



CASE STUDY

Singapore | Kampung Admiralty

# Ageing Well Together

At Kampung Admiralty, seniors can join a mass exercise, check on their health, and even play with their grandchildren—all at their doorstep.

## The Challenge

Singapore is ageing. In 2015, some 1 in 8 Singaporeans were aged 65 or older. This proportion will double by 2030 when it is estimated to have over 900,000 seniors. An ageing population has implications for society, such as rising demand for healthcare and social services. Coupled with the trend of smaller nuclear families and more people staying single, more elderly households in Singapore may experience social isolation as they

struggle to live independently or are cut off from society.

In 2015, the city-state introduced the Action Plan for Successful Ageing to ensure Singapore remains an attractive place to grow old in, and where seniors can realise their fullest potential and are cared as integral members of society. Kampung Admiralty—Singapore's first retirement village—is a physical expression of this vision.

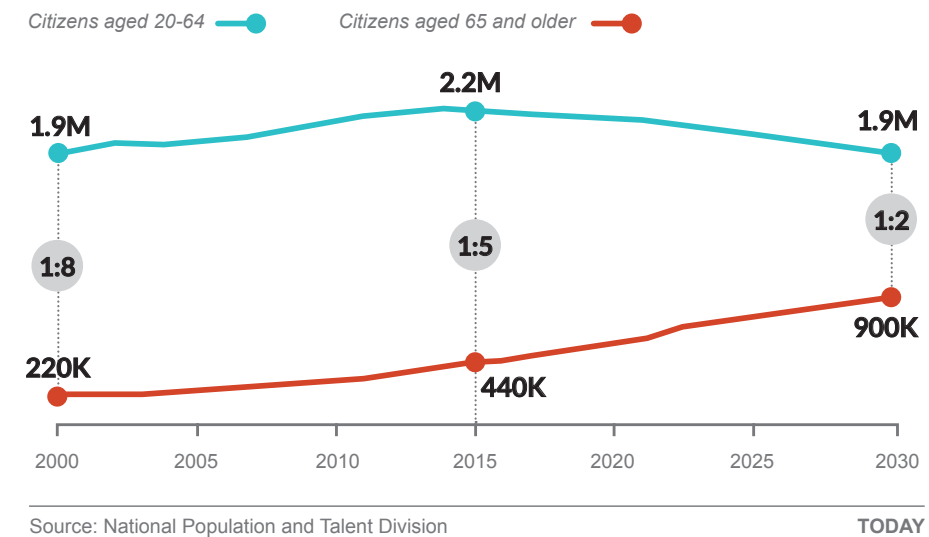


Justin Zhuang is a writer who sees the world through design.

## Singapore feeling impact of rapidly ageing population

By Kelly NG

### Number of working-age citizens has peaked



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Singapore has to quickly respond to the trend of an ageing population.





## The Solution

Completed in 2017 by the Housing and Development Board (HDB) together with other public agencies, Kampung Admiralty combines public housing apartments with a wide variety of lifestyle services and public amenities in a single integrated development. These different functions are stacked one on top of another to create an 11-storey “vertical village” just for seniors.

The entire development is designed with the elderly in mind. Residents aged 55 and above live in two towers of studio apartments that sit atop Kampung Admiralty. The units are installed with senior-friendly features, including grab bars, slip-proof flooring, retractable clothes-drying racks in the kitchen and alarms to notify neighbours in an emergency. “Buddy benches” are also installed at the entrances of each unit to encourage residents to socialise.

Efforts to promote social bonding continue at a community garden below the apartment blocks. An Active Ageing Hub offers residents opportunities to interact through activities such as line dancing and a weekly cooking session that uses produce from the community garden. Next to the hub is a childcare centre that regularly organises activities for both generations to come together through storytelling and craft workshops. Unlike other hubs that charge a membership fee, the hub at Kampung Admiralty lets seniors participate in its activities for free if they volunteer for at least three hours a week. This could include helping the centre with care duties for frail seniors or organising activities for fellow retirees.

To encourage residents to be active, Kampung Admiralty incorporates a range of services in the development, including a two-storey medical centre, a supermarket, cafes and other retail stores. A Community Plaza on the ground floor allows for mass exercises, bazaars and cultural events. It also connects to an MRT station, inviting the public into the development to enjoy spaces such as its 900-seat food court on the second floor.

In these ways, Kampung Admiralty attracts the entire neighbourhood to make it lively for all. “Kampung Admiralty shows that co-locating multiple uses that everyone needs...makes life easier for the whole neighbourhood. But what makes them want to stay and spend time together, share a meal, participate in activities and get to know new friends is that the building is open, friendly, comfortable, accessible and very green. The convenience draws people in, and the atmosphere makes people want to stay,” shares Wong Mun Summ, co-founder of WOHA, the architectural firm that designed the development.

**“An Active Ageing Hub offers residents opportunities to interact through activities such as line dancing and a weekly cooking session.”**



01 Two towers of studio apartments have been set aside for older residents in Kampung Admiralty.

02 Intergenerational programmes provide opportunities for the young and old to interact.

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## The Outcome


Since the first residents moved in two years ago, Kampung Admiralty has proved to be a model for ageing-in-place. According to a survey of 46 senior residents, their quality of life—in terms of finding meaning or feeling empowered—has improved by 8%.

One reason may be the many activities organised by the development's Active Ageing Hub. According to the director of the hub, 1 in 5 residents take part in its activities. For retiree Poo Chee Chiang and his wife, the hub has even become like a second home as they spend up to five days a week there. He told LabourBeat, a website on workers in Singapore: “There is a big group of people here...with a lot of energy. If we were to do things on our own, it becomes easy to lose interest.”

The hub has also boosted the health of nearby residents like Linda Ng. Through activities in the hub, she learnt how to eat healthily, exercises more and is no longer cooped up at home.

She told *TODAY* newspaper: “My life has changed...Now I've lost 8 kg and my doctor said it was a miracle that my diabetes got so much better.”

Kampung Admiralty's integrated approach to caring for seniors has also impressed those from overseas. In 2018, the World Architecture Festival named it the Building of the Year because the jury felt it offered lessons for cities and countries around the world. In a statement, the award's programme director, Paul Finch, said the project was admirable for how it “dealt with the universal condition of longevity and health treatments, social housing provision, and commercial space, which enabled substantial public realm benefits”.

But the best endorsement has come from Singapore's commitment to develop and replicate the model across the country. By 2026, a similar retirement village will be built in the neighbourhood of Yew Tee, and more are expected to follow. 



01 Kampung Admiralty's community plaza is a vibrant place that draws people together.