Kashiwa-Toyoshikidai Projects for Enabling Age-friendly Communities:

Achievements and Future Challenges

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On May 13, 2010, the Institute of Gerontology of the University of Tokyo, Urban Renaissance Agency, and the City of Kashiwa formed the Three Party Toyoshikidai Gerontology Research Group (hereafter called “Toyoshikidai Project”). The Toyoshikidai Project has ever since conducted model projects in Toyoshikidai housing complex, an area where the percentage of elderly exceeds 40%, to realize “Aging in Place” which means that the elderly can continue to live in their own community throughout their lives. This calls for availability of medical care at home and opportunities for social participation, and the Toyoshikidai Project implemented model programs to achieve such goals. At the end of the 5th year of the project, two new programs on lifestyle support services and promotion of health or frailty prevention were added. As we near the end of the term of our project, we review our achievements, and renew our collaboration toward our 10th year to tackle the unsolved challenges together.

In the report, the first five years of the project (2010-2014) is denoted as Phase 1, and the following three years as Phase 2.

1. Building a town with in-home care

Promotion of in-home care
<Phase 1>
The Project initiated discussions to promote in-home medical care through multidisciplinary organization in 2010, when the idea was yet new to the country. In March 2014, we published the “Guidebook for in-home nursing and multidisciplinary collaboration – the
Kashiwa model,” outlining rules for a functioning multidisciplinary collaboration. In April 2014, Kashiwa Medical Collaboration Center was established in the heart of Toyoshikidai housing complex as a collaboration of the Kashiwa doctor’s association, Kashiwa orthodontists’ association, and Kashiwa pharmaceutical association, acting as a center for provision of information and advice, as well as helping to coordinate in-home medical care. Such efforts in Kashiwa were reflected in the amendment of the care insurance laws in 2015, which spread the in-home medical and nursing collaboration project country-wide.

<Phase 2>
The country-wide spread of in-home medical care shows a certain level of success of our project. However, the number of doctors providing in-home care remains low, and home-visit nursing centers remain to be small-scale. This shows need for further promotion and education regarding in-home care to hospital staff.

To address these problems, the Kashiwa doctor’s association, Kashiwa home-visit nurse station, the University of Tokyo, and the city of Kashiwa established a “Phase 2 working group for in-home medical care” in 2016. In 2017, this working group conducted “A study to strengthen the function of home doctor and sub home doctor” aimed to strengthen the collaboration between in-home doctors and visiting nurses to alleviate anxieties of the patient and their family, and held “Training sessions on the Kashiwa model integrated community care system” to strengthen collaboration between in-home and hospital staff.

At the same time, a trial “study group on supporting patients and families’ choice and readiness” was held in 2015 for better multidisciplinary collaboration, and in 2016, “discussion group to enjoy the difference of opinion among different disciplines” was held along with a training program. This program is the basis of the current discussion group hosted by the integrated community support center and is spreading among the community.

<in the future>
We will continue our efforts and training sessions to increase in-home doctors, strengthen the home visiting nurse station, and to better the collaboration between multiple disciplines. A project to visualize in-home medical care will also be conducted to increase local people’s knowledge of in-home medical care.
Maintenance of the integrated community care system model

<Phase 1>
A serviced home for the elderly with a 24-hour support office for medical/nursing/caring services was established in May, 2014 in the Toyoshikidai housing complex. This is the first of such an elderly home equipped with all aspects of the integrative community care system established in Japan. It is the center of service provision of in-home medical care, nursing, and caring in the local community, and is the embodiment of the integrative community care system (figure 1).

| Service Provider: Gakken Cocofump Corporation |
| Collaborative Service Provider: Social Welfare Corporation Nagaoka-Fukushi-Kyokai, Sugi Medical Co., Ltd. |
| Total number of housing: 105 (independent housing 33; care housing 72) |

<Phase 2>
In the “6th Kashiwa elderly active plan” launched in April 2015, induction of serviced elderly home with service provision center functions, and the lowering of rent prices of serviced homes for low-income elderly were discussed. However, the focus was shifted to implementing 24-hour service centers for in-home medical care provision rather than making it compulsory for serviced home to be built in conjunction to the service provision center, as provision of in-home care is more central to our goals of realizing Aging in Place.

We are also strengthening functions and collaboration between multiple disciplines at the Kashiwa local medical collaboration center, and developing training programs to support decision making and dissemination of information.

<Future Challenges>
The 7th Kashiwa elderly active plan will start in April, 2018, and will establish 24-hour in-home medical care service centers for each living sphere (mid-sized communities). The establishment of these centers will result in a support system that would enable elderly requiring mid-level care to continue living in their houses as long as possible.
Life style support service (Newly added in Phase 2)

<Phase 2>

An additional working group was launched in Phase 2 (February 2015) to accommodate the need for support and the amendment of the care insurance act. The “study group for the maintenance of community support” is a collaboration of NPOs, welfare commissioner/commissioned child welfare volunteers, local committee, and care providers. In 2015 and 2016, “support committees” for each of the 20 community areas were launched to build a system for provision of support and a place of belonging for the locals.

As part of this working group, the Toyoshikidai project held the “San’ai festival” in June, 2017. 240 locals participated and discussed the need of community support and shared the current situation in the community. Three working groups, the “community support system,” “health maintenance and place of belonging,” “dissemination and networking” were formed involving local companies, stores and care providers and are currently working to solve these issues.

<Future Challenges>

The second San’ai festival will be held in February, 2018 and a survey will be conducted regarding community support and place of belonging. The results of this survey will be used to determine future activities. The community support system will be structured through collaboration of these local citizens and local organizations. We aim to reflect the outcomes of the projects in Toyoshikidai to other parts of the city.

2. Building a community where elderly can continue to be active and engaged

Work for purpose and support to find purpose of life

<Phase 1>

In order to promote social participation in older adults, we created the concept “work for purpose.” This concept merges “work” or employment which is the lifestyle the elderly is used to, and social work that would give them a sense of “purpose” in their retired life. Five areas of business that contributes to the solution of local challenges were selected including
1) agriculture, 2) food in the locality, 3) child care, 4) lifestyle support, and 5) welfare. Jobs were prepared by the project in each area except for 2). Elderly employment in 3) and 4) were especially successful that it spread to other companies (table 2).

The work for purpose model works as a direct employment contract between the business organization and the elderly, and generally involves a short work shift of one to two hours, one to three days per week. As an introductory session, the project held eight "employment seminars" between 2011 and 2013 where 591 persons participated. The seminar featured a group work session to encourage employment and to support networking among the participants, and was greatly successful.

In order to implement the work for purpose model in Kashiwa city, the city’s silver resources center (registration office for elderly who wish to work on occasion) places two coordinators who matches job opportunities with elderly’s needs since October 2013. The coordinators were able to match 47 older adults with jobs by March 2015.

<Phase 2>
In order to further promote social participation among the elderly, the “second life platform project” was launched in November 2014. This project collects information on volunteer activities, NPO activities, life-long learning, hobbies, and health promotion activities that older adults may wish to join in. A “second life support desk” was placed on the first floor of the city hall as a model project by the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare until March 2016. The coordinators introduced relevant activities to older adults, conducted seminars on social engagement, and published information on their website.

In 2016, Employment Security Bureau, the Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare launched the “life-long engagement local collaboration project” incorporating this model and expanded the project nation-wide. Kashiwa city followed this example and launched the “Kashiwa city association of life-long engagement” with the local board of trade and the social welfare association. The association, involving various organizations, takes over the activities of the second life platform project and will promote employment as well as non-employment activities among the elderly.
<Future Challenges>
The Kashiwa city association of the promotion of life-long engagement will collaborate with the silver resource center, board of trade, and social welfare association to build a system to encourage employment, local social work, and other forms of social engagement disregarding age. It will strengthen their support to match employment or activities with relevant senior citizens, and work to let the wider population know of such support. It will support work sharing among the senior employees, as well as launching companies, social business, and community business which would maximize the potential of the elderly wishing to engage in society. The project's activities will be evaluated, and effective future development will be discussed.

As for 2) food in the locality as initially suggested among the five business areas, a “community eatery” is being planned as a place to prevent elderly undernourishment, a place for work for purpose, and a place for networking.

Creating an environment that encourages outings, networking, and participating

<Phase 1>
In order to maintain elderly's health and enjoyment in life, it is important that the environment is suitable for the elderly to be able to go out of their houses with ease.

Toyoshikidai housing complex has aimed to provide such an environment by building a street named “a walk for all seasons” as the housing complex is rebuilt (Fig.2). Study groups have been held since 2011 with the local residents on how to build a park for the area, resulting in a park in the center of the housing complex next to the serviced housing for the elderly (Fig.3).

For provision of opportunity to learn new ideas, “Kururu seminars” were held since 2013 at elementary schools in Toyoshikidai area with the social welfare association. In 2013, 100 people attended, but attendance grew to 510 by 2016. Social experiments such as installing benches in various locations of the housing complex and opening community cafes at vacant stores were conducted to support local networking and community building.
The Kururu seminar now provides three semesters of lectures a year, and 15 groups formed by those who completed the courses are now operating around the Toyoshikidai area. A vacant store in Toyoshikidai shopping street was offered during 2015 through 2016 as a temporary community space to support activities run by local residents. A small space in the shopping street is now provided as a permanent local activity center in 2018, supporting activities of local groups and the launch of the community café.

Future Challenges

The street for all seasons and local activity center will be used to offer lectures and workshops in collaboration with the social welfare association and local community groups. The activities lead by the local residents to form new network and activities will be a model for the management of local residential activities. The formation of community and networking among the residents and transportation accessibility will be monitored as factors of an environment that encourages outings to assess housing and townscape design for the improvement of elderly QOL.

Promotion of health and prevention of care (Newly added at the end of phase 1)

Based on the three-year health promotion survey starting 2012 on 2,000 elderly in the area, easy to understand ideas and standards were created regarding nutrition, physical activities and social engagement. These new ideas and standards were provided to local citizens for an effective and continuous health support program, and led to the development of “frailty check” by the local supporters.

Phase 2

The first “Lecture on frailty check” was held in February, 2015 in Sakaine Higashi town meeting. Lecture on frailty check was added as one of the programs of the city’s care prevention in April 2015, and frailty check was provided to measure the effects of the physical activity program in two local groups.

This trial led to “outreach type lectures” held at group meetings and “permanent provision type lectures” held at care prevention centers and the integrated community care center in 2016. Training sessions for frailty prevention supporters were held twice a year, and by
January 2018, 104 supporters are registered in the city.

Frailty check is now provided as a means to spread awareness of frailty, and is being promoted as a community based health promotion and frailty prevention program. The “Frailty prevention project 2025” is now working to promote building environments where frailty can be prevented through daily life activities.

Additionally, the Toyoshikidai local groups are planning to promote frailty prevention by creating a “place to frequent” or a place to go to. The goal is to provide frailty prevention as part of the lifestyle support services.

<Future Challenges>
We aim to analyze the change of attitude and behavior on health promotion and social engagement among citizens due to the lectures on frailty check to create a system where residents who take part in frailty check would be able to continuously engage in activities to prevent frailty. We will support various types of care prevention activities to reflect the individual conditions and needs of the local residents.

Plans for 2018-2021
In the past 8 years, we strived to suggest ideas and build the foundation for an ideal environment for Aging in Place. In the next three years, we aim to establish our trials as a continuous program. We aim to expand our project, and health promotion and care prevention will be strengthened. We are gearing towards the completion of our model community, where people can Age in Place.
<Toyoshikidai area in 2030 - a vision of the community, May 2010>

<Current condition of Toyoshikidai Apartment Complex, March 2018>