

## Transformative human development How can the new sustainable development framework support all people of all ages?<sup>1</sup>



### Key messages:

- The SDGs must reflect the reality of the world as we find it. The post 2015 framework is being developed at a time of major demographic change.
- 'People, of all ages and abilities, are at the center of sustainable development'<sup>1</sup>. Therefore the effect and implications of population dynamics and global ageing must be factored into shaping new goals and targets.
- The opportunities and challenges of increased longevity will have particular consequences for the present youth bulge who will be the largest 'age bulge' - group of older people in history - by the end of 2030.
- The principle of 'leaving no one behind' means that no goals or target can be met unless it is shown to be met by all groups, across the life-course.
- Improved data that is disaggregated by age, sex and other factors is needed as well as better use of existing data and attention to filling gaps.
- The impact of discrimination and inequality due to age factors is widespread and needs to be factored into policy responses.
- Political commitment is needed to ensure that all elements of the post 2015 agenda are pertinent to and enjoyed by all people across the life-course.

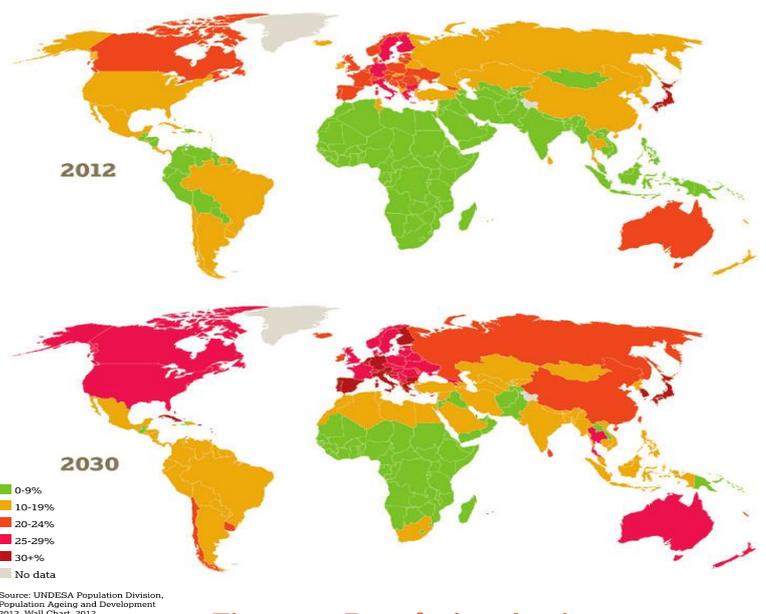


Figure 1: Population Ageing 2012-2030



HelpAge International

global network

<sup>1</sup> Based on 'Leave no one behind' discussion paper on options for integrating youth and older people into the post 2015 framework February 2014 see [childrenyouth.org/2014/02/07/discussion-paper-on-youth-and-older-people](http://www.helpage.org/silo/files/options-for-integrating-youth-and-older-people-into-the-post2015.pdf)  
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### Considerations

- Further discussion and action is needed to transform the post-2015 framework to give priority to a whole-life approach to development.
- Transforming human development so that all are included in its benefits is possible, but requires a better understanding of the diverse issues faced by women and men, and their intersecting issues, as they age.
- Evidence and existing work shows us the commonalities that exist between issues highlighted by children & young people<sup>1</sup> and older people.<sup>1</sup>
- Experience tells us that siloed approaches to age related issues are not helpful. All ages are relevant and necessary for development, and age groups are often interdependent.
- Policy action can and should be based on -existing and new frameworks as well as existing agreements.

## Why we need a transformative agenda for all ages

We believe that the Sustainable Development Goals must be based on the transforming ideas contained in international human rights, standards and principles, which include universality, non-discrimination, equality, participation, empowerment and accountability and which are applicable to all people of all ages.

Addressing the full range of rights as interdependent and indivisible for people of all ages in the SDGs will benefit children & youth and older people and the societies in which they live now and into the future. This is the only way to ensure the security and wellbeing of current and future generations. Younger and older people face discrimination in different aspects of their lives beyond income and health, for example being subjected to different types of violence and abuse, being denied the right to live autonomous lives and being excluded from the decision-making processes that affect them. The two age groups suffer similar barriers based on chronological age discrimination; examples include youth and older people being denied access to sexual and reproductive rights when they are sexually active, and people in old age being denied health care on the basis of age and being obliged to give up paid employment when they are not ready to do so.

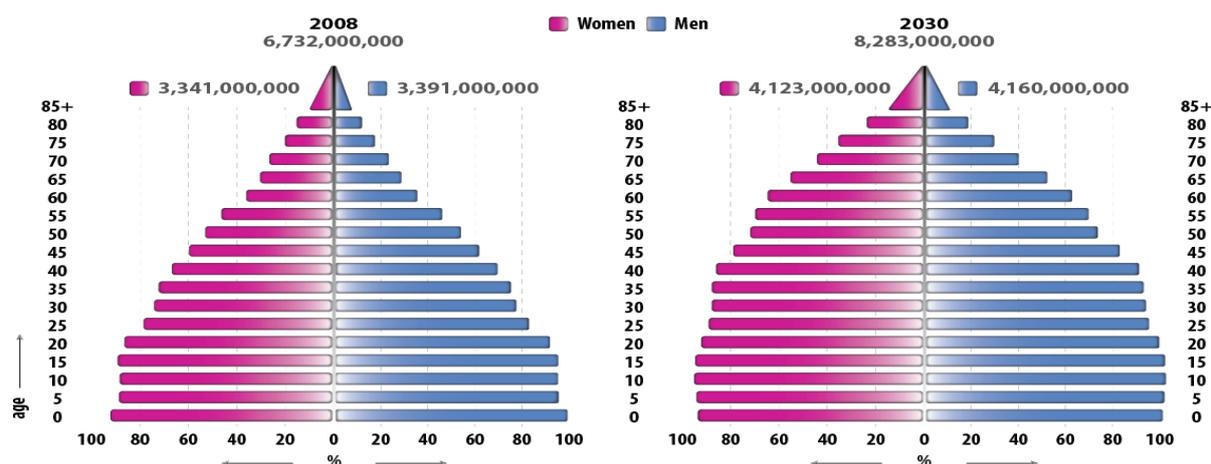
Transforming lives across all generations requires a better understanding, and responsiveness to, meeting the rights and needs of all people across the life-course.

Today approximately 44% of the world's 7.2 billion people are under 24 years old and, by 2030 one billion of the projected population of eight billion will be over 60 years old. In 2030 there will be more people over 60 than children under 10, with the most rapid change in age structures occurring in the developing world. The opportunities and challenges of increased longevity will have particular consequences for the present youth bulge who will be the largest 'age bulge' - group of older people in history - by the end of 2030. Disaggregated population data projections, scenarios and analysis are necessary to chart progress and achieve goals and policies for both current and future generations.<sup>2</sup>

The issues at stake are not only social or economic. Children & youth and older people are more vulnerable to the impact of environmental disasters and are often not systematically included in measures to tackle risk and reconstruction. Inequality and poverty in later life are directly related to inequalities of opportunity experienced when young. Excesses of present day over consumption and production will have to be borne by future generations of older people.

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<sup>2</sup> See 'Population Dynamics in the post -2015 Development Agenda: Report on the Global Thematic Consultation on Population Dynamics' : UNFPA, UNDESA, UN-Habitat, IOM, 2013 New York



**Figure 2: Estimates of global population by gender and age, 2008 and 2030**  
 Source: [www.i-pri.org](http://www.i-pri.org)

## The importance of the ‘Data Revolution’

Accurate data in all countries is essential to help us respond to our changing world. It is most important that policy makers have and use first class and up to date data that is disaggregated by age as well as by gender and disability. Data that paints a vivid picture of national as well as global changes in age structures, which encompass both the ‘youth bulge’ and current and future ‘age bulge’, along with life in older age and its challenges will help transform lives, but is long overdue.

Currently that absence of data on children and youth and that for older people from many data systems used routinely for development planning and analysis renders them invisible. Data systems are not fit for purpose in today’s ageing world<sup>3</sup>. The absence of good age disaggregated data in many data systems particularly in the developing world may reflect both age discrimination and a culture of ageism. Global coordinated action is needed at all levels of the data system to improve its quality and range. At the same time attention to gender equality, so that all forms of violence against women of all ages can be prevented and eliminated, with guarantees of equal rights of women of all ages, including their right to own and inherit property, sign a contract, register a business and open a bank account and the elimination of discrimination against women of all ages in political, economic, and public life, will underpin successful development.

Development planning needs to take account of population dynamics, and support the creation and development of new data sets and champion the better use of existing data.

## Age and the SDGs

In February 2014 Member States had an informal discussion meeting to consider age in the framework. Options below were presented to support the principle of ‘leaving no one behind’. Options to support the opportunities of longevity, not only its challenges, were presented, with the idea that there should not be a focus on any one single age group. The options are summarized as follows:

**Option 1: Recognition of all ages in meta-text of the Goals** to recognize population dynamics and global ageing in the SDG narrative text. This is an essential starting point, but for many doesn’t go far enough as it doesn’t address the targets or indicators.

**Option 2: Targets and indicators on age derived from current Indexes.** This option is to ground the narrative on age using targets and indicators found within current indices developed by the

<sup>3</sup> Albone R et al ‘Older People Count: Making Data Fit for Purpose’: Global AgeWatch Policy Brief 4: HelpAge International, London January 2014

Commonwealth in their Youth Development Index<sup>4</sup> and HelpAge international in its Global Age Watch Index<sup>5</sup>. These Indexes have been developed using data that is currently available and comparable across a range of countries. While there are gaps to be filled, especially in relation to data on older people, and recognition that significant gaps in data and monitoring mechanisms will need to be addressed for a true data revolution to 'leave no one behind', they offer a reliable pathway to integrating measurable policy responses to young people and older people.

**Option 3: An age lens on all goals underpinned by disaggregated and new data** This requires filling in the gaps already identified in the existing indexes, which are coming up with suggestions of where this "data" revolution in age is needed. Investment is needed on poverty and inequality data, together with environmental and resource based indicators and targets, and new data would take time to embed in the data sets.

**Option 4: Building goal(s) based on implementing existing commitments** using already internationally agreed sets of programmes for action (eg World Programme For Action on Youth and Madrid International Plan for Action on Ageing), allowing governments to use already agreed plans to build action on youth and older people post-2015.

**Option 5: Creating goal(s) based on emerging demographics and future generations** to create targets and even goals which would go beyond current programmes for action, using demographic predictions for 2030 and beyond and considering future generations in all post- 2015 discussions.

## Conclusion

Whatever options are chosen ensuring the society for all requires new frameworks.

The new sustainable development agenda must ensure accountability to children & youth and older people. It must further their economic and personal security, support improved access to health, education and basic services, deliver decent and full employment and foster an enabling environment that enhances participation, active citizenship, and freedom from age related discrimination across the life course.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.youthdevelopmentindex.org/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.helpage.org/global-agewatch/>

## Innovative approaches to measuring wellbeing for youth and older people

The CYDI and GAWI cluster concerns into the domains of secure income, appropriate and accessible health care, employment, education (proxies for capability) and opportunities to participate and live without fear of violence and discrimination (enabling factors). These are essential at all stages of life. The degree of achievement of these areas provides a lens through which core concerns of all people can be viewed for appropriate policy responses, with policy implementation monitored for success over time. Below is an illustrative suggestion of how these pre-existing data sets can be clustered for use in the post-2015 framework, integrating core concerns into a common agenda.



**Commonwealth Youth Development Index:** agreed by the Ministers of Youth of Commonwealth States and recognised by the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting of 2013. The Index assesses youth development according to 15 indicators that are grouped into five key domains: **Education, Health and Well-being, Employment, Civic Participation and Political Participation.** Similar to the Human Development Index, the YDI calculates a score for each country between 0–1 that indicates the national average. The Index currently has data for 170 countries.

<http://www.youthdevelopmentindex.org/>

### Global AgeWatch Index 2013

**Global Age Watch Index 2013:** developed and constructed by HelpAge International from international data sets grouped under a dashboard of 13 indicators with four domains (**Income status, Health status, Education and Employment, and (factors of) the Enabling Environment**) using the HDI as a model. The domains were identified by older people and policy makers as key enablers of older people's wellbeing. They describe means to extend capabilities in older age. The Index currently has data for 91 countries (89% of the world's over 60s) and growing as data becomes available.

<http://www.helpage.org/global-agewatch/>

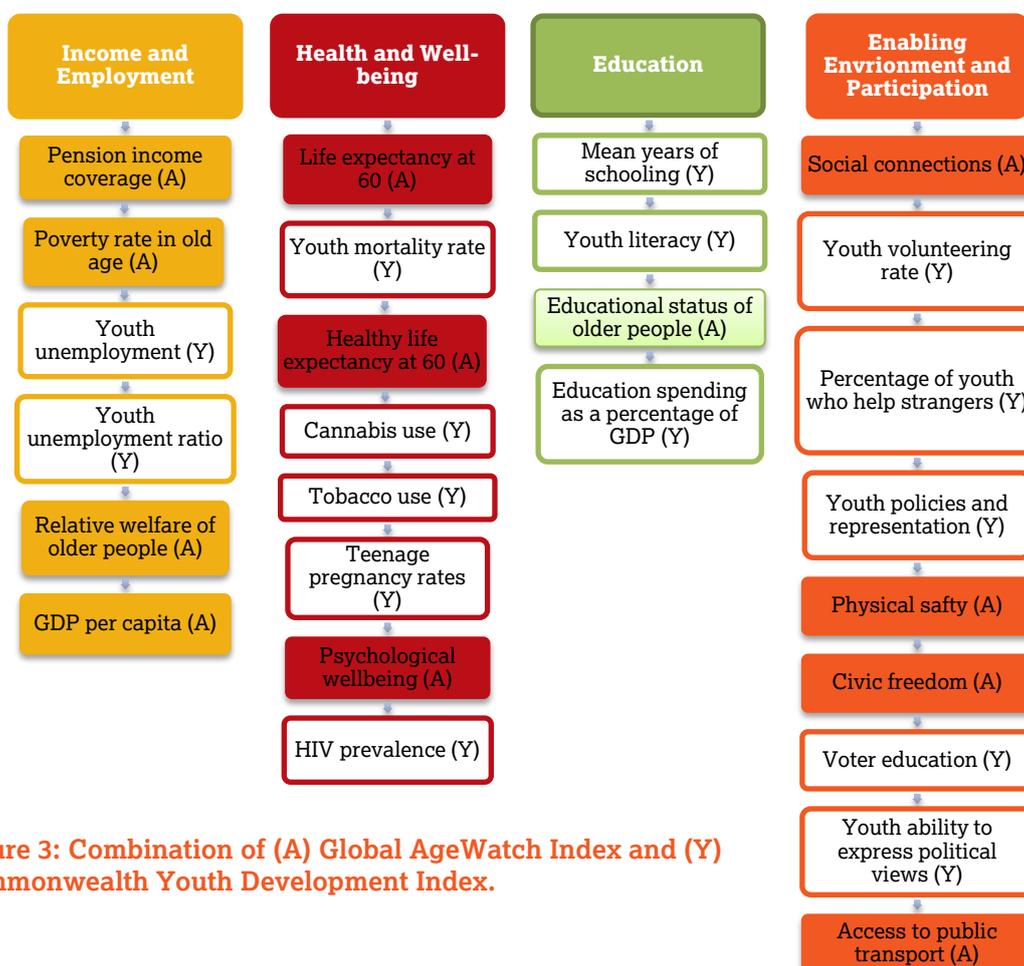


Figure 3: Combination of (A) Global AgeWatch Index and (Y) Commonwealth Youth Development Index.