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Preface

Ageing vitally in the age-friendly city. Every citizen of The Hague should have the opportunity to live as independently as possible and be able to participate in the community. Most people can live independently and do so without assistance, but due to old age, illness or a handicap at times it can be difficult.

Many citizens of The Hague in such a situation get support from the people around them and are therefore able to continue to live by themselves. That is essential, but it is equally important that people are continuously challenged to actively participate in the community. The municipal authorities want to stimulate that and thus collaborates with all partners in the city: citizens, companies, social institutions and interest groups.

The municipality collects wants and ideas and makes an effort to implement them in cooperation with care providers and welfare organizations. Many companies of The Hague find it important to be there for all citizens of The Hague and make an effort to facilitate that. For example by adapting their services to the wishes and needs of senior citizens or people with a disability. Or by having their mechanics or deliverers keep an eye out so they can offer help or have help offered when needed.

The Hague has an increasing number of innovative companies and start-ups with appealing services and products that enable people to stay healthy for a longer period of time, enabling them to maintain their independence for longer. All in all this makes The Hague the age-friendly city of The Netherlands!

Karsten Klein
Deputy Mayor and Alderman for Economic Affairs and Healthcare
The Hague
Age-Friendly City

Alongside Amsterdam, Utrecht, and Rotterdam, The Hague is one of the four largest cities in the Netherlands. The Hague has a little over half a million inhabitants of which 51% are women. A relevant detail is that The Hague has a large population of migrants and expats. Over 140 nationalities live in The Hague. Therefore The Hague is called a city with super diversity. In The Hague 50.8% of the population has a non-Dutch origin.

The Hague is the first city in The Netherlands to join the network of Age-Friendly Cities of the World Health Organization (WHO). An age-friendly city encourages active ageing by optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age. In practical terms, an age-friendly city adapts its structures and services to be accessible to and inclusive of older people with varying needs and capacities. The WHO has defined eight areas of city living, including: information and communication, respect and social integration, social participation, community and health. We actively focus on enabling improvements in each of these areas of city living throughout the city of The Hague.

The Hague is a city where ageing citizens are inspired to stay active and vital. Social support is used to combat loneliness and enhance social participation and a sense of community. Local government working with the community ensures that neighborhoods are accessible and safe.
Research & Results

The basis of our action program Age-Friendly city is a thorough research in which both Senior citizens of The Hague and professionals have participated. The age friendliness of all eight city districts has been reviewed using the eight domains of city life of the World Health Organization.

To make the findings of the research ‘what do senior citizens find important in order to stay vital’ clear, the results have been turned into an infographic. Based upon the findings, additional research was done resulting in a district’s score being better or worse than others and the action program “The Hague Age-friendly City” was initiated.

Below is an overview of the 8 domains of city life as defined in the WHO model. This model was also used by The Hague to test our age-friendliness. The infographic on the next page illustrates the results of our findings.

**Outdoor Spaces and Buildings**
- To what extent are the facilities and buildings accessible for senior citizens?
- Think for example of access with a wheelchair or rollator.

**Transportation**
- Are there sufficient possibilities regarding public transport and is it affordable?
- To what extent is the transport accessible for example when using a rollator?

**Housing**
- Does the city offer enough options for living for senior citizens and is it affordable?
- Is it easy to find out what options the municipality has to offer, for example in case of home modifications?

**Social Participation**
- Are there sufficient activities in the city, senior citizens can participate in to get in touch with other citizens?

**Civic Participation and Employment**
- Does The Hague offer enough options to keep working as an employee or as a volunteer?

**Communication and Information**
- Are senior citizens informed sufficiently and does the information provided meet their needs and abilities?
- Are there, for example, in addition to digital contact, avenues for personal contact to provide further clarification.

**Respect and Social Integration**
- Do public and private organizations have enough to offer for senior citizens?
- How does the media talk about senior citizens?

**Community Support and Health Services**
- Are the health care options in The Hague sufficient and are they easy to find? Are good health care and facilities affordable?

**1. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings**

**2. Transportation**

**3. Housing**

**4. Social Participation**

**5. Civic Participation and Employment**

**6. Communication and Information**

**7. Respect and Social Integration**

**8. Community Support and Health Services**

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**What’s important to senior citizens of The Hague?**

**1. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings**
- The Hague senior citizens: Good maintenance of green areas in neighbourhoods
- Sufficient benches in public areas
- Winter maintenance to prevent falls
- Cycle tracks without obstacles
- Sufficient benches in public areas
- Well-illuminated streets and pavements
- Wider cycle tracks
- Good maintenance of cycle tracks
- ATM machines
- Keep scooters out from cycle tracks
- Winter maintenance to prevent falls
- Sufficient benches in public areas

**2. Transportation**
- The Hague senior citizens: Good maintenance of cycle tracks and pavements
- Wider cycle tracks
- Sufficient bicycle parking spaces in the city centre
- Public Transport (OS): senior-friendly staff, high frequency of public transport in the evening, accessibility of stops and vehicles, stops close to home, free public transport for people over 60, 70 or 75
- Local bus: shorter waiting time and a greater distance

**3. Housing**
- The Hague senior citizens: Affordable lifetime homes for senior citizens
- Focus on accessibility of homes
- Feeling safe in one’s own home

**4. Social Participation**
- The Hague senior citizens: Promotion of participation in activities by senior citizens
- Affordable activities for senior citizens
- Community centres in every neighbourhood
- Neighbourhood Restaurants with a good ambiance and which are open and regularly accessible
- Cooperation between for example theatres, care institutions, sports clubs and the municipal authorities for senior citizens’ activities
- A knowledge centre to benefit from each other’s knowledge and expertise
- Meeting places to get in touch with neighbours
- Cooperation between family doctors, senior advisors, neighbourhood contact persons and elderly care professionals
- Initiatives to prevent social isolation among senior citizens

**5. Civic Participation and Employment**
- The Hague senior citizens: Refund of the costs made for voluntary work
- Affordable volunteer work for senior citizens in the job market

**6. Communication and Information**
- The Hague senior citizens: It must be clear for senior citizens who they can turn to with their questions

**7. Respect and Social Integration**
- The Hague senior citizens: Increase neighbourly help through representation of all ages in a neighbourhood

**8. Community Support and Health Services**
- The Hague senior citizens: Increase social networks for informal care
- Better quality of domiciliary care
- Involvement of the 60-70 year old with persons over 80 who are in need of help
- Provide a means of compensation for informal care
**Action program**

The Hague Age-Friendly City is the policy agenda which addresses the senior citizens (65+) in The Hague. Goal of the policy is to enable every senior citizen to participate in our society (coalition program).

To do so the municipal policy is based on three priorities:

- Improve vitality;
- Reduce loneliness;
- Encourage and facilitate continuous living in your own environment (instead of care facilities).

Essential in implementing these priorities is that we don’t have a top-down approach, but we try to motivate the (senior) citizens and organisations of The Hague to have a particular role in this. As a local government we try to create an environment that encourages our citizens to take initiative and responsibility. Through partnerships with corporations, small and medium enterprises, and organisations, the municipality of The Hague creates alliances on specific themes. We facilitate these alliances through financial means from the municipality and our partners. Bottom line in every project or activity concerning the elderly is that it has to meet the needs and preferences of the senior citizens in The Hague.

**Improve vitality of senior citizens**

The first priority in our action program is improving vitality of our The Hague senior citizens. This is a shift in focus in our policy from vulnerability to vitality. It’s interesting what senior citizens are able and willing to do. Less interesting is what they aren’t able to do anymore. How can the elderly stay vital and still enjoy life? That’s our primary focus regarding this priority. During the whole year the municipality facilitates activities and awareness campaigns to promote vitality. A good example of an active promotion is ‘The month of Vitality’. This is an annual event scheduled in October. Since the first Friday of October is the National Day of the Elderly, this usually is our starting point.

“Active ageing with physical and mental vitality in the Age-Friendly City.”

**Vitality award**

The Vitality award is an award of appreciation for initiatives of citizens of The Hague to work towards a senior-friendly city. The Vitality award stimulates citizens of The Hague (both local residents and organizations) to be actively involved with the city. With your initiatives you inspire each other to remain vital and to combat loneliness.

The initiatives, provided they are workable, may vary from small to large and must be applicable to a variety of themes such as: social restaurants, coaching in using new media or safe online payments, dementia-friendly shops but also ideas about the use of internet, a senior-friendly walking area or a walking buddy in the neighbourhood.

Prior to the award ceremony, gatherings in each city district are organized during which the submitted initiatives are presented and discussed. Also ideas that need some help from other parties, can be submitted. The Vitality award brings together various parties from which collaborations may be formed.

With the help of good ideas and great initiatives the municipality can improve the liveability of the city even more. The Vitality award is presented in each city district to organizations or local inhabitants who develop initiatives to be active and involved with the city.

**Month of Vitality**

The Month of Vitality is a theme specifically aimed at senior citizens to participate and stay active. All sorts of activities are organized by various companies and organizations throughout the city. The activities they organize are described on the “Month of Vitality” website [www.maandevandevitaliteit.nl] and in a special festival newspaper insert.

During the Month of Vitality, partners of the city and local organizations are called upon to organize activities for senior citizens. These activities can include sports, cultural activities or activities that stimulate senior citizens to be an active part of their communities such as classes that teach them how to use smart devices such as tablets and smartphones.
Common in The Hague

The platform ‘Common in The Hague’ [Doodgewoon in Den Haag] considers it essential that citizens of The Hague make conscious decisions with regards to the last phase of their lives. The objective of ‘Common’ is to expand the possibilities of dying a dignified death by the citizens of The Hague. The platform stimulates ‘becoming the director of your last stage of life.

In collaboration with organizations in the field of healthcare and end-of-life care services, the platform wants to increase the awareness of this theme among the citizens of The Hague. And subsequently break the taboo regarding dying and death.

The Platform ‘Common in The Hague’ is a connecting link between all institutions that offer services to citizens of The Hague concerning death. Furthermore, the platform wants to reinforce the network of such institutions and optimize the collaboration.

Among the actions performed by the platform are the recording of life stories of people during their last stage of life, an activity which is performed by younger citizens. This happens during gatherings where people eat and talk to each other, such as several locations of Resto VanHarte. These life stories form a source of inspiration for events that are organized by the Platform ‘Common in The Hague.’

Golden Plates

The Golden Plates [Gouden Bordjes], is an appreciation for excellent provision of meals in the elderly care. Among others, in accordance with the principle for the elderly by the elderly but also in cooperation with professionals of various professional backgrounds.

The Golden Plates are meant to continuously inspire institutions to improve the offer of meals. The Golden Plates started as an initiative in 2011 and celebrated its fifth anniversary in 2016 in cooperation with those that are active in the health care industry of The Hague and Deputy Mayor and Alderman Karsten Klein (Economic Affairs and Healthcare) and other professionals.

In 2012 the Golden Plates was granted the acknowledgment “Good Practice & Idea” by Genero. Genero (cooperation partner of Erasmus Medical Centre, Rotterdam-Rijnmond region) regards the Golden Plates as a support of the improvement of health care and welfare for senior citizens. The set-up of the Golden Plates aims at activities with regards to meals that in time will lead to an integral supply of care and support. Which then aims at an improvement of self-reliance. This also helps in combatting loneliness among senior citizens because it increases the number of opportunities for getting in touch with other senior citizens, in an attractive environment with good service.
Community against Loneliness

As part of the ‘Community against Loneliness’ (Community tegen Eenzaamheid) various parties in The Hague look for solutions to combat loneliness. This results in surprising collaborations between organizations, companies and citizens. In December 2015, the green light was given to the Community against Loneliness, during a Christmas lunch with 800 senior citizens on the Pier of Scheveningen.

The Community against Loneliness started as a collaboration of entrepreneurs, professionals and volunteers, who were all looking for chances and opportunities to combat loneliness. In recent past coalitions were created between ADO Den Haag (local soccer club), Xtra(welfare), Pathé cinemas, Buddy Network, Resto VanHarte, and migrant senior citizens. As this is only the beginning.

The Community against Loneliness of The Hague is more to than meets the eye, and unexpectedly brings together people and organizations while adding brilliance to life.

Diverse The Hague

The Hague is a diverse city where citizens feel recognized and play a role which suits them. This ideal connects organizations that are active in advocacy, community service, sports, welfare, healthcare, education and government.

Staff members, volunteers and persons in need of care ask themselves: what does this mean for our organizations, what does it mean to me, what is needed to do that, who is of importance to do this?

Since 2009 these organizations have gone around with each other within Diverse The Hague [Divers Den Haag]. A lot has been accomplished already: organizations increasingly draw clients with diverse backgrounds, and services are more tailored to a diversity of people in the city. An increasing number of staff with a diversity of backgrounds find positions within these organizations. Knowledge and know-how is growing and within organizations a stronger and broader awareness for the need of connecting and staying connected at all levels in the ever changing city, is growing.

Hence, Diverse The Hague works on broadening both the number of organizations and their level of knowledge on the subject matter. Thus promoting the dialogue between organizations and people, both on the inside and out.
The new policy in The Hague also pays more attention to the support of vulnerable senior citizens who have problems with structure in their daily life. This at times combined with the symptoms of dementia requires that their informal caregivers provide them with activating daytime activities and social networking opportunities. In recent years dementia meeting places have been setup by healthcare and welfare providers as initiated by the municipality. In addition the city has setup day care facilities for senior citizens. In the next few years some of these facilities, as listed below, will be further developed. This is necessary because of the increasing number of independently living senior citizens with issues ranging from lack of a daily structure through dementia.

Facilities that require further development are:

- A close-knit network of day care centers in their own neighborhood where senior citizens and their informal caregivers can ask for support, coaching, and use of day care facilities in their nearby surroundings.
- Centers where informal caregivers can count on contact with fellow sufferers and respite care.

"Cultural participation gives surplus value for the quality of life and for the personal development of senior citizens."

The Cultural Canvas is a triptych which is used by our partners to further promote cultural participation.

The triptych consists of the following:

- What do senior citizens of The Hague consider important with regards to arts and culture?
- A sufficient amount of inspiring examples
- What can healthcare, welfare and cultural institutions do to inspire senior citizens to do more with arts and culture

"Cultural participation gives surplus value for the quality of life and for the personal development of senior citizens."

- Support for a large group of older local residents and their informal caregivers in their respective neighborhoods
- The threshold to participate in support programs will be removed as much as possible by further simplifying the processes
- A wide variety of support programs aimed at enjoyment of life and vitality
- Ownership for both users and/or local residents must be encouraged
- Funding should be unambiguous

Cultural Canvas

Cultural participation of senior citizens forms an integral part of our policy as a senior-friendly city. Cultural participation does not only contribute to participating independently and actively in society. It also provides more possibilities to deliver tailor-made work and make connections between welfare organizations, healthcare providers on the one hand and cultural institutions on the other hand. To implement the above mentioned, we use our self developed Cultural Canvas. The Cultural Canvas is a triptych which is used by our partners to further promote cultural participation.

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