INTRODUCTION TO THE BETTER VISION, HEALTHY AGEING PROGRAM TOOLKIT

AUDIENCE AND PURPOSE OF THE TOOLKIT

The Better Vision, Healthy Ageing Program Toolkit has been written for non-governmental organisation and government program managers and officials who design, implement and evaluate any type of community program that promotes the health and wellbeing of elders. Community leaders who participate in the design of programs may also find elements of the toolkit useful. It is also intended to provide eye health workers with ideas to design and implement community-based vision screening and eye health promotion activities. Lastly, it is designed for program managers who wish to gain a better understanding of how to ensure the participation of elders in any community development program.

The toolkit's purpose is to increase knowledge, practical skills and commitment to:

- Healthy ageing strategies that can contribute to the health status and quality of life of elders
- Healthy ageing strategies that can contribute to the prevention and management of eye health problems
- Eye health care that can contribute to active and healthy ageing
- Integrate the prevention and management of eye health problems within the general health system
- Reorient health systems and services towards the needs of elders
- Respect the rights of elders
- Encourage the important contributions that elders make to families and communities
- Include elders as key actors in community programs
- Strengthen contact and communication between generations within families and in communities

CONTENT OF THE TOOLKIT

The toolkit consists of practical ideas and methods based on the experiences and lessons from the Better Vision, Healthy Ageing Program in Sri Lanka.

It is divided into three interrelated sections, which provide frameworks and guidance for:

1. Establishing and implementing Elders' Clubs and peer education activities
2. Eye health promotion and assessing and managing common eye health problems in the community
3. Involving elders in development programs, including mainstreaming ageing in development, and ethical and practical guidelines for working with elders

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The toolkit includes samples of documents that have been used by elders and peer educators throughout the Better Vision, Healthy Ageing Program which may be adapted for other contexts.

The toolkit also includes quotes from elders, their families and other community members, highlighting their experiences and illustrating the ideas discussed.

Below is a brief summary of each document in the toolkit:

THE BETTER VISION, HEALTHY AGEING PROGRAM SUMMARY

A background document on the program rationale, setting, goals and aims, partners and stakeholders and key program components. Can be useful as a standalone document to give an overview of the program.

GUIDE TO ESTABLISHING COMMUNITY ELDERS' CLUBS

A practical step-by-step guide to establishing Elders' Clubs at the community level and Elders Committees. Provides details of the process to be followed from initial community consultation through to running meetings and activities. Includes a summary of the importance of social participation and the benefits of Elders' Clubs and the challenges and lessons from the Better Vision, Healthy Ageing Program experience. A valuable resource for program managers, community leaders or Elders' Club leaders.

FRAMEWORK FOR ACTIVITIES FOR ELDERS' CLUBS

A list of suggested types of activities that Elders' Clubs may follow. Intended for use by program managers and community leaders or Elders' Club leaders. Should be used in conjunction with the Guide to establishing community Elders' Clubs.

GUIDE FOR USE OF HEALTH PROMOTION PICTURE CARDS

A health education tool consisting of a set of picture cards alongside a series of health promotion messages. Intended to stimulate discussion of healthy behaviours. The cards can be used in a variety of flexible and entertaining ways in individual households or within a group or community setting such as an Elders' Club. Intended for use by anyone interested in health promotion.

VISION HEALTH PROMOTION MESSAGES FOR ELDERS

An information handout which outlines the function of the eye, common eye problems, eye disease management and treatment, and guidance on what elders can do to look after their own vision. Intended for use by program managers, health workers, community leaders or Elders' Club leaders, and elders and their families.

GUIDE TO COMMUNITY-BASED VISION SCREENING: THE EYE HEALTH PROMOTERS MODEL

A practical step-by-step guide to implementing a novel methodology for community-based vision screening called the Eye Health Promoter Model. Includes rationale for vision screening of elders in the community, overview of the model using trained elders to undertake stage one vision screening of their peers, and the steps involved in identifying, training and supporting Eye Health Promoters. Also outlines a practical approach to screening elders, referring to eye care specialists, and managing lists of elders for glasses provision and cataract surgery. Intended for use by program managers and health workers, including eye care specialists.

GUIDE TO COMMUNITY-BASED GLASSES PROVISION

A practical step-by-step guide to implementing community-based glasses provision linked to the Eye Health Promoter model. Includes the steps involved in collating prescriptions and placing orders, checking and following up these orders, and finally distributing to elders in the community. Intended for use by program managers and health care providers, including eye care specialists.

BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER YOUR CATARACT SURGERY: GUIDE FOR ELDERS AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS

An information handout which is provided to elders in the program before they go for cataract surgery. Provides practical information on preparing for the surgery, what to expect at the hospital and post-operative eye care. Intended for use by elders and their families.

GUIDE TO MAINSTREAMING AGEING IN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

A guidance document which outlines a process for considering ageing in development projects or programs. Encourages programmers to analyse how elders might contribute to and benefit from development activities and how the rights, roles and responsibilities of elders may be affected by programs. Provides guiding questions and examples to consider at each stage of the project cycle: information gathering and situation analysis, planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. Intended for use by program managers.

ETHICAL AND PRACTICAL GUIDELINES WHEN WORKING WITH ELDERS

A set of guidelines for working with elders in development programs that consider the need to respect elders' rights to health and dignity, and to recognise their physical and psychological needs and family and community responsibilities. Practical examples are provided. Intended for use by anyone working with or alongside elders.

TERMS OF USE

The materials in this toolkit may be used free of charge.

You are encouraged to reproduce and use the materials under the following conditions:

- The names of the Better Vision, Healthy Ageing Program partners and the Burnet Institute and The Fred Hollows Foundation logos are retained on existing materials and not replaced with your own logo
- The source of the materials must be acknowledged
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- The Burnet Institute is acknowledged for its management and technical direction of the activities carried out in the Better Vision, Healthy Ageing Program
- The Fred Hollows Foundation is acknowledged for its funding of the activities carried out in the Better Vision, Healthy Ageing Program
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HOW TO USE THE TOOLKIT

You are encouraged to read the entire toolkit before starting to plan programs or projects based on the new ideas presented. Reading the toolkit in a study group with colleagues is an excellent way to discuss the ideas and how they might be relevant to or applied in your context, and to learn from each other.

The toolkit is also designed so that you can choose which ideas are relevant for your context. Each document is available as a separate PDF.

We encourage you to consider adapting the guides, frameworks, and sample handouts to suit your particular context.

For further information about the Better Vision, Healthy Ageing Program, please contact:

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The Better Vision, Healthy Ageing Program partners would appreciate receiving details of any use made of this material in training, research or program design, implementation or evaluation.

This Toolkit draws on the experience of implementing the Better Vision Healthy Ageing Program in Sri Lanka in partnership with PALM Foundation, Berendina Development Services, the Plantation Human Development Trust, Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, the Ministry of Health national Vision 2020 programme, the Kandy Centre for Sight, and the District Department of Social Services. The documents in The Better Vision, Healthy Ageing Program Toolkit were written and edited by Dr Wendy Holmes (Technical Director, Better Vision Healthy Ageing Program), Kelly Durrant (Program Manager, Burnet Institute) and Rachel Coghlan (The Fred Hollows Foundation). The work described in these documents was undertaken by:

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