

WHO Healthy Cities Recognition: Call for Nominations

The Alliance for Healthy Cities (AFHC) is an international network collaborating with the World Health Organization (WHO) that aims to protect and enhance the health of city dwellers.

The 10th Global Conference of AFHC will take place in Seoul, Republic of Korea, on September 25th to 27th, 2024. The conference is co-hosted by the Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) and the Alliance for Healthy Cities in the Western Pacific Region. It is co-sponsored by the WHO Western Pacific Regional Office. The theme of the Conference is “Smarter and Healthier Cities for a Better Future”.

Since 2004 and every two years during the Global Conference and General Assembly of the AFHC, WHO Western Pacific Regional Office (WPRO) recognizes outstanding work in selected areas to encourage cities in the Western Pacific Region to continue to innovate and demonstrate effective and efficient ways of promoting and protecting the health of urban populations. The awards will be presented at the 10th Global Conference of the Alliance for Healthy Cities and officially awarded by WHO WPRO.

Eligible applicants: Cities from Member States of the Western Pacific Region, World Health Organization

Deadline for submission: 24 July 2024. Any nominations received after this date will not be considered.

How to submit: Please complete the WHO Healthy Cities Recognition nomination form. Email your submission and supporting documents to the Health Enabling Societies Unit of WHO-WPRO at the following email address: wproncd@who.int

Recognition: Recognition will be awarded to nominees who successfully demonstrate best practice in the following areas. Awardees will be announced at the 10th Global Conference of the Alliance for Healthy Cities, 25th-27th September 2024.

List of WHO Healthy Cities Recognition award categories:

- *Age-Friendly Cities: Bridging Generations for a Healthier Tomorrow*
- *Let's be Active!*
- *Tobacco-free city for future generations: strategic implementation of tobacco control measures to protect children and youth*
- *Transforming Food Environments for Healthy Diets and Optimal Nutrition*
- *Safe, Sustainable and Health-enabling Transport System*
- *Community Engagement to Advance Health Equity*
- *Climate resilience and environmental sustainability for health in cities*
- *Safeguarding Communities Against Alcohol-Related Har*

All applications in all award categories will be evaluated against the following criteria:

- They provide a concise Executive Summary of the program*
- The program they present is relevant in the context of the city*
- They provide a clear definition of the objectives and anticipated outcomes of the program*
- They present a detailed planning structure of the program and its process of implementation*
- They support collaborations implemented across both health and non-health sectors, ensuring a comprehensive approach to planning, execution, and assessment*
- The program they present addresses gender and equity gaps within communities, fostering inclusivity*
- The program they present has a potential for replicability, adaptability and broad implementation across various urban areas*
- The program they present is effective and implements measurement of its impact*
- The program they present is sustainable and ensures continuity in the future*

Award title: *Age-Friendly Cities: Bridging Generations for a Healthier Tomorrow*

Award description:

The *Age-Friendly Cities: Bridging Generations for a Healthier Tomorrow Award* recognizes cities that have demonstrated outstanding support to ageing populations and intergenerational initiatives to improve people's life across the life course.

More than 240 million people over the age of 65 live in the Western Pacific Region, with expectations for this number to double by 2050. The 2020-endorsed Regional Action Plan on healthy ageing aims to address the needs of current and future ageing populations in the Western Pacific Region. This plan encourages Member States to take early action in preparing for population ageing and to promote the active participation of older adults in society, emphasizing a whole-of-society approach.

The significance of an intergenerational approach in meeting these needs is paramount. By fostering a society where knowledge, skills, and values are exchanged between generations, we enhance the health and well-being of individuals across all ages. Intergenerational programs play a crucial role in providing support and care, building resilient communities where everyone, regardless of their age, can contribute significantly. Such initiatives help dismantle social barriers, counteract ageism, and cultivate cohesive, supportive environments that are conducive to healthy ageing.

This award seeks to recognize and spotlight cities' initiatives and good practices that address the challenges of ageing societies with innovative, intergenerational cooperation. Examples of applications could include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Cities promoting activities in which older people support mentoring and provide childcare for mothers and their babies.
- Cities setting up programs for older people to volunteer in schools, share knowledge and experience, and foster mutual understanding with students.
- Cities supporting older people to lead or participate in community activities, fostering social connection across generations.
- Cities promoting programs enabling older people to participate in health promotion activities within their communities, encourage healthy behavior across all ages.

In highlighting these endeavors, the award aims to encourage further efforts that bridge generational divides, ensuring a healthier, more inclusive society for community members of all ages.

Award title: *Let's be Active!*

Award description:

Regular physical activity is widely recognized as a cornerstone in the prevention and management of various non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and certain types of cancers. Moreover, it plays a crucial role in mitigating risk factors such as hypertension and obesity. Beyond physical health, engaging in regular physical activity has been linked to cognitive benefits, including a delay in the onset of dementia, as well as improvements in overall quality of life and well-being.

Despite these well-documented benefits, however, the Western Pacific Region faces significant challenges regarding physical inactivity. Alarmingly, one in four adults and 85% of adolescents in the region fail to meet recommended levels of physical activity. Factors contributing to this trend include rapid and unplanned urbanization, technological advancements fostering sedentary behaviors, and a reliance on passive modes of transportation. Urban spaces have increasingly prioritized motorized vehicles over pedestrian walkways, diminishing walkability, while limited green areas and community spaces further restrict accessibility to physical activity opportunities. Additionally, concerns regarding personal safety, such as poorly lit areas and high-density traffic, deter individuals from engaging in outdoor physical activities like walking and cycling.

In response to these challenges, Member States have committed to reducing the global prevalence of physical inactivity in adults and adolescents by 15% by 2025, compared to a 2016 baseline. To facilitate this endeavor, the *Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018-2030*, comprising four strategic objectives, has been formulated and endorsed. For more detailed information, please refer to the following link: [Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018-2030](#) .

This award honors efforts that have significantly advanced physical activity to enhance resident health and foster environments conducive to walking and cycling. Efforts could include, but are not limited to, those that are in alignment with one of the four strategic objectives outlined in the draft *Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018-2030*, considering factors such as proximity to residential areas, availability of safe pedestrian pathways, and the presence of barrier-free facilities for individuals with disabilities.

Award title: *Tobacco-free city for future generations: strategic implementation of tobacco control measures to protect children and youth*

Award description:

The *Tobacco-free city for future generations Award* recognizes cities that have made a significant contribution to preventing tobacco use and implementing control measures protecting vulnerable inhabitants from the harmful effect of tobacco products.

In light of the steady decline in tobacco users, it has become increasingly evident that the tobacco industry targets children and youth as their prime demographic to sustain their business and even extend their market reach. To counteract this alarming trend and promote the health and well-being of future generations, it is imperative to implement comprehensive tobacco control measures prioritizing the protection of children and youth from the harm of tobacco and related industries and their products.

The WPRO Regional Action Plan for Tobacco Control 2020-2030 highlights the importance of implementing key tobacco control measures and programmes with particular focus on protecting vulnerable populations including children and youth. Some sub-national jurisdictions in the Western Pacific Region have already embarked on meaningful initiatives towards creating tobacco-free futures and generations.

This award seeks to recognize cities across the Western Pacific Region that have demonstrated exemplary efforts and implemented innovative approaches to foster healthier tobacco-free environments, with a particular focus on protecting children and youth from the harms of tobacco and nicotine products. These efforts include the implementation of: smoke-free policies, stringent restrictions or bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship, and promotion of tobacco cessation programmes.

Award title: *Transforming Food Environments for Healthy Diets and Optimal Nutrition*

Award description:

The *Transforming Food Environments for Healthy Diets and Optimal Nutrition Award* recognizes cities that have made a significant contribution to improve population nutrition status.

Most countries in the Region face a double burden of malnutrition, which consists of both undernutrition and overweight and obesity, as well as diet-related noncommunicable diseases (NCDs). Moreover, the relationship between undernutrition and overweight and obesity is more than mere co-existence. Undernutrition early in life – and even in utero – may predispose to overweight and obesity later in life. Despite some progress, poor nutrition and unhealthy diet continue to threaten the health and development of women, adolescents, and children in the Western Pacific Region.

An important step in the prevention and control of diet related NCDs is to promote a *healthy* diet, which is heavily influenced by the food environment. The foods available to people in their daily lives, the nutritional quality, safety, price, convenience, labelling and promotion of these foods compose the food environments. A healthy food environment enables and encourages people to access and choose healthy diets which contribute to end all forms of malnutrition (SDG target 2.2.) and prevent NCDs (SDG target 3.4).

Applications from cities implementing measures, policies, and interventions that enable consumers to access and choose healthy diets may include, but are not limited to:

- Policies that protect children from the harmful impact of food marketing
- Proper labelling that make consumers aware of the nutritional content of the food and facilitate to choose healthier options
- Interventions that promote availability and accessibility of healthy foods in different settings such as schools and workplaces
- Public food procurement and service policies for healthy diets (e.g., to reduce the intake of free sugars, sodium, unhealthy fats, and to increase the consumption of legumes, wholegrains, fruits, and vegetables)
- Behaviour change communication and mass media campaigns for healthy diets (e.g. to reduce the intake of energy, free sugars, sodium, unhealthy fats, and to increase the consumption of legumes, wholegrains, fruits and vegetables), and
- Efforts that seek to protect, promote and support optimal breastfeeding practice.

Award title: *Safe, Sustainable and Health-enabling Transport System*

Award description:

Mobility is a daily need. With about 70% of the global population expected to live in urban settings by 2030, the increasing needs for urban mobility will exceed the capacity of current transport system and require more sustainable solutions. While upgrading the transport system, cities have many opportunities to protect and promote the health of their citizens. A safe road transport system reduces the risk of crash and injuries among all road users regardless of whether they are pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists, or drivers, nor their age and gender. A safe and accessible transportation system encourages people to walk, cycle and use public transport, which increases physical activity and mitigates the impact of climate change.

Safe and accessible transport systems contribute to the realization of many SDGs, in particular SDG 3.6 "*halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents.*" and SDG 11.2 "*By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible, and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities, and older persons.*".

This award seeks cities across the region who are champions in providing a safe, accessible and sustainable transport system with an aim to reduce injuries, promote physical activity, and create a healthy environment. Efforts can include, but are not limited to:

1. Implementing policies that seek to encourage multimodal transport, such as policies that prioritize the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport users;
2. Implementing policies or actions that seek to improve road infrastructure, with performance targets tied to the safety and health of all road users;
3. Enacting and enforcing road safety legislation or policies that seek to ensure the safe use of roads, such as regulation on driving speed, seatbelt and restraint usage, proper helmet use.
4. Efforts that seek to improve the post-crash response, such as establishing coordinating mechanisms for dispatching responses from the fire brigade, police, and ambulance, and providing related training.
5. Efforts that recognize the gender perspective in transport and take actions to mitigate gender inequalities, both for road users and potential employees in the transport industry.

Award title: *Community Engagement to Advance Health Equity*

Award description:

The *Community Engagement to Advance Health Equity Award* recognizes cities that have demonstrated outstanding meaningful community engagement as an approach to advance health equity and address social determinants of health.

Community engagement is essential for achieving Universal Health Coverage and Health Equity. Further, it is an effective tool to meet the needs of vulnerable populations by shifting power to communities, providing tailored solutions to unique challenges, building trust through two-way communication, transparency, accountability, and collaboration, mobilizing community resources, and strengthening multisectoral partnerships. By understanding the unique needs and vulnerabilities of different groups and actively involving communities in decision-making processes, community engagement can help make public health programs more effective, increase community ownership over health outcomes and equity, address systemic barriers, and promote social justice.

The Award celebrates cities in the Western Pacific Region that have used community engagement as an approach to improve access to quality health services, food security, early childhood education, social protection, or safe and affordable housing, healthy working life conditions, or social inclusion and non-discrimination, and prevent gender-based violence to create a health enabling environment. Efforts should, but are not limited to, engage one or more of the following groups:

1. Migrants, refugees, or internally displaced people

2. Indigenous People or ethnic minorities
3. People living with disabilities
4. People with marginalized sexualities or gender identities
5. Survivors of gender-based violence
6. People living in slums, informal settlements, or who are homeless
7. People living in closed settings

The applications should also be firmly rooted in the context of regional and global commitments. They should support action towards SDG 1: No Poverty, SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being, SDG 5: Gender Equality, and SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities.

Award title: *Climate resilience and environmental sustainability for health in cities*

Award description:

The *Climate resilience and environmental sustainability for health in cities Award* is designed to recognize cities that have demonstrated exceptional commitment and innovation in promoting climate resilience and environmental sustainability measures that positively impact on health.

The Award acknowledges the interconnectedness of environmental sustainability, climate resilience, and public health. It recognizes efforts at the global, regional, and national levels that address health issues exacerbated by climate change, such as heat-related illnesses, vector-borne diseases, and respiratory conditions caused by poor air quality.

For instance, a city that has successfully implemented a comprehensive urban greening program, reducing heat islands and improving air quality, would be a fitting candidate for this award. Similarly, a city that has developed innovative flood management systems to protect its citizens and infrastructure from the increasing threat of sea-level rise could also be considered. Strong proposals will demonstrate close links with health systems, health infrastructure or health outcomes.

Applications should also be firmly rooted in the context of regional and global commitments. They should echo the ethos of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, and Goal 13: Climate Action. They should also align with the Global Programme of Work (GPW) 13's triple billion targets, particularly in promoting healthier populations by mitigating environmental health risks.

The Award will be a testament to a city's dedication to creating a healthier, more sustainable future for its residents. It will celebrate the power of innovation, inclusivity, and resilience in the face of the triple planetary crisis. The Award will be a call to action for cities worldwide to prioritize climate resilience and environmental sustainability in their urban development strategies.

Award title: *Safeguarding Communities Against Alcohol-Related Harms*

Award description:

The consumption of alcohol is causally linked to more than 200 health conditions, including numerous Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and at least 7 types of cancers, as well as injuries from road crashes and interpersonal violence. Shockingly, every minute, one person dies from alcohol-related harm in the WHO Western Pacific Region alone. Moreover, alcohol's detrimental effects extend beyond health, as it diminishes social inhibitions, impairs judgment, and is associated with lost productivity and increased instances of misconduct in the workplace. Consequently, the use of alcohol entails significant health, social, and economic losses for both individuals and society as a whole.

Cities possess a plethora of opportunities to mitigate these losses and ensure the productivity and security of their inhabitants by curbing the availability, accessibility, affordability, and marketing of alcohol products. This award aims to recognize cities across the Western Pacific Region that excel in implementing various policies to reduce citizens' alcohol consumption. Such efforts may encompass, but are not limited to:

1. Those that enforce bans or comprehensive restrictions on alcohol advertising, sponsorship, and promotion, including online marketing, especially those targeting young people;
2. Those that strengthen restrictions on alcohol availability, such as regulating business hours, outlet density, and licensing for sales of alcohol products;
3. Those that raise prices on alcohol through excise taxes and pricing policies;
4. Efforts that advance and enforce drink-driving countermeasures;
5. Those that facilitate access to screening, brief interventions and treatment;
6. Efforts that seek to enhance community awareness about the harms associated with alcohol consumption to individuals and society as a whole.

By recognizing and rewarding cities that proactively address alcohol-related harms through multifaceted policies and actions, this Award aims to inspire further progress and collaboration at city level in this critical area of public health. This Award also encourages to contribute to the achievements of multiple NCD related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 3.5 "*Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol.*"