

LEE LI MING PROGRAMME IN AGEING URBANISM

Recreational Spaces for Older Population¹

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Population ageing is a cause of concern for cities around the world, especially Asia. It is changing in both size and age composition. According to the most recent United Nations statistics, population ageing is taking place in nearly all the countries of the world.³ The number of persons aged 60 and over is projected to increase from the present 841 million to more than 2 billion (21% of projected global population) by 2050. The demographic structure of cities have evolved such that the number of older people aged 60 and over is projected to outnumber young children (under age 5) in 2047, thus increasing the burden on the working population. If population projections are correct, the future

older population will be more affluent, educated and ambulant. Yet, many cities are inadequately prepared to meet the changing needs, hopes and aspirations of the older population. In addition to housing, there is a need to provide adequate outdoor recreational spaces. Outdoor spaces matter. They play a key part in countering ageism, enabling the older adults to live more active and healthy lives and improving their overall quality of life.

What kind of recreational spaces will increase quality of life as we age?

Play is a vital need in enhancing the quality of life for all ages, especially the elderly. Research suggests that meaningful play among the older population greatly helps to foster connectedness, cultivate oneself and others, and contribute to society. A corroboration of literature findings aims to elucidate how recreational spaces around the world can facilitate meaningful, and active usage by their older population. The goal is to highlight creative concepts, models and practical solutions to address senior citizens' psycho-social needs.

1 This is an evolving database. We will be adding more examples and cases over time.

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3 UN World Population Ageing 2013.