

Global issues in ageing and health

Policy challenges from the World Health Organization

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Thinking globally about ageing and health

- ✦ The WHO World Report on Ageing and Health was released in late 2015
- ✦ Its' goal is to improve health of older people in all world regions
- ✦ Its' approach pushes the boundaries of conceptualization of health
- ✦ It admonishes governments to do more



Thinking globally about ageing and health

- It uses an ecological framework to urge nations to take action to improve the lives of older people around the world



World Health Organization (2015). *World Report on Ageing and Health*.



Outline of the presentation

- A new definition of health
- Ageing and health in global context
- Key policy challenges
- Developing supportive environments
- Conceptualizing context
- Fostering full citizenship



An new definition of health

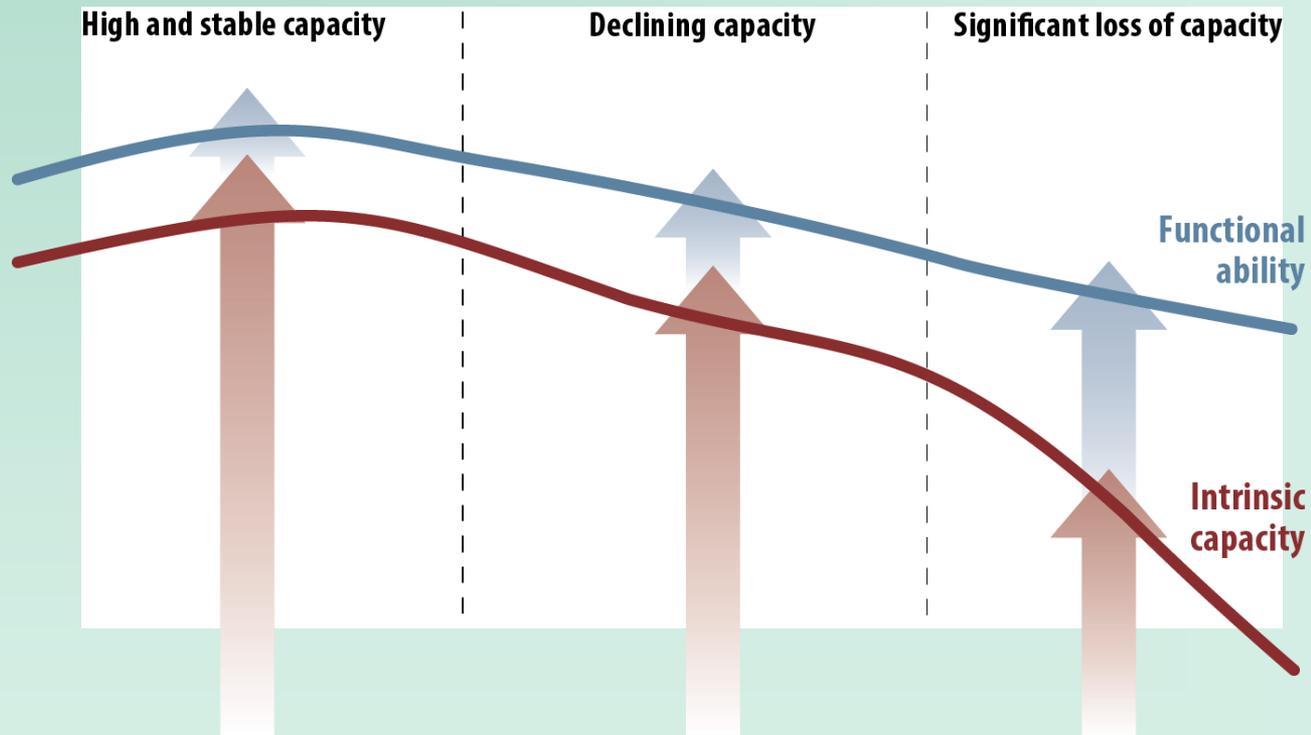
Functional ability

Health-related attributes that enable people to be and to do what they have reason to value. It is made up of the *intrinsic capacity* of the individual, relevant *environmental characteristics* and the interactions between them.

- ✦ **Intrinsic capacity** is the composite of all the physical and mental capacities of an individual
- ✦ **Environments** comprise all the factors in the extrinsic world that form the context of an individual's life



Components of healthy ageing



John R Beard, et al. (2015). The World report on ageing and health: a policy framework for healthy ageing. The Lancet. Published Online 28 October 2015. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(15\)00516-4](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(15)00516-4)

Ageing and health in global context

- **Healthy Ageing** is a process of developing and maintaining the ability to be and do what a person has reason to value (WHO definition)
 - Healthy ageing is the process of developing and maintaining a ‘good fit’ between a person and the contexts in which they live (an ecological definition).
- **Well-being** is the person’s assessment of their ability to be and do what they want to do. It comprises domains such as happiness, satisfaction and fulfilment (WHO definition)
 - Well-being is the outcome or indication of ‘goodness of fit’ between person and contexts (an ecological definition)

Adapted from the World Health Organization (2015) Global Report on Ageing and Health



WHO Key policy challenges

- Diversity in older age
- Rising inequities
- Stereotypes and ageism
- Differences in societal structures and beliefs



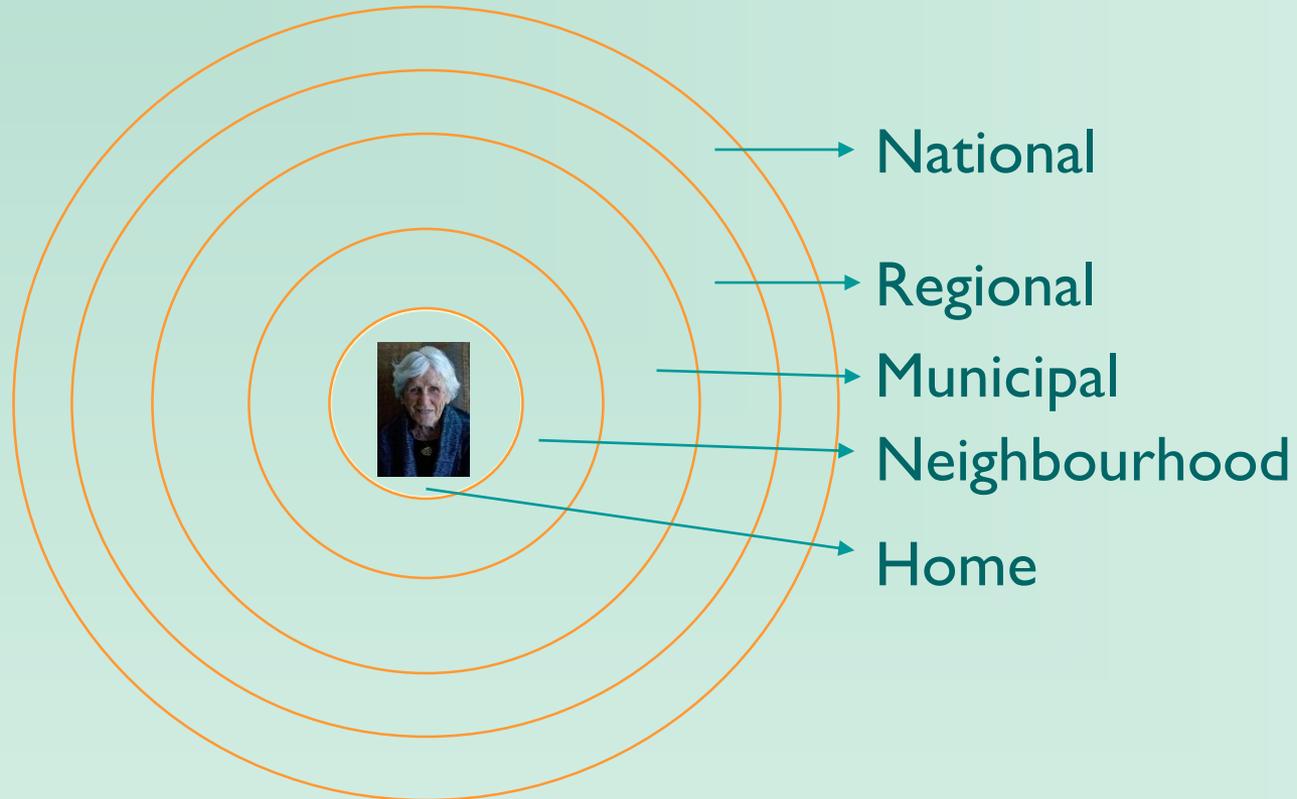
Developing supportive environments

- Need to respond to the WHO statement that “the health of older people is influenced not only by the systems providing health and long-term care but also *by the environments they live in and have lived in throughout their lives*”
- In policy terms we have given insufficient attention to the intersections among levels of policy creation and enactment. We address the question:

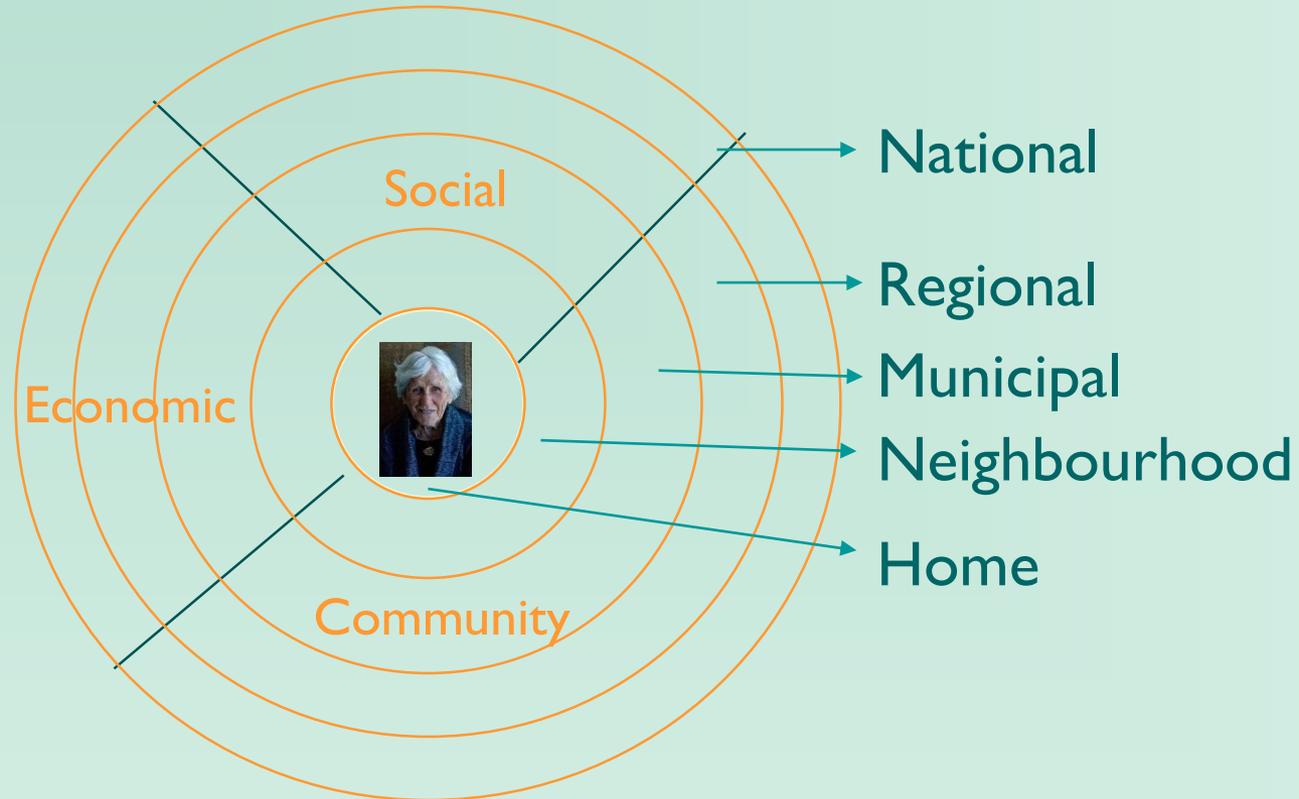
What are the challenges that policy has to address in order to enhance the well-being of older people?
- We draw on concepts of critical human ecology, age-friendly and liveability to suggest how we should address the challenges



Policy environments



Policy environments



Conceptual frameworks for understanding and informing policy at these intersections

- ✦ Critical Human Ecology
- ✦ Age Friendly Communities
- ✦ Liveability



Policy framework: Liveability

WHO definition of '*environment*' requires refinement to incorporate liveability if it is to succeed in recognizing the opportunities and constraints of environments in which people live.

- Recognising **diversity** of people and places
- Challenging **ageism**: Inclusion of older people as active citizens not passive recipients of services
- Reducing **inequity** toward full citizenship
- Accounting for **societal beliefs and structures**



Policy challenges in relation to WHO

- WHO says that no country can afford to be without policies for its older citizens
- Our reconceptualization gives us a new perspective on how and where to develop services and programs that take into account national beliefs and structures, regional and local inequities and that foster full citizenship of its older members



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