



The impact of Inclusive Design for Getting Outdoors: How has our work influenced the future of outdoor environments?

I'DGO was established to explore if, and in what way, the ability to get out into one's local neighbourhood impacts on older people's quality of life and what barriers there are to achieving this day-to-day. In the first phase of our research, which involved over 770 people aged 65+, we asked our participants what features of their local neighbourhood helped or hindered what they wanted to do outdoors and audited 200 residential neighbourhoods to look for barriers and benefits to getting around as a pedestrian. Having identified the challenges to getting outdoors, as well as older people's preferences, we produced guidance on how to design streets, parks and public open spaces with older people in mind. Collectively, these practical design guides are one of only two such sources referenced in the World Health Organization's international guide to creating *Global Age-Friendly Cities* (2007).

Our findings have been cited in national planning guidance by both the Scottish and Welsh Governments and in the *UK National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society: Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods* (2008). This brings together the work of the UK Departments of Communities and Local Government (DCLG), Health (DoH) and Work and Pensions (DWP), with the first now a partner on our second phase of research, I'DGO TOO (together with the Department for Transport). By invitation, we have consulted on the Scottish Government's Planning Policy document, *Designing Streets* (2010), and the Government Office for Science Foresight Report *Making the Most of Ourselves in the 21st Century: the Effect of the Physical Environment on Mental Wellbeing* (2008). Most recently, we have contributed to *Manual for Streets 2: Wider Application of the Principles* (2010) by the Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation; subsequently speaking at all four of the publication's UK national launch seminars in late 2010 (delegate attendance of 500+) and two regional seminars to date.

We are committed to the 'trickling down' of policy to Local Authority and practitioner level, with an emphasis on delivery. We are cited in *Homes for our Old Age: Independent Living by Design* by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and the Scottish Association of Building Standards Managers' *Inclusive Design Handbook*. We have spoken at a Ministerial Roundtable, hosted by Baroness Andrews, on *Delivering Lifetime Neighbourhoods and Inclusive Eco-towns* and sit on number of task groups, including the Royal Town Planning Institute's *Quality and Density Task Group*, the Town and Country Planning Association's *Eco-towns Housing and Inclusive Design Panel* and the *Fairness in an Ageing Society Policy Forum: Living Well in Your Neighbourhood* run by a consortium comprising the Fabian Society, Housing 21 and Council & Care. Our recent events schedule has seen us work with a diverse range of professionals influenced by our findings, including the College of Occupational Therapists (UK) and Association of Occupational Therapists of Ireland, older people's teams in the City Councils of Edinburgh, Manchester and Newcastle, Local Authority planners in Norfolk and Suffolk, Engineers Ireland and the National Register of Access Consultants.

We are delighted that, on the strength of our overall impact on policy makers and practitioners, we are featured as a case study in a major new report on the value and impact of research – *Making the Case for the Social Sciences: Ageing* (2010) – published collaboratively by the British Society of Gerontology, the Academy of Social Sciences & AgeUK and launched at a ministerial Q&A led by Baroness Greengross (Westminster, July 2010).



The impact of Inclusive Design for Getting Outdoors: How has our work influenced the future of research?

I'DGO was established under the fourth round of the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council's Extending Quality of Life initiative and our current phase of research is part of EQUAL 5. Our commitment to 'joined up thinking' extends beyond our own consortium to other vehicles for knowledge transfer, particularly the KT-EQUAL programme of which Catharine Ward Thompson is a Co-Investigator.

I'DGO has fed into KT-EQUAL's activities in many ways, but perhaps most significantly into a thriving series of workshops and seminars, including *Research for Older People and those with a Disability* (Manchester, 2010), *Falls and Falls Prevention* (Bath, 2010), *From Ageing Research into Policy* (London, 2010), *Physical Activity Promotion: Blending Policy, Research and Practice* (Bath, 2010), *Qualitative Research Methods* (Loughborough, 2010) and *Dementia: Innovative Approaches Towards a Better Quality of Life* (Sheffield, 2011). On behalf of KT-EQUAL, the consortium has hosted the multi-disciplinary inclusive design workshops, *A Built Environment for All Ages* (Edinburgh, 2010), *An International Perspective on the Built Environment for an Ageing Population* (Edinburgh, 2011) and, with the ActiveAge project run by the strategic consultancy, BusinessLab, *The Competitive Advantage of Age Friendly Cities* (Newcastle, 2011). Links with Canadian gerontologists and policy makers have been formed and strengthened through the *The Science of Age-Supportive Built Environments*, an Anglo-Canadian study tour of the UK supported by the High Commissions of Britain and Canada (London and Edinburgh, 2010). One year on, through the linkages made, I'DGO team members have presented at a number of events in Canada, including a joint meeting of the CIHR - Institute of Aging and the Public Health Agency of Canada, *Fostering Knowledge Development and Exchange on Age-Supportive Communities* (Toronto, 2011), and the *Festival of International Conferences on Caregiving, Disability, Aging and Technology (FICCDAT)* (Toronto, 2011).

Outside of KT-EQUAL, our recent knowledge transfer activity takes in events in Australia, Japan, China, Germany, Belgium, Éire, Italy, Iceland and Spain, as well as initiatives within the UK, such as the invited cross-disciplinary workshop *Ageing Well in the Built Environment* organised by the Local Government Association and UK Research Councils (London, 2010). Three of our researchers have taken part in the two-day *Healthy Ageing and the Physical Environment* workshop hosted by the Medical Research Council and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council in co-operation with Tsinghua University (Beijing, 2010) and five at a major international conference on the impact of global change organised by the International Association for People-Environment Studies (Leipzig, 2010). We have participated in the third international conference held by the International Association for Universal Design (Hamamatsu, 2010) and hosted a multi-disciplinary Chinese delegation exploring current trends and innovations in UK research into accessibility (Salford, 2010). Finally, we have liaised extensively with the British Society of Gerontology; contributing to its events programme and writing for *Generations Review*.

This Impact Statement is correct as of June 2011. For further information on any of the activities mentioned, please contact Máire Cox (m.cox@eca.ac.uk).