

Cheat Sheet

Ageing Population:

ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS
IN SINGAPORE



Introduction

According to the United Nations report entitled World Population Ageing 2013,

“Population ageing is taking place in nearly all the countries of the world. Ageing results from decreasing mortality, and, most importantly, declining fertility. This process leads to a relative reduction in the proportion of children and to an increase in the share of people in the main working ages and of older persons in the population. The global share of older people (aged 60 years or over) increased from 9.2 per cent in 1990 to 11.7 per cent in 2013 and will continue to grow as a proportion of the world population, reaching 21.1 per cent by 2050.”



“Globally, the number of older persons (aged 60 years or over) is expected to more than double, from 841 million people in 2013 to more than 2 billion in 2050. Older persons are projected to exceed the number of children for the first time in 2047”.

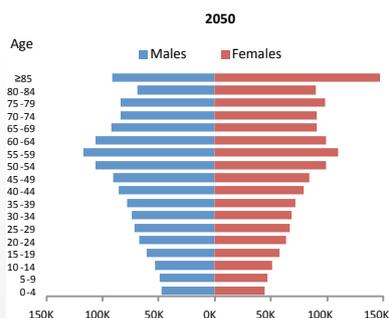
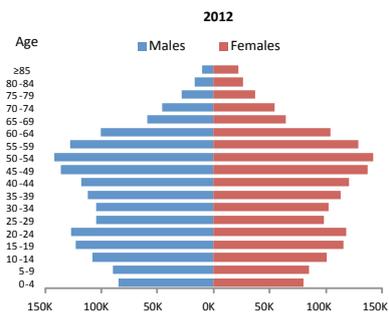


The report also highlighted countries that are or will be facing this issue such as China, Germany, Hong Kong, Japan and Taiwan.

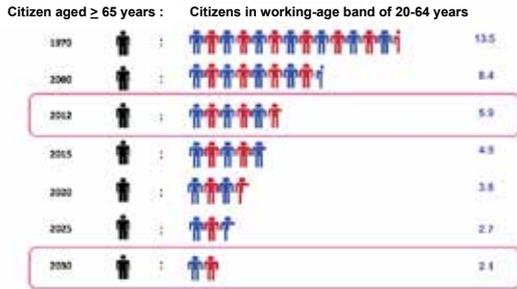
Source: United Nations. “World Population Ageing 2013”.

Ageing population in Singapore

Singapore’s population is ageing rapidly. Based on the projected Singapore profile below (which is taken from the Singapore Population White Paper), the population age demographic trends will shift significantly, and by year 2050, female citizens will outnumber their male counterparts.



With reference to the economic load, the support ratio between working-age and elderly citizens will fall to 2.1 by 2030, as shown in this illustration below.



Sustainable Elderly-friendly Environment

The World Health Organisation's concept of active ageing refers to:

“...the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age.”



To help ease the load, there are plans to raise the retirement age to 67 by 2017. Employers too are urged to increasingly tap on this group of experienced old age workers.

Various government agencies led by the Ministry of Social and Family Development and Ministry of Health are working hand in hand, along with private sectors and individuals, in the provision of a concerted and synchronized eldercare system.

While the Singapore Government provides the necessary support and infrastructure to build a conducive environment for dignified ageing, it is critical for the elderly population to embrace active ageing in their daily lives. The Committee on Ageing Issues in its report of 2006, recommended 8 broad strategies and efforts to deliver them are still on-going.

Key Strategies

Outcome 1: Elder-friendly housing

- Provide different housing options
- Help seniors to monetize their housing assets

Source: Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports. Committee on Ageing Issues: Report on the Ageing Population. (June 2016, pp. ii – iv).

Outcome 2: Barrier-free society

- Make all HDB precincts barrier-free
- All new public buses should be elder-friendly

Outcome 3: Holistic affordable healthcare & eldercare

- Top up Medisave Accounts when Government shares budget surplus
- Family practitioner based holistic care for seniors

Outcome 4: Active lifestyles and well-being

- Promote more programmes and services for seniors
- Build on strong family ties to ensure that the family continues to be the first line of support



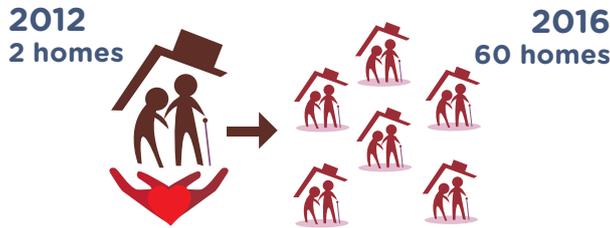


DID YOU KNOW? NEWS ARTICLE HIGHLIGHTS

Community Eldercare System

Given that some 83, 000 seniors will be living alone by 2030, plans are underway to provide support to these seniors. Through a new coordinated system, Singapore will be divided into zones. Community eldercare in each zone will be overseen by an anchor operator. Up to five senior activity centres will be set up in each zone and the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) will appoint the anchor operator.

GROUP HOMES FOR LONE SENIORS TO LIVE TOGETHER



Source: Tai, Janice. 2014, April 19. The Straits Times.

Enrichment Programmes

Organizations such as the International Longevity Centre Singapore and the People's Association's Active Ageing and Family Life division have been organizing programmes on topics such as financial literacy, health, fitness and wellness for the elderly. It is understood that PA's Active Ageing and Family Life unit has reached out to about 230, 000 men and women (aged 50 and above) through various activities such as dancing, brisk-walking, singing, handicraft and cooking.



Source: Ng, Jane. 2013, December 28. The Straits Times.

Elder-friendly Features

By the year 2030, the number of citizens aged 65 and above is set to triple to 900, 000. To cater to the needs of the elderly, it is understood that since 2013, the Ministry of Health has been initiating programmes such as City for All Ages and Enhancement for Active Seniors or EASE, for which, through the provision of grants, organizations could embark on projects that enhance their elderly-friendly features. Some of the improvements made for the elderly include retrofitting toilets with grab bars and non-slip floors. The Housing and Development Board is also supporting EASE as part of its Home Improvement Programme (HIP).



Source: Ng, Jane. 2013, December 28. The Straits Times.

Forging Intergenerational Ties

The Council for Third Age (C3A) has been conducting the Intergenerational Learning Programme (ILP) since 2011. Some 6, 000 students and seniors have been benefitting from this programme which saw seniors picking up skills in information technology, social media and photography. These hands-on lessons are conducted by students from primary and secondary levels right up to the polytechnics and the Institute of Technical Education.



Source: Teo, Joyce. 2015, September 29. The Straits Times.

Positive Social Engagements

Since 2013, the Council for Third Age's Kopi and Toast programme has been providing opportunities for the elderly to be socially engaged through a mentoring scheme for new or recent retirees. Mentors and mentees enjoy learning from one another by picking up new hobbies and skills such as photography, computer and cooking.

Source: Teo, Joyce. 2015, September 29. *The Straits Times*.

The National Senior Volunteer Month is organized by the RSVP Singapore, an organization for senior volunteers. This campaign is aimed at raising awareness of senior volunteerism and has attracted about 3,000 sign-up.

Source: Goy, Priscilla. 2015, October 16. *The Straits Times*.



Skills Upgrading for Women

A study by the Institute of Policy Studies noted that women live longer. In 2007, there were 982 males per 1,000 females. For 2011, the age projection for males and females were 79.6 years and 84.3 years respectively. The Women's Initiative for Ageing Successfully or Wings was set up with the aim to "empower women with knowledge and skills to lead healthy and happy lives, including talks and short training courses". Currently, Wings offers certificate programme for confinement nannies. This is a joint collaboration with the KK Women's and Children's Hospital. It is understood that some 100 nannies have been trained, some of whom include grandmothers who have the experience of raising their own children.

Source: Ng, Jane. 2013, February 12. *The Straits Times*.



Debunking Stereotypes

- Seniors can contribute in the building of civic, cultural and spiritual outcomes in a society.
- As invaluable assets to society, seniors can contribute through volunteering, childcare, care of other adults and charitable giving.

Source: Lee, Chew Chiat. 2014, May 12. *The Straits Times*.

DISCLAIMER: Readers are advised to visit the relevant websites for more updates on the on-going efforts to manage this issue which requires a multi-dimensional approach.

Information Literacy

Online resources via Internet

There are many types of resources that are published on the Internet. To search for specific document type, you can use these recommended strategies and keywords:

- 📁 Ageing population filetype:pdf
- 📁 Ageing population filetype:ppt

You can also refine your search according to country. Add the specific country eg. Japan, Hong Kong, China, Germany etc. in your search as follows:

- 📁 Ageing population Japan filetype:pdf



http://www.nlb.gov.sg/sure/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Cheatsheet3_newspaper_FA.pdf

Newspaper articles

News reports provide excellent updates for current information on this topic. For more information on newspaper report, do refer to our Cheat Sheet edition entitled "Newspapers".

References:

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Tai, Janice. (2014, April 19). 'More help for lone seniors under new eldercare system'. *The Straits Times*, Top News, p. 3.

Teo, Joyce. (2015, September 29). Keep well with a positive attitude towards ageing. *The Straits Times*, Home, p. 13.

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