

# Application for the WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities

## Letter of commitment from the Mayor

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To whom it may concern,

Gangbuk-gu is preparing to be a proud member of WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and has been building networks and sharing information with other member cities, to allow the elderly to contribute to the growth of local community, to create the urban infrastructure for that will make the life of elderly more comfortable and to become a local community where everyone live in harmony.

Gangbuk-gu has become an aged municipality in 2013, when the ratio of elderly population, 65 years or older, reached 14.1%. As of the end of December 2017, the ratio of elderly population reached 16.8%, which equaled to 54,813 persons. This was the highest ratio among the autonomous districts in Seoul. The ratio is anticipated to reach beyond 20%, and Gangbuk-gu will become a super-aged municipality in 2021. In addition to the sharp growth of the proportion of elderly population, Gangbuk-gu has a relatively high ratio of the low-income class elderly of 8.6%. Gangbuk-gu is especially in need of an age-friendly environment.

I have implemented the most integrated and innovative strategies to create the age-friendly city to achieve one of the goals of Gangbuk-gu, 'Healthy 100, Hopeful Gangbuk,' and I am here to be with the WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities for the first time among the Seoul's autonomous districts, to achieve that goal.

As it was mentioned earlier, the vision of Gangbuk-gu for the age-friendly city (AFC) is summarized by the slogan of "Healthy 100, Hopeful Gangbuk." Translated into English more liberally, it would be 'AFC Gangbuk'. The vision focuses largely on three aspects of:

1. the convenient AFC Gangbuk;
2. the healthy AFC Gangbuk; and
3. the harmonious AFC Gangbuk.

Under these three aspects are the 8 areas the age-friendly cities pursue.

Gangbuk-gu will:

- create physically age-friendly environments, including comfortable houses; parks and forests that promote outdoor activities; roads easy to walk; and easily accessible modes of transportation; and
- actively and continuously implement integrated health management projects and policies that will provide personalized health management and win-win health policies where the residents and medical service providers work together, so that the elderly can avoid suffering from chronic diseases, reduce their financial burdens from medical treatments and be full of energy.

The number of elderly living alone is sharply increasing as the nuclear family became a trend. A growing number of elderly who live alone are socially isolated, attempting suicides or dying alone in the absence of proper care.

I would like to make Gangbuk-gu a community where the elderly feel proud of themselves, take part in the social activities and share their experiences; the young respect the elderly; and the young and the old live in harmony.

The 'WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities' is a great opportunity for Gangbuk-gu to achieve my goals. I would like to learn the best practices of other cities, so that I can apply them to Gangbuk-gu with appropriate modifications and improvements to create the 'Healthy 100, Hopeful Gangbuk' where not only the elderly but also everyone are comfortable and safe.

With the WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities, Gangbuk-gu will become a sustainable community of future where:

the elderly can live dignified and respected life;  
the people can plan for healthy future in eco-friendly environment;  
and  
the people live in harmony.

Thank you!

Park, Gyum-soo  
Mayor of Gangbuk-gu  
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