</p>	<p>1. Encourage cooperation between the Elder Academy and schools to promote a spirit of respect among students</p>
		5.2	Services and products to suit varying needs and preferences are provided by public and commercial services.	✓✓		
		5.3	Service staff is courteous and helpful.	✓✓		
		5.4	Older people are visible in the media, and are depicted positively and without stereotyping.	✓✓		
		5.5	Community-wide settings, activities and events attract all generations by accommodating age-specific needs and preferences.	-		
		5.6	Older people are specifically included in community activities for “families”.	-		
		5.7	Schools provide opportunities to learn about ageing and older people, and involve older people in school activities.	✓✓		
		5.8	Older people are recognized by the community for their past as well as present contributions.	✓✓✓		
		5.9	Older people who are less well-off have good access to public, voluntary and private services.	-		

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6	Civic Participation and Employment	6.1	A range of flexible options for older volunteers is available, with training, recognition, guidance and subsidies.	✓✓	<p>1. District Council members to continue gathering comments from local residents, including older people, through various means, such as the Meet the Public Scheme.</p> <p>2. Cooperate with NGOs to promote the importance of the elderly's contribution to the society.</p> <p>3. Relay views to NGOs and other organisations, such as the Airport Authority, to employ the elderly and create more suitable part-time job opportunities</p>	<p>1. To establish an age-friendly working group under the Islands District Council, which has 1/4 of members as elderly, to serve as a platform to collect residents' opinion.</p> <p>2. Appeal to all sectors, with the assistance of relevant government departments, for promoting elderly employment</p> <p>3. Collect local residents' views on any proposed changes on land use through meetings with District Council members.</p>
		6.2	The qualities of older employees are well promoted.	✓✓		
		6.3	A range of flexible and appropriately paid opportunities for older people to work is promoted.	✓		
		6.4	Discrimination on the basis of age alone is forbidden in the hiring, retention, promotion and training of employees.	✓✓		
		6.5	Workplaces are adapted to meet the needs of disabled people.	-		
		6.6	Self-employment options for older people are promoted and supported.	-		
		6.7	Training in post-retirement options is provided for older workers.	-		
		6.8	Decision-making bodies in public, private and voluntary sectors encourage and facilitate membership of older people.	-		

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7	Communication and Information	7.1	A basic, effective communication system reaches residents of all ages in the community.	✓✓	<p>1. Encourage NGOs to implement appropriate community programmes to promote communication and information exchange among older people (e.g. training for older people on the use of instant messaging apps on smartphones)</p> <p>2. Encourage NGOs to form clansmen groups for effective communication of non-Cantonese-speaking older people.</p>	<p>1. Relay views to the relevant government departments and private service providers regarding the coverage of mobile network on Lantau Island</p>
		7.2	Regular and widespread distribution of information is assured and a coordinated, centralized access is provided.	-		
		7.3	Regular information and programmes of interest to older people are offered.	✓✓		
		7.4	Oral communication accessible to older people is promoted.	-		
		7.5	People at risk of social isolation get one-to-one information from trusted individuals.	✓✓		
		7.6	Public and commercial services provide friendly, person-to-person service on request.	-		
		7.7	Printed information – including official forms, television subtitles and text on visual displays – is usually in large fonts and the main ideas are shown by clear headings and bold-face type.	-		
		7.8	Print and spoken communication uses simple, familiar words in short, straightforward sentences.	-		

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7	Communication and Information (Con't)	7.9	Telephone answering services give instructions slowly and clearly and offer options for callers to repeat the message.	✓✓	
		7.10	Electronic equipment, such as mobile telephones, radios, televisions, and bank and ticket machines, has large buttons and big lettering.	✓✓	
		7.11	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 public libraries.	✓✓	

	Age-friendly City Domains	WHO Checklist		Suggestions and Follow-up action	
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8	Community and Health Services	8.1	An adequate range of health and community support services is offered for promoting health.	✓✓	1. Encourage NGOs to organize appropriate community programmes to enhance support for older people and their carers 2. Appeal to the Hospital Authority to evaluate the
		8.2	Home care services include health and personal care and housekeeping.	✓✓	
		8.3	Health and social services are conveniently located and accessible by all means of transport.	-	

	8.4	Residential care facilities and designated older people's housing are located close to services and the rest of the community.	✓✓	<p>existing services of North Lantau Hospital.</p> <p>3. Appeal to the Hospital Authority for further improving the telephone appointment system for outpatient clinics</p> <p>3. Review the possibility of carrying out the concept of "medical and social integration" to provide health care services.</p> <p>4. Relay views to the relevant government bureaux/departments to improve the existing transportation services between the district and service facilities.</p>
	8.5	Health and community service facilities are safely constructed and fully accessible.	-	
	8.6	Clear and accessible information on health and social services for older people is provided.	-	
	8.7	Delivery of services is coordinated and administratively simple.	-	
	8.8	All staff are respectful, helpful and trained to serve older people.	-	
	8.9	Economic barriers impeding access to health and community support services are minimized.	✓✓	
	8.10	Voluntary services by people of all ages are encouraged and supported.	-	
	8.11	There are sufficient and accessible burial sites.	✓	
	8.12	Community emergency planning takes into account the vulnerabilities and capacities of older people.	✓	

Reference: World Health Organization. (2007). *Global age-friendly cities: A guide*. World Health Organization.