



**HelpAge
International**

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TESTIMONY MANUAL

for the MIPAA plus 10 Bottom-Up, Participatory Approach

"The Voices of Older Persons"

A contribution to the State of the World's Older Persons 2012



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Introduction and summary

This manual provides guidelines to collect video and written testimonies on age discrimination (or discrimination in old age). Both methods are one of the most direct, engaging and effective ways to bring older people's voices to a global platform. Personal testimonies, videos and photographs are key tools in giving voice to older people across the globe to tell a story in their own words.

This activity is part of the work leading to the "State of the World's Older Persons 2012" Report. The focus of this exercise is to explore experiences, perceptions, fears and hopes of older persons around the world. The group discussions and testimonies conducted with older people will comprise a major input for the report which is a joint publication by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and a number of UN agencies, including for example the UN Programme on Ageing and the World Health Organization, as well as international organisations, such as the International Federation on Ageing. The publication will be presented to the United Nations Commission for Social Development in February 2013 when the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing will be officially reviewed.

Please note that the work outlined in this manual captures Activity 4 which is briefly mentioned in the "Manual for MIPAA plus 10 Bottom-Up, Participatory Approach: The Voices of Older Persons".

Aims of the whole study

- To provide authentic older people's voice on the implementation of MIPAA
- To offer a global vision of what needs to be done to ensure the full implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing everywhere

Objectives of the testimonies

- To capture the reality of age discrimination (or discrimination in old age) and about the impact of age-related policy measures on the quality of life of older people

Methods

The two (or more, if you like) testimonies will be collected after the group discussions. Plan to collect them on a separate day. If appropriate, identify two participants that seemed to be particularly articulate and had personal stories of age discrimination. Please explain that the testimonies will be shown to many audiences (e.g. in New York during the Commission for Social Development, at international conferences on ageing and at national level), be on a website and used in publications. Check if they want their names to be included in the video and written testimonies. Their names do not need to be mentioned.

Testimony 1 – Video testimony: Here older persons talk about issues they face and how they are being discriminated against. The older persons will be asked to make a 1-3 minute video statement on their experience with age discrimination and the impact this has made on their lives. The person should be well spoken and have a very strong personal story they would like to share with the public. Preparation needs to be made in advance so that the statement is strong and does not require much editing in office. (See pp.5-6 for guidelines.)

Testimony 2 – Written testimony: Here older people will talk about their lives and particular areas in which they believe to be treated differently because of their age. They will also be asked to explain what governments should do to make their lives better. Examples of good implementation of government policies are of particular interest. (See pp.6-7 for guidelines.)

Use of testimonies

Testimonies of older people about how they face discrimination because of their age are a powerful and important method to explain to governments and other stakeholders what the problems are.

The testimonies will be part of the “State of the World’s Older Persons 2012” Report (see page 2). Please get formal consent of the individuals that their testimonies can be shown to a global audience.

You can see examples of similar videos, recorded in 2009, on HelpAge International’s website: <http://www.helpage.org/what-we-do/rights/rights-and-older-people/>

Box 1: Why bother? - A summary

It will take the voice of older people to a global level

We will use this footage to take the voice of older people from around the world to global decision makers, e.g. to the Commission for Social Development where the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing will be reviewed and appraised.

It will help support our campaign for a UN convention on the rights of older people

The footage will help us put pressure on decision makers to protect the rights of older people. Please remember that each and every person you interview will make our voice stronger when lobbying governments.

It will help your national campaign

Also remember that you can use your footage to lobby your own government as well. Demonstrating that your lobbying voice is based on the feelings of older people will give you more influence.

It will help us engage the media and supporters with these issues

Conveying the authentic voices of older people from around the world will make the Age Demands Action campaign and the HelpAge network’s work on human rights more interesting and engaging for the media and potential supporters.

Roles and responsibilities

National MIPAA project coordinator or regional communications officers:

- Identify photographer and videographer to collect testimonies.
- Share “Testimony Manual” with group discussion facilitators who will be collecting the testimonies.
- Provide guidance and technical input in gathering the stories, taking images and recording videos.
- Edit the videos and provide subtitles in English.
- Collate testimonies from the country, translate and send the package (images, narrative, video) by October 15, 2011 to the global project coordinator, Ina Voelcker (ivoelcker@helpage.org) or load it up to www.dropbox.com (details to be provided in due course).

Facilitators:

- Follow the manual guidelines.
- Provide about 5-10 images of the people in the written testimony. If possible also provide a few images of the person in the video testimony.
- Collect one 1-3 minute video of personal testimony and one written testimony on age discrimination/discrimination in old age.

Preparation

- 1. Selection of photographer and videographer:** You can either recruit a professional photo-/videographer or do it yourself if you have the equipment and experience. If you need any advice please liaise with the Regional Communication Officers.
- 2. Selection of older persons:** Please invite two older people with an interesting context from your group discussions to take part in a video testimony and an “interview” for the written testimony. Interview both a man and a woman, one of them being in the older age group. Make sure to inform them about the use of the testimonies so that they can give informed consent.
- 3. Material** (* indicates that translation will be required unless the study will be undertaken in English):
 - Questions/script for testimonies* (see pp.5-7)
 - Consent form* (see p.8)
- 4. Technical equipment:**
 - Video camera for recording of video testimony (Testimony 1)
 - Voice/tape recorder for recording the written testimony (Testimony 2)
 - Photo camera for written testimony (Testimony 2)

Guidance on collecting the testimonies

Protection of participants

- Get consent before you start and clearly explain what you are doing, why you are here and how the story and the pictures will be used at international (and national) level. Also clarify that their participation is voluntary and that they can withdraw from participation at any time. (Please find more information on p.2 and in the “Manual for MIPAA plus 10 Bottom-Up, Participatory Approach: The Voices of Older Persons”. Also find a template for a consent form on p.8)
- Explain that the general public will see these stories and information.
- Ask whether the person would like us to use his/her real name or nick name to protect the identification of the person.
- When providing real names, we will refrain from using geographical information (beyond country name).
- When there are sensitive issues involved (e.g. HIV and AIDS, abuse, insecure political situation in the country etc.) names must be changed. In some cases it might be better to not film the face of the person but their profile or the back of their head to avoid that they can be identified and hence be brought in danger.
- Names of children below the age of 18 must be removed or changed.

Testimony 1: Age discrimination video testimony

Technical information

Sound and picture: Please check the sound before recording so the older person can be heard clearly and make sure that the older person is always in the picture. Please do not record music over the footage.


It can sometimes be hard to find a quiet spot to record a video message. Try to avoid any disruptions by animals, traffic, fan, wind/rain or other people.

Format and delivery: Format should be ideally AVI files which can be uploaded to www.dropbox.com. Ina will provide you with the password and guidelines.

Making the video

- Try and put the older person at ease before the interview.
- Before you start filming, get informed consent of the older person to be part of the video. (See p.8 for a consent form template)
- Then discuss age discrimination with the older person using the following questions to guide you:
 1. **Are you ever denied things/services or treated unfairly because of your age? (Or: In which way do you think you as an older person are treated differently than younger people?)**
(For example are you denied healthcare, or the opportunity to work?)
If so, please tell me how?
 2. **What would your life be like if you had what you are being denied?**
 3. **What one thing would you like to see your government do to help older people in your country?**
- Explain that you would like them to talk on the video for 1 to 3 minutes about an experience of age discrimination, what the consequences were and what they would like governments do to help older people.
- Prepare the statement with them, before you start filming. Take notes of what they say noting exactly what they say.
- If the older person feels that it would be useful to have some key words on a flip, please write them down and position the flip behind the camera to ensure the older person looks into the camera while speaking.
- Ensure that the older person is looking straight into the camera.
- During the filming, encourage the older person but don't speak.
- If required you can film each question separately, if you can then edit the different videos into one.
- If you need to interrupt the older person (or if you get interrupted by somebody else), ensure that the older person is still at ease and doesn't feel under pressure.
- Keep it short.
- Thank the older person for their time and openness/frankness. You might want to spend a few more minutes with the older person and give them some emotional support before you leave.

Box 2: An example of a video testimony from the 2009 ADA Campaign



Anwarra, Bangladesh: Too old for healthcare?

Anwarra has been refused healthcare because she is old and poor.

As populations age worldwide the care burden will grow enormously. We are working to prevent this happening by ensuring that older people are included in health financing and have the access to the healthcare they deserve.

Watch the video to hear what Anwarra has to say.

Find what happened to Anwarra unacceptable? Sign our [Age Demands Action petition](#).

[Find out more about our work to help older people access age-friendly healthcare.](#)

Testimony 2: Written testimony

Things to remember

- Move away from distractions.
- If possible use a voice recorder as back-up to note taking.

Carrying out the “interview”

- The testimony should be open-ended because we are trying to encourage the older person to talk about their lives and experiences.
- There are just a few questions designed to encourage the older person to talk about their lives and experiences.
- Before you start interviewing, get informed consent of the older person to be part of the written testimony. (See p.8 for a consent form template)
- If you have permission record the interview and even if you are recording, take notes recording what the older person says. Make sure your notes quote exactly what the person says.
- Use the following questions to guide you:
 - 1. Please tell me about how you came to be living here in** *(no more than a minute)*
 - 2. What do you think is the best age to live in this society? Why do you think this?**
 - 3.1** *If answer is that younger age is the best, pick up on this different treatment in old age:*
 - a. Describe how you feel when this happens.**
 - b. How do you think this treatment would be different if you were 30 years old today?**
 - c. What difference does this make to your life and your family?**
 - d. What do you do to overcome this discrimination or to protect yourself? Do you feel that you are able to do anything? Explain possible actions or barriers.**
 - 3.2** *If answer is that older age is best age, continue with the following:*
 - a. Many older people are treated less favourably simply because of their age. Please describe a time when this happened to you (e.g. getting pension, healthcare, work, housing, transport).**
 - b. Describe how you feel when this happens.**
 - c. How do you think this treatment would be different if you were 30 years old today?**
 - d. What difference does this make to your life and your family?**
 - e. What do you do to overcome this discrimination or to protect yourself? Do you feel that you are able to do anything? Explain possible actions or barriers.**
 - 4. Who do you think is in the best position to address this mistreatment of older people?**
 - 5. What should they do to stop this bad treatment of older people?**
(Please give concrete examples, e.g. penalties for perpetrators, legal support for victims, ...)
 - 6. What do you hope for the future?** *(End on a positive note.)*
- Thank the older person for their time and frankness. Again, spend some more time with the older person to make sure they are OK and confident that things will improve. Some people will get very emotional and will appreciate if you spend a few more minutes with them.



Taking photographs

- Try to get engaging and personal photos that respect the people's dignity.
- Captions need to remain accurate and capture information such as the name, location and age of the people that are in the image.
- If possible take the pictures where the older person lives or in their communities reflecting their environment.
- Take about 5-10 high quality photographs (more if you like).

Writing up the testimonies

- Note the name, age, location and occupation of the person interviewed at the top of the script.
- Write down all your hand-written notes and quotes from the voice recording. Please write this in English if possible. If not, translate it later on.
- You will end up with a transcript of what the older person said.
- If an amount of money is mentioned, note the current exchange rate to USD/GBP at the bottom of the transcript.

Packing of testimonies

- Translate the spoken word into English and put the subtitles in the video message. Do not use another voice to record what the older person said. Use subtitles so that the original voice of the older person can still be heard.
- Put the photographs and translated testimonies together. Make sure that both the written testimony and the video testimony are labelled with the country and the name (or nickname) and age of the older person.
- Please send a copy of the written testimonies and the photographs to the global project coordinator, Ina Voelcker (ivoelcker@helppage.org).
- Please load the video testimony up to www.dropbox.com. Ina will provide you with the details to access the account.

Details on the outputs of the overall study can be found on page 5 in the "Manual for MIPAA plus 10 Bottom-Up, Participatory Approach: The Voices of Older Persons".

Annex – Consent Form (template¹)

Permission to use testimonies (written and in form of a video message)

Dear participant,

HelpAge International is grateful for your participation in this work and your willingness to share your story with us. Your testimony will help to illustrate how older people are treated differently because of their age/in older age. This information will be used in our publications, on our website and presentations to international and national decision makers. Your participation helps to disseminate information about the reality of age discrimination as well as the impact of any age-related policy measures on the quality of life of older people.

Please note that your is voluntary and that you can withdraw from participation at any time.

Thank you very much in advance for your participation.

To be completed by the participant

Name: _____

Place: _____

Please tick one of the following options:

- ☐ My real name **can** be used.
- ☐ My real name **cannot** be used. I wish to be given a nickname.

With this letter, I give HelpAge my permission to use the information that I am voluntarily sharing with you as indicated above, including visual material.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

To be completed by the interviewer

Name: _____

Signature: _____

¹ Please amend this template according to requirements in your country.