

Creating Age-friendly Cities and Neighborhoods: Lessons from New York City

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For the past five years, the Age-friendly New York City initiative has been transforming New York City to make it more inclusive of the 1.4 million older adults who live there. Designing and enacting hundreds of 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' initiatives, the project has become a model for large and small cities around the world.

The 'top-down' approach involves city leadership - the mayor, city council, all city agencies and a commission of leaders from the public and private sectors - improving policy and practice to better include older adults in street life, city parks, retail businesses, workplaces, cultural institutions and community organizations. The 'bottom-up' strategy includes older adults as leaders in guiding all improvements - through community consultations, neighborhood-level aging improvement districts and an age-friendly ambassadors program.

Evaluations of individual components of the program have shown great progress - from improved pedestrian safety to profitability for participating local retail stores. This presentation will share lessons learned with other organizations, communities and individuals interested in making their cities more age-friendly.

The Age-friendly NYC initiative is a partnership of the Office of the Mayor, the New York City Council and The New York Academy of Medicine. The New York Academy of Medicine is the World Health Organization's Collaborating Center on Aging, Urbanization and Globalization and provides strategic assistance to cities around the world implementing age-friendly initiatives.