

# This is Age Demands Action



**HelpAge  
International**

*global network*

# A force for change

**All over the world, older people are coming together to claim their rights – and becoming a real force for change. Their global grassroots movement, is called Age Demands Action (ADA). It's the only one of its kind in the world.**

ADA fights age discrimination – believing it's completely unjust to push older people to the sidelines as is still the norm today. 1 October, the UN International Day of Older Persons, is a key day of action for the campaign, when delegations of older people meet their governments to call for change. At the same time, ADA mobilises the wider public through general awareness-raising and celebrations.

Launched by the HelpAge global network in 2007 in 26 countries, the campaign has already doubled in size – proof of the energy it's igniting globally. Through ADA, many older people are finding their voice for the first time in their lives. Often excluded for many years, they're now sitting down with political leaders to speak from the heart about what they need.

Their demands couldn't be more urgent. Older people today are some of the world's poorest, most invisible, and most marginalised. Over 100 million live on less than US\$1 a day. Half of the world's older people lack a secure income, with fewer than one in five getting any kind of pension.

Thanks to ADA, that's changing. In a survey of more than 1,200 older people, 52 per cent said the campaign had secured immediate improvements for older people in their country. And 86 per cent said ADA had developed their ability to influence governments, while 95 per cent believed it had raised the profile of ageing issues in their country.

In the following pages, you'll learn more about ADA's progress to date. And if you're moved and inspired, why not become part of the story yourself? Whether you could help as a funder, partner or campaigner, we would like to hear from you.



HelpAge Korea

**Calling for action**

**winning change**



# Gathering momentum

Since its launch in 2007, ADA has grown rapidly – by October 2011, older people in 60 countries were on board.

Most campaigners start locally, before stepping up their influence to national level – when they meet face to face with senior government ministers and heads of state. By winning such an influential audience, older people are able to transform millions of lives.

Unsurprisingly, ADA's profile is soaring. In 2011 alone, over 62,000 older people took action, with the campaign featured widely in national media. In some countries, campaigners estimate that at least half the population has heard about the campaign.

# The breakthroughs

**ADA is proving beyond a doubt that, when older people come together and speak out, policy-makers act. Thanks to the campaign, life is getting better – finally – for many of the world’s older generation. Take these examples:**

## **33,000 older Kenyans now have a secure income.**

ADA campaigners fought long and hard for this remarkable victory, first meeting the Prime Minister in 2009 to highlight their urgent need for a secure income. As a result, in 2010, some of the poorest older people in Kenya began receiving a monthly payment of US\$17 from the government – a figure that will soon rise to US\$23. They need that income desperately, as many feed and care for grandchildren orphaned by AIDS.



HelpAge Kenya



HelpAge Kenya

## **Older people in Darfur’s displaced people’s camps have the health insurance cards they need to access vital health services.**

In 2011, ADA campaigners in western Darfur met with the Director General of the Ministry of Social Welfare. Their objective: to convince him to provide health insurance ID cards for older people living in camps, helping them access vital healthcare. And they won – 4,000 vulnerable older people have now received the cards.

## **The Pacific region’s first National Ageing Policy has been launched, thanks to campaigners in Fiji.**

In 2010, ADA campaigners urged the Ministry for Social Welfare, Women and Poverty Alleviation to introduce the Pacific region’s first-ever National Policy on Ageing. Less than 12 months later, the policy was approved by the Cabinet. At a follow-up meeting with 85 ADA campaigners in October 2011, the Minister announced the establishment of a National Council of Older Persons to ensure the policy is implemented in full.



HelpAge International



COSE

## Everyone over 80 in Sri Lanka now gets a pension.

In 2010, ADA campaigners pulled out all the stops to get a pension scheme agreed in Sri Lanka. Besides a 500-strong march and a press conference, campaigners won the support of the National Secretariat of Elders alongside senior politicians.

This groundwork helped persuade the Minister for Social Services to put a proposal for the country's first universal pension scheme before Cabinet. The measure got through – and now all Sri Lankans over 80 are entitled to a pension.

## 110,000 older people are benefiting from the Philippines' first-ever social pension scheme.

Older people won increased income security after ADA delegations met senior officials at the Department of Social Welfare and Development, marched in their thousands to Manila's giant Mall of Asia and targeted the most influential members of Congress. As a result of this tireless preparatory work, the government passed a new Act in 2010, guaranteeing pensions for the country's poorest older people.

## Peru's poorest older people are first in line for the country's new pension scheme.

In Peru, it's been years since campaigners started calling for *Pensión 65*, a non-contributory pension for Peruvians over 65. But with the added impetus of ADA and the support of members of Congress such as José Urquiza Maggia, the campaign finally bore fruit: the plan was approved in October 2011, as thousands marched in three cities. Payments are already being issued, with the country's poorest older people set to receive theirs first.

# Faces at the forefront



HelpAge International

***Raising voices***

***inspiring action***

**In 2011, older people in 12 countries nominated a number of their fellow campaigners to be ADA leaders. Passionate and articulate, these ADA leaders play a frontline role in taking the campaign forward. They act as spokespeople for the campaign when giving interviews to the media, lead delegations to meet politicians and champion the campaign with international diplomats. The trust and influence they've won also comes down to the fact that they've experienced older people's struggles at first hand.**

**Meet two of these outstanding representatives:**

## **Kenneth Hemley, 71, Jamaica**

Kenneth spent much of his working life as a technician in Jamaica's textile industry after beginning his career in construction. Today he is President of the Rivoli Senior Citizens Club in St Catherine and an ADA leader.

Having witnessed at first hand the discrimination faced by older people, Kenneth decided "enough is enough", joining ADA to bring about change. He has since been instrumental in getting the Jamaican government to widen access to pensions – mobilising delegations of older people to call for this essential step forward.

The power of Kenneth's campaigning has been recognised by several UN agencies, which have invited him to speak to a number of UN forums in New York.



### **Rhoda Ngima, 77, Kenya**

Rhoda has long been a pivotal figure in her church and community, where she brings people together, inspiring them to stay strong and keep going through life's challenges. She's now bringing her leadership experience and social commitment to ADA, where she's already made a big impact.

For instance, in 2009, she led an ADA delegation to meet the Prime Minister. And the following year, she met the Minister for Gender, Children and Social Development to explain the benefits of increasing pensions. After the meeting, the Government agreed to raise pension payments for all older people in Kenya.

*“We have been removed from a very dark pit and brought to the surface where there is light. ADA has made me an ambassador to spread news about older people. I have learnt that even in old age I am able to do something worthwhile and constructive for my country.”*

**Rhoda Ngima**

# Much to look forward to

**Looking over the achievements of its first five years, there's no doubt that ADA is taking big strides forward at an impressive rate. So what's next on the agenda?**

First, the campaign aims to empower many more older people in at least 80 countries to campaign for tangible policy change. The increasing number of campaigners will be offered a range of peer learning and training programmes at national and regional levels.

Organisations and older people's associations in the HelpAge global network will build links with each other. They will have the chance to take part in regional and international forums where they will share success stories and plan regional campaigns.

In a particularly exciting new partnership, 40,000 campaigners in Europe aged 18-35 will bring their energy and commitment to ADA.

To fulfil the next stage of its remarkable journey, ADA needs new partners, campaigners and sources of funding now. If you would like to get involved with this groundbreaking movement, please contact the campaign at: [campaigns@helpage.org](mailto:campaigns@helpage.org)



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