

Ageing and Development

News and analysis of issues affecting the lives of older people

Issue 14 July 2003



Devastation in Biara, near Halabja, northern Iraq, during the war earlier this year.

After the war in Iraq

The aftermath of the war in Iraq raises many questions about the future of its most vulnerable citizens, including older people and their families.

The war leaves in its wake a multitude of long-term problems for Iraq. Twelve years of UN economic sanctions led to a serious deterioration in the conditions of life for the population. These economic hardships were only partially mitigated by the UN's 'oil for food' programme. When the war broke out, over 60 per cent of the population was wholly or partially dependent on food rations.

The country's infrastructure – electricity, water and sanitation systems – and its health care services have been brought to the brink of collapse. This is the result of economic sanctions, the destruction caused by three wars since the 1980s, and the large-scale looting that followed the 2003 war.

The 2003 war also disrupted economic activity and halted government payments. The disorder that has followed has further undermined the ability of the poorest groups to maintain their livelihoods.

In the Kurdish-administered region, where HelpAge International has been working since 1997, uncertainty and safety concerns led thousands of people to move away from the areas that were close to Iraqi military lines. Many went to stay with friends and relatives, stretching those families' already meagre resources.

Salha Khano, aged 72, ended up with ten of her daughter-in-law's relatives staying in her house in Deir Alouk, a collective town to the north-west of Dohuk. The relatives had moved from their homes in Dohuk, fearing the dangers that war might bring.

Kurdish culture has a strong tradition of hospitality. 'We welcomed the displaced people warmly and I

wished I were able to host more,' says Salha. 'But we have used all our stock of foodstuffs and savings and we have only got enough rice left for a few days.'

HelpAge International's programme has included home visiting, support to small-scale income generation, and advocacy for older people's rights. It hopes to develop and expand this work in other regions of Iraq, where the needs of older people are likely to be more acute.

HelpAge International's emergency response
[Web: www.helpage.org](http://www.helpage.org) (click News)

ReliefWeb
[Web: www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf](http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf)

UN Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN)
[Web: www.irinnews.org/Iraqfp.asp?SelectRegion=Iraq_Crisis](http://www.irinnews.org/Iraqfp.asp?SelectRegion=Iraq_Crisis)

International Committee of the Red Cross
[Web: www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/special_Iraq](http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/special_Iraq)

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HelpAge International

Leading global action on ageing

News round up

Developments that affect older people's quality of life

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Older citizens monitor poverty programmes



Eye care queue in Bangladesh, one of the countries in which older people will review government services.

HelpAge International

Support to poor older people hardly features in national poverty reduction programmes, nor are older people included in national consultations on poverty reduction.

These are some of the findings from the first phase of HelpAge International's older citizens monitoring project, which will support older people to press their governments to implement the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and other development agreements.

An audit of poverty reduction programmes, using literature reviews and consultations with older people and policy makers, has been carried out in Bangladesh, Bolivia, Ethiopia, Jamaica, Kenya and Tanzania.

Older people talked of problems related to health services, water, income and landlessness. Policy makers admitted that issues of age did not feature in policies designed to reduce poverty, and said they intended to change this.

Over the next two years, older people in these six countries will be supported to monitor the effect of measures designed to reduce poverty and improve health services. The results will be used to highlight both problems and successes, and to motivate older people to claim their entitlements and become involved in consultation processes.

East meets west in Europe

Older people's organisations in European Union candidate countries are preparing to lobby their governments on anti-discrimination and social protection issues, in line with EU policy.

Ten countries – Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovak Republic and Slovenia – will join the EU in 2004. Bulgaria and Romania hope to join in 2007.

At a meeting of the East and Central Europe Network of NGOs

working with and for older people, organised by Help the Aged and HelpAge International in Slovenia in April, representatives of organisations from nine EU candidate countries looked at how they could lobby their governments on EU issues and strengthen links with western European NGOs.

In some areas, including anti-discrimination, EU candidate countries will have to implement EU law. In others, including social protection, they will not be bound

by EU law, but must develop policies in line with EU principles.

At a follow-up meeting in June 2003, organised by AGE, the European older people's platform, members of the East and Central Europe Network were briefed on EU structures and processes.

In particular, AGE is supporting members to lobby on an anti-discrimination directive that will come into force in 2006, prohibiting age-based discrimination in employment.

Another key issue for candidate countries is pensions.

EU pensions process

[Web: europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/soc-prot/pensions/index_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/soc-prot/pensions/index_en.htm)

Conference on social protection in the candidate countries

[Web: europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2003/jan/conf_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2003/jan/conf_en.html)

AGE

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Comment

Time to listen and act

'It is not proper to consider older persons as only a vulnerable group; we have to see them as resource people with skill and wisdom! We need to change factors that make them vulnerable.'

So said Montoya, an older magistrate from Dodoma, Tanzania, at a consultation for HelpAge International's older citizens monitoring project (see above).

The older people involved in the project know that they will need to acquire new skills, organise well,

and speak loudly to make their voices heard. They have rarely been informed about poverty reduction programmes, but they know it is their right to be included in them.

It is time for governments to listen and act on the raised voices of their older citizens. As Montoya

went on to say: 'What we need is resources – older people have been put into trash cans, and we are not sure if they are breathing or not!'

Sylvia Beales
Policy Development Manager,
HelpAge International

Meetings on ageing and poverty

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs is convening a number of meetings with government and civil society experts to promote older people's right to development, as set out in the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.

An intergovernmental workshop on ageing and poverty, with a special focus on how ageing should be included in national poverty reduction strategies, will be held in Tanzania in October, with the participation of 11 African governments. This will be followed by an expert meeting in Malta in November to develop indicators for measuring progress

in implementing the Madrid Plan, and an intergovernmental workshop on mainstreaming ageing in Vienna in December.

An expected outcome of these meetings will be guidelines for governments to promote older people's rights, including their right to be included in development processes.

The regional follow-up process in Latin America and the Caribbean will culminate in a ministerial meeting in Santiago, Chile, in November. Expert meetings have been held on health and wellbeing, income security and poverty, and strengthening social networks.

A regional civil society consultation in Santiago in June, and a meeting of older people's leaders to be held in Colombia in October, will enable older people's voices to be channelled into ministerial debates.

Report echoes Madrid Plan

The 'State of world population 2002' report from the United Nations Population Fund, *People, poverty and possibilities: making development work for the poor*, echoes the Madrid Plan's call for ageing to be mainstreamed into the development agenda.

To meet the Millennium Development Goal of halving the

proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015, poverty reduction strategies must focus on the poorest and most vulnerable older persons, especially women, and on breaking the poverty cycle that runs from one generation to the next, says the report.

Workshop on ageing and poverty
29-31 October 2003,
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
More information:
Diane Loughran, UNDESA
Email: loughran@un.org
Web: www.un.org/esa/

Latin America follow-up process
UN ECLAC
Web: www.eclac.cl

State of world population 2002
Web: www.unfpa.org/swp/swpmain.htm

Picture of violence in Cambodia

A picture of domestic violence, and powerlessness of older people to intervene, emerges in a set of interviews with older people in Cambodia.

One older woman said: 'My son-in-law would beat my daughter until she lost consciousness... I tried to intervene in their disputes because I did not want them to divorce. [Now] I have to support my four grandchildren and my daughter, as her husband abandoned her to live with another woman.'

An older man said: 'I have a son-in-law who commits domestic violence against my daughter. Sometimes he wants to kill me because of my intervention.'

Stories were collected by HelpAge International from eight older women and three older men in seven villages in Banteay Meanchey and Battambang provinces in 2002, as part of a project to raise awareness and support older people affected by domestic violence.

The older people were living in a variety of situations – with their children and in-laws, with a single child and grandchildren after in-laws had left, looking after grandchildren on their own, or living alone. All spoke of disputes or physical violence within their families.

The older people said they felt hurt, perplexed, ashamed and worried for themselves in the face of domestic violence. They also talked about problems of isolation, poor health, and lack of money for food and clothes for themselves and children in their care.

'I have difficulty supporting my grandchildren as we do not have enough food to eat and I am always ill,' said one older woman. 'I go to the forest four to five hours per day to pick wild vegetables... [but this] does not provide me with enough income.'

Another older woman who moved with her grandchildren because her daughter and son-in-law were quarrelling, said: 'I face a lot of

difficulties supporting my grandchildren, because I do not have a good shelter or enough food for them to eat and I cannot take good care of them because of my weak physical condition.'

The older people said they valued visits, loans and gifts from members of older people's associations. They asked for more visits from neighbours, more practical support, better

understanding by the government of their situation, education for younger generations about the problems faced by older people, and expansion of associations to other villages so that more older people could be assisted.

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At home in Cambodia, where older people have spoken about their experience of domestic violence.

News round up

Developments that affect older people's quality of life

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Attitudes in Africa

Attitudes to older people are examined in studies in Sudan and Ghana, commissioned by HelpAge International as part of a programme to promote older people's rights in Africa.

A study by the Sudanese Society in Care of the Elderly People (SSCOP) and the Institute of African and Asian Studies of Khartoum University looked at the impact of poverty and displacement on attitudes towards older people in Omdurman, near Khartoum. This area has received waves of internally displaced people from all parts of Sudan.

A survey of householders and focus group discussions with older men and women in four residential areas and one camp shows that migrant communities live in extreme poverty. For older people, the main issues are poverty, inadequate health services, insecure subsistence and lack of employment opportunities.

In general, householders' attitudes to older people have not changed. Nearly 80 per cent of householders agreed that older people were 'like the gum arabic tree', which has many uses. However, older people no longer receive the support from the community that they enjoyed in their original places.

In Sudan, grandparents, particularly grandmothers, have an important traditional role as storytellers. This helps to create a bond with their grandchildren. Asked whether this custom is maintained, only 23 per cent of older people interviewed said it was. Disrespectful terms for older people are used by children in streets.

'Our neighbours are not bad people but they have no time or resources to help other people.'
Older people in Omdurman, Sudan

Older people do not blame their neighbours for failure to maintain social solidarity. However, they blame younger generations

for being disrespectful.

A survey by HelpAge Ghana and the Centre for Policy Studies, University of Ghana, used questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions with older people, young people and carers in four rural and urban communities in and near Accra and Kumasi during 2002. Television dramas were monitored by students from the Centre for Policy Studies.

Older people said that young people lacked respect for them. They attributed this to a general disregard for the law and misunderstanding about their rights. Older people also highlighted their own poverty as a reason why young people looked down on them.

Young people reported negative behaviour by older people. They said that their willingness to care for people in their old age was determined by the type of care that the older people had given them.

In television dramas, older people were generally portrayed in a positive way, when they appeared at all. However, the tendency was not to portray older people.

Impact of displacement and poverty on attitudes towards older people (draft)

Adam Azzain Mohamed, SSCOP, 2002

Survey of attitudes towards older people and ageing in Ghana

HelpAge Ghana and Centre for Social Policy Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, 2003

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Also see Briefing on page 6.



Alison Geldart/HelpAge International

Helping hand in Sudan, where a study looks at attitudes.

Pensions for all?

A fundamental fiscal realignment to generate the resources for social protection for all older persons was one of the strategies proposed at a seminar on social protection in Washington in October 2002.

The seminar, organised by HelpAge International, the National Academy of Social Insurance and the Initiative for Policy Dialogue, brought together leading thinkers in the international lending organisations, the United Nations, universities and research centres.

A summary of the proceedings and a discussion of key issues raised are contained in a report of the seminar, published by HelpAge International. The report highlights five questions for further debate:

- Can the provision of universal social protection be a vital element of the package required to deliver on the Millennium Development Goals?
- How much is political will the key to reducing poverty of older persons?
- Is social protection well-targeted development aid?

■ Could old age be a well-chosen universal indicator for targeted anti-poverty programmes?

■ What are the policy options for developing countries to enable them to implement social protection systems that will reduce poverty and inequality?

These questions will be further examined in a report to be published by HelpAge International in 2004, marking the launch of a campaign to highlight older people's poverty and advocate for the introduction of basic non-contributory pensions.

Population ageing and development – new strategies for social protection

Report of a seminar held on 31 October 2002 organised by HelpAge International, National Academy of Social Insurance and the Initiative for Policy Dialogue
Email: publications@helpage.org
Also available as a PDF at: www.helpage.org

Diary

■ How can European Union development policy be more inclusive of the rights and entitlements of all social groups, including marginalised issues such as older age? A seminar to examine these questions will be held at the European Parliament, organised by HelpAge International, One World Action, Aprodev and WIDE, with

the support of British MEP Glenys Kinnock, in late September 2003.

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■ A review of global progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals to reduce under-fives and maternal mortality rates by two-thirds by 2015 is to be published by the 'Grow up free from Child Poverty Coalition' in late 2003, drawing on material from a wide range of NGO and faith groups, including

HelpAge International.

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■ Growing numbers of older people are caring for orphans and vulnerable children, but there is little policy or programming directed toward their needs. A joint paper by HelpAge International and the International HIV/AIDS Alliance, due in September 2003, will examine experience in Asia and Africa, and make policy and practice recommendations.

More details in A&D15.

■ The Bolivian government has agreed to resume the Bonosol, the annual payment to people aged 65 and over, at a rate of 1,800 bolivianos (US\$235). However, the Bonosol has been under attack by some organisations, in particular pensioners' associations and some trade union branches, with the support of opposition parties, arguing that funds used for the Bonosol will deplete reserves for future pensioners.

Asia media comes under the spotlight

Older people want to be well informed, they welcome access to all kinds of media, and they want to participate fully in contemporary life, says a survey of older people and the media in Asia.

The survey, commissioned by HelpAge International, involved older people and other community members in 32 rural and urban locations in Bangladesh, China, India, Laos, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam.

Participatory methods were used to find out how older people get news, information and entertainment, what media they prefer, how they are represented in the media, and how others see them.

Older people consistently displayed an interest in the world around them, even though they are often stereotyped as uninterested, frightened or opposed to change.

Oral communication still plays a central role in providing information and entertainment for older people. However, broadcast media, particularly television, are becoming very important, especially for those with low literacy levels.

Television and radio are more likely than newspapers to be equally accessible to older women and men, because newspapers

are often only available in public places where older women are less likely to go.

Older people who took part in the survey said that there should be more for older people in all the media. They felt that mass media should act as agents for social change. Most countries reported a strong demand from older people to be more involved in media production.

The survey formed part of a DFID-funded project to identify appropriate media for development work with older people, and sensitise the media to the implications of population ageing and the contributions of older people.

Older people and the media: a community survey
HelpAge International 2002

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Brent Madison/HelpAge International

Older people want more access to the media, says a survey in Asia.

Briefing on HIV/AIDS

Surveys carried out by HelpAge International in five villages in Tete province, Mozambique show that more than half of all older people are caring for an average of three orphans.

The number of orphans and older carers in the villages has increased at least fourfold in one-and-a-half years.

This is one example of the impact of HIV/AIDS on older people that is described in *HIV/AIDS and ageing: a briefing paper*, published by HelpAge International.

The paper explores the main ways in which HIV and AIDS impact on older women and men in developing countries. It reviews the research, programme and policy implications of including older people in interventions to achieve the Millennium Development Goal to halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS

by 2015, and identifies actions required to tackle the devastation caused by the epidemic.

The paper also outlines work that HelpAge International is undertaking to support older people affected by HIV/AIDS. In Mozambique, older people have been trained as 'listeners' to raise awareness about HIV and AIDS and help families cope with the multiple traumas AIDS presents them with.

HIV/AIDS and ageing: a briefing paper
HelpAge International, 2003
Email: publications@helpage.org
Also available as a PDF at: www.helpage.org

Briefing

Analysis of current topics in ageing

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Raising the issue of rights in Africa

Older people in Africa are subject to widespread violations of their rights. *A&D* looks at the causes and effects of abuse against older people, and what can be done to protect their rights.

Across Africa, chronic and deepening poverty, and weakened family and community structures due to migration, conflict, natural disasters and the impact of HIV/AIDS have contributed to serious violations of older people's rights. Poverty is an abuse of human rights with devastating effects on older people, along with inaccessible healthcare and failure to provide social protection.

Older people are abused socially, economically, physically and emotionally – often by a member of their own family or community. An extreme example of abuse are deaths and injuries resulting from witchcraft accusations, when communities respond to calamities by pointing the finger at an older person. 'When you are very old, people wonder what you might have done to live this long. In fact, because of your age, people automatically brand you a witch,' says Stanley Lwampungu, an older man from Kenya.¹

Another problem is abandonment by family members who have gone to settle in urban areas or, in pastoral communities, moved on in search of pasture for their livestock. Sometimes, frail older people are abandoned in hospitals, where they can be further exposed to mistreatment by healthcare workers.

Rights of older people, especially women, to any property are often violated. Women's right to land and inheritance is often ignored. People's right to security is fundamental, but in urban areas, where crime is common, and in times of conflict, frail older people are particularly vulnerable to theft,



In northern Tanzania, community education using music and drama is helping to reduce witchcraft-related attacks against older people.

Sylvia Beales/HelpAge International

attack and loss of property and possessions. The right of older women to live in peace in their own houses is often denied them.

Poor access to health services is a widespread problem. Huge pressure on over-stretched resources means that older people are often the lowest priority. Corruption and bribery, and failure to implement national laws entitling older people to free medicines, further deny older people their right to healthcare, as they cannot raise money to pay.

Growing emphasis on community-based health care in a number of African countries has placed much of the responsibility for care with the family, without providing extra resources. In particular, increasing numbers of older people are caring for younger family members with HIV-related illness – yet older people are rarely targeted in HIV/AIDS education programmes. Their right to inclusion in community-based programmes is often ignored.

Problems seeking justice

There are a number of legal frameworks protecting human rights in Africa. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) specifies the right to participation, economic, social and cultural rights, although it does not specifically mention older people. The African Charter on Human and People's Rights (1981) outlines the duties of individuals to their families and society.

African governments have signed up to the United Nations Principles for Older Persons (1991), which set out older people's right to independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment and dignity. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees policy on older refugees (2001) provides for the particular challenges facing older people, and recognises the need to support the contributions they can make.

The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (2002) specifically commits governments

to promote and uphold older people's rights, including their right to development and freedom from abuse and discrimination.

However, few African governments have incorporated these agreements into national policies. Poor older people and their organisations are generally excluded from policy-making processes and are not represented in government. As Ebrahim Ali from Tanzania points out: 'We have no member of parliament, no councillors, no chief. We have no one who can talk to the government on our behalf.'

Most people are not familiar with existing laws and policies to protect older people. Older people themselves are not aware of their rights. Africa has many human rights organisations, but they do not often pay specific attention to older people.

Many cases of elder abuse never go to court, because law enforcement agencies are unwilling to prosecute, owing to negative

attitudes to older people, or because older people are afraid to press charges or cannot afford the fees.

For older people without a good education, court procedures can be difficult to follow. 'My case went to the high court but I had no idea what they were saying because they spoke in English. I came out with nothing,' says Francis Kaburi from Kenya, who sought legal redress on loss of property.

Changing attitudes

Over the past two years, HelpAge International has supported a range of initiatives aimed at promoting the rights of older people in Africa. These include commissioning research into attitudes, supporting community education projects, providing grants for legal challenges, running awareness-raising workshops on human rights for older people's organisations, human rights groups, lawyers and the media, producing and disseminating information, and lobbying for policy change.

'The way forward lies in strengthening links between older people and their communities, and promoting positive attitudes towards older people. Partnerships also need to be created between older people's groups and human rights organisations and activists to redress human rights abuses, backed up by policies and laws protecting older people,' says programme coordinator Pension Munyama.

Research into attitudes to older people in Sudan and Ghana, commissioned by HelpAge International, points to deteriorating relationships between older and younger generations, and recommends intergenerational anti-poverty programmes and awareness-raising (see page 4).

Community education initiatives in a number of countries are helping to improve attitudes to older people. In South Africa, community-based organisation Elim-Hlanganani Society for the

Care of the Aged is training volunteers both to provide home care services to older people, and to sensitise the local community about the importance of supporting older people. 'We must learn to help each other,' says coordinator Florence Khosa. 'People live alone, but their neighbours can draw water, run errands and help with cooking.'

Elim-Hlanganani, which successfully took the district government to court over non-payment of pensions in 1998, has also developed positive relationships with the government, resulting in the appointment of a social worker to process applications for foster-care grants by older people caring for orphans.

In northern Tanzania, poverty, low education levels and strong beliefs in witchcraft have led to a rising number of atrocities against older people. However, a broad-based programme including community education and paralegal training has led to greater acknowledgement of older people's rights and a fall in witchcraft-related attacks.

In Lesotho, the Maseru Women's Senior Citizens Association has started a community education project involving older people and service providers, designed to raise awareness of older people's rights.

HelpAge Zimbabwe is running a community education pilot project in partnership with the Southern African Human Rights Trust, in which groups of older people and other community members meet to share their experiences and concerns.

Supporting materials, including a video and series of radio plays, have been produced by HelpAge International. These have been used in training workshops and aired by national media such as the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation.

Legal challenges

A number of legal challenges have been brought by older people with support from older people's

organisations and human rights organisations, using grants from HelpAge International.

In Durban, South Africa, the Muthande Society for the Aged is supporting grandparents caring for orphans to take the local government to court for refusing them foster care grants. By law, carers of orphans are entitled to foster care grants, but some older people have been denied these.

In Swaziland, the older people's organisation Umtfunti is supporting an older couple accused of concealing their son, after he was charged with murder. The couple have been victimised and live in fear of attack. Umtfunti has brought a case against local community leaders, with support from Women and Law in Southern Africa, and Lawyers for Human Rights. The case has generated much media coverage, encouraging more older people to come forward. It has also highlighted older people's lack of awareness of their rights, which is now being addressed through an education programme.

HelpAge Kenya has moved into civil rights work by teaming up with the Centre for Minority Rights Development (CEMIRIDE) to support an older woman threatened with eviction from her marital home by a businessman. He claims it is his, after one of the woman's sons attempted to apportion some of the land to private buyers.

Bringing lawyers together

Raising awareness of older people's situation among those that can help them is a key element of the programme. 'Lawyers can play an important part by advocating with and for older people for litigation, and providing services to represent older people whose rights are being violated, as is happening with CEMIRIDE in Kenya and Lawyers for Human Rights in Swaziland,' says Pension Munyama.

A workshop in Nairobi, organised by HelpAge International in March

2003, brought together 30 lawyers and representatives of human rights organisations from east, west and southern Africa, including 16 members of the International Commission of Jurists. Participants explored ways in which bar associations and older people's organisations could collaborate to promote the rights of older people in Africa.

The need for the legal profession to support older people is starting to be recognised. Otiende Amollo, secretary of the Kenya branch of the International Commission of Jurists, says: 'We need to be prepared to take affirmative action to protect older people, so that, in certain instances, as preference has been given to women, children and people with disabilities, preference will also be given to older people.'

1. Quotes from older people are from 'The rights of older people' videos.

HelpAge International's Africa rights programme is funded by the UK Department for International Development, with additional funding from the World Health Organization and Netherlands Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

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The rights of older people

Two video documentaries: 'The mark of a noble society' and 'Possible solutions' VHS format, HelpAge International, 2003

Old is gold

Five 15-minute radio plays: *Abandonment of older people*, *Older people and healthcare*, *Violence against older people*, *HIV/AIDS and older people*, *Poverty and older people* CD-ROM, HelpAge International, 2002/2003

The mark of a noble society: human rights and older people Briefing paper, HelpAge International, 2000

Ageways 59: Violence and abuse HelpAge International, April 2002

Profile

Taking older people's interests forward

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Moving minds in Moldova

Community self-help initiatives and the concept of active ageing are starting to take root in Moldova, with some help from the gerontological association, Second Breath.

The collapse of the Soviet Union has led to economic hardship across eastern Europe. Particularly hard hit is Moldova, a small country sandwiched between Romania and Ukraine. Loss of traditional markets has led to rapid emigration, with as much as a quarter of the population now living abroad.

More than one in six of those remaining in Moldova are pensioners. In some villages, more than half the population are older people.

Older people face serious difficulties. Pensions are very low, providing only a quarter of the amount needed to buy food. Some older people in towns have had to sell their possessions or resort to begging, while those in villages survive by growing food and burning seeds for fuel.

Services that used to be provided by the government have been reduced or withdrawn. The cost of health care and medicines put these out of reach of many older people.

Reliance on the state during the communist era means that there is no history of community self-help. But out of necessity, small self-help groups and NGOs have started to emerge.

Community services

The gerontological association, Second Breath, was established in Balti, Moldova's second city, in 1998, with funding from the Open Society Institute. Second Breath is unusual in combining medical and social rehabilitation services with community-based activities.

Second Breath runs a home care programme, day care centre, meals-on-wheels and 'warm house' parties for housebound older people. These services are provided by volunteers, some of them older people themselves who have been recruited through the rehabilitation centre. It also runs a 'hospice at home' programme employing professional staff.

'We set up Second Breath because we realised that older

people felt overwhelmed by financial and practical difficulties,' says president, Irina Baicalova. 'There is a great sense of isolation. Many older people who could go out, stay at home, because they have nothing to do.'

Irina Baicalova, a doctor by profession, is dedicated to promoting high standards of care and human rights for older people. The United Nations Principles for Older Persons – independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment and dignity – underlie all Second Breath's work, and Second Breath has established its own bill of rights, covering the rights of the client and the duty of the carer.

Influencing policy

Second Breath has helped to increase understanding of older people's situation by organising conferences and round-table discussions, publishing guidelines for carers, and carrying out research. In 2000, it published the results of a survey of 1,500 older people (reported in *A&D* 8). It highlighted their desperately low income and problems of poor diet, ill-health, difficulty accessing health services, lack of respect for older people's rights, and a desire by older people to participate in social and political life.

The research has supported advocacy, a growing area of Second Breath's work. In 2002, Second Breath, in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, organised a conference in the capital, Chisinau, at which a shift in attitudes to ageing became apparent. 'Heads of social services are beginning to understand that both passive and active ageing can exist,' says Irina Baicalova.

The organisation is also contributing reports to HelpAge International's older citizens' monitoring project (see page 2).

New networks

A number of older people's organisations in Moldova have made contact with Second Breath through a national network that it has established with support from HelpAge International. Local branches of pensioners' and veterans' associations are beginning to talk about community initiatives and discuss how older people can improve their situation.

Second Breath will continue to encourage the government to listen to active older people and understand their situation, by participating in discussions aimed at developing a national policy on ageing and a poverty reduction strategy.

Building on these contacts, Second Breath is taking the lead in a new project supported by HelpAge International to develop sustainable, low-cost support systems that will help to reintegrate older people into society – for example, through volunteer-based services, income-generation activities, health promotion and lobbying local government about entitlements.

It will also have a role in a new regional network being set up with support from HelpAge International to combat age discrimination across south-east Europe.

'Only two years have passed since we published our research,' says Irina Baicalova. 'I am very happy that the concepts raised in it have started to be understood and developed.'

More information:

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Older people enjoy a 'warm house' party organised by a volunteer from Second Breath.

Second Breath

Talking point

Understanding older people's experience

9

Pension process in Uttar Pradesh

Research into the administration of pension schemes has been carried out in the state of Uttar Pradesh, India. *Amanda Heslop* spent a day with the research team.

Interviews with over a thousand older people in rural and urban districts of Varanasi were carried out in November 2002, as part of a research project by HelpAge India, the Centre for Applied Sociology and HelpAge International. The research aims to understand how the schemes are administered and investigate older people's experiences of access.

I spent a day with the HelpAge India researchers – Anupama Datta from Delhi and S K Singh and R K Srivastava from Varanasi. As we walked through the villages, what struck me most was the amount and diversity of visible activity by older people.

I saw older people engaged in *bidi* (cigarette) making, dry flower picking or tending, washing pots, selling vegetables from a hand-pulled cart, tending paddy fields, shop trading, pulling carts with loads, making fuel from dung, farming, building scaffolding from bamboo onto a brick house, herding goats, pulling water from a rope-bucket well, and going to farm.

The villages contained a mixture of brick buildings without cement, mud dwellings (which are typically the scheduled caste quarter) and a few brick and cement dwellings belonging to the better off. Buildings are clustered together around fields that look fairly large but are mostly divided into very small plots.

Villages typically have a central meeting place, or *chaupal*, and this is often the first point of introduction for the researchers. Some of the interviews took place in public, outside a person's house. However, the interviewers were well trained to focus on the respondent, ignoring other comments.

The interviews went along the lines of the following one with Ram Chindra, who was pushing a wheeled cart containing a few vegetables that he was going to sell.

What is your age? I am 62.

What is your caste? Rajbhar.

Is your wife alive? Yes.

Asks about education.
I can write my name, that's all.

Do you have a house? Yes.

Do you own it? Yes.

What is your occupation?
I have just started selling vegetables. I buy them from the market and sell them.

Asks about income.
I get about 70 rupees [US\$1.5] a day.

Do you live with your family?
Yes. What do I eat if I don't live with them?

Asks about family.
I have four daughters and two sons. I live with my wife, my sons and their wives and children and my unmarried daughters.

Are you aware of social assistance schemes for older people?
Yes. I don't get anything but I know people who get it.

Has any help been given to you to apply for it?
Nobody has helped me.

What schemes do you think you are eligible for?
I'll take whatever I get.

What do you think makes you eligible for these schemes?
One of my eyes. I can't see from one eye at all. The vision in the other is fading.

Are you getting any benefits?
Nothing.

Have you applied for any of these?
Yes. I asked the Gram Pradhan [head of the village committee] about it.

About which scheme?
The old age pension.

In the last three years, how many times did you try to get it?
One. I went to the Gram Pradhan when he was filling forms for others. But I was told there was no point in filling in the form because only six applicants would be accepted.

Why do you think you did not get the benefit?
I told you already. The Pradhan said only four or five will get it so there's no point filling out a form for you.

What do you think the government should do for people like you?
We should get some facilities from the government.

Can you suggest any changes in the procedures adopted for getting benefits?
It shouldn't be done through the Gram Pradhan. I went to the block office but I couldn't meet with anyone. Someone else should do it but not the village Pradhan.

The findings of the research, which is funded by the World Bank's Social Protection Division, will be reported in A&D 15.

Amanda Heslop is research and training manager, HelpAge International.

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Ram Chindra stops his cart to answer questions about claiming his pension.

Amanda Heslop/HelpAge International

Pension schemes

Three means-tested schemes operate in Uttar Pradesh:

- state pension of Rs50 (US\$1) a month for people aged 65 and over who have no family support or income from employment

- national pension of Rs75 (US\$1.6) a month for people aged 65 and over who are living below the poverty line (combined with the state pension to give a total of Rs125 a month)

- the 'Annapurna', a monthly allowance of 10 kilos of grain or rice for older people who are eligible for either a state or national pension, but who do not receive one.

Resources

New publications, websites, conferences and courses

10

Journal articles

A round-up of what is being written on ageing issues. For journal details please write to the editor or email: ctill@helpage.org

National

Trends in dietary traits of the elderly: the Indonesian case
R Boedhi-Darmojo, Asia Pacific J. Clinical Nutrition 11:s1 (September 2002)

Successful aging among the young-old, old-old and oldest-old Chinese
CK-L Chi and I Chi, Int. J. Ageing and Human Dev. 54:1 (2002)

'I want to go!' How older people in Ghana look forward to death
S van der Geest, Ageing and Soc. 22:1 (January 2002)

Demographic transition in China and its implications
A Hussain, World Dev. 30:10 (October 2002)

Elderly people and policies regarding ageing in China. A report on Chinese literature
M Long, Genus 56:3/4 (2000)

A lost generation: as AIDS decimates South Africa's population, grandmothers shoulder family burdens
F Pearce, The Boston Globe, 7 January 2003

International

Stability and change in living arrangements in Indonesia, Singapore and Taiwan 1993-1999
E Frankenberg et al., Pop. Studies 56:2 (2002)

Perceived elderly traits and young people's helping tendencies in the US, Ireland, Nigeria and Brazil
F E Eyetsemitan, J. Cross Cult. Ger. 17:1 (2002)

Misconceptions and misapprehensions about population ageing
E M Gee, Int. J. Epi. 31:4 (August 2002)

Global ageing – the non-governmental organisation role in the developing world
M Gorman, Int. J. Epi. 31:4 (August 2002)

Ageing in Asia: facing the crossroads
H A I Hermalin, Hallym Int. J. Aging 3:2 (2001)

The future of global ageing
R Palacios, Int. J. Epi. 31:4 (August 2002)

A global view of the causes of ageing: an interview with Robin Holliday
S I S Rattan, Biogerontol. 3:5 (2002)

Globalization, population aging and ethics, part II: toward a just global society

L Polivka, J. Aging and Identity 7:3 (September 2002)

An ageing world: new issues, more questions

M Janicki and P N Walsh, J. Intellectual and Development Disability 27:4 (December 2002)

Health

Demographic and health conditions of ageing in Latin America and the Caribbean

A Palloni et al., Int. J. Epi. 31:4 (August 2002)

Functional limitations in Mexican American elderly

A Pennathur et al., Int. J. Industrial Ergonomics 31:1 (January 2003)

Ageing in China: health and social consequences and responses

J Woo et al., Int. J. Epi. 31:4 (August 2002)

Development of a Japanese quality of life instrument for older adults experiencing dementia (QLDJ)
Y Yamamoto-Mitani et al., Int. J. Ageing and Human Dev. 55:1 (2002)

Chronic illness and depressive symptoms among Chinese older adults: a longitudinal study

K L Chou and I Chi, Int. J. Ageing and Human Dev. 54:2 (2002)

Cultural construction of a disease: a 'supernormal' construct of dementia in American Indian tribe

J Neil Henderson and L Carson Henderson, J. Cross Cult. Ger. 17:3 (2002)

Constructing and deconstructing the self: dementia in China

C J Ikels, J. Cross Cult. Ger. 17:3 (2002)

Nutrition of elderly people in Mervajja nursing home

M Saava and I R Kisper-Hint, Papers on Anthropology 11 (2002)

Flexible hips? On Alzheimer's disease and ageing in Brazil

A Leibing, J. Cross Cult. Ger. 17:3 (2002)

Senility as disintegrated person in Japan

J W Traphagan, J. Cross Cult. Ger. 17:3 (2002)

The situation of older people with intellectual disability in Nepal: a pilot study

S Shresta and G Weber, J. Intellectual and Development Disability 27:4 (December 2002)

Effects of forced displacement on the mental health of older people in North India

S Kedia and J Willigen, Hallym Int. J. Aging 3:1 (2002)

Cross-cultural

International differences in life satisfaction among urban living elders: Chinese and Canadian comparisons

N L Chappell et al., Hallym Int. J. Aging 2:2 (2001)

The impact of social ties on depressive symptoms in US and Japanese elderly

H Sugisawa, J. Soc. Issues 58:4 (Winter 2002)

The experience and interpretation of dementia: cross-cultural perspectives

J N Henderson, J. Cross Cult. Ger. 17:3 (2002)

Family

Social change and adult children's attitudes toward support of elderly parents: evidence from Nepal

A Mehraban Pienta et al., Hallym Int. J. Aging 3:2 (2001)

Mutual exchange of support and intergenerational relationships in Korean families

Y Jang et al., Hallym Int. J. Aging 2:2 (2001)

Comparison of caregiving burden among Korean and Japanese caregivers

K-O Rhee and M J Lee, Hallym Int. J. Aging 3:2 (2001)

Family support and health statuses of the elderly in Imo State of Nigeria

G O Unanka, J. Soc. Issues 58:4 (Winter 2002)

Gender

Health expectancies in Japan: gender differences and policy implications for women

I Tsuji et al., J. Women and Aging 14:1/2 (2002)

Disability among older women and men in Fiji: concerns for the future

S V Panapasa, J. Women and Aging 14:1/2 (2002)

Economic

Earning a way out of poverty

A Bush, Ageways (May 2003). Special issue on income-generating activities.

Asia's huge unfunded gap [pension planning]

T Holland, Far Eastern Economic Review (January 2003)

Population aging and its impact on elderly welfare in Africa

O K Sarkwa et al., Int. J. Ageing and Human Dev. 54:2 (2002)

Asia strained by ageing population

Jill McGivering, BBC News World Edition (14 May 2003)

[Web: news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/3025289.stm](http://www.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/3025289.stm)

Social security reform: a worldwide phenomenon

Y-P Chen, J. Aging and Soc. Pol. 14:1 (2002)

Social security reform in Latin America: policy challenges

S J Kay and B E Kritzer, J. Aging and Soc. Pol. 14:1 (2002)

Social security in the Middle East: a brief review

J Turner and J H Lichtenstein, J. Aging and Soc. Pol. 14:1 (2002)

Characteristics and the background of the Japanese long-term care insurance system

M Masuda, Hallym Int. J. Aging 3:2 (2001)

Social insurance schemes in the Gulf countries

Z S Mohammed, Int. Soc. Security Rev. 55:4 (Oct-Dec 2002)

Problems and future directions of the long-term care insurance system in Japan: rethinking substitution and compensation for family care
M Morikawa, Hallym Int. J. Aging 3:2 (2001)

Social security for the unorganised sector in South Asia

S I Rajan, Int. Social Security Rev. 55:4 (Oct-Dec 2002)

Social security in Africa: a brief overview

C Bailey and J Turner, J. Aging and Soc. Pol. 14:1 (2002)

Social security in Asia and the Pacific: a brief overview

J Turner, J. Aging and Soc. Pol. 14:1 (2002)

Social security reform ideas in Japan

N Watanabe, J. Aging and Soc. Pol. 14:1 (2002)

Wellbeing

Depression and substance use in a middle aged and older Puerto Rican population

K Weingartner et al., J. Cross Cult. Ger. 17:2 (2002)

Promotion of physical activity in a developing country: the Agita Sao Paulo experience

S Matsudo et al., Public Health and Nutrition 5:1a (February 2002)

Perception of aging and sense of well-being among Latino elderly

Y Beyene et al., J. Cross Cult. Ger. 17:2 (2002)

Research update

Major new projects

12



New studies in Latin America focus on poverty and livelihoods.

Maccom Barter/HelpAge International

A review of documentation on trade liberalisation, trade partnerships, national policies relating to trade, and policies, legislation and budgets relating to older people will be carried out in all four countries.

The research will also study the impact on older people of any public or private measures or services introduced as a result of changes in the industries concerned, and the potential impact of trade negotiations underway.

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HelpAge International and partners between mid-2003 and mid-2004 to examine the characteristics, causes and consequences of poverty, taking into consideration issues such as gender, ethnicity and rural/urban differences.

The research is funded by the UK Department for International Development, European Union and Help the Aged as part of HelpAge International's regional Active Ageing programme.

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Non-contributory pensions

A comparative study of how non-contributory pensions alleviate poverty in South Africa and Brazil has been completed by the Manchester University Institute for Development Policy and Management and University of East Anglia, UK. The findings will be presented at a seminar in London on 4 September 2003, hosted by the Overseas Development Institute.

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Trade liberalisation in the Caribbean

The impact of trade liberalisation on older people in the Caribbean is being researched in 2003 by HelpAge International.

The research focuses on industries that are important to the region's economy, and in which older people are particularly active – the dairy industry in Jamaica, banana cultivation in St Vincent and the Grenadines, rice production in Haiti, and mixed farming in Grenada.

Interviews with older people, policy makers, industry officials, academics and NGOs in Jamaica and St Vincent will look at the consequences of trade liberalisation on older people's livelihoods. Areas to be investigated include the impact of currency devaluation on cost of production, reduction of tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade, new hygiene and labelling requirements, and trade-related investment measures.

Communication in Kenya

HelpAge Kenya has commissioned research by the University of Nairobi into how older people find out about their rights and community services available to them.

Interviews with older people in and around Nairobi discussed the use of home visits, meetings, audio and audiovisual media, mobile cinema, print media and non-formal adult education. The findings will be published in *A&D* 15.

The research was funded by HelpAge International as part of its older citizens monitoring project (see page 2).

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Poverty in Latin America

Qualitative research with older people and community members in five countries in Latin America – Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia and Peru – will be carried out by

Livelihood strategies in Bolivia

A study of older people, poverty and social livelihood strategies in Latin America is to be carried out through a partnership between University College, London and HelpAge International, with funding from the Economic and Social Research Council.

The study will focus on factors influencing poverty in old age, and strategies used by older people to overcome poverty.

Household research will be carried out in two poor, urban communities in La Paz, Bolivia over ten months from mid-2003. It will use a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, including surveys, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with older and middle-aged people, and members of their families and communities.

The study is part of a three-year PhD degree which is due to be completed in 2005.

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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.

Ageing and Development aims to raise awareness of the contribution, needs and rights of older people and to promote the development of laws and policies supporting older people. It is published three times a year by HelpAge International, with funding from Help the Aged (UK).

Copies are available in English and Spanish, free of charge on request to policy makers, programme planners and researchers. Please contact us with brief details of your work. If requesting multiple copies, please explain who these are for and how they will be distributed.

Ageing and Development is also available on the web at: www.helpage.org

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