Three worlds of digitalisation, environment and society: the challenges of aging and immigration

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Acknowledgement

- We pay our respects to the traditional custodians of the unceded lands on which we work and live and to elders, past present and emerging, and to Aboriginal people in this meeting.

Mega trends and elders

- Mega trends – AI/digitalisation, environmental/climate changes and globalisation are affecting the context in which people live
- Human society has also experienced profound changes
  - Many countries in Indo Pacific experience ageing populations
  - As a legacy of globalisation, people move to new places when they were at working age and their older parents have joined them
  - Other elders are left behind in home countries/hometowns without intergenerational support
- Policy still has not kept up with these changes and there are significant implications for older people and migrant families, esp those with older members
- Policies that try to address social issues for these groups increasingly have to encounter technological and environmental changes.
- Therefore, it is important to understand the interactions between the three worlds: digital/technological, environmental and social as they relate to healthy ageing and family functioning
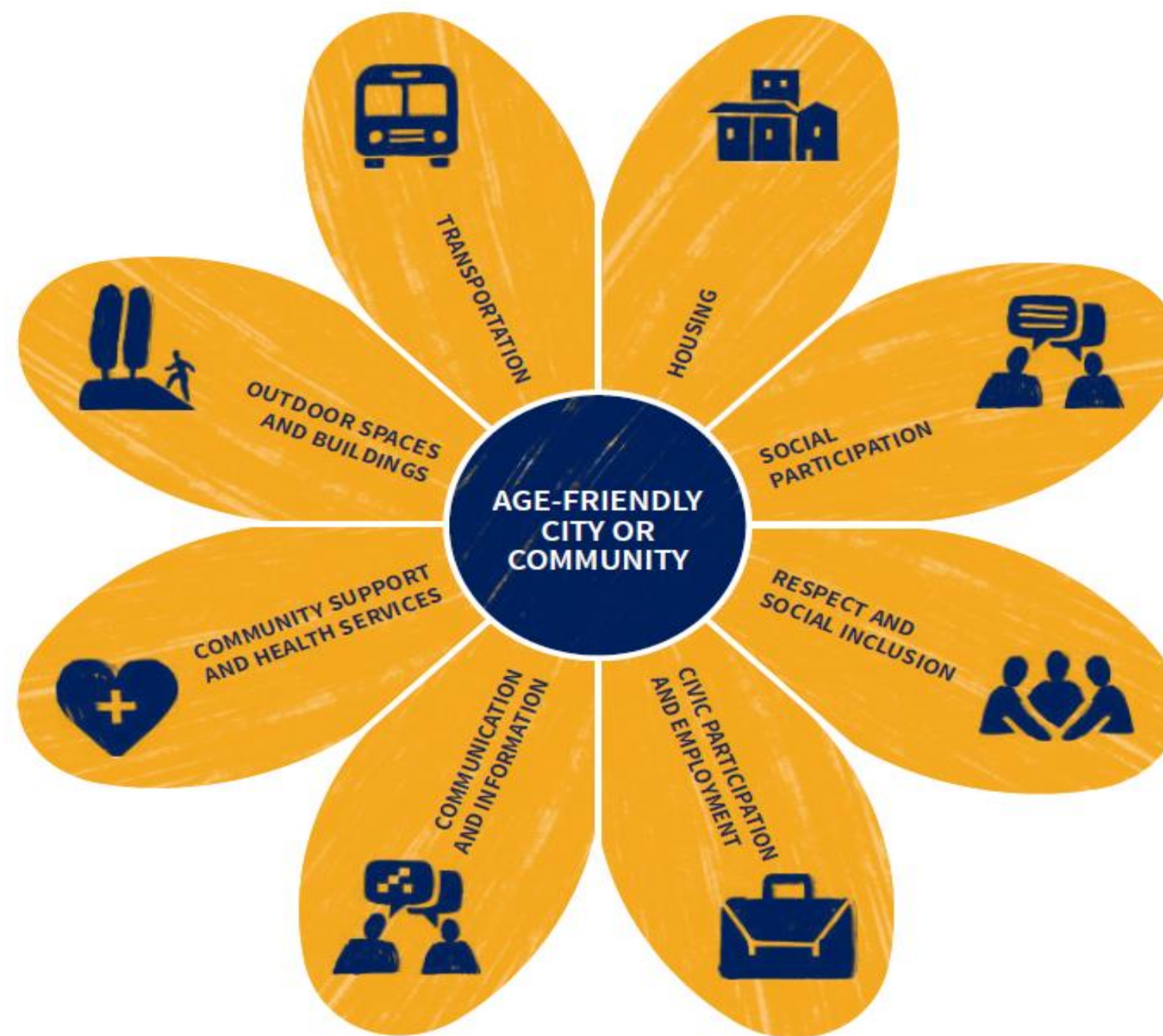
WHO National programmes for age-friendly cities and communities

- Updated framework stresses the need for **digital inclusion** and the relevance of the **natural environment** and the balance between the built and social environments https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240068698

Digitalisation, natural environment and society loosely linked together
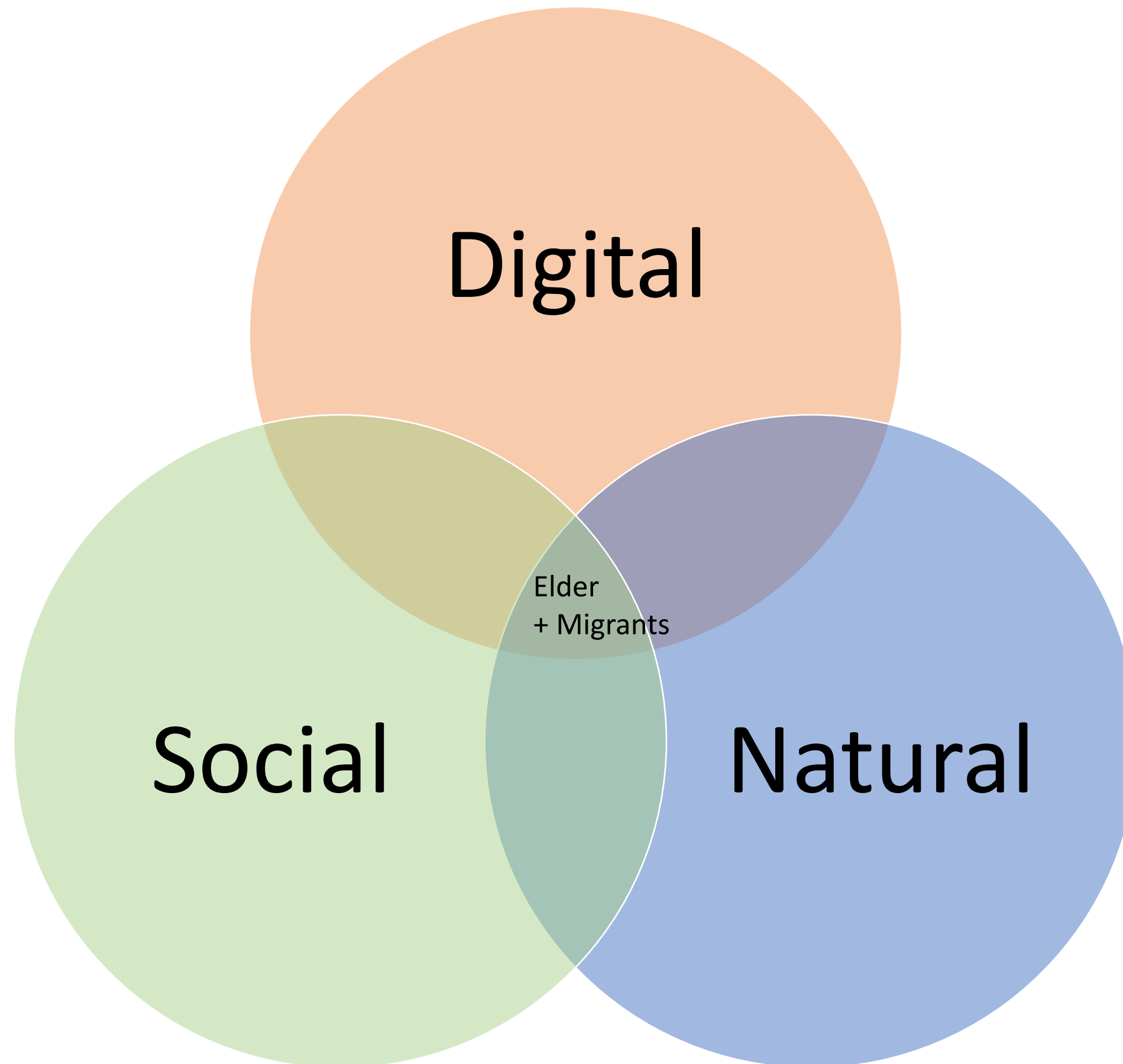
Age-friendly city domains of action

Domains

- However the notion of separate domains is misleading

- Digitalisation and technology are not just about communication and information

- They are significantly integrated into different domains (transport, housing, services) and including the environment.

- Similarly environment and climate are not just about outdoor spaces but affect housing, transport and social participation (and migration).

- Thus these domains are all interacting rather than separate areas of action.

What is needed—better awareness of overlapping worlds

Changing dynamics for older people in the three world

- Natural, social and digital environments could be in tension
  - Services and family supports provided virtually could reduce face to face social interactions and family time
  - Time spent in the digital world could reduce access to nature (less gardening)
  - Climate change could force elders to spend more time indoors and in digital world
- On the other hand they could also be complementary
  - Online forums can provide information and support to access the natural environment
  - Social media is crucial in promoting volunteering and social participation as well as participate in climate action
  - Old age friendly cities would encourage older people to go out more –what is the environmental implication if older people spend more time outdoors?

Migrant families

- The primary need is social integration
  - How to navigate in new digital, social and physical environments.
  - Digital barriers lead to poor access to society and even nature
  - Lowered their potential to contribute to society and protection of nature
  - However continue to access news and social contacts with country of origin
  - Service provision increasingly digitalised and technology focused

- Digital solutions can offer limited empowerment
  - Easier translation and easier information access
  - Easier social participation
  - Growing volunteering among migrant population—some can be beneficial to nature.
  - Tech also helps inter-generational solidarity in migrant families e.g. through translation apps and social media/Zoom calls

- Natural solutions can relieve pressure
  - Nature related volunteering, but very limited participation, migrant elders are often confined to their own residential communities
  - Often don't have access to information about volunteering or access to nature or environment

Policy and practice

- Although policy and service provision for age care are increasingly recognising technological advances, environment and climate change and specific issues for migrants, these policies are still developed in silos.

- Usually implemented in different government agencies.

- Often do not take into account interactions or intersectionality

- Lag behind technological developments and climate change impacts

Implications

- Need to have more systematic analyses of how nature, digital world and human society interact when we try to address social challenges, including migration and older people in migrant families.
- Several questions for policy makers:
  - How to integrate the considerations in different domains in social policies
  - How can policy keep up with rapid changes in technology, society and climate?
  - How to avoid silos and ensure all policies address these 3 issues

Questions?

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