

Ageing in South Asia

Putting Older People First
Issue 1 / September 2016



Manna Rahman/HelpAge International

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HelpAge

global network

Wellbeing Ranking of Older People

Following the massive earthquake measuring 7.8 magnitude that struck Nepal on 25 April 2015, HelpAge responded to the needs of affected, particularly older people through cash transfers, shelter support, health camps and livelihood support. Recently, older people's Wellbeing Ranking was conducted in two of the most affected districts i.e., Sindupalchowk and Nuwakot. The ranking is a kind of economic vulnerability assessment, which helps identify vulnerable OP in dire need of cash support in order to facilitate their livelihood. A total of 675 such OP were identified. HelpAge has developed series of interventions aimed at restoring affected OP's livelihood.

Older people of Kiul, Sindupalchowk participating in Cardamom Cultivation Training organised by CSRC.

Older People Receive Skills Development Trainings

HelpAge has been working with Community Self-Reliance Center to deliver various kinds of skills development trainings to earthquake affected older people of Sindupalchowk, Nepal with the aim to restore their livelihoods in past few months. Sindupalchowk is one of the worst earthquake hit districts. 5 vegetable farming, 1 bamboo craft and 1 account keeping trainings were provided to the older people as well as their family members.

Participants expressed that the trainings were very helpful and they plan to further utilise skills gained for income generation. Additionally, seed grants were also provided to 18 local Older People's Associations, so that they can mobilise the grant as revolving fund to further support their income generation effort.



Luna Khadka/HelpAge International

From the field

Older People's Association Strengthening Active Ageing

Older people receiving vegetable farming training in Hemja, Kaski.



Keshab Shrestha/HelpAge International

Older People's Association of Hemja in Kaski district, Nepal has 101 members (68 M & 33 F). The OPA has been actively involved in strengthening Active Ageing. Aside from seed money mobilisation and micro-saving, it has been collecting funds from different government

organisations. For instance, on April 2016, OPA Hemja was able to receive NRS 130,000 from Women and Child Office, Kaski. Assessing need of older people and market demand, OPA organised 5 days training on vegetable farming to 30 older people. During training older participants were able

to learn improved vegetable cultivation technologies. After training, participants were also supported with NRS 2,500 as a starter support.

HelpAge Reaches Cyclone Roanu Affected with Cash Transfer

Cyclone Roanu battered the coast of southern Bangladesh on 21 May 2016, forcing half a million to flee their homes and leaving 23 dead. HelpAge International in coordination with its partner- Bangladesh Institute for Theatre Arts (BITA) responded with cash transfer to 650 affected households with older people in two unions under Ramgoti Sub-district of Lakshmipur district, with support from ongoing project- Inclusion of Older People in Disaster Resilience (IDR), funded by Margaret A. Cargill Foundation.

Unconditional cash grants were provided after doing proper needs assessment in coordination with Union Disaster Management Committee (UDMC). Each HH was provided BDT 2,200, so that they can meet their immediate basic

needs. Older people expressed their gratitude for HelpAge and BITA, and also shared their plans to repair house, buy foods, cloths and medicine from the grant received.



Mama Rahman/HelpAge International

HelpAge staff (right) collecting thumbprint (substitute for signature) of older people during cash transfer.

From the field

“I am living with my son. I can’t work properly due to impaired vision and mobility problem. Cyclone Roanu damaged our tiny house. We didn’t have money to purchase food and medicine as we were left with no income sources.”

“In such distressing situation I was provided BDT 2,200 by HelpAge. I will spend most of it buying food and medicine, and also visit doctor’s chamber for eye treatment with the rest amounts. This support has helped us to survive. My deep gratitude from bottom of my heart to HelpAge and BITA for extending support for us.”

Mrs. Rejia Begum (75)
Char Algi village, Char Algi Union,
Ramgoti

Disaster Management Committee Formed with Older People’s Representation

It is mandatory to form Local Disaster Management Committee (LDMC) in Municipality and Village Development Committee, and Community Disaster Management Committee (CDMC) in Wards of Municipality as per Local Disaster Risk Management Planning (LDRMP) Guideline 2011, endorsed by Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development, Nepal. But the LDRMP Guideline doesn’t mention scope of older people in any of the committees. As a part of Nepal Earthquake Response Project (NERP), 9 LDMCs and 9 CDMCs were established in programme areas, with 10–35% representation of older people from varied backgrounds such as Older People’s Associations, national political

parties and organisations working in DRR in each committees. It’s been presumed that inclusion of older people in the committee will help address vulnerabilities/capabilities of aged community members while conducting Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment.



Dinesh Thapa/HelpAge International

Community Disaster Management Committee (CDMC) formation in Mahankal, Sindhupalchowk.

Donors Pick Age and Disability Issue

RAPID offered HelpAge its seven ongoing projects in Pakistan implemented by its different national and international partners to test and see the gaps with respect to specific needs of age and disability in humanitarian response. RAPID is USAID’s emergency fund managed by CONCERN Worldwide locally. The 7 projects are on WASH, Food security and Livelihood, Health and Shelter. This is the outcome of HelpAge’s effort for bringing together significant humanitarian organisations into one network. Local partners in different locations of Pakistan have started gauging age and disability specific interventions and the process will continue for coming three months.

Dementia Care Training Conducted in Bangladesh



BOHUBRIHY 2016

HelpAge in coordination with Bangladesh Dementia Action Alliance Foundation provided Dementia Care Training to 45 participants including care givers, network members and development practitioners. The 3 days long training was conducted in Centre of Palliative Care, BSMMU in Dhaka from 11-13 June 2016 and 'We for the Aged' Network office in Dinajpur from 19-21 June 2016. HelpAge plans to conduct similar trainings in other parts of the country in coming days.

Trainings on Geriatric Health for Service Providers



Keshab Shrestha/HelpAge International

Participants in Geriatric Health Training at Dhulikhel, Kavrepalanchok.

Community Health Workers and Counselors operating under Nepal Earthquake Response Project (NERP) in Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Nuwakot, Kavrepalanchok and Sindupalchowk districts of Nepal were provided trainings on Geriatric Health in post-emergency context, from April-June 2016. The trainings basically aimed at enhancing service provider's knowledge so that they can effectively deliver general health services, psychosocial care to older people, and orient frontline community workers and local stakeholders in post-earthquake.

Older People Focused Integrated Health Camp Organised

With support from partners in five working districts of NERP i.e., Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Nuwakot, Sindhupalchowk and Kavreplanchowk, Integrated Health Camps were conducted targeting 60 years and above age group. A total of 3,670 were benefited from the camps, out of which 310 older people were diagnosed with Cataract. Necessary arrangements for the Cataract surgeries were done by the camps. Assistive devices such as Hearing Aids and Power Glasses were also distributed to the needy.



Keshab Shrestha/HelpAge International

An old man in Jaisithok, Kavrepalanchok undergoing Cataract test.

Nepal Emergency Response Project partners:

District	Partners
Bhaktapur	Women for Human Rights
Gorkha	Community Support Group
Kathmandu	Nepal Participatory Action Network
Kavrepalanchok	Action Works Nepal
Nuwakot	Community Self-Reliance Centre
Sindupalchowk	Community Self-Reliance Centre



Keshab Shrestha/HelpAge International

An old woman arrives at the health camp in Nuwakot organised by HelpAge with support from CSRC for check-up.

Age Demands Action on Health

Age Demands Action on Health takes place every year on 7 April (World Health Day). It is the key date for older men and women to come together and campaign on health related issues that affect them, including the need for age friendly health services in their countries. This year's theme was **“Beat Diabetes”**. Several campaign activities were initiated across South Asia on ADA on Health this year. Some major glimpses are as follows:



Ashish Magar/HelpAge International

Bangladesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 rallies initiated in collaboration with government in the capital- Dhaka, as well as in Dinajpur, Manikgonj, Naogaon, Netrokona and Rangpur. Altogether 1,207 (including 251 female) participated in those rallies. • 5 discussion programmes organised in Dinajpur, Manikgonj, Naogaon, Netrokona and Rangpur districts. Around 843 people including relevant government officials, media personnel and NGO representatives participated. • 4 cultural performances initiated to aware older people and their community, including local health service providers for ensuring healthy life in old age. Around 1,565 (including 523 female) community people were directly/indirectly reached with the WHD central message through local folk music and short drama. (http://bit.ly/1WucBuf) • A Policy dialogue on national TV channel- ATN Bangla was arranged. High-level government officials including president of Bangladesh Diabetic Association attended the programme, which basically focused on health situation of older people at national scenario in particular. • A free health camp organised at Gangachara, Rangpur. A total of 352 (including 140 older women and 126 older men) were benefited from the camp. • 3 radio programmes were arranged in two of the major community radio stations. A discussion programme titled “Probiner Shashtho Kotha (Health talk of older people)” was aired on 15 April 2016 by Borendro Radio 99.2. Similarly, two other discussion programmes titled “Change Environment: Older People’s Health” and “Doctors talk” was aired on 6 and 7 April respectively by Radio Dhoni 91.2. Older campaigners, high-level government officials, medical experts and civil society representatives were part of these discussion programmes.
India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A health camp organised for Blood pressure and Diabetic check-up. • Public gathering and meeting addressed by government health department representatives and sharing of fact sheets.
Nepal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Silent March organised on the occasion of WHD-2016, where at least 100 people participated in the march including older people. (http://bit.ly/24UBTXm) • A delegation, representing several civil societies, led by HelpAge International submitted an appeal to the Ministry of Health and Population on WHD. • An interaction on Diabetes and Older People was organised. A total of 78 from various concerned organisations namely WHO, Nepal Law Commission, Geriatric Society Nepal and so on participated therein.
Pakistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A delegation to the government officials in Punjab and Sindh for approval of senior citizen bill. • A mass rally was organised by Federations of Older People’s Associations.

“I am grateful to HelpAge for believing in the skills of an older man”.

Read an inspiring lifestory of Abdul Hameed in Waqas Qureshi’s latest blog [HERE](#).



Waqas Qureshi/HelpAge International

Age Demands Action on Rights



Manna Rahman/HelpAge International

This year on June 15 (Age Demands Action on Rights), campaign partners along with OPAs and networks members in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka called their governments to support call for a new **UN Convention on the Rights of Older People**. Several community events such as rally, delegation to the government, drawing and speech competition among students, human chain formation, cultural events and media sensitisations were organised to aware general public on abuse against older people and to support the call for UN convention. Following are some of the glimpses:

Bangladesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four human chains formed with participation of older people, civil society, cultural actors, development workers, youth groups, students and journalists at Union and Upazilla of Dinajpur, Manikgonj, Netrokona and Naogaon. Campaigners strongly demonstrated message against all forms of elder abuse. Altogether 1,136 people including 623 female participated in the events. • Four cultural performances initiated in Dinajpur, Manikgonj, Netrokona and Naogaon to aware family members, community people, local governments and service providers about elder abuse. Journalists pledged to play Watchdog role to protect rights of older people. Around 3,568 (including 1,058 female) community people were engaged and oriented. • A leading national media- Independent TV dedicated one episode of its popular talk show for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on 11 June. Nirjharinee Hasan, Country Director for HelpAge office in Bangladesh and Dr. A.K.M Nurun Nabi, Vice-Chancellor, Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur were the key spokespersons in the show. Full video available HERE. • ATN Bangla (a TV channel) produced news ticker throughout the day on 15 June with message about need for a new UN Convention on the Rights of Older People. • A package programme comprising of songs, drama and discussion was produced by Borendro Radio 99.2 fm with coordination from HelpAge partner- Barendrabhumi Samaj Unnayan Sangstha (BSDO). Listen to the programme HERE. • A public hearing programme involving 48 participants from policy makers, OPAs, campaigners, NGO partners, academician and students was initiated by ATN Bangla. As a result of the effort Dr. Dipu Moni, Member of Parliament pledged to join the upcoming Open-ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG) meeting in December 2016. Full video available HERE.
Nepal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A national level discussion event was organised at Kathmandu on 15 June 2016 inviting Hon. Deputy Prime Minister, C.P.Mainali as the chief guest of the event. • A radio talk programme on WEAAD was organised at Sagarmatha FM radio 102.4 MHz in coordination with HelpAge's partner- Ageing Nepal. Mr. Krishna M. Gautam, Chairperson of AN was the chief spokesperson at the show; he highlighted vulnerabilities of older people to elder abuse. • Two articles published focusing elder abuse in national vernacular print media
<p>Campaign partners in India, Nepal and Sri Lanka met their concerned government decision makers seeking their commitment to support the call for a new UN Convention on the Rights of Older People and participate in upcoming UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing meeting.</p>	



Bisakha Tamang/HelpAge International

Hon. Deputy Prime Minister C.P. Mainali giving speech during World Elder Abuse Awareness Day event at National Women's Commission, Kathmandu, Nepal on 15 June 2016.

Age Demands Action Became Social Capital for Cultural Actors

Md. Motaleb Mia (45) is leader of Showmesshawary Cultural Group at Durgapur, Netrokona district in Bangladesh. His group has been performing traditional folk songs in their community since 2001. Motaleb and his group members were trained to campaign through cultural events on older people's issues in the community, as part of HelpAge project- **Promoting Rights of Older People and Influencing Policy through Cultural Campaigning and Media Work**. His cultural group have been part of several ADA campaigns and performed in various mass events. Apart from campaigns, Motaleb often raises his voice for older people and their rights individually. He has been famed as active campaigner as well as advocate for protecting the rights of older people in his community.

Meanwhile when local government (Union Parishad) election took place, Motaleb contested as Independent Chairman Candidate. With support from cultural group members as well as community people he was elected as Chairman of Gaukandia Union Parishad.

“My engagement with ADA campaign has added value for me to become social activist. People's love and support elected me. I would like to thank all cultural group members and community people. Now, this is an opportunity for me that I ensure support for older people. I will give priority to older people in every service delivery I will be engaged in coming days. I dedicate myself for protecting rights of older people”, expressed Motaleb.



Pic 1- Md. Motaleb Mia (second from right) performing with his group during ADA event.

Pic 2- Md. Motaleb Mia (third from right) with his group members and older people of their village.

Sindh Assembly in Pakistan Passes Bill for Older People's Welfare

The provincial legislative assembly of Sindh, Pakistan has passed Senior Citizen's Welfare Bill 2014 on 29 April 2016. Sindh is the second province after Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Pakistan to formulate law for protection of older people's rights in the country.

Sindh is the second most populous province in Pakistan with a population of about 55.25 million, whilst the province house approximately 4 million older

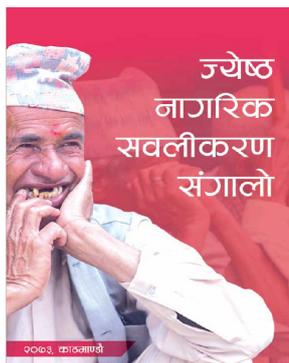
people. Implementation of the bill contributes to promoting wellbeing of existing as well as future older people in the province.

Under the Sindh Senior Citizens' Welfare Bill, older people on the basis of the cards issued by the Senior Citizens' Council would be entitled to essential services and benefits, including 25 percent concession in transport fares and other purchases, free funeral and burial services, free treatment of geriatric, medical and health services from government medical institutions, discount at recreation centres.

Copy of the bill is available [HERE](#).

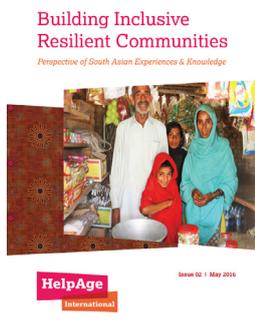
1. Promoting Rights of Older People and Influencing Policy through Cultural Campaigning and Media Work is a European Union funded project, implemented by BARCIK, BOHUBRIHY and BSDO. Duration of the project is 36 months starting from January 2014.

Publications



“Strengthening Senior Citizens: a collection of national policy, process and success stories”.

Copies available [HERE](#).



SA regional bulletin- **Building Inclusive Resilient Communities**.

Copies available [HERE](#).

‘Dangerous Demographics: Pakistan’s Forgotten Elderly Population’

HelpAge International with support from British Council in Pakistan is undertaking a research project to collect quantitative and qualitative information about the rights of older population in Pakistan. The project aims at bringing problems faced by older people in Pakistan at the forefront, whilst consulting key decision makers find better steps to improve their existing conditions. This will be a national level study, led by Dr. Asghar Zaidi, who is the professor at University of Southampton. Its report will be published after completion of project in September 2016.

Upcoming Events

Bangladesh

- Four HOPE trainings will be organised for relevant organisations under IDR project.
- Two trainings on Dementia Care for Caregivers will be organised under Strengthening the Asian Network on Ageing project.
- Four district level cultural festivals focusing ADA will be initiated under Promoting Rights of Older People and Influencing Policy through Cultural Campaigning and Media Work. Also, 4 refresher ageing sensitisation workshops will take place at Dinajpur, Manikgonj, Naogaon, Netrokona districts under the same project.

HelpAge Network Members in South Asia

- Bangladesh Women’s Health Coalition (BWHC)
- Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM), Bangladesh
- Gramin Vikas Vigyan Samiti (GRAVIS), India
- HelpAge India
- HelpAge Sri Lanka
- Pakistan Medico International
- Resource Integration Centre (RIC), Bangladesh

Age Demands Action team of Bangladesh on World Health Day this year.



Balayot Hossain/HelpAge International

HelpAge International is a global network of organisations promoting the right of all older people to lead dignified, healthy and secure lives.

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