Learning from evaluations at HelpAge International in 2012

Sixteen evaluations were conducted at HelpAge International in 2012. Three of these evaluations had a global focus, drawing the lessons learned from HelpAge global approach (Independent progress review, annual review) and the impact of the Age Demands Action (ADA) campaign. Countries specific evaluations assessed the effectiveness and impact of emergency response (Kenya and Ethiopia); livelihoods programmes (India, Pakistan, Myanmar, Mozambique and Tanzania), and Rights (Kyrgyz Republic and Tanzania).

# HelpAge International Independent progress review 2012

The 2012 Independent Progress Review (IPR) concluded that HelpAge was being strategic in its choices regarding the use of PPA and other unrestricted funding. The availability of this unrestricted funding is what helps the organisation take a learning approach, be innovative, flexible and gain recognition and a voice amongst national Governments, UN bodies, donors and NGO partners alike.

The review team made the following recommendations to HelpAge International:

* Further pursue initiatives to take forward the value for money agenda
* Continue to ensure that regional and national staff are orientated and trained accordingly
* Give greater emphasis to information management systems
* Strengthen M&E capacity at national level
* Strengthen existing linkages, and develop new linkages with research institutes.
* Ensure that HelpAge is able to respond to the evidence required by the PPA Evaluators.
* Mobilise funds to carry out an assessment of the effectiveness and impact of present approaches to capacity building.
* Explore ways in which organisational learning can better inform planning, programming and innovation.

***Read full report here (insert link)***

# Policy, influencing and campaigning

The Age Demands Action Campaign evaluation showed the campaign growth from 27 countries in 2007 to 59 participating countries in March 2012.[[1]](#footnote-1) The campaign also mobilised a significant number of older people to fight for their rights. For example, since 2008, 32,213 people have signed a global petition calling for equal rights for older people and, in 2011, ADA engaged over 62,000 campaigners.[[2]](#footnote-2) It also achieved some significant improvements for older people’s lives. In 18 municipalities or provinces around the world older people achieved changes for the betterment of their lives, for example by being granted discounts and special seating on local transport or through improved health services. Although attribution of policy changes to ADA is difficult, it is extremely likely that the activities of ADA have in many countries contributed to important breakthroughs. 21 countries made progress on Older People Policies, or Policies including older people; 7 countries created National Older People Committees; in 4 countries HelpAge was invited to contribute to Older People Policies; 17 countries made progress on extending coverage of pensions or other social protection policies or are in the process of reviewing these policies; in 11 countries, older people saw improvements in their access to health services; 7 countries implemented improvements to other public services such as transport or housing; and 3 countries investigated older people’s issues with a view to change . ***Read full report here****.*

# Emergency response

The Real Time evaluation of DEC emergency response in Kenya and Ethiopia found that considerable efforts had been made to draw on lessons learned from previous responses. This was more evident in program design and strategy than it was in practice. Many examples were found of innovative program adaptation to the particular circumstances of the region concerned. For example in Kenya several agencies (notably Oxfam and Help Age International) have adopted innovative food distribution and other methods to provide social protection, support livelihoods and improve markets. These included vouchers, cash grants through (and to) traders, and small commissions for distribution services. These approaches, which some agencies have grounded in a solid social and gender analysis, are felt to offer more and longer-term benefits than outright food distribution, as well as being efficient ways of achieving short-term relief goals.

In Kenya and Ethiopia, implementing agencies appeared to suffer from some loss of institutional memory concerning their longer-term engagement, and lacked the long-serving staff that they used to have. In particular agencies have learned that emergency responses which are built on and work alongside longer-term development projects are likely to have greater impact in themselves, to increase future scale up and response capacity, and to assist in building resilience

At the operational level, although agencies were well aware of the need to integrate short- and longer-term perspectives of their work, they were less adept in practice at combining the two and achieving the necessary organisational transitions.

*Read full report: Disasters Emergency Committee –. Kenya Real-Time Evaluation*

*Red full report: Disasters Emergency Committee – Ethiopia Real-Time Evaluation*

# Rights to live without violence at old age

The project "Right to Life without Violence in Old Age" is one of the first initiatives raising the issue of violence, neglect and abuse against older people in the Kyrgyz Republic. Before, the issues of violence against elderly people had never been discussed or addressed in the communities. Although the regulations of local authorities contain norms to support older people, these measures are generally limited to providing one-time aid in the form of gifts on the Elderly People Day and other significant dates. Problems of violence against older people were traditionally considered as family internal issue and the lack of protection allowed family members and other community members to keep on abusing older people. There were many cases when older people, mostly retired women were not able to defend their own rights and were forced to a street living.

The evaluation found the Project approach appropriate and feasible in local communities. Particularly, the method of establishing of OPGs for mobilization and engagement of community members in order to improve stakeholders’ involvement in addressing the problems of violence and abuse of the elderly, turned out as very effective.

Implementation of the project at the national level, when all regions of the country were involved, reinforced the attempt to influence and change attitudes in the communities to the problems of older people. Partnership with the Association of Crisis Centers (ASC) was the best solution by HelpAge International, since the Crisis Centers (CCs) in the regions had a successful experience in identifying, solving and preventing violence against women, and that in turn allowed them to use easily their skills and resources on the ground for the success of the project.

The strategy of involving all community stakeholders in project implementation, represented by Aiyl okmotu, courts of aksakals, women's councils, youth committees and representatives of non-governmental organizations in some communities, was successful and contributed to the achievement of the Project objectives.

The target group of the Project - active members of the communities and members of civil society enhanced their skills and knowledge in the field of protection of the rights of older people. They learned to independently solve the problems of abused victims who turned to them and organized information campaigns, and that resulted in building trustful relationships with community members. ***Read the full report (***

# Poverty alleviation and livelihoods

HelpAge programmes in Pakistan, India, Myanmar and Tanzania with a livelihood component were also evaluated in 2012. These evaluations looked at the impact of community revolving fund on older people in Pakistan, older people access to microcredit prgrammes in India or vulnerable people participation in decentralized development planning and budgeting in Tanzania. In general the evaluations concluded that:

* HAI interventions had broken the perceived image of OPs as non-contributory to productive figures of households.
* Primary (OPs) and secondary stakeholders (other communities) are sensitized regarding ageing. Key stakeholders needs to be thoroughly sensitized.
* Resilience of communities developed to face disasters, OPAMCs formed to mitigate risks during disasters and CAPs developed.
* HAI has emerged as a trustworthy friend of older people in addressing their needs.
* Older people are marginalized in existing poverty reduction programmes, other than HAI offered in the targeted districts.

***Read full reports : Pakistan, Myanmar, India, and Tanzania***.

1. Corporate Indicator 22 Q1, Strategy target of 60 countries by March 2013, and a PPA target of 65 countries by 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Corporate Indicator 22 Q2, Strategy target of 65,000 people by March 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)