

Call for action

In a final statement, all participants of the Asia regional seminar on social pensions expressed their hope that this seminar and its outcomes will contribute to the MIPAA +5 review at country and regional level.

Key conclusions in the statement are:

1. There is clear evidence internationally of the positive impact of non-contributory social pensions in the reduction of poverty as well as in social and economic development.
2. The existence of several schemes for delivering social pensions and other forms of social protection in Asia is a demonstration of the intent and commitment of our governments to ensure income security for all Asians in old age.
3. Recent economic studies, as well as the experience of several countries, demonstrate that social pensions are an affordable and cost-effective way of delivering social protection to older people.

For these reasons, participants called on governments, the UN bodies, the international donor community and civil society to continue their commitment and strengthen their support to the analysis, research, debate and implementation of social pension programmes in the region.

'The universal scheme is very effective, there are many positive aspects. The means-tested scheme is considered a poor method by the World Bank for two reasons: one) it misses a lot of people and two) it is expensive to operate.'

Jomo Kwame Sundaram, UNDESA, New York



Asian governments urged to take action ensuring social protection in old age

A regional seminar "Ensuring social protection/ social pensions in old age in the context of rapid ageing in Asia" took place at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok, Thailand on 29-31 January 2007. HelpAge International organised the Seminar in collaboration with United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), International Labour Organization (ILO) with support of the Japan Foundation and UK Department of International Development (DfID).

The Event gathered more than 70 high level delegates from 13 countries, including government officials, national non-governmental organisations, international agencies, donor institutions and senior UN officials.

Participants reviewed the existing state of social protection and social pensions policy in the region and identified key areas for policy and practice development.

Non-contributory social pensions: reducing poverty and hunger of older people

The numbers of older people are growing faster than any other age group in Asia. Yet, despite impressive economic growth among Asian countries, most poor older people still live without social security and are in chronic poverty. Overall there is a very limited non-contributory social pensions system.

Jomo Kwame Sundaram, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Cooperation, Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations, who delivered the keynote speech at the opening session, emphasised that non-contributory social pensions could be the alternative to the provision of partial 'safety nets' to poor older people.

More about social protection in Asia:
www.helpage.org/News/Latestnews/@53097

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APRDC hosted a meeting of the 'Asia/Pacific health working group'

24-25 April 2007, Thailand: Partners and health researchers in five selected countries including India, Indonesia, Singapore, Cambodia and Vietnam, met in Chiang Mai to conduct the planning for primary health care research which will assess perceptions of primary health care services by older

people, family care givers and health care providers.

The meeting resulted in the design of three research instruments, an outline of the country reports, and signing of the partnership agreements.

There will be tele-conferences to follow up on progress and also a meeting held in the third week of July to finalise the regional report to be considered at the regional MIPAA review meeting in Macau, October 2007.

Photo: Sombat Suwannasri /HelpAge International



On 24-25 April 2007 the APRDC hosted a 'Health working group' meeting in Chiang Mai, Thailand

Photo: GRAVIS



19 Mar 07, India: GRAVIS participated in the EU's thematic seminar on 'Gender dimension in development projects: European Commission experience' in New Delhi



Photo: GRAVIS

Network exchange visit to Older Citizens Monitoring (OCM) project in Bangladesh

17-23 April 2007, Bangladesh: APRDC coordinated a visit to Bangladesh to share learning and experience on the Older Citizens Monitoring (OCM) project.

The visit was hosted by Resource Integration Centre (RIC) with APRDC bringing 22 members of HAI network from Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam and APRDC.

The OCM project, which successfully concluded in 2005, aimed to facilitate interaction between older people, civil society and governments, and support older people to monitor and increase their access to services and entitlements.

The participants visited OCM project sites in Pubail Union and Sriramkathi Union, meeting with village committees and monitoring teams, union committee members, and local government authorities.

The OCM model is now being scaled up to 410 villages in 18 unions through a new project that began in late 2006. APRDC aims to support the replication of the model in countries where there is strong interest.

GRAVIS made a presentation on the project 'Assimilated development of older people in Thar Desert in Rajasthan'. They also provided information during the event. The project aims to reduce poverty through support for disadvantaged and vulnerable communities meet their basic needs, improve the quality of their lives and reinforce the development capacities of older people within those communities.

Health and development practitioners in Banda Aceh trained on 'health services for older people'

30 April - 4 May 2007, Indonesia: HelpAge International (HAI) APRDC organised two training events on older people's health in Banda Aceh.

The first was a 3-day session attended by 25 health professionals from nine local health centres, two international medical agencies and Indonesia's health department. The second was a 2-day session attended by 18 participants from 11 local organisations.

The training was facilitated by Dr Prakash Tyagi, the Director of Gramin Vikas Vigyan Samiti (GRAVIS) in India, a network member of HAI. There were also guest speakers from the Government's health department, a local organisation, World Health Organization (WHO) and HAI Indonesia.

The training aimed to:

- familiarise participants with ageing issues
- emphasise the link between ageing and health
- enhance the knowledge base of participants on older people's health



Photo: Edward Gerlock /COSE
Like children, older people have specific health needs

issues

- develop knowledge and skills relating to age-friendly primary health care
- enhance understanding of disaster management relating to older people's health.

The participants commented that the training was their first opportunity to gain a greater understanding of the health issues of older people, and it gave them ideas about how to provide better health services for older people.



Photo: Resource Integration Centre
Members of HAI network visited the Older Citizens Monitoring (OCM) project in Bangladesh

MIPAA +5: World not prepared for ageing

Five years ago today (12 April), 159 governments signed the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA). This commits governments to include ageing in all social and economic development policies, and to halve old-age poverty by 2015, in line with the Millennium Development Goals, but new research by HelpAge International shows the state of the world's older people is getting worse.

Older people are among the poorest in many societies

Research reveals that older people are among the poorest and most vulnerable in many societies, because governments have not prepared for the world's rapidly ageing population.

By 2050, more than one in five people will be aged over 60, thanks to falling fertility rates and longer life expectancy. According to UNDESA, nearly 80% will live in developing countries. HelpAge International estimates that 100 million older people now live on less than US\$1 a day and this figure will continue to rise.



Older people are among the poorest in many societies

Despite growing awareness of ageing issues as reflected in national policies, country reports by HelpAge International and its partners on the situation of older people in Bangladesh, Moldova, Serbia, Uganda and Vietnam show:

- Older people need to work into their 70s, 80s or until they die for a regular income, as adequate safety nets such as a pension are not in place
- their rights are, in many cases, not respected
- older people face widespread discrimination and abuse.

More information: www.helpage.org/News/Latestnews/@55537

Demystifying advocacy

Advocacy is a collection of different activities with the same overall aim – to influence people who can ‘pull strings’ and bring about changes that will benefit a certain group of people. It can be carried out at different levels – in the community, at local or district government level, nationally and internationally.

Informal approaches, using personal experience and contacts, are often the best way to influence leading figures in the local community. Getting your member of parliament to visit a day centre and talk to older people who come each week for a decent meal can be a powerful advocacy activity that may lead to increased funding.

At national and international level, more formal approaches are required. These may include speeches, presentations, reports containing statistics and examples of the problem you are trying to resolve.

Key steps include: 1) Research the issues and set objectives, 2) Gather evidence, 3) Identify target audiences, 4) Identify allies, 5) Develop messages, 6) Plan how to deliver messages, 7) Raise resources, and 8) Monitoring and evaluation impact.

More information: *Ageways68 Advocacy with older people*

Resources



Social cash transfers for Asia

Ensuring social protection/social pensions in old age in the context of rapid ageing

Intergovernmental regional seminar report by HAI APRDC



Advocacy with older people

Some practical suggestions

PDF version republished by HAI APRDC

Ageways68: Advocacy with older people

Practical issues in ageing and development

Download: www.helpage.org or hard copies, please request from hai@helpageasia.org



Poverty in focus: Analysing and achieving pro-poor growth

Published by International Poverty Centre

Download: www.undp-povertycentre.org/pub/IPCPoverty_in_Focus010.pdf



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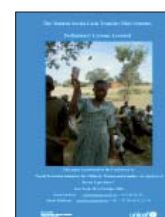
Published by the Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE), Philippines

www.cosephil.org

Agein in Africa

Issue 29, April 2007

Download: www.helpage.org or hard copies, please request from helpage@helpage.co.ke



'The Malawi social cash transfer pilot scheme: Preliminary lessons learned'

Published by UNICEF

Download: www.unicef.org/policyanalysis/files/The_Malawi_Social_Cash_Transfer_Pilot_Scheme_-_Preliminary_Lessons_Learned.pdf

New webpage on 'Social transfers and social protection – IPC Research Programme'

<http://www.undp-povertycentre.org/cct.htm>

This new webpage on the IPC Research Programme on Cash Transfers and Social Protection highlights IPC publications on this theme and includes other important research papers, interviews, and evaluation reports from multilateral organisations, research centres, NGOs, governments and practitioners. It also presents a list of cash transfer programmes in 34 countries.

Cash and food transfers: A primer

Published by World Food Programme

This paper sets out key factors underpinning the choice of cash and food transfers. A central conclusion is that appropriateness cannot be predetermined. Rather, programme objectives, economic analysis, market assessments, capacity requirements and beneficiary preferences play important roles in the cash/food selection equation. Importantly, combinations of cash and food transfers should be considered more widely, especially if implemented under a national social protection programme.

Experience is accumulating in designing and implementing cash transfers, including during emergencies. At the same time, empirical evidence now shows the important role that food transfers can play in non-emergency settings. It is important, however, to refrain from generalisations regarding both cash and food transfers.

A number of factors warn against drawing definitive conclusions from ongoing cash implementation efforts, including questions about the robustness of the evidence, the relief implementation perspective and possible “extra-technical” issues. These factors are summarised below.

- **Robustness of the evidence:** The studies available have not yet reached a “critical mass” from which reliable lessons can be drawn. Cash transfers are growing in number but are still marginal compared to the magnitude of food aid operations and experience.

- **Short-term perspective:** For the most part cash transfers are implemented as pilot projects, which are short-term by definition. This limits potential behavioural change (by households and traders), making it hard to detect possible multipliers in the economy and to foster longer-term nutritional outcomes.
- **Scaling up:** There is a possible mismatch between the evidence available, the capacity to implement and the creation of policy. Pressure is increasing to scale up small cash pilots, in some cases to the national level.

Bearing in mind these factors, three main preliminary conclusions can be gleaned from the theory and experience on cash and food transfers.

- **From “cash versus food” to “cash and food”:** Wide variations in programme objectives, market conditions and capacity levels in most countries suggest that cash and food can be complementary inputs rather than alternatives.
- **Transfers as components of broader social protection strategies:** Cash and food transfers are only instruments, and not strategies *per se*.
- **Cross-cutting issues:** Both cash and food transfers require a whole set of common processes, such as sound needs assessments, the monitoring of markets, emergency preparedness mechanisms and the presence of contingency plans.

Download: www.wfp.org/policies/Introduction/other/Documents/pdf/OP18_Cash_and_Food_Transfers_Eng%2007.pdf

Measuring the impact of advocacy

Is it necessary to measure the impact of advocacy and if so, how do you do it? Here are some suggestions.

Just as with a practical project, it is useful to find out how well your advocacy activities are working, so that you can:

- learn from the experience and plan future advocacy activities
- report to donors and partners.

However, the impact of advocacy work can be very difficult to assess. First, most advocacy work has long-term consequences, and the impact may not be evident until after the project has ended.

Second, attribution is very difficult – it is often impossible to know precisely what has caused a policy change, or indeed, what effect a policy change has had. Moreover, much advocacy takes place through the work of coalitions, which can make it difficult for people to say how their own efforts have contributed.

There are ways to monitor advocacy activities, if not the actual impact. Keeping a record of your activities will at least go some way towards measuring progress and accounting for the resources invested in it.

It can help to think of different levels of impact, or ‘milestones’ towards achieving your overall objective.

Then you can work out indicators – ways to measure progress – at each level. For example, you could characterise your progress as follows:

1. Raising awareness of an issue
2. Contributing to the debate
3. Changing opinion
4. Changing policy
5. Getting policy change implemented
6. Improving older people’s lives.

Your advocacy project might aim for all these levels of impact, or it might be less ambitious and aim to change a particular policy.

More information: [Ageways68 ‘Advocacy with older people’](#)

HelpAge International is a global network of not-for-profit organisations with a mission to work with and for disadvantaged older people worldwide to achieve a lasting improvement in the quality of their lives.

AgeNews Asia/Pacific aims to highlight issues of ageing and the rights of older people in Asia/Pacific as well as sharing experiences in working with and for older people.

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