

# Project Home Works: Ageing-in-Place (Pilot Phase)

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June 2023

# INTRODUCTION

## About Habitat for Humanity Hong Kong

Driven by the vision that everyone deserves a decent place to live, Habitat for Humanity began in 1976 as a grassroots effort. The housing organisation has since grown to become a leading global non-profit working in more than 70 countries. Habitat works locally in Hong Kong, and across the Asia-Pacific region, to help families achieve the strength, stability and self-reliance they need to build better lives for themselves.

Habitat has been serving the local community in Hong Kong since 2004. Our mission is bringing people together to improve housing conditions in Hong Kong and build homes overseas, giving a hand-up to people in need and strengthening communities to be self-reliant and resilient.

Our Project Home Works programme fills a critical service and resource gap by providing cleaning, repair, renovation and modification services for vulnerable elderly people living in public rental housing. We work with local NGOs and social workers to identify families most in need of our services.



### Our **Vision**

A world where everyone has a decent place to live.

### Our **Mission**

Habitat for Humanity brings people together to build homes, communities and hope.

# Project background

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Ageing is a global phenomenon. Like other developed economies, Hong Kong will face the challenges of this shift in demographics in the coming decades. According to the Census and Statistics Department's population projection, the percentage of elderly persons aged 65 and above in the total population will increase from 20.8 per cent in mid-2022 to 35.1 per cent in 2069. Hong Kong will also face the challenge of ageing housing stock, compounded by deteriorating conditions of buildings in a sub-tropical climate.

Following the World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines on age-friendly cities, embracing age-friendly communities would create active ageing opportunities for older adults through health, participation, and security, enhancing their quality of life as they age. The WHO has identified housing as one of the eight domains necessary to provide a comprehensive view of the age-friendliness of a community.

We are delighted to have been partnering with ZeShan Foundation since June 2022 on our Project Home Works: Ageing-in-Place (Pilot Phase) project. It is providing home assessment (using the Double Smart Assessment Indicators for Elderly-friendly Community developed by PolyU's Jockey Club Design Institute for Social Innovation) and modification services to 60 grassroots households with elderly persons. We are collaborating with a network of community organisations and home repair experts to enable more elderly people to live in age-friendly homes through installation of handrails, bed rails, anti-slip floor treatments, flooring repair, lighting improvement, etc.

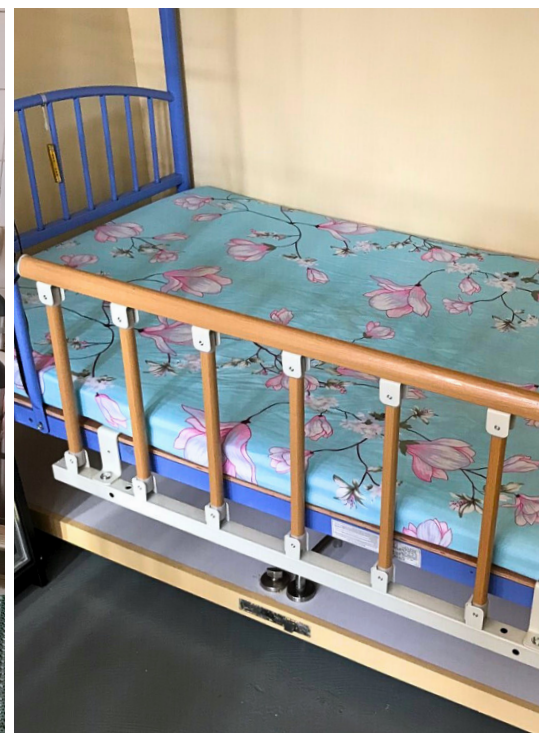
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Anti-slip floor treatment



Installation of handrail



Installation of bed rails

# Case study - Uncle Ng

Uncle Ng lives with his wife and a son with special needs. During our home assessment, we learnt that Uncle Ng had reduced mobility, making it difficult to stand up from the chair and walk around. He used to sit on a round plastic stool for the shower and lean against the sink for support when using the toilet. The elderly couple also mentioned that they received a donation of a thermo ventilator a few years ago, but did not know how to install it for use in winter. In addition, we observed that the clock in the living room was out of order, affecting their adherence to daily routines.

Noticing the fall risks and inconveniences in their daily lives, the Habitat team arranged the installation of grab bars and replaced the stool with a shower chair. Our team also added a new plug socket and a rack for the thermo ventilator. A malfunctioning extension cord in the kitchen area was replaced with a new one. A geriatric chair with adjustable heights and armrests, a new clock, and a pack of batteries were provided. We showed the couple how to change the batteries when needed.

**“I feel much safer now using the grab bars inside the toilet. The new chair is excellent, as it is more comfortable and safer than before. The shower chair is light but steady, which eases my back pain during shower. With the new clock, I can tell when to take my medicine without relying on my wife’s reminders. When the weather is very cold, the thermo ventilator helps me a lot in keeping me warm. Thank you so much for offering us the help!”** said Uncle Ng.



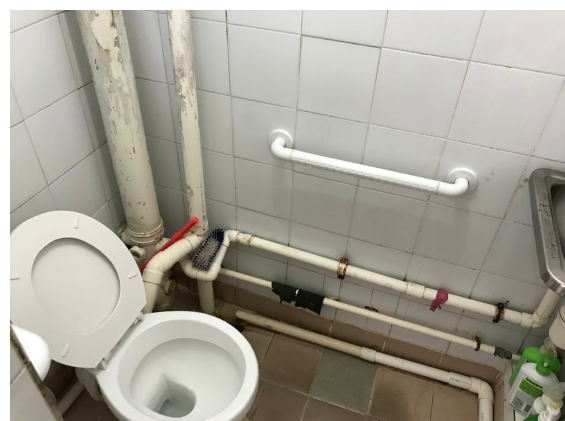
New plug socket for thermo ventilator



New clock with batteries



Replacement of malfunctioning extension cord



Installation of grab bars in the bathroom

# Case study - Grandma Lin

Grandma Lin suffers from vertigo and takes care of her son, who has an intellectual disability, on her own. During the home visit, she shared with us her daily frustrations and difficulties walking around the house and juggling chores while experiencing chronic dizziness. The wear and tear of the old shoe cabinet and storage shelves caused inconvenience and distress to their daily lives.

After the home assessment, the Habitat team arranged installation of handrails in the living room and the toilet to assist their daily activities. Anti-slip coating was also applied to the bathroom floor. A geriatric chair was provided as a replacement of the foldable chair in the living room. On top of that, the shelves in the living room were repaired. A new shoe cabinet was also in place for better organization and hygiene.



Old shoe cabinet

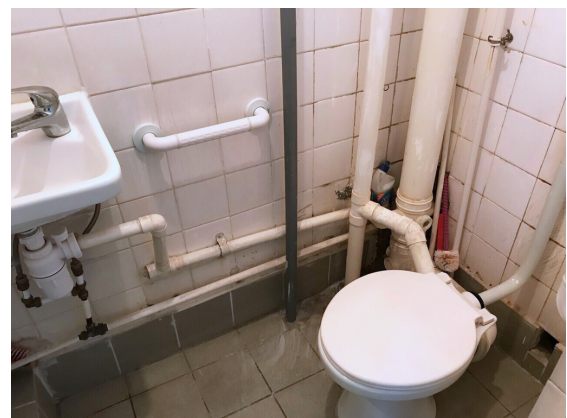


Replaced new shoe cabinet

After home modifications, Grandma Lin held our hands tightly and expressed her gratitude in tears, “Now I can hold on to the handrails around the home whenever I feel like falling. I also enjoy using the new chair which is so comfortable. You all have made my home much safer. I can feel your care and support towards us...I just don’t know how to express it...I feel so contented and grateful for your help!”



Installation of handrails in the living room



Installation of grab bars in the bathroom

# Case study - Uncle Chan

When our team visited Uncle Chan, he expressed difficulties sitting up and getting out of bed. When asked about his sleep quality, he said that he had not been sleeping well. He had to keep the lights on throughout the night as the light switch was blocked by a bunk bed ladder (which was intended to be discarded). We learned that he slept on a pillow made of recycled materials, which prevented him from sleeping comfortably. We also noticed cables spreading across the floor, posing a trip hazard.

In view of the needs, the Habitat team provided Uncle Chan with a new pillow and a bed rail. We also communicated with his social worker to find ways to dispose of the bed ladder. In our post-service follow up visit, Uncle Chan told us that our service brought positive impacts on his life, "after moving the cables from the floor to the new extension cord on the television table, I do not need to worry about tripping over. The bed rail helps me get off the bed easier and eases my worry about falling on the floor. I can now reach the light switch easily when needed." When asked about the replacement of the pillow, Uncle Chan expressed,

**"It (the pillow) is wider and much more comfortable than the original one. They are totally different. I can turn my body during sleep. I can sleep well throughout the whole night!"**



**Before installation of bed rail and replacement of pillow**



**After installation of bed rail and replacement of pillow**

# Case study - Mr & Mrs Wong



**"Before your visit, we never realised the risks around the house and thought of the solutions you provided. Thank you so much for making our home much safer and comfortable. It really makes a big difference!"**

**- Mr Wong**

Mr and Mrs Wong live together and take care of each other. Both of them reported declined mobility and fear of falling in the house, in particular the bathroom. The couple also expressed worries over standing and sitting on the chair and sofa. Mr Wong was sitting on a damaged chair temporarily fixed with metal wires. Mrs Wong told us her head had been injured for a few times by the corner of the floating shelf next to the sofa. Moreover, we noticed the care-on-call bell was placed on the top bunk, barely reachable by the couple in case of emergency.

To reduce their fall risk, we arranged installation of handrails and provided them with anti-slip slippers as a replacement of the non-slip resistant slippers. The broken chair was replaced with a new geriatric chair. We then moved the care-on-call bell to the television shelf and did a test call with the couple. To enable Mrs Wong sit next to the armrest of the sofa, the length of the wooden floating board was reduced. It no longer blocks the way she stands up.



**Before: Floating shelf causing head injuries**



**After: Shortened floating shelf**

# Case study - Uncle Tse

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During home assessment with Uncle Tse, we observed several fall risks, including the high door threshold at the toilet, the lack of a steady shower chair, foldable chairs without backrests and armrests, and slippery floor in the bathroom. There were also injury risks such as a wobbly storage rack unanchored to the wall and the sharp edges of the overhead cabinet right above the cooking stove.

To improve the home environment, we arranged installation of handrails and application of anti-slip coating in the bathroom. We applied anti-bump protective foam on the overhead cabinet to avoid head injuries when Uncle Tse cooks in the kitchen. We replaced the old wardrobe with a second-hand wardrobe with age-friendly D-shaped handles. A shower chair and geriatric chair were provided. Lastly, a new storage rack was installed and fixated to the wall with stability and appropriate height for Uncle Tse.



**“Thank you for the help you all provided for me! Your organisation is very detail-minded during the process. The improvements have made my home much safer. I feel more confident and contented now. I have no words to express how grateful I am.”**

**-Uncle Tse**





# Project outcomes

Habitat partnered with The Hong Kong Polytechnic University to conduct an impact evaluation on this pilot project. Preliminary results showed that home modifications reduced older persons' fear of falling at home and caregivers' burden and increased older persons' life satisfaction. It was also found that the participants, caregivers, and case workers were generally satisfied with the upgrades and agreed that the improvements helped support their daily living.

## Beneficiary surveys data



**100%**  
were satisfied with  
our services

**98%** agreed that their home  
safety was improved

**88%** agreed that their knowledge  
of home assessment  
increased

**85%** agreed that their confidence  
in choosing suitable home  
modifications increased

Focus group discussions with partnering social workers also noted unexpected positive impacts driven by the project, including service users' increased receptiveness towards other community services, reduced conflicts between caregivers and the elderly, more self-care time for caregivers, as well as social workers' raised awareness and broadened perspectives on the holistic needs of elderly persons.



**The success of the pilot project was made possible with the support of and collaboration with the following organisations:**

**Funded by**



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**Partnering NGO centers (in alphabetical order)**

Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service Integrated Community Centre for Mental Wellness (Wan Chai)

Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service Lai Yiu Neighbourhood Elderly Centre

Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service Tsing Yi Neighbourhood Elderly Centre

Caritas Cheng Shing Fung District Elderly Centre (Sham Shui Po)

Caritas Integrated Home Care Services - Sham Shui Po

Christian Family Service Centre Everjoy - Home Care Service for Persons with Severe Disabilities

ELCHK, Kwai Chung Neighbourhood Elderly Centre

ELCHK, Shatin Enhanced Home and Community Care Service

Fu Hong Society Integrated Community Centre for Mental Wellness - Sunrise Centre

HKYWCA Cheung Ching Neighbourhood Elderly Centre

Hong Kong ABWE Social Services Cheung Hong Baptist Church Neighbourhood Elderly Centre

Hong Kong ABWE Social Services Lai King Bradbury Neighbourhood Elderly Centre

Kowloon City Baptist Church Neighbourhood Elderly Centre

Yang Memorial Methodist Social Service Oi Man Neighbourhood Elderly Centre

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## In partnership with



## Social enterprise collaborators



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