

Holistic and Comprehensive Strategy for Asian Ageing Society from the Perspective of "Active Ageing"

**-Implication from the Experiences
in Japan, Taiwan and Thailand-**

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Preface

Taking measures for the ageing society is an important issue shared not only by high-income nations but also by middle-income countries. In particular, many Asian countries have been facing a rapidly ageing population as the socioeconomic situation improves. In these circumstances, there is a strong demand for promoting measures for the ageing society and improving healthy life expectancy because these are global health issues today. The key concept for the situation is “Active Ageing”. The concept of “promoting healthy and Active Ageing” was stated in the outcome document of the 2016 G7 Ise-Shima Summit held in Japan, which is deeply involved in this topic.

WHO defines Active Ageing as “the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation, and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age.” In other words, for the sake of promoting Active Ageing, it is essential to further strengthen the tie between the elderly and community, as well as to develop social capital in cooperation with diverse stakeholders. Japan and other countries are now engaged in various initiatives for Active Ageing. Many such initiatives are unique and take root in local cultures, while there are also many efforts composed of general-purpose elements. Each country is expected to share its initiatives and problem awareness with other nations for better understanding about the measures for Active Ageing.

Staying healthy and living an active life in the community are the common desires of all people. Senior citizens’ thoughts and activities are important, while it is also necessary to actively shape a community where the elderly can live comfortably. Focusing on Japan, with the world’s highest ageing rate, facing rapidly ageing populations in recent years. Taiwan and Thailand

also have rapid ageing as well as Japan. This booklet introduces initiatives to improve the healthy life expectancy in the three countries and the results of the awareness survey conducted on the working generation regarding old age after retirement. We believe that the case examples and activities of the three nations in this booklet will offer many suggestions for updating future elderly health activities.

The projects introduced in this booklet were funded by the Toyota Foundation. We would like to extend our thanks to the foundation. Images of the projects of the countries in this booklet are included on the attached video. We hope that this booklet and video will be helpful for you.

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Chapter 1

Population Ageing and Active Ageing in the World



International trends in population ageing

The overall world population reached 7.38 billion people in 2015. The population is predicted to further increase and exceed 10.2 billion people by 2060. Senior citizens age 65 or older account for 8.3% of the overall population in 2015, estimated to increase to 17.8% by 2060. Going forward, the international community will almost certainly face a rapidly ageing population (Table1-1).

Social maturity due to an improved economic situation is often accompanied by population ageing. Issues resulting from an ageing society often used to be discussed only in developed areas, however developing areas will also rapidly be ageing over the next half century. Looking at the results by area, a rapidly ageing population is reported in many Asian countries (Figure1-1). The elderly population ratio in Asia is the same level as that of Japan about 40 years ago. Many of these areas are predicted to become ageing societies (the elderly accounting for 7% or more of the overall population) in 2010 and an aged society (14% or more) in 2035. The transition period from an ageing society to an aged society is 115 years in France, 85 years in Sweden, and 47 years in the United Kingdom, while Japan reached an aged society in the relatively short period of 24 years (Figure1-2). Looking at other Asian countries, Singapore is predicted to become an aged society in 17 years, South Korea in 18 years, and Thailand in 22 years, which is much faster than Japan, indicating that it is urgent for the Asian region to address the population ageing issue.

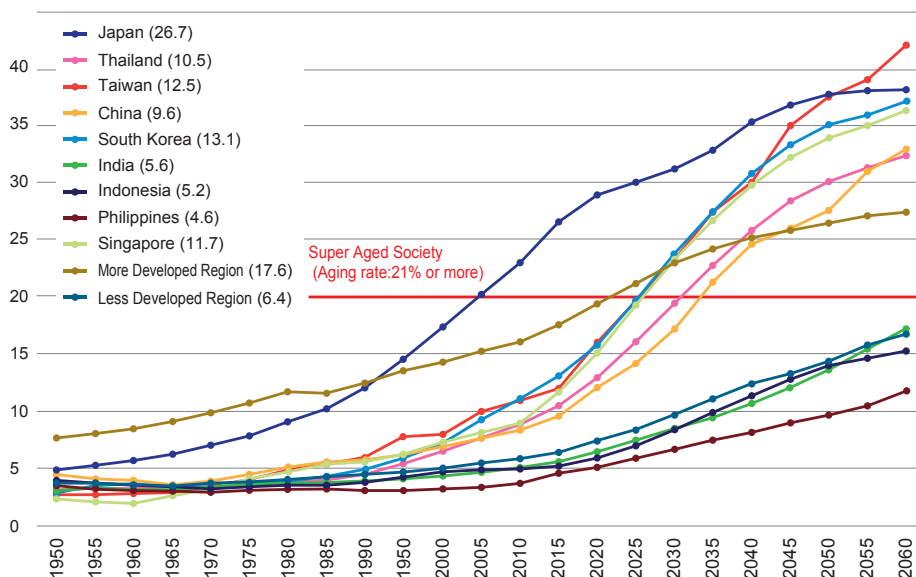
In particular, many developing countries will need to develop a social security system including pensions, health care, nursing care, etc. to cope with population ageing. Japan became the first country in the world to face an ageing population with a declining birthrate and has vast experience in this field. In order to cope with the population ageing issue shared by Asian countries, Japan is expected to strengthen the framework of cooperation with Asian countries to address the aged society, the social security system, and other relevant issues.

Table 1-1 Global Population Trends and Population Ageing

	1950	2015	2060
Overall population	2,536,275,000	7,383,009 ,000	10,222,598,000
Age 65 or older	128,815,000	611,897 ,000	1,817,264,000
More developed regions	62,744,000	220,572,000	357,701,000
Less developed regions	66,071,000	391,325,000	1,459,563,000
Ratio age 65 or older	5.1%	8.3%	17.8%
More developed regions	7.7%	17.6%	27.6%
Less developed regions	3.8%	6.4%	16.3%
Average life expectancy (men)	45.51 years	68.55 years	76.72 years
Average life expectancy (women)	48.5 years	73.11 years	81.09 years
Total fertility rate	4.9	2.5	2.1

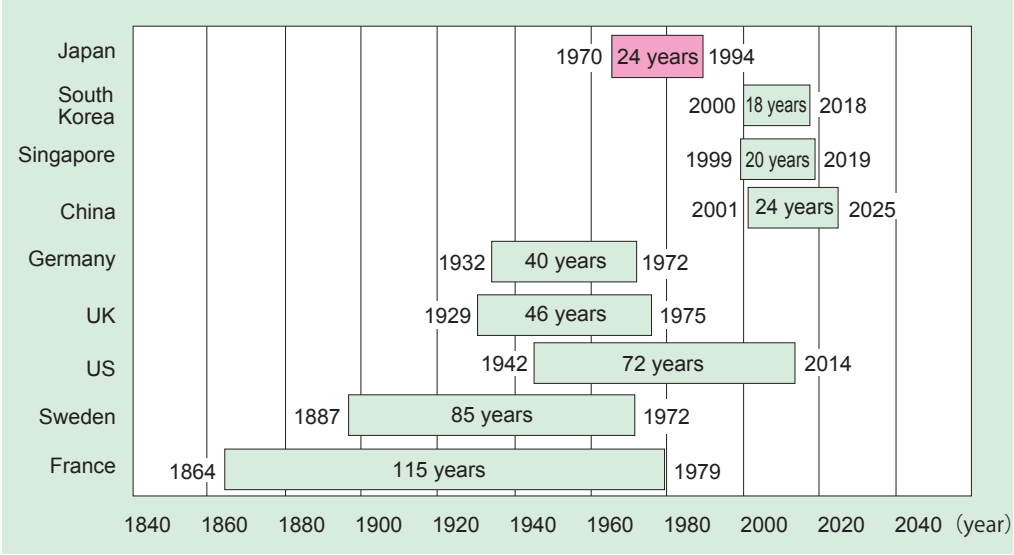
UN.World Population Prospects:The 2017 Revision

Figure 1-1 Ageing Rate of the World Population



UN.World Population Prospects:The 2017 Revision

Figure 1-2 Period Required for the Ageing Rate to Increase from 7% to 14% in Some Countries



UN.The Ageing of Population and Its Economic and Social Implications

Improvement in healthy life expectancy and Active Ageing

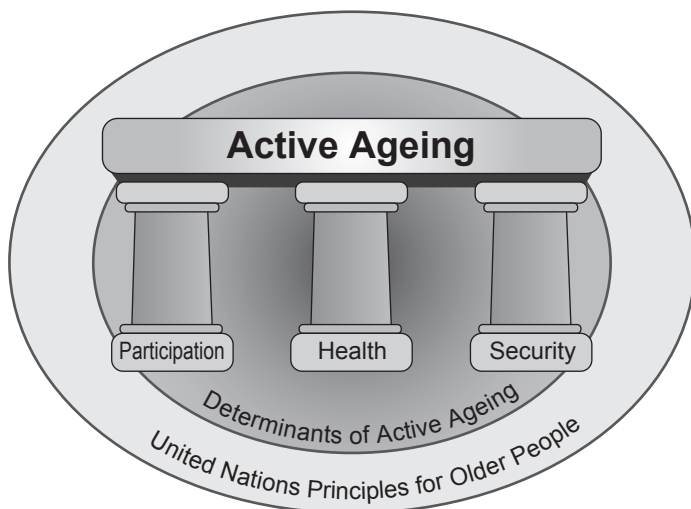
In Asian countries facing an increase in average life expectancy and society-wide ageing, the next key challenge is to consider how to improve healthy life expectancy. Even if life expectancy increases, senior citizens will become less motivated if they mostly live an unhealthy life with physical, mental, and social limitations. The healthy life expectancy in Japan is 74.8 years, second in the world after Singapore, while South Korea is the ninth longest, at 73.0 years, meaning that Asian countries already account for approximately one-third of the top 10 nations in the world (Table1-2).

Table 1-2 Top 10 Countries with a High Healthy Life Expectancy

Rank	Country	Healthy life expectancy (years)
1	Singapore	76.2
2	Japan	74.8
3	Spain	73.8
4	Switzerland	73.5
5	France	73.4
6	Cyprus	73.3
7	Canada	73.2
7	Italy	73.2
9	Australia	73.0
9	Iceland	73.0
9	Norway	73.0
9	South Korea	73.0

The key concept in improving healthy life expectancy and allowing the elderly to live an active life is called “Active Ageing.” Active Ageing is an ageing model proposed at the UN Second World Assembly on Ageing held by WHO in 2002. The term “Active Ageing” is defined as “the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation, and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age.” WHO also proposes the following three domains as a policy framework for Active Ageing: participation, health, and security (Figure1-3).

Figure 1-3 Three Pillars of Active Ageing determinants by WHO



Active Ageing and Healthy Ageing

The concept of Active Ageing proposed in 2002 serves as the academic base for various activities to achieve a better quality of life for the elderly. The European Union declared 2012 to be the “European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations,” which led to a major social impact. In 2015, WHO came out with the concept of healthy ageing that focuses on “health” and “environment” among the three domains of Active Ageing. The term “Healthy Ageing” is defined as “the process of developing and maintaining the functional capacity to achieve old-age well-being.” Similar to Active Ageing, healthy ageing emphasizes the necessity of cooperation among multiple stakeholders. In this way, the concept of Active Ageing was inherited in today’s healthy ageing, leading to concrete actions under the Global Strategy and Action Plan on Ageing and Health (2016–2020).

From What Age Does One Become an Older Person?

There is no uniform standard for the definition of the elderly, and the definition varies according to country. Demographic statistics in Japan define people age 65 or older as elderly, although this definition is not backed up by sufficient medical evidence. In the international community, generally people age 60 or older are defined as elderly. Thus, when examining statistics, it is necessary to check beforehand the minimum age of being considered an older person.

According to the results of the survey carried out in fiscal 2016 by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare in Japan, in response to the question “What age does one become an older person?” the most common answer was “70 years of age or older,” which accounted for 41.1% of the total. On the other hand, the ratio of people who answered “65 years of age or older” was 20.2%, which is relatively low. Other responses were “75 years of age or older” (15.1%), “60 years of age or older” (9.2%), and “80 years of age or older” (7.5%), in that order. 8.4% said “age is not a determiner.”

NILS-LSA, a long-term longitudinal cohort study conducted by the National Center for Geriatrics and Gerontology in Japan, measured and compared the normal walking speed of people age 65 or older in 1997 and 2006. This study shows the 2016 cohort group has a higher walking speed in all age groups of men and women. Walking speed is considered a representative health index which is even related to life expectancy; thus, this study suggests the possibility that senior citizens physically become younger.

In the Outline of Measures for the Ageing Society approved in 2018 by the Cabinet Office in Japan, the government aims to create a society where people of all generations can willingly participate in the society based on their motivation and capacity, rather than uniformly judging older people only by their age. The definition of the elderly is changing with the change of society.





Chapter 2

Case of Active Ageing in Japan



Current situation of the ageing society in Japan

Today, many advanced nations have been facing a challenge of population —an increase of ageing population with a declining birthrate (Figure2-1) . Japan is currently at the forefront of this issue. The ageing Japanese society is characterized by the following facts.

- The population of Japan has been declining since 2005.
- The average life expectancy is among the highest in the world: 81.09 years for men and 87.26 years for women (2018).
- The ratio of the elderly (age 65 or older) is 27.7%, the highest in the world (2017), and the elderly population is increasing.
- Population by generation has two peaks: the baby boomer generation (1947) and the baby-boomer-junior generation (1974).

Such a demographic structure change has an impact not only on social security but also on the living and financial situations of, and disease structure of, senior citizens.

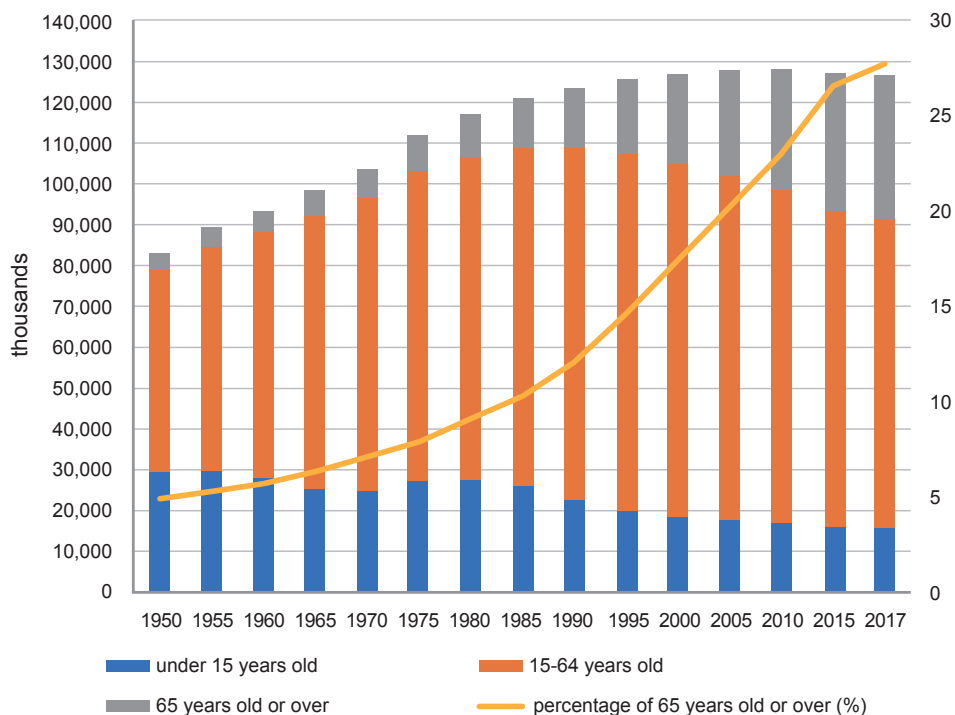
The New Guideline of Measure for the Ageing Society was developed and announced by the cabinet office in February 2018 . It is a basic and comprehensive guide for public measures for the ageing society to be implemented by the Japanese government in accordance with the Basic Act on Measures for the Ageing Society. It has three fundamental principles, which are (1) To aim at creating an age-free society where people of all ages can make use of their motivation and abilities, depending on their hopes; (2) To make local communities that can concretely describe elderly living at any stage of life and to prepare the foundation of life in communities; (3) to aim for new measures on the ageing society by using the innovation of technological achievements.

Challenges of the ageing society in Japan

Senior citizens in Japanese society, facing an ageing population with a declining birthrate, have several challenges. Here are some examples from the White Paper on the Elderly .

64.6% of people age 60 or older are not concerned about their

Figure 2-1 Population trend and percentage of age 65 or over



<https://www.stat.go.jp/data/jinsui/2017np/index.html>

financial situation, while the number of people receiving public assistant is on an upward trend, undermining their economic basis for living. However, around 40% of active workers age 60 or older wish to “work as long as they can”; if combining the number of those who wish to work until 70 or older, approximately 80% of the elderly are willing to work. One of our challenges is to consider how to build a society that supports their motivation for work.

Generally the elderly people have lower physical strength and cognitive capacity than when they were young and the number of people who are certified as being in need of care increases after they reach the age of 75. The major reasons for this are

cerebrovascular disease (stroke) for men and dementia for women. In Japan, however, the physical strength and healthy life expectancy of the elderly have been improving over the past decade. Their mathematical thinking and reading comprehension abilities are also above average in the OECD countries. This might be thanks to the promotion of measures against lifestyle-related diseases and the nationwide being-healthy boom.

In regard to social participation by older people, 47.5% of male and female senior citizens answer that they engage in some kind of work or activity, while about 70% of people age 60 or older say that they are not committed to any voluntary social activities. These days, when social connection or social network has a positive effect on the life and health of the elderly, we need to build an environment that enhances people's awareness of social connection and encourages senior citizens to participate in their communities.

Measures and activities for Active Ageing in Japan

1) NPO Asaka grandpa (Saitama Prefecture)

The NPO Asaka grandpa is an organization established in 2013 in Asaka, Saitama, with a population of approximately 140,000 people. Asaka grandpa project for child-rearing was launched based on a Asaka City public health nurse's idea to simultaneously address both "health promotion for senior men" and "support for child rearing," which had been issues in Asaka. Before the launch in 2013, a symposium titled "The potential abilities of senior men for the community" was held to encourage the public to understand the project. Later on, trainees were granted a certificate as child-rearing supporters after spending





13 days completing 30 ninety-minute lectures, including practical training at nursery schools, elementary schools, and after-school children's clubs. After the first training course finished, certified child-rearing supporters had an opportunity to consider what they should do next, rather than engaging in activities at a designated place. This initiative later helped shape the organization and develop relevant rules. In addition, subsequent training courses include lectures by former trainees in the course who are currently active in the organization. Becoming an incorporated nonprofit organization in 2017, the

Asaka grandpa is further committed to providing fun activities.

The organization's activities include watching out for the safety of children playing at nursery schools on public open days. The members also do various activities at elementary schools, such as providing learning support, reading to children, and accompanying field trips. They work at nursery schools, elementary schools, and after-school children's clubs once or twice a week. The organization also joins exchange programs and events in the city and offers a wide variety of activities, including playing various games with children and teaching them how to use a saw and other carpenter's tools. For the sake of cultivating members' child-rearing skills, they learn mutually how to fly paper planes or make pinwheels as new skill to please children.

There are many reasons why members joined the organization, such as “finding the information on a city poster,” “being encouraged by family members to join,” and “applying for membership after watching a demonstration by a member at the senior citizens college.” Through actual activities after joining



the organization, they gave much feedback, such as “becoming energized by children,” “feeling very happy when children call my name on the street and their parents also thank me,” “having many occasions to go out, which helps me stay healthy,” and “meeting people of the same generation in the community.” In this way, the Asaka grandpa’s activities have a positive impact on their physical and mental health.

2) Kamikatsu Town Irodori Project (Tokushima Prefecture)

Kamikatsu is a mountainous town in the central part of Tokushima Prefecture with a population of around 1,500 and an ageing rate of 50%. The town has the world-famous Irodori Project, a business where older people in the town cultivate and sell seasonal leaves used as a garnish for dishes. This business mechanism is developed by Irodori Co. Ltd.

Establishing Irodori Co. Ltd. was fully funded by Kamikatsu Town at the beginning. And now it is being operated by their business. The business is carefully identifying the needs of customers who use the garnish for their restaurants, while also providing the information to senior citizens called “Irodori farmers” and distributing quality leaves only in the quantity needed when they are needed.

As of 2018, about 200 households engage in business as Irodori farmers. Their average age is 75, and the oldest is 92. This business



is supported mainly by elderly women.

As you can see from the fact that the Irodori Project is a business, it has been proven that senior citizens can earn money and live an affluent life. Some senior citizens earn 15 million yen a year, the highest income in this project. However, enjoying economic wealth is not the only benefit of this project. If people have something to do, they tend to get relief from bodily pains and take care of their health. Through this initiative, senior citizens needed by, and connected to, the community can also be motivated and find their lives worth living.

In the Irodori Project, farmers need to perform moderate outdoor physical work for cultivating leaves; at the same time, they use computers to manage order processing between the farmers and Irodori Co. Ltd., and examine their sales on the computer. They also are led to use cognitive function through their work. Because of these tasks, it is easy to assume that the Irodori Project positively affects their physical and mental health.

Senior citizens working as Irodori farmers also say that the

happiest thing is when they receive orders, ship satisfactory leaves, and make money. Thus, what is important to the elderly is to continue to work and find their lives worth living.



Measures for the Active Ageing society in the future in Japan

Going forward, what kind of activities and measures for Active Ageing are expected? As you can see from the case examples introduced in this booklet and the video, firstly, senior citizens should be able to be proud of themselves and find their lives worth living. The Irodori Project tells us that employment and earnings are important to older people; at the same time, they also find it delightful, joyful, and fun to be committed to the business. Motivation in life, pleasure, and joy can also be found in the activities of the NPO Asaka grandpa.

The second key is to examine how closely the measures for Active Ageing are connected to community and society as an activity. How much can we produce the activities in place where the elderly live? We hope that such activities will be promoted in Japan, facing an increasingly ageing society.

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Column 2

Industrial Welfare: Shifting from Pensions to Annual Earnings

This phrase was created by the Irodori Co. Ltd. CEO Tomoji Yokoishi when he was inspired by senior citizens who started to gain an income from this project. Generally, people think of “welfare” as an environment where older people can live a comfortable life without working. On the other hand, another perspective of welfare is to work and make money in terms of achieving a comfortable life and staying healthy. Welfare is definitely necessary for those in need of medical and nursing care and social support, while it is also a fact that working can also be another aspect of welfare for healthy older people.





Chapter 3

Case of Active Ageing in Taiwan



Current situation of the ageing society in Taiwan

The population of Taiwan, Republic of China, is 23.57 million (Ministry of Interior, 2018). The GDP per capita was \$25,893 in 2016. Dramatic ageing of the population is occurring: The older (age 65 and over) population reached 7% in 1993, and in 2017, the older population reached 14.1%. Taiwan is one of the fastest ageing societies.

Although Active Ageing has just been noticed in Taiwan in the most recent decade, the ageing policy has been implemented for years. The kinds of act on health, long-term care and social security for the elderly have been prepared to maintain their life.

Also, Taiwan's government responses to Active Ageing include the Elderly Health Promotion Program, Age-Friendly City Program, and the so-called "Great Talent and Bold Vision Policy for Active Ageing" program directed by the Health Promotion Administration (HPA) of the Ministry of Health and Welfare. The HPA sponsored a grand project named "Constructing a leading international Active Ageing monitoring and decision-making system," including more than 20 research projects on Active Ageing during the period 2015–2018. Taiwan's Active Ageing Index (TAAI) is accordingly constructed. The TAAI is expected to be used for regular data collection by the government and to provide information for policy planning by the central government, for local government for policy implementation and evaluation, and for references by the silver industry and the public.

Challenges in the ageing society in Taiwan

The main challenges in the ageing society in Taiwan include the followings.

Low fertility and fast population ageing: Taiwan has been one of the fast ageing society in the world. It is not just because of population ageing and lengthened life expectancy, but also the fertility rate in Taiwan is very low, with a total fertility rate of about 1.13 . Although

the health and social welfare sectors started to respond and plan for the ageing trend, including the start of Active Ageing policies, the challenges of reducing the working and younger populations would be a great challenge in the future.

Social participation and financial security: Compared with European countries' Active Ageing performance, Taiwan's Active Ageing shows good status in health and capacity in Active Ageing domains, while the social participation score was lower than the EU . One possible reason is due to the low fertility and low co-residence of older adults living with children, as well as the very low political participation rate for the older cohorts in Taiwan. The other possibility is that older adults prefer participating in other social groups, which has been suggested as one of the Active Ageing indicators in TAAI. In fact, there are various social groups very popular among elderly people in Taiwan. The variability of social group participation should be encouraged. In addition, the pension system is under reform in Taiwan, and the economic growth of Taiwan in recent years needs further improvement. Financial security would be the next challenge for future cohorts.

Cross-ministry policy and collaboration in Active Ageing: Active Ageing belongs to the policy planned and implemented by the Ministry of Health and Welfare currently, and the Health Promotion Administration is the responsible department. However, Active Ageing is a cross-disciplinary concept, and the related policies need cross-ministry collaboration. Dialogue and collaboration in responding to Active Ageing are needed, and the agenda setting of Active Ageing should be the priority.

Measures and Activities for Active Ageing in Taiwan

1) ChiShan tennis club (a district of Kaohsiung, Taiwan)

ChiShan is northeast of the centre of Kaohsiung. It is small town with a population of 40,000 in a rural area and with an aged society. ChiShan tennis club has lasted for more than 25 years. Anyone who is interested in playing tennis can join the club. Currently most of



members are in their sixties to eighties. At the beginning they joined the club to keep their health, however, fulfilling social relationships and friendships in the club keep them participating in the club continually. Most elderly members come to the tennis court every day and play tennis. It has become “serious leisure” for them.

2) Senior Citizen College at the National University of Kaohsiung (Kaohsiung City, Taiwan)

Kaohsiung City is located southern Taiwan, the third-largest city, with about 2.8 million population. Since 2017, the National University of Kaohsiung has been holding the “Happy-Aged College,” supported by Taiwan’s Ministry of Education. Senior citizens whose age is older than 55 are eligible to join the program by applying with a NT\$2,000 registration fee every semester (one semester is 18 weeks). The three-hour class is run three times per week during a semester. The topics, of course, are various: health, language, culture, law, financial economics,





and so on. Most the seniors expressed that they learned new things and were positively stimulated, and they have more interest in participating in other social activities. It fulfils their second life after retirement with lifelong learning.

3) Senior Citizen Farm (Kaohsiung City, Taiwan)

Kaohsiung City government runs the elderly citizen farm as one of its senior citizen welfare policies. Every Kaohsiung senior citizen whose age is over 65 is eligible to apply and to attend this program. Seniors randomly chosen have the right to cultivate and manage a



30m² farm. The activity allows the elderly to socialize, and there is a case where a woman growing vegetables at the farm donated them to a non-governmental organization for meal delivery to the elderly living alone in the city. She says that one of her motivations to come to the farm and grow vegetables is from feeling that she wants to support the elderly by delivering meals. She feels happy through doing it. She also says that doing farm work outside makes her healthier physically and mentally. The elderly can have

opportunities for physical and social exercise.

Measures for an Active Ageing society in the future in Taiwan

As a fast-ageing and ageing country, Taiwan is trying to integrate top-down and bottom-up policy implementation from the level of the central government to the community in the face of the arrival of an ageing society and upcoming problems. The dual-track approach, which integrates the energy of the relevant non-governmental groups, is expected to minimize the social problems brought about by the ageing society and to enable the middle-aged and elderly to age smoothly. Therefore, considerable efforts have been made, including in health, security, and social participation dimensions.

In addition to the various policies and measures that have been carried out, when we execute this project, it offers Taiwan a very good opportunity to get more understanding about Active Ageing policies and the social reality of Japan and Thailand. We learned that the development of Japan's activities for Active Ageing is integrated with the community industry, and from Thailand's experience, the integration of community energy and traditional culture of Active Ageing is a very good reference and learning object for Taiwan.

An integrated active system is expected in Taiwan, from the central government to the community, from people's physical health to spiritual health. It conforms to the trend of internationalization, integrates the traditional culture and life characteristics of the local society, and provides an active and ageing society with complete structure and support.

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Column 3

The SANPOYOSHI Principle in Community Volunteer Activities

SANPOYOSHI (literally, “good for three directions”) is the principle to which Ohmi merchants attached importance in the Edo Period. The term sanpo means “sellers,” “buyers,” and “community.” Eiichi Shibusawa, a business person in the Meiji Period, emphasized “the balance between ethics and profits” in his book, insisting that profits should be shared by the society for the common good of Japan.

This principle also fits with the concept of community volunteer activity, meaning that the activity cannot be sustainable unless it is beneficial to the following three parties: contributors (those giving help), beneficiaries (those receiving help), and community. Community activities should always be offered in a win-win-win manner.





Chapter 4

Case of Active Ageing in Thailand



Current situation of the ageing society in Thailand

With the success of birth control, Thai society is expected to become a complete aged society in the next five years. Features of Thailand's ageing society are as follows.

- The Thai population continues to decline since 1970.
- The average life expectancy at birth for males is 72 years, and for females 79 years (2018).

In the past, the total fertility rate was higher than 5, while the current total fertility rate is 1.5 (2016) per woman.

-At present, four working-age adults (dependency ratios) support one elderly person and one child. However, within 15 years, it is expected that two working adults will have to support one elderly person and one child. The dependency ratios of the elderly population in Thailand will reach 54% in 2050, which will be above the average for Southeast Asian countries (26.6%), and the country will rank 24th among the countries with the highest old-age dependency ratios in the world.

- Considered at the family level, those who are ready to have children may perceive that bearing a child may be a burden, and they worry about their child's future, so the family may have just one child. However, those who are not ready to have children, such as teenagers, may bear children early and have more than those who are ready. The working population of the future will have altered social contributions and economic growth. From an expansive population pyramid of the past, Thailand is fast becoming a constrictive population pyramid with late expansion, which will affect those 40–50 years old, who will soon retire.

The Thai government have initiated multiple support mechanisms in order to enhance support for the vulnerable elderly, such as by creating income security schemes, enhancing social participation, and promoting health and creating equitable health care service models that are tailored to the elderly throughout the nation.

The policy is implemented by the Department of Older Persons (DOP) of the Ministry of Social Development and Human

Security, which was established in 2015. The vision of DOP is the development of sustainable elder quality of life and well-being. Their missions include promoting the potential of the elderly, promoting their welfare, and protecting elderly rights and well-being. The six components in the national policy for the elderly are:

- 1 Being self-reliant
- 2 Being actively engaged with society
- 3 Growing spiritually
- 4 Maintaining healthy lifestyle
- 5 Actively learning
- 6 Managing later life security

Challenges in the ageing society in Thailand

Even though Thai elderly have longer life expectancy, on considering the quality of life of the elderly, it is found that only 5% have good health and are free of illness, while 95% have one or more chronic non-communicable diseases. It is becoming more common to observe the elderly in wheelchairs and being bedridden. It is also found that the elderly experience more accidents, such as falls, but it should be noted that 75% of the accidents are attributed to unsafe and unsuitable environments (e.g., lack of grab bars, safety railings, or uneven floors), which are preventable. Public infrastructure often remains elderly-unfriendly. Commuting and taking public transport to obtain health care is also costly or unavailable in certain areas for the elderly. As the number of the elderly increases, more physicians and health care professionals trained in geriatric medicine will be required to support the increased number of the elderly. At the local community level, the strategies to tackle this issue are to deploy trained caregivers to assist the elderly. This approach is particularly crucial in remote areas where health service is inaccessible. Therefore, health care and the health service system will become an important challenge.

As the number of elderly people increases, the working-age population will have to support both the elderly as well as their

children, placing greater economic burden on the workforce. The Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, an national economic planning agency in Thailand, found that approximately 7 millions elderly people are not in the workforce (2017). This is in addition to the fact that neighbouring countries in the ASEAN region will also experience an ageing society. Thus, the labour force will become scarce, an important challenge of the future.

Measures and activities for Active Ageing in Thailand

One activity that encourages national policy for the elderly is elderly clubs and elderly schools. To date, there are 26,263 registered senior citizens' clubs (2016).

1) Donglumduan School Centre for Learning and Health Promotion for the Elderly (Pantainorasing Municipality)

Donglumduan School in Pantainorasing Municipality was established in 2016 and is one of several elderly schools in Samutsongkram Province, Thailand. The province is about one hour southwest of Bangkok by car. This elderly school is another form of group activity. It promotes lifelong learning, social participation, development of skills that the elderly are interested in; promotes independence and living with dignity; and promotes physical and mental health. They focus on passing on knowledge, experience, art and culture, and traditional wisdom,





so these elements add value to the community. To carry out the activities, the driving process is bottom-up as opposed to top-down. The organization is supported by the public sector, private sector, and local administration. In an integrative network, the Department of Older Persons of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security coordinates the activity. The Non-Formal Education Department of the Ministry of Education assists in

lifelong learning, knowledge, and local wisdom. The District Health Promoting Hospital of the Ministry of Public Health oversees the physical and mental health. The District Local Administration of the Ministry of Interior supports the operation, coordinates, as well as forms a network of working committees.

Donglumduan School organizes various activities throughout the year. Each batch comprises of 50–70 participants. The activities revolve around physical, mental, emotional, and social activities that enhance better quality of life for the elderly in the community. Examples of their activities include the flag ceremony, welcoming the spirit, the oral health campaign, preventing falls activities, preventing memory loss activities, recreation activities, field trip activities, vocational training, and Songkran day activities. The Tambon Administration Organization (the local government) supports

this activity in terms of budget and logistics in collaboration with other stakeholders in other ministries such as the Health Promoting Hospital, the Ministry of Public Health, the Department of Extended Education of the Ministry of Education, etc.

The elderly who take part in this activity are engaged in social participation as they get opportunities to interact, share, and learn from each other. They are no longer alone in the community. For the activities that promote health, the elderly are then more aware of how they can stay active. They may even contribute back to the society such as through volunteer work in the community. They can live a meaningful and active lifestyle. However, the elderly who are home-bound or are in bedridden circumstances will be limited from participation.

Another impact of elderly school is the collaboration between relevant organizations. Health deterioration, financial dependency, and solitude are issues that the elderly will experience, and no single organization can handle all of the aspects. Thus, it will take all of us to provide quality of life to the elderly.

Measures for an Active Ageing society in the future in Thailand

Improving the quality of life for the elderly will be challenging in the future. Thailand still lacks systematic management in term of sharing information and tracing the outcomes and impact of implementation at all levels, even though the District Health Board (DHB) programs have recently been launched, in 2018. Health systems have been changed in order to cope with the super ageing society. Family medicine and long-term care are well-structured with academic institutions, where multidisciplinary teams look after a population of 10,000. There is a 70-hour caregiver training course that will provide elderly care skills to community members such as village health volunteers and family members.

Elderly club and elderly school will continue, depending on the area and community support. The Elderly School in Pantainorasing,

Samutsongkram area, that we visited didn't have clear additional income-generating projects as a focus, which should be more helpful to enhance income security of the elderly. Project implementation by the elderly school could improve further if effective evaluations take place.

With changes in population structure and disruptive technology, a new strategy has been discussed among universities when there are fewer and fewer students in university. All universities should consider learning and relearning education, when now the learners are those who have been working for a while and then come back to universities for upgraded skills. A study explored the reasons for possible local resistance to the Third Age University concept in Thailand, which could help the Thai government fighting a growing number of elderly in a fast-changing world of increasing uncertainty in work, security, and other aspects of life.

In conclusion, tackling the ageing society in Thailand seems possible. This matters not only for the younger generation or the 60-plus generation, but also for everyone in the society to prepare themselves for social change. Current preparations include constructing the essential infrastructure, policies, and care system for the elderly in the communities. The goal is to bring out the best of the elderly's knowledge, experience, and wisdom that will contribute to the development of the local communities.

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Chapter 5

**Perception toward retirement life among the
working generation, from the perspective of an
“Active Ageing Model”**



Background and Objectives

As we have seen, it is high time for Asia to take concrete actions to address the aging society with an eye on the next generation. We need to prepare ourselves for old age from an earlier life stage late middle age. There is also a necessity to build a social framework that encourages people to change their awareness of this fact.

As the first step toward this goal, this analysis clarifies how the working generation today perceives their old age to come after retirement. Based on the Active Ageing Model (WHO) as an inclusive aging model, we created a questionnaire using the Active Ageing Index (EU) to clarify the characteristics of positive perception toward old age after retirement among the working generations in Japan, Taiwan, and Thailand (Table 5-1).

Table 5-1 List of Active Ageing Index

Employment	Participation in society	Independent, healthy and secure living	Capacity and enabling environment
1. Paid work	2. Voluntary activities	7. Physical exercise	16. Mental well-being
	3. Care of children	8. Health checkups	17. Using ICT
	4. Care of older family	9. Dental checkups	18. Meeting with friends
	5. Care of community	10. Independent from children	
	6. Leisure	11. Enough savings	
		12. Financial leeway	
		13. Guaranteed minimum living minimum livingminimum living	
		14. Physical safety	
		15. Lifelong learning	

Characteristics of the Three Countries

The ageing rate in the three countries covered by this study is 26.7% in Japan, 12.5% in Taiwan, and 11.0% in Thailand. Japan is characterized by the world's highest percentage of senior citizens,

while Taiwan is one of the countries with the highest ageing rate. Thailand is facing an ageing society before achieving sufficient economic development. They have different industrial structures and varied levels of industrial progress. On the other hand, however, it is expected that a further change in people's lifestyles and values will lead to changes in disease structure and progress in ageing. These three countries share common concerns over such social issues (Table 5-2).

Table 5-2 Social, Demographic and Economic Characteristics of 3 countries

	Japan	Taiwan	Thailand
Population	127 million (World Bank 2016)	23.55 million (MOFA 2017)	65.72 million (Thai Census 2015)
Total fertility rate (TFR)	1.44 (2017)	1.18 (2015)	1.5 (<1 in Bangkok) (2015)
Ageing rate	26.7% (MHLW 2016)	12.5% (Taiwan Gov. 2015)	11% (World Bank 2016)
Characteristics of demography	Highest ageing rate in the world	Will be the highest ageing rate in 2050	High ageing rate with inadequate development
Industry	Manufacturing Service	Manufacturing	Still agriculture (40% of all workforce)
GDP per capita	US\$38883 (IMF 2016)	US\$22540 (Taiwan Gov. 2016)	US\$6033 (NESDB 2016)

Methods

An online-based cross-sectional survey was conducted on a total of 900 survey panel members, including 50 male and female participants, each in their 30s, 40s, and 50s from Japan, Taiwan, and Thailand. The questionnaire comprised questions on socioeconomics and lifestyle, as well as a total of 18 Active Aging-related questions regarding employment (1 question), social participation (5 questions),

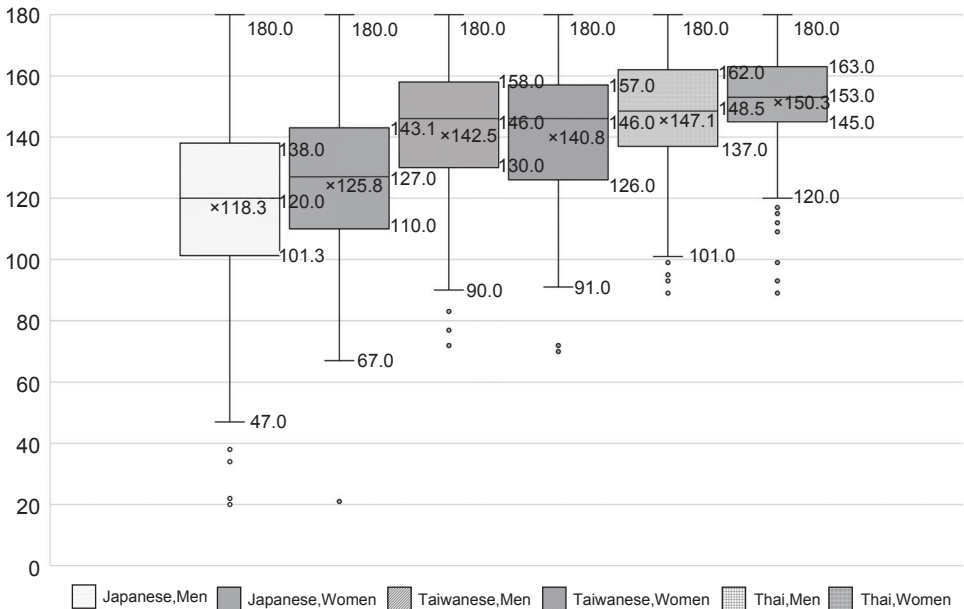
independent, healthy, and secure life (9 questions), and capacity and enabling environment (3 questions).

For analysis purposes, an international comparison was made on the score distribution of the three countries. This survey and the analysis were carried out on approval of research ethics from the Research Ethics Committee of the National Institute of Public Health (NIPH-IBRA#12157).

Results and Discussion

In regard to positive perception toward old age after retirement from the perspective of Active Ageing, both the average points and the score distribution were low and varied widely for both men and women in Japan; in addition, the score was significantly low in many indexes (Figure5-1). The higher the ageing rate was, the lower the average score was; Japan was the lowest, followed by Taiwan and Thailand.

Figure 5-1 Active Ageing Score (by country, by sex)



The top four indexes with high scores were, for Japanese men, “guaranteed minimum living,” “physical safety,” “sufficient savings,” and “mental well-being”; for Taiwanese men, “physical exercise,” “sufficient savings,” “physical safety,” and “mental well-being”; for Thai men, “sufficient savings,” “physical exercise,” “health checkups,” and “care of family members and relatives.”

In the case of women, the top four indexes were, for Japanese women, “guaranteed minimum living,” “mental well-being,” “sufficient savings,” and “physical safety”; for Taiwanese women, “mental well-being,” “physical exercise,” “sufficient savings,” and “physical safety”; for Thai women, “sufficient savings,” “financial leeway,” “health checkups,” and “physical safety.” The item “voluntary activities” was

Table 5-3 Average Score of each Active Ageing Index (men, by country)

Field	Index	Japan	Taiwan	Thailand	Pa
Employment	Employment	6.28±2.54	7.49±1.80	7.79±1.83	<0.001
	Voluntary activities	4.59±2.40	6.59±2.10	7.40±1.64	<0.001
	Care of children and grandchildren	5.43±2.52	6.53±2.14	7.84±1.91	<0.001
Social participation	Care of family members and relatives	5.67±2.27	7.69±1.82	8.56±1.46	<0.001
	Care of the elderly in the community	4.81±2.31	6.99±2.00	8.08±1.58	<0.001
	Social activity	5.52±2.52	7.33±1.97	7.93±1.72	<0.001
	Physical exercise	7.00±2.43	8.87±1.42	8.69±1.53	<0.001
	Health checkups	7.01±2.39	8.40±1.70	8.75±1.39	<0.001
	Dental checkups	6.99±2.35	8.32±1.63	8.51±1.57	<0.001
	Independent life	7.35±2.33	8.05±1.81	7.15±2.15	<0.001
	Sufficient savings	7.68±2.37	8.81±1.40	8.85±1.57	<0.001
	Financial leeway	7.19±2.30	8.23±1.61	8.45±1.62	<0.001
Independence, health, security	Guaranteed minimum living	7.77±2.29	8.68±1.36	8.26±1.68	<0.001
	Physical safety	7.68±2.34	8.79±1.43	8.56±1.43	<0.001
	Lifelong learning	6.40±2.29	7.84±1.91	7.40±1.97	<0.001
	Mental well-being	7.44±2.34	8.69±1.45	8.61±1.38	<0.001
	Using ICT	7.05±2.27	7.48±1.79	8.05±1.55	<0.001
Capacity and enabling environment	Meeting friends	6.39±2.35	7.69±1.74	8.19±1.51	<0.001

Table 5-4 Average Score of each Active Ageing Index (women, by country)

Field	Index	Japan	Taiwan	Thailand	Pa
Employment	Employment	6.62±2.08	7.39±2.00	7.77±1.80	<0.001
	Voluntary activities	4.73±2.20	6.56±2.20	7.29±1.89	<0.001
	Care of children and grandchildren	5.74±2.51	5.48±2.49	7.29±2.30	<0.001
Social participation	Care of family members and relatives	5.90±2.41	7.19±2.08	8.66±1.27	<0.001
	Care of the elderly in the community	4.46±2.15	6.77±2.13	8.13±1.50	<0.001
	Social activity	5.82±2.45	7.40±2.12	7.99±1.79	<0.001
	Physical exercise	7.52±1.96	8.79±1.45	8.79±1.43	<0.001
	Health checkups	7.54±2.04	8.29±1.81	8.88±1.40	<0.001
	Dental checkups	7.66±1.94	8.31±1.72	8.85±1.41	<0.001
	Independent life	7.73±2.05	8.30±1.92	7.67±2.25	0.013
	Sufficient savings	8.24±2.02	8.72±1.70	9.12±1.32	<0.001
Independence, health, security	Financial leeway	7.62±1.92	7.99±1.91	8.91±1.42	<0.001
	Guaranteed minimum living	8.37±1.86	8.61±1.64	8.67±1.50	0.241
	Physical safety	8.21±1.96	8.70±1.56	8.88±1.38	0.001
	Lifelong learning	6.76±2.11	7.99±1.84	7.80±1.68	<0.001
	Mental well-being	8.30±1.80	8.81±1.49	8.83±1.34	0.003
Capacity and enabling environment	Using ICT	7.47±1.85	7.85±1.73	8.36±1.42	<0.001
	Meeting friends	7.09±2.15	7.63±1.89	8.41±1.38	<0.001

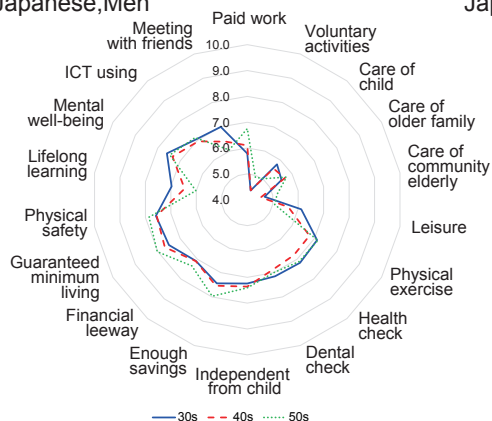
one of the indexes with the lowest score in all countries and genders (Tables 5-3 and 5-4).

The results are presented in a spider chart to visualize the overall score distribution. Thailand showed a well-balanced pattern with high scores in all indexes, while Japan was characterized by an unequal pattern for both men and women with a large difference in scores according to the index. Taiwan showed a pattern between those of Thailand and Japan. The size of the pattern for Japanese men was the smallest, indicating that the score was low (Figure 5-2).

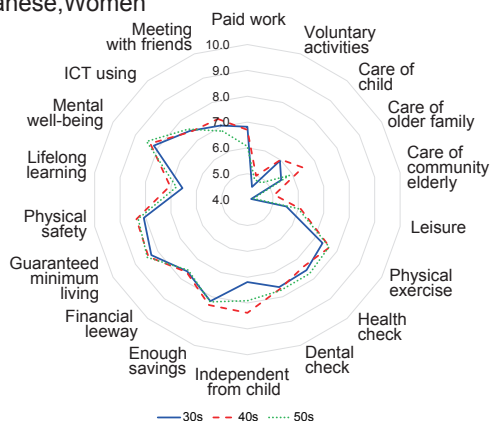
This survey covering the three countries suggested that the perception toward Active Ageing was a mind-set closely connected to culture, livelihood, and lifestyle, meaning that perception should

Figure 5-2 Average Score of each Active Ageing Index (by country, by sex, by age)

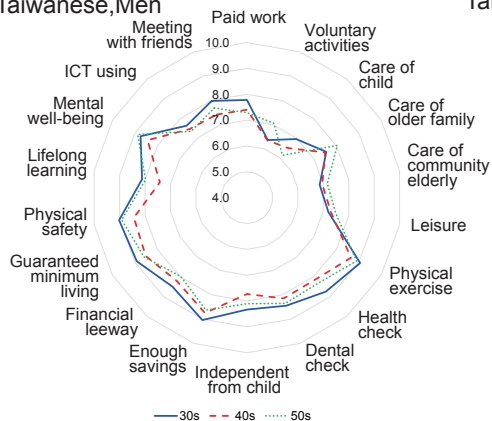
Japanese, Men



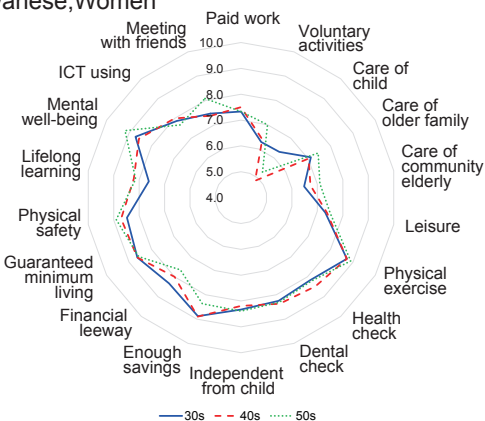
Japanese, Women



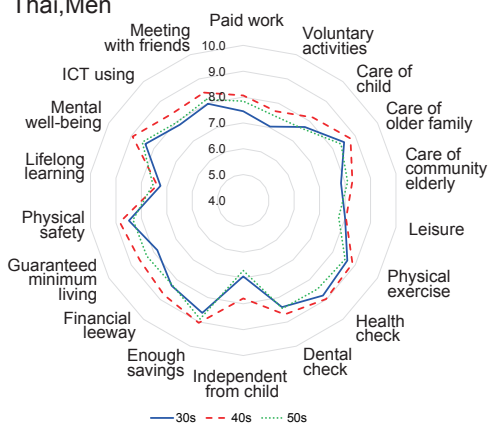
Taiwanese, Men



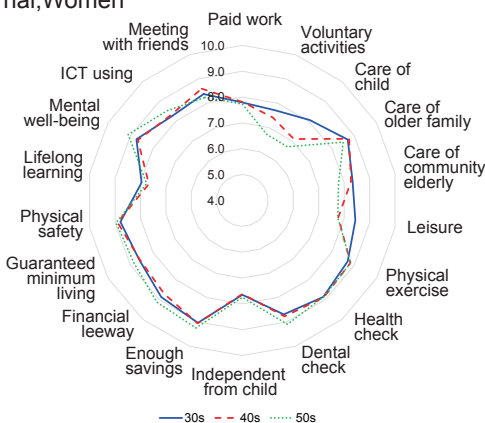
Taiwanese, Women



Thai, Men



Thai, Women



be considered in light of socioeconomic development level and sociocultural context in the countries. This survey in particular highlighted the fact that the working generation in Japan is less concerned about social involvement. Social participation makes it possible to foster social capital for a better subjective health status of the elderly. Thus, for the sake of achieving Active Ageing, communities and public policies are expected to create an environment where all generations, including the working generation, can develop social connection beyond gender, age, life stage or life course, and other social roles.

Column 4

KYOUIKU and KYOUYO for the Elderly

Two Japanese words, KYOUIKU and KYOUYO, are formally translated as “education” and “culture,” respectively. But in Japanese, the same pronunciation of Kyouiku means “Today, I (have a place to) go,” and that of Kyouyo means “Today, I (have something to) do.” Those two words have been recognized as important aspects as well as education and culture among the elderly.



The Key Message of Active Ageing

The ageing of society is now an unavoidable and irreversible phenomenon around the world. How can we regard this phenomenon as an opportunity?

In this booklet, we observed the various policies and measures that have been carried out to tackle this global issue. Active Ageing means not only being physically healthy but also having an enriched life.

In order to achieve a society of Active Ageing, we recommend valuing the local, which is the foundation of elderly life and its culture and needs. Active Ageing is for all generations as well as the elderly. Social systems that integrate diverse people and organization are essential for the creation of the improved society of Active Ageing.



[Team members of the project visiting the elderly at Donglumduan School Centre, Thailand in Feb 2018]

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