Social Inclusion and Age-friendly Communities

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Outline

- Urbanisation and Ageing.
- Ageing-in-place.
- Social inclusion/exclusion.
- Challenges and Opportunities.

ESRC Place-Making Project

ESRC *Place-Making with Older Adults: Towards Age-Friendly Communities (2016-19).*

Website: http://placeage.org/en/

Twitter: @placeage

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Urbanisation and Ageing

- By 2030 two-thirds of the population will be living in cities.
- At least a quarter of those urban populations will be aged 60 plus.
- ‘Architectural disability’ – barriers to social participation as a result of a poorly designed environment.
- Cities marketed to a young, urban elite – older adults seen as antithetical to the bright, vibrant city.
- Processes of urbanisation have tended to exclude older adults.

Social Exclusion

"Social exclusion is a complex and multi-dimensional process. It involves the lack or denial of resources, rights, goods and services, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people in a society, whether in economic, social, cultural or political arenas. It affects both the quality of life of individuals and the equity and cohesion of society as a whole" (Levitas, 2007, p. 9)

Ageing-in-place

- **Ageing-in-place**: *the preferred environment to age is at home and in the community.*
- Providing older adults can retain a sense of independence.
- Ability to remain in the home depends on ‘assets and resources’.
- Ageing-in-place becomes more difficult over time with health and physical problems. **Ageing-in-the-[*right*]-place?**

Older adults as a ‘resource’

- Old age seen as a period of deterioration and weakness.
- ‘Apocalyptic’ demography.
- Older adults want to make a positive contribution into old age.
- **Old age as an ‘opportunity’.**
- If we ensure older adults live **healthier** as well as longer lives, and have the opportunities to flourish then societies can **adapt to the ageing demographic.**

Old age – Social Inclusion?

- To support **independence, autonomy, choice** (as key markers of social inclusion)
- To provide the supports (physical, social and cultural) for older adults to **age-in-place**?
- To challenge the **discrimination and stigmatisation** that often excludes older people?
- To enable opportunities for older adults to assume **meaningful roles** in society?
- To ensure **equitability in respect of access** to services?

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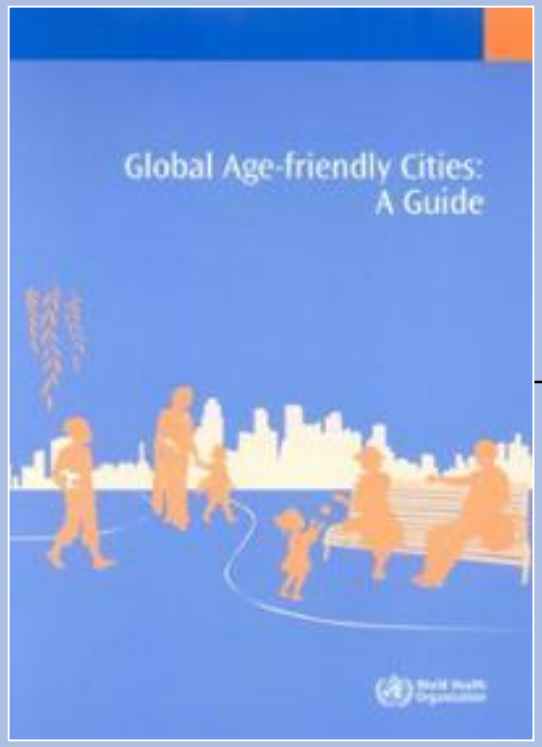
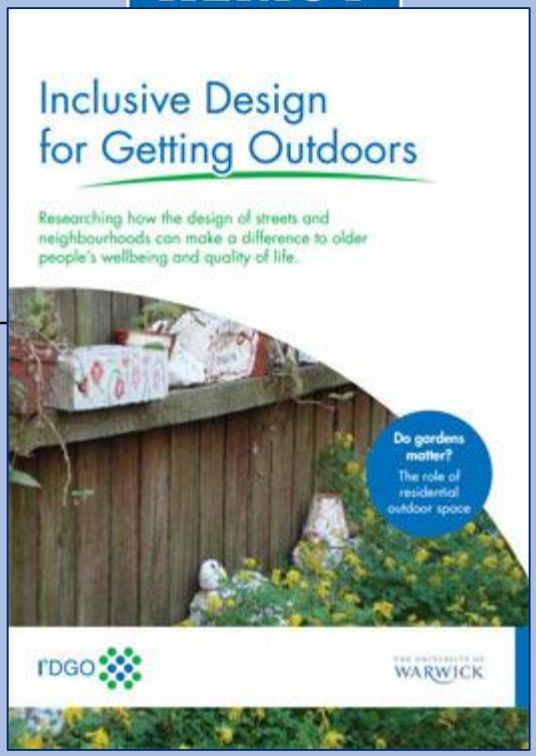
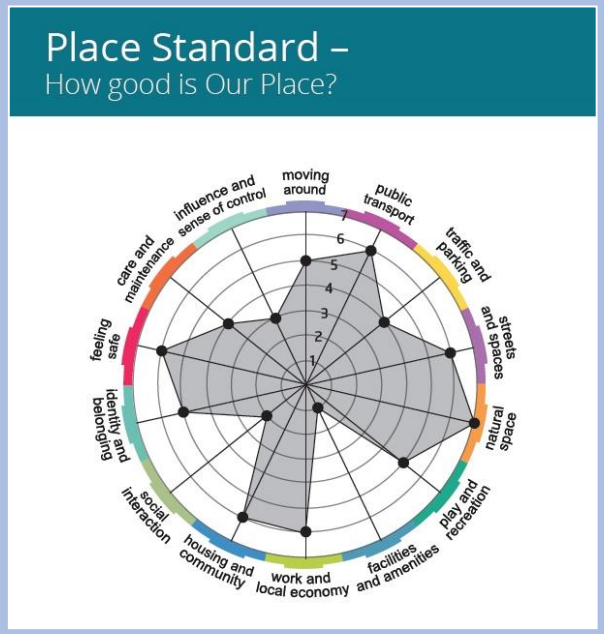
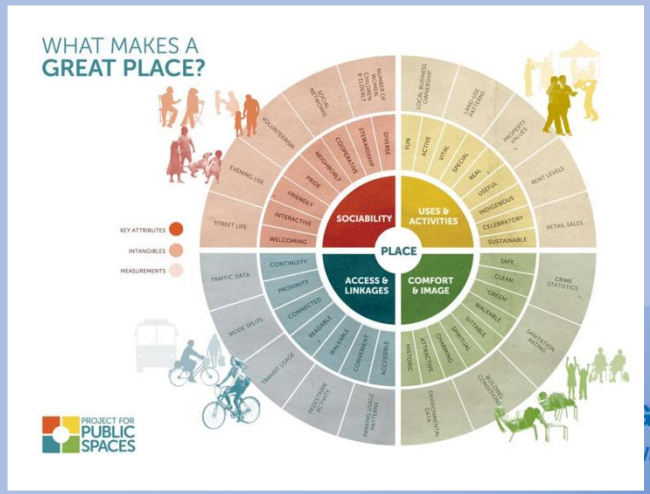


Working to become
Dementia
Friendly
2015-2016







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WHO Age-friendly City domains

- Social participation
- Respect and social inclusion
- Civic participation and employment
- Housing
- Transportation
- Outdoor spaces and public buildings
- Community support and health services
- Communication and information

Generic guidelines.

Checklist against which communities can be measured.

Assumes a homogeneity to old age.

- ☐ 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 RESERVED FOR PEDESTRIANS.
- ☐ PAVEMENTS ARE NON-SLIP, ARE WIDE ENOUGH FOR WHEEL-CHAIRS 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 NONSLIP MARKINGS, VISUAL AND AUDIO CUES AND ADEQUATE CROSSING TIMES.
- ☐ DRIVERS 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 PATROLS AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION.
- ☐ SERVICES ARE SITUATED TOGETHER AND ARE ACCESSIBLE.
- ☐ SPECIAL CUSTOMER SERVICE ARRANGEMENTS ARE PROVIDED, SUCH AS SEPARATE QUEUES OR SERVICE COUNTERS FOR OLDER PEOPLE.
- ☐ BUILDINGS ARE WELL-SIGNED OUTSIDE AND INSIDE, WITH SUFFICIENT SEATING AND TOILETS, ACCESSIBLE ELEVATORS, RAMPS, RAILINGS AND STAIRS, AND NON-SLIP FLOORS.
- ☐ PUBLIC TOILETS OUTDOORS AND INDOORS ARE SUFFICIENT IN NUMBER, CLEAN, WELL-MAINTAINED AND ACCESSIBLE.

Outdoor spaces and getting around

- Barriers in terms of outdoor space and getting around.
- Lack of ‘resting points’, potholes, A-frames, temporary disruptions e.g. roadworks.
- Social participation often seasonal. Fall hazards as a barrier.
- Does not matter how age-friendly community is in terms of service provision if getting to the end of the street is impossible.

Communities eroding around older adults

HEC
YP11 ZGD

Rights in terms of accessibility

"Since the COPD has got worse I haven't been able to get out of the house. As an able-bodied person, I was out every day, in the community, visiting friends. I loved living here. I didn't really pay attention to things like stairs and lifts and if this or that door can fit a wheelchair. Now I hate the community I live in. Why can I not access things? Why should it be so difficult? Why is this allowed?"

Transportation

- Loss of driving licence – significantly impacted independence.
- Convenience of transport nodes; bus routes and schedules; bus shelters; lighting.
- Respect – from transport providers and users.
- Transport that supports a ‘whole journey’ approach **i.e. A to Z and back again.**
- Free bus services often have eligibility criteria – prevents people travelling as a group.

Respect and social inclusion?

"I have dementia so I sometimes get confused and forgetful when I am out. I was on the bus going to [daughter's house] when I forgot where I was going and why I was getting on the bus. I struggled to remember how much the bus fare was… and couldn't count my change. The bus driver got really annoyed and frustrated with me. I just got off the bus in the end. Haven't been on one since."

Safety and Security

- Key barrier and facilitator to social inclusion.
- Perception of crime often higher than actual crime.
- Knowing others and place familiarity decreased fear of crime.
- In our study safety and security related to levels of deprivation – **though not in the way you would think.**

Housing and Home

- Home often the location where social relationships are maintained.
- Passive activities meaningful to some; often wrongly interpreted as isolation.
- Sheltered accommodation and other assisted living potentially beneficial in terms of SI - however, models often inconsistent.
- Housing options limited - *right*sizing not downsizing.
- Housing in a community of choice and co-located next to transport and services and amenities.

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Access and Negotiation of Key Services

- Access to services for older adults can be problematic – often depending on others.
- Older adults often find it difficult to navigate the services they need – lack of integrated, joined-up care.
- Older people seen as requiring ‘special’ attention, which is often viewed as patronizing – stops people accessing services.
- Information and communication – awareness of services.

Social Participation

- Formal opportunities for social participation – e.g. book clubs, dancing, gardening, arts and crafts etc.
- ‘Negotiating access’ can be difficult.
- Social participation often framed around opportunities for social engagement with friends and family.
- **Perceived inability** Vs actual inability.
- Negative perception of community centres as being for the ‘very old’. Often reflected in the types of activities offered.
- Individual skills and lifelong learning.
- Do not always have to be ‘inclusive’.

WOMENS
CENTRE
ESTD
1989

Civic Participation

- Can be important in bringing about the services that older people need.
- Evidence of older adults being involved in civic groups e.g. community council, tenants groups.
- However, voice not always heard. Can be demoralising/disenchanting for some.
- Mental burnout – ‘representing’ the community.

Right to Participate

"When things are happening in the community, they do ask us to come along. We go along and have our say. Yet they go ahead with what they were going to do anyway. It's like older people are often heard but seldom listened to…. It's our community as well."

Volunteering and Work

- Transition into retirement not always easy – escalated risk of social exclusion for some.
- Volunteering ‘formal’ e.g. charity shops.
- Volunteering ‘informal’ e.g. upkeep of community.
- Mostly driven by altruistic means.
- People unsure how to volunteer or volunteering opportunities not support of older adults lives.

Technology and Ageing

- Commonly used to feel better informed (e.g. health advice) and more socially connected (Skype, e-mail and online communities).
- Older people primarily use the internet to: shop, learn about health issues.
- More instruction and support is needed for seniors e.g. computer clubs.
- Courses need to reach those that are housebound – role of ‘older champions’.

Intergenerational Communities

- Age-friendly not necessarily focused on OLDER PEOPLE.
- Envisaging the community that we all want – inclusive of age.
- Inter-generational supports that can enable ageing-in-place.
- e.g. inter-generational spaces, mutual supports, two way transfer.
- Not about older adults being ‘cared for’.

Intercultural Supports

- Cities perceived as melting pots where difference is embraced.
- Age-friendly communities may on the surface appears inclusive.
- Often masks cultural differences where the needs of certain groups of older adults are excluded.
- Experiences of the city and expectations in respect of age-friendliness might be different.

Rights to the City

Rights to the city – not just ability to navigate in and around a given place or access services but the *right to participate in and shape the city?*

New forms of urban citizenship and governance are needed.

Challenging Existing Practice

- Work with older adults to identify barriers and facilitators to the delivery of AFC – active ageing, social participation and independence.
- Challenge existing principles of urban planning and development that exclude older adults.
- Prototype and design solutions for age-friendly communities.
- Old age is not homogenous. Cities are diverse.
- Develop recommendations for policymakers and practice.

SOUTH BANK
MARINA

WORKSHOP ITINERARY

AFC – Social Inclusion

- Social inclusion not likely to be solved by one sector alone.
- Joined up/national strategy – yet need to prioritise the issue at a local level.
- Health, housing, transport, environment.
- Need cross-sectoral working – reflected in some AFC plans e.g. Age-friendly Manchester.
- Different levels of resources at a city and community level – need for low cost solutions.

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Conclusion

- Promoting and building in inter-generational supports into communities.
- Understanding intersectionality and its role in designing AFC.
- Need to understand experiences of ageing across different groups and design flexibility into AFC models.
- Role of information and communication in helping people to navigate the services.
- Outreach for the hardest to reach older adults in the community.