

Ageing and Development

News and analysis of issues affecting the lives of older people
Issue 5 March 2000



Forward looking... a proposal by the European Commission could improve the outlook for older people in East and Central Europe.

Reaching out to Eastern Europe

An important new development that aims to improve the representation of older people in Western Europe could also benefit older people's organisations in Eastern and Central Europe.

During 1999, five networks that represent older people throughout the European Union were invited to submit a proposal to the European Commission to form a European Older People's Platform.

Grouping the existing networks together could lead to greater recognition of the needs and interests of older people by the EU's policy makers. It could also provide an opportunity for older people's organisations in Eastern and Central Europe to liaise more closely with the EC in terms of policy development and funding, as strengthening links with organisations in non-EU Europe is a key area of work proposed for the new Platform.

The move would be in line with

one of the objectives of the new Commission - the enlargement of the European Union to countries in Eastern and Central Europe.

East and Central European countries continue to face enormous problems in trying to provide adequately for all their citizens. State welfare provision has dropped sharply and more older people are living with their families, but high unemployment and inflation mean that many families are unable to provide adequate support. NGOs and older people's organisations are playing an increasing role in providing care services and influencing policy.

New directory

A directory of local NGOs in East and Central Europe, due to be published shortly by HelpAge International's East and Central Europe Network, includes insights into the roles of older people in society, patterns of care and social provision, and the relationship

between NGOs and government. *Nothing about us without us* draws on interviews by NGOs in seven countries - Albania, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia. HelpAge International welcomes the EC's initiative and supports the creation of such a platform. Paul Hinchliff of the East and Central Europe Network comments: 'This initiative should give older people's groups better access to information on the discussions that are taking place between governments and the Commission. It will enable them to influence both their own governments' view of the situation of older people and the EU's views.'

Nothing about us without us
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Eurolink Age network
www.eurolinkage.org/

European Commission's page on ageing
http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg05/soc-prot/ageing/index_en.htm

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International

Leading global action on ageing

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New laws and policies in 1999

The International Year of Older Persons in 1999 helped to focus policy-makers' attention on ageing, and resulted in the introduction of several new laws and national policies during the year.

A law protecting older people was passed in the Dominican Republic in August. NGOs submitted and discussed with their government a national policy on ageing.

The government of India formulated a national policy for older persons to address the concerns of older people and help them spend their life with purpose, dignity and peace.

In Dominica, the government approved a national policy on ageing submitted by the Dominica Council on Ageing.

The Belize government is drafting a national policy for older persons in consultation with NGOs, and plans to set up a National Council for Older Persons to oversee its implementation.

The government of Tanzania is developing a national policy on ageing and is working with HelpAge International on a consultative process involving older people.

The governments in Bolivia, Mexico and Peru have formed national, multi-sectoral commissions to promote action plans on ageing (see Bolivia profile on page 8).

A Caribbean Charter on Health and Ageing has been adopted by the CARICOM secretariat (representing heads of governments).

In the Philippines, the government has launched a six-year action plan for older people.

The government of St Lucia has contracted HelpAge International to carry out research with older people, to review policy on ageing (see page 12).

A review of national policies on ageing in 46 countries is included in *The Ageing and Development Report*

*Copies are available from: Earthscan, Freepost 1, 120 Pentonville Road, London N1 9BR, UK
Fax: +44 20 7278 1142
Price £14.95 plus postage and packing (£2.50 UK, £3.60 elsewhere).*

A 16-page summary in English, French and Spanish is available free from HelpAge International
Email: cdobbing@helpage.org



Philip Wolmuth/Panos Pictures

Bearing fruit... a submission by the Dominica Council on Ageing led to a new national policy benefiting older people.

EU package could legalise age discrimination

An anti-discrimination package proposed by the European Commission could create a worrying precedent for older people.

The package includes, for the first time, a proposal for a European Union Directive to prohibit discrimination on the

grounds of age, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability or sexual orientation. However, it also contains a condition that, in certain cases, age discrimination is acceptable. For example, it permits 'the establishment of age limits which are appropriate and necessary to pursue legitimate

labour market objectives'.

Organisations for older people in Europe are now trying to organise a campaign against this proposal.

For more information contact:
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Comment

Struggle for inclusion

Ageing is a universal experience, linked closely to issues of lifestyle, social networks and working conditions. At the beginning of the new millennium, we have to ask again why ageing is still on the margins of the international social

development and social policy debates (see page 6).

The demographic facts and their implications are clear enough. Poor older people are the fastest growing population group, especially in developing countries, and the economic and reproductive support they provide remains critical for family and community survival. It makes economic as well as moral sense

to invest in their capacities - yet policies for older people are still dominated by costly welfare responses, which are neither appropriate nor inclusive.

We find ourselves now struggling to ensure that the issue of productive ageing is included in the key Millennium Forum debates. Is the world ageist, or simply unimaginative?

But there are important

opportunities for corrective action. Alongside the review of poverty and development targets, the forthcoming summits and forums that deal with the complex social development issues of our time are ideal platforms for ageing and the aspirations of older people to be placed centre stage.

Sylvia Beales
Policy Development Manager,
HelpAge International Secretariat

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Putting ageing on the agenda

NGOs are pressing for ageing issues to be included on key agendas.

Millennium Forum - a chance to influence the UN

The Millennium Forum which will convene in New York in May will be a unique opportunity for NGOs from the North and South to influence UN thinking in the new century.

The Forum forms part of the preparations for the UN Millennium Summit, which will be held in September.

With the theme 'The United Nations in the Twenty-first Century', the Forum will divide into six thematic working groups, focusing on peace, poverty eradication, human rights, the environment, globalisation, and strengthening and democratising the United Nations.

However, despite the publication of a paper on ageing and lobbying efforts by the New York-based Ageing Assembly, none of the six sub-theme draft papers so far issued has covered the topic of ageing.

The Ageing Assembly is continuing efforts to contact thematic convenors and press for incorporation of the ageing draft into their documents, as well as the inclusion of speakers on ageing during the sub-theme workshops in the Millennium Forum itself.

'Despite the acknowledged importance of demographic changes which will result in the over 60s outnumbering younger age groups by 2005, at the time of going to press, none of the convenors appeared to have read the ageing paper submitted in November,' said Helen Hamlin, co-convenor of the Ageing Assembly.

The ageing paper results from the Plan of Action on Productive Aging agreed at the 1999 Seoul International Conference of some 1,000 NGOs.

Ageing Assembly

Email: ageingassembly@egroups.com

For text of Seoul conference see NGLS Roundup 48

Website: <http://ngls.tad.ch>

Millennium Forum

Website: www.millenniumforum.org

Millennium Summit/Assembly

(see also page 6)

Website: www.un.org/millennium

Beijing review - policies for older women

In March, the plan of action agreed at the 1995 Beijing Women's Summit will be reviewed and follow-up actions agreed.

HelpAge International (HAI) wants to see much greater emphasis on the issues faced by older women in future international plans and actions. HAI's concerns and suggestions are detailed in a paper presented to the Gender and Development (UK) pre-Beijing +5 conference held in London in February.

The paper explores the problems faced by older women and their extensive social and economic

contributions to family survival and national development. It urges affirmative action to support these contributions and puts forward the UN Principles for Older Persons as the framework for ensuring that policies are appropriate, targeted and rights-based.

For a copy of the paper 'Invisible contributors; the case of older women and their struggle for recognition'

Email: nickyp@helpage.org

Womenwatch

Website: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/update.htm

Older populations - taking a positive view

The World Health Organization, International Labour Organization, HelpAge International and the International Social Security Association are planning a half-day symposium at the Social Development Summit review meeting in Geneva in June.

It will focus on population ageing and the contribution that older people can make to development in low-income countries.

More information:

Email: cdoobing@helpage.org

Key points for Campaign 99+

Regional representatives from the HelpAge International network, which includes more than 550 member and partner organisations in over 70 countries, will meet in London in April.

The meeting will discuss core objectives and milestones for Campaign 99+, the network's ten-year campaign which seeks to advance the economic and social rights of disadvantaged older people and take forward the key action points set out in *The Ageing and Development Report*.

Ageing and Development Report

Details on page 2

Letters

Listening to older refugees

The experiences of CARE International confirm much of your research on older people in emergencies (A&D4). REACH the Vulnerable in Bosnia began in 1994 as an emergency programme to provide life-saving assistance to vulnerable people, mainly elderly refugees, overlooked by mainstream relief efforts.

REACH initially delivered services directly to older people through specialist teams of health and social workers. However, medical and welfare services have not returned to pre-war levels, and vulnerable elderly people remain exposed to severe health and psychological problems.

As a result, successive REACH programmes have attempted to develop community-based services and appropriate and affordable models of care for elderly people. A key component is building the capacity of community-based organisations (CBOs), such as pensioners' unions and societies for disabled people.

A conference of older people active in CBOs in June 1999 showed the value of this approach. Older people valued self-help and community cooperation, they wanted to learn from others, and saw cooperation and mutual respect as paramount.

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We welcome letters from readers. Please write to:

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Letters may be edited.



Older women's contributions to family survival need to be recognised by policy makers.

Sean Sprague/Panos Pictures

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Betty Press/Panose Pictures

Programmes need to be developed to address the different roles of older men and women.

Remember older men

Discussion of gender and age tends to focus on the issues facing older women. But a complete gender perspective means also being clear about the issues facing older men.

In a paper presented to the 2nd World Conference on the Ageing Male in Geneva in February, Todd Petersen, chief executive of HelpAge International (HAI), stressed the need for more dedicated research on the effects

of poverty and exclusion on older men, and for programmes to address the different roles of older men.

Drawing on participatory research by HAI, the paper commented on men's economic role, which means that loss of earning power has serious consequences for their position in society. Violence and abuse of older men is linked to their declining status and the barriers they encounter in contributing to family survival.

Marginalisation of older men

For a copy, Email: cdoobing@helpage.org

HIV and older people

Uganda research highlights multiple impact

A study of older people in Uganda highlights the many ways in which HIV impacts on older people.

The research, supported by the Medical Research Council (UK) and HelpAge International, was based on surveys in a village in south-west Uganda by the MRC Research Programme on AIDS in Uganda. It showed that:

- as sexually active adults, older people are vulnerable to infection
- as parents, they try to protect their sons and daughters from HIV; they care for those who are ill and bury them when they die
- as grandparents, they care for orphaned grandchildren
- as dependent old people, they lack the support of deceased sons and daughters.

The report emphasised the severity of the problems faced by participants and the sadness that pervades the lives of many.

For more information about the report, **We will be alone when we die: HIV/AIDS and the aged in rural Uganda**, contact:

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Thailand report focuses on role as carers

Research in Thailand shows that older people are extensively affected by the HIV epidemic as carers for their adult children.

A study by the Population Studies Center at the Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan in 1999, assessed the impact of HIV on older people in Thailand, using interviews with health workers in rural and urban communities to provide quantitative information about adult children or other relatives who had died of AIDS or had AIDS symptoms.

The incidence of HIV in Thailand has fallen in response to efforts to control the epidemic, but deaths will continue to increase for some years.

The study, funded by the National Institutes of Aging, found that two-thirds of adults who died of AIDS lived with or near a parent by the last stage of their illness. A parent, usually the mother, acted as main carer for about half. Either a parent or another older relative provided at least some care for 70 per cent.

The study contrasted the high level of parental involvement in Thailand with, for example, the USA.

It pointed out the financial and emotional strains of caring on older people, and emphasised the need for public health programmes to address the needs of older people as carers, and for social and economic support.

Older people and AIDS: quantitative evidence of the impact in Thailand Report no. 00-443

Population Studies Center, University of Michigan, PO Box 1248, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1248, USA
<http://www.psc.isr.umich.edu/pubs/>

A 60-year-old widow in Ethiopia, bringing up four of her sister's children because their mother died of AIDS, was forced to leave her house because she could not pay the rent. 'Her death throws me into a sea of hunger and misery.'

HIV has a major impact on older people:

Economic

- loss of vital income-earning capacity while caring for children with HIV, orphaned grandchildren and children of other deceased relatives
- additional expenses: medical, household, schooling
- burial costs of sons and daughters
- no one to support them in old age

Health

- lack of targeted AIDS education, putting older people at risk
- stress caused by additional responsibilities

Emotional

- sadness and grief for those who have died
- anxiety and fear about the future
- stigma and social isolation associated with caring for someone with HIV
- guilt when grandchildren have to miss school to help them

What is needed:

- more research into the multiple impact of HIV on older people
- recognition that older people are at risk of HIV, including health education programmes and health services targeted at older people to protect them from HIV
- recognition and support for older people's critical role as carers, including economic and social support, and education to enable them to care for people with HIV

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Myths and misconceptions

In this column we highlight a popular myth about older people and explain what the situation really is.

Have you heard anything about older people that may be a myth? If so, write to the editor or email ctill@helpage.org

1. Impact of HIV

'In some countries there won't be any older people because everyone will die of AIDS before they reach old age.'

HIV has had a substantial impact on life expectancy in the countries most seriously affected by it, and will continue to do so. In some sub-Saharan African countries, life expectancy will be reduced because of HIV.

However, despite the impact of HIV, populations are continuing to grow, including populations of older people. In Uganda, for example, the number of people aged 60 and over is projected to more than double from 0.8 million

in 2000 to 1.9 million in 2030, according to the US Census Bureau Data Base 1999. In Zimbabwe, the number is expected to rise from 0.5 million to 0.6 million.

In addition, changes in behaviour are helping to slow down the rate of HIV infection in some countries, and may ultimately reduce infection levels.

The impact of HIV can be compared in some respects to the impact of wars in the 20th

century. Despite the huge loss of life in the middle generations in Europe (especially East and Central Europe and the Soviet Union) between 1939 and 1945, the momentum of population ageing carried on, resulting in the 'old' population profile we see in contemporary Europe.

More information

World Population Profile: 1998, US Bureau of the Census
<http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/wp.98.html>

UNAIDS
<http://www.unaids.org>

Abolish age limits, says report from Bangladesh

Most older people in Bangladesh cannot meet their basic needs, including food, healthcare, clothing and shelter. They also lack access to income-earning activities.

These are key findings from research carried out by HelpAge International and the Bangladesh Association for the Aged and Institute of Geriatric Medicine during 1999.

Bangladesh is one of the poorest and most densely populated countries in the world. Decreases in fertility rates and improved life expectancy have led to a rapid increase in the number of older people. More than 7.3 million people are aged 60 or more, representing 6 per cent of the population. This number will almost double by 2020.

The research used participatory research techniques in four rural and urban locations.

Poverty and exclusion are major problems for older people. Families remain a primary source of support for older people, but family support is undermined by

poverty. Older women are more dependent on their families than older men, which increases their vulnerability. Women without families and widows are the most vulnerable.

Most older people continue to engage in income-generating activities as long as they can. Older people continue to play an important role in the family, but their contribution goes unrecognised, even by older people themselves. Older women's primary contribution is assistance in household activities and caring for grandchildren. Older men's primary contribution is income.

Older people are excluded from services and support by NGOs and government because of age limits or barriers such as lack of awareness of services, inappropriate services or difficult physical access.

The report highlights the need to change social attitudes, including the expectations of older people themselves. It calls for older people to be integrated into community development and poverty alleviation programmes, and for

government and NGO programmes to abolish age limits and identify and eliminate other barriers to participation by older people.

A situation analysis of older people in Bangladesh:

'Uncertainty rules our lives'

is due out in March.

Email: clopez@helpage.org

New design

...what do you think?

Ageing and Development has been redesigned to bring you more news, comment and analysis of issues affecting older people.

We need to know what you think of the new format and what you would like to read about in future issues.

Please take a few minutes to fill in the questionnaire card in this issue (you could win a prize) or email the editor at: ctill@helpage.org



Cutting canes for betel production - in Bangladesh most older people continue to work for as long as they can.

Geoff O'Donoghue/HAI

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Summits ignore older people

In September the United Nations will hold its Millennium Summit. The summit will draw on past summits and their +5 conferences, as well as the views of civil society, to review and reform the UN. But a review of the principal UN conferences and summits of the 1990s reveals a widespread neglect of older people - and this neglect looks set to continue.

UN summits on nutrition, population, human rights, education, environment, social development and gender have given scant attention to older people, despite the fact that the number of older people in developing countries will more than double in the next 25 years. Behind each paragraph of the core summit documents is a pyramid of governments, lobby groups, advocacy networks and NGOs, all pushing for particular sections of the population to be represented. The rights of older people have been raised in summit follow-up processes and background meetings and reports. Nonetheless, older people are barely visible in the core documents. Even among traditionally marginalised groups - women, refugees, indigenous people and people with disabilities - older people are the least referred to. The point is not to advocate a 'hierarchy of vulnerability' - increased attention to one category can improve the prospects of others; healthy, educated children are more likely to become healthy, independent older people. However, since people within all categories become older and vulnerable to the poverty and discrimination related directly to old age, it should be of universal concern that the rights of older people do not have a higher profile in UN summits.

Despite the fact that a Technical Meeting on Population Ageing in Brussels in October 1998 formed part of the follow-up to the Population Conference (ICPD+5),

older people and ageing get only 33 references in both the Progress Review (21) and Further Implementation (12). This indicates the difficulty in moving ageing from a marginal issue to a mainstream concern.

While specific references to ageing and older people are rare, much is said about vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. But like another broad category, 'the under-served', there is little opportunity to follow up the rights of specific groups such as older people when such a wide range of groups is included. The 'under-served', for instance, includes children, adolescents, women, older people, disabled people, indigenous peoples, rural populations, urban populations, migrants, refugees, displaced persons and slum-dwellers.

References to older people

Older people were mentioned as follows:

Education for All 1990

This does not mean education for all ages, although a brief reference in the Follow-up Report states that 'learning opportunities for all, regardless of age', must be provided. Reference to adult education applies to those over 15 years of age.

UNCED 1992

Considering the size of the document, there is minimal reference to older persons. Volumes 2, 3 and 4 make no reference at all; references appear only in Volume 1 on Social and Economic Dimensions.

Women figure highly, as do indigenous peoples.

International Conference on Nutrition (ICN) 1992

This was the precursor to the World Food Summit, focusing on the fact that nutritional deficiencies will lead to physical and mental disability, as well as shortening life. The documentation refers to the Declaration of Human Rights and pledges that during the decade 1992-2002 it will reduce substantially 'under-nutrition, especially among children, women and the aged'. Among those that it considers 'the most nutritionally vulnerable' are infants, young children, pregnant and nursing women, disabled people and older people.

Human Rights 1993

There is only one reference to older people, along with women, children and people with disabilities. This is disappointing, given that people who are recognised as being vulnerable are in greater need of their rights being specifically protected, and that dignity, acknowledged as central to human rights, is one of the five UN Principles for Older Persons.

ICPD 1994

This is the pivotal conference for older people, with by far the

greatest number of references to date (43) and a whole section dedicated to older people.

Given the nature of the conference, it is not surprising that much of the discussion was in the context of demographic issues. Ageing is presented as a challenge, but also an 'opportunity to all societies'. Governments, it argues, need to consider equity within and between generations that will ensure support to older people. The report states that 'many countries are currently re-examining their policies in the light of the principle that older people constitute a valuable and important component of a society's human resources' and this is reaffirmed in subsequent attention to the contribution older people make as carers and volunteers.

Social Summit 1995

Older people are mentioned less frequently than those with disabilities (who have a dedicated paragraph), refugees and women. However, there are references such as an 'emphasis on lifelong learning', 'equity among generations', and policies that empower people to enjoy good health and productivity 'throughout their lives' that reflect awareness of the need specifically to include older people. The quality of these



Slow moving... this queue to collect pensions in Bloemfontein, South Africa reflects progress in recognising the rights of older people.

Hahn du Plessis

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references is better than some in other documents, which only acknowledge older people as members of a long list of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

Women's Summit 1995

This refers to older women and to special needs in the later stages of women's life cycle, health considerations and the impact of HIV/AIDS on the grandparent generation. It notes that women are often left to care for older family members (although, of course, older women and men are also often carers to younger family members) and therefore have limited access to labour markets.

There are a number of initiatives in the Follow-up Process that have older women as a focus – the Resolution on the Improvement of the Situation of Women in Rural Areas and publication of a number of articles on older women.

World Food Summit 1996

This report concentrates on food security and food for all. The Plan of Action does not refer specifically to older people; references come within the addresses of Pope John Paul II and the then president of Italy, while also referring to women and children.

Habitat II

Far more attention is given to disability than to older people. A section devoted specifically to vulnerable groups and people with special needs makes seven references to refugees, five to children, three to disability, three to women, one to migrant workers and one to older people.

Social Summit +5

This follow-up report to the World Summit on Social Development states that governments have given detailed accounts of policy initiatives to integrate various social groups into mainstream economic and social activity. One group mentions older people along with children and youth, people with disabilities and those with special needs.

In the 210-page report, 52 paragraphs out of a total of 902 paragraphs (nearly 6 per cent) refer to or mention older people. The majority are in connection with developing countries, but a number refer to Western Europe, Japan and North America.

The report has almost two pages specifically on older people, highlighting the International Year of Older Persons and the Report of the Secretary General on the IYOP.

A number of smaller reports from the Economic and Social Council focus on older people and follow-up arrangements to the IYOP. These initiatives now come under the umbrella of the follow-up to the Social Development Summit.

Prospects for future summits

While older people have generally had poor representation in the summits, later summits have at least tended to give more weight to minority sectors. Language has also changed: just as 'the disabled' have become 'people with disabilities', 'the aged' have become 'older people'.

But this shift does not go far enough. Documentation for the Millennium Summit to date barely mentions ageing - there is one reference in the Western Asia Regional Report in connection with human rights violations in Iraq.

The main chance lies with the Millennium Forum, which will be held in New York in May to focus the views of civil society organisations. The Forum recognises ageing as an issue, including it as one of its 53 thematic issue areas. But ageing still needs to be discussed in the context of the Forum's six main sub-themes: peace; poverty eradication; human rights; the environment; globalisation; and strengthening and democratising the UN.

The need is to continue to press for ageing to be included on mainstream UN agendas.

For a list of documents analysed in this briefing email:
cdobbing@helpage.org
Millennium Forum
see page 3

References

Number of references in major summit final reports, plans of action and follow-up reports

Summit	Women	Refugees	Indigenous peoples	People with disabilities	Older people
Education for All 1990	20	7	2	0	0
UNCED 1992	278	175	14	4	9
ICN 1992	56	31	6	10	11
Human Rights 1993	61	14	15	5	1
ICPD 1994	304	80	44	27	43
Social Development 1995	162	51	17	38	26
Women 1995	1,940	104	43	33	28
Habitat 1996	210	34	29	70	17
World Food Summit 1996	61	7	10	0	2
Education for All 1996	87	5	0	0	(1)
UNCED +5 1997	93	7	14	2	3
Human Rights 1998	55	28	14	5	0
ICPD +5 1999	337	32	0	3	33
Totals	3,664	414	369	197	174

Fast facts

Nutrition Research in India and Tanzania has found that 30 per cent of older people are malnourished.

Human rights Increasing numbers of older people are living in poverty. Unless their rights to development are recognised, poverty alleviation strategies cannot succeed.

Education Educational opportunities are generally denied to older people. Yet schemes that target illiteracy, reproductive health issues, social questions and vocational training yield good results.

Environment Older people feel their knowledge is undervalued. Yet it has proved useful in the development of local environmental and disaster mitigation programmes.

Population Older people in developing countries will make up 12 per cent of the global population by 2025.

Social development In developing countries over 30 per cent of older people continue to work, mainly in the informal sector. Yet most banks deny credit to people over 50.

Gender Older men and women face different health, economic and social issues. Yet there is little research, debate or action on the implications of these issues.

Human settlements Eviction of older people from their homes, particularly women and those in conflict situations, is a large and growing problem

Source: HelpAge International projects and reports

Profile

Taking older people's interests forward

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Rallying support... older people in Bolivia demonstrate with placards declaring: 'Age doesn't count, what counts is the spirit' and 'We're proud to be old'.

Valerie Medler/HA

Bolivia: creating a common space

Democracy was restored in Bolivia in the 1980s, but since then, five successive governments have each come from the opposition, making it difficult to develop a national policy on social issues. At the same time, free-market economic policies have led to increased poverty among older people. Commissions bringing together government and civil society representatives have been established to tackle these problems. Orlando Gonzales examines their progress.

Over the past 15 years, the Bolivian government has reduced its role in economic management and social provision, achieving significant improvements in the economy, but at a high cost in terms of unemployment and poverty among marginalised groups. Older people are the poorest sector of the population, and their position has worsened.

Some improvements for older people have been lost with changes in government. For example, in 1998, the government used profits from the sale of state enterprises to fund an annual payment for everyone aged over 65, but this was dropped by the present conservative government in 1999.

At the start of its second year in office, the present government recognised the need to develop social policies to alleviate poverty. One of the proposals that arose from international organisations, in particular the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), was the formation of national commissions focusing on specific social issues.

In 1998 the government agreed to a proposal by *Defensa del Anciano* (see box) to establish four technical commissions to research key issues facing older people and make policy recommendations. The first three focus on legislation, health and welfare, and the fourth is responsible for publicising the work of the three commissions. Each is made up of *Defensa del*

Anciano members, other civil society organisations and relevant state bodies and government departments.

The commissions have had varying levels of success. The Legislation Commission has been working on establishing a law on older people, reviewing existing laws and amendments to see how they affect older people, and proposing reforms and modifications.

The Health Commission has drafted a health policy for older people, involving local government as service providers and providing training in geriatrics and gerontology as part of the Healthy Municipalities Programme of PAHO.

The Social Welfare Commission has had difficulties becoming established, but hopes to develop an action plan this year.

The Dissemination Commission helped to promote the commissions' achievements, although an evaluation of the commissions' work in November 1999 noted the need to increase public awareness of ageing issues and of what is being done by both civil society and government to address these issues.

In 1999, a PAHO meeting in Lima, Peru proposed to take these developments a step further through the establishment of a National Commission to promote the development and implementation of policies in favour of older people. This proposal was met favourably by the Bolivian government. The National Commission has the mandate to coordinate the activities of the four technical commissions and develop policies for older people. It is also multi-sectoral, being chaired by the Sub-Ministry of Gender and Generations. Immediate objectives include promoting the work proposed by the Legal Commission, studying the proposals of the Health Commission, and considering how to strengthening the Social Welfare Commission.

Looking ahead

The establishment of the commissions has improved the outlook for older people, but progress is not guaranteed. Links between *Defensa del Anciano* and the government have been affected by changes among government decision-makers, and any achievements of the commissions could be dismantled by the next government.

The way ahead for the National Commission, as the body that will receive proposals from the technical commissions, lies in establishing mechanisms for converting proposals into government policies and programmes. If there is the political will, these proposals may prosper. It seems that *Defensa del Anciano* and the government are ensuring that there is, at least, a common space for policy development, which may be beneficial to older people in Bolivia.

Voice for older people

Defensa del Anciano (In Defence of Older People) is a national network of government and non-governmental organisations, older people's groups and the Catholic Church. It was formed in 1995 to raise awareness of the role of older people and promote their rights in order to improve their quality of life.

Orlando Gonzales is programme coordinator of the Horizontes Foundation which develops small projects and funds networks and councils of older people in Bolivia.

Email: horizontes.bolivia@latinwide.com

HelpAge International Latin America Regional Development Centre

Email: helpage.bolivia@unete.com
Website: www.latinwide.com/helpage

Defensa del Anciano
Email: danciano@ceibo.entelnet.bo

Bolivian Government, Sub-Ministry of Gender and Generation
Email: vaggf@megalink.mail.com

Talking point

Understanding older people's experience

9

Coping in a crisis

Last October, a cyclone in the Indian state of Orissa devastated the lives of millions of people. A&D goes behind the scenes to find out how the relief effort catered for older people.

Orissa is one of the poorest states in India. When the cyclone struck, tidal waves over 20 feet high washed entire villages out to sea. Shanty towns were destroyed, leaving 2 1/2 million people homeless. Trees were broken and crops were ruined. Over 300,000 cattle were drowned. Almost 10,000 people are officially estimated to have died, and altogether 15 million people were affected. The cyclone only lasted 36 hours, but it will take many years to get back to 'normality'.

Even before the cyclone, people started coming to each other's aid. Some local NGOs took vulnerable old people and children to the safety of schools and temples.

After the cyclone, free meals were provided by over 300 kitchen centres, organised mainly by local authorities in collaboration with NGOs. The army moved in to clear roads and organise initial supplies, air-dropping food packets to areas

that remained inaccessible by road or rail. Government and civil defence volunteers disposed of cattle carcasses.

In some villages, older people supervised food distribution. The cyclone was an example of a recurring natural disaster of which many older people have experience. But one older woman commented that whereas in the past, younger people had taken notice of older people's advice, they were less willing to do so now.

Despite the efforts, many people were initially excluded. One older widow, who had lost both her sons and a daughter-in-law, was left with her other heavily pregnant daughter-in-law and seven small children. She managed to take care of all of them for over 17 days before any assistance reached them.

HelpAge India and its local partners played a crucial role in

providing relief and ensuring that the particular needs of older people were met. Emergency work was a new experience for HelpAge India. However, it has worked for many years in Orissa through agecare programmes implemented through grassroots partner NGOs.

HelpAge India set up an office with local partner Nysasdri in the state capital, Bhubaneswar, to carry out a field assessment and liaise with government, national and international NGOs and other project partners to develop an emergency action plan. About 30 organisations were providing relief, and meetings were held frequently to coordinate the relief effort.

HelpAge India's initial assessment identified the needs of the most affected families, not just older people. These included lack of food and loss of utensils, destruction of livelihood, lack of shelter, lack of appropriate medical care, and lack of access to all services.

By the second week, HelpAge India had identified six of the worst affected districts for aid. It worked with five local partners to provide essential food, blankets, plastic sheeting and medicine to nearly

5,000 families in 32 villages during the first month. HelpAge India also arranged for two of its mobile medical units to work in Orissa, providing medical relief to 15 villages a day. Gastroenteritis, diarrhoea and dehydration were common health problems, estimated to claim 80 lives in the first month. The work was funded by DFID's humanitarian aid fund and by Help the Aged (UK) through a Disasters Emergency Committee appeal.

In an emergency, agencies do not single out particular groups for aid. However, their strategies can mean that some groups are excluded. Three weeks after the cyclone, a consortium of leading voluntary organisations started implementing 'food for work' programmes only. At one of the coordination meetings, HelpAge India influenced a decision to request local authorities to continue providing food aid to the most vulnerable groups. The point was made that these groups need emergency food for at least three months.

HelpAge India also used the meeting to distribute key checklists to agencies to ensure that older people were not forgotten. For example: What are the immediate needs of older people? To what extent have the relief services reached older people? The checklists were prepared as part of the *Best practice guidelines* developed by HelpAge International (see A&D4). The need for support in Orissa will continue. HelpAge India and partners will continue to work there on rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes, which will form the basis for longer term development work.

The Ageing World and Humanitarian Crisis: guidelines for best practice will be published by the HelpAge International Secretariat in April.
Email: nstam@helpage.org

The Ageing World and Humanitarian Crises research report is at:
www.helpage.org/emergencies/index.html



Kama Patra is a 70-year-old widow who lives with her widowed daughter in Bhubaneswar. She was moved to safety during the cyclone. When she returned home, she found that all her cooking utensils had been stolen, the roof of her house had blown away and the house was flooded. She was cold and needed food.

Alyson Rose/Help The Aged (UK)

Resources

New publications, websites, conferences and courses

10

Journal articles

Development of an activities of daily living scale to screen for dementia in an illiterate rural older population in India

G G Fillenbaum et al

Mortality trends of elderly people in Taiwan from 1974 to 1994

K-K Leung et al

Age and Ageing

Vol 28, Issue 2, March 1999.
Published quarterly by Oxford University Press, Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP, UK
Fax: +44 1865 267485
Email: jnl.orders@oup.co.uk

1999 Amultree Essay Prize: Cross cultural attitudes to the menopause and the ageing female

C Mercer

Age and Ageing

Supplement 2, July 1999 (see above)

Ageing research in multi-ethnic rural communities: Gaining entrée through community involvement

Sara A Quandt et al

Beliefs about elderly people among social workers and the general public in Hong Kong

Chun-Kiu Cheung et al

Ageing in rural China: Impacts of increasing diversity in family and community resources

Alun E Joseph, David R Phillips

Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology

Vol 14, issue 2, June 1999.
Published quarterly by Kluwer Academic Publishers, POB 322, 3300 AH Dordrecht, The Netherlands.
Website: <http://wkap.nl>

Studying living arrangements of the elderly: Lessons from a quasi-qualitative case study approach in Thailand

John Knodel, Chanpen Saengtienchai

Labour force status transitions at older ages in the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand 1970-1990

James M Raymo, Jennifer C Cornman

(Re)imagining ageing lives: Ethnographic narratives of Muslim women in diaspora

Parin A Dossa

Differences in health characteristics between native Japanese and Japanese-Americans

Saeko Fujiwara et al

Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology

Vol 14, issue 3, September 1999 (see above)

Intergenerational influence in Singapore and Taiwan: The role of the elderly in family decisions

Lindy Williams et al

Factors associated with health perception of Saudi elderly

Jamal S Jarallah et al

The role of religion and ethnicity in the help seeking of family caregivers of elders with Alzheimer's disease and related disorders

Sue Levkoff, Beca Levy, Patricia Flynn Weitzman

Family support, financial needs and health care needs of rural elderly in China: a field study

Hong Li, Martin B Tracey

Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology

Vol 14, issue 4, December 1999 (see above)

Studying sociological problems of ageing in India

M S Gore

A socio-economic profile of an ageing Indian population

Kumudini Dandekar

How oriental culture responds to the challenges of ageing

Wu Cangping

People and multiculturalism

Frederick Ehrlich

BOLD

Vol 9, no 4, August 1999.
Published by the International Institute on Ageing (United Nations, Malta), 117 Paul Street, Valletta, Malta.

Tel: +356 243044. Fax: +356 230248
Email: INIA@maltanet.net
Website: <http://www.inia.org.mt>

Older drivers

Ageing among Mexican Americans

AIDS and older women in Botswana

Housing in Greece

Global Aging Report

May/June 1999. Six issues per year published by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), 601 E Street NW, Washington DC, 20049 USA

Tel: +1 202 434-2402
Fax: +1 202 434 6494
Email: gar@aarp.org
Website: <http://www.aarp.org>



Ed Gerbode/COSE

'Active ageing' was the topic of a recent UN conference.

Trouble in pension paradise
Recipients' response to consumer directed long-term care
Robotic pets

Guatemalan widows trade on-line
Japanese health care reforms
Nursing homes in Chile

Global Aging Report
July/Aug 1999 (see above)

Ghana's seniors contribute
Indigenous populations get short shrift

...As do older women

All around Asia
Changing traditions in Uganda
...And senior services in Mexico
Ageing prison populations
Global investments

Global Aging Report
Sept/Oct 1999 (see above)

Why Japan has so few babies

Pensions everywhere
WISHing in Singapore
Zulu grandmothers talk

Mozambique's displaced elders
Widowhood in India

Global Aging Report
November/December 1999 (see above)

Invisible older women
Older users explore the uses of the Internet

Ageing in Cuba
German women experiment with group living

Global Aging Report
January/February 2000 (see above)

Global perspectives on lifelong learning:
(Double issue and winner of a 1999 Mature Media Award).

Educational interests and motivations of older adult learners: a comparative study between Australia and China
Cliff Picton and Caroline Yuen

The Ecuadorian experiment in international living
Anne Alvear

Community experiences in active ageing: an NGO perspective
S D Gokhale

Insights into gender and ageing: The World Health Organization perspective on gender, ageing and health
Alexandre Kalache

Speaking out: an interview with Berhane Ras Work, president, the Inter-African Committee
Irene Hoskins

Special reports: The 1997 IFA global conference: a look back
Monica Ferreira

The 1999 IFA global conference: a look ahead
LFA

International focus: A sociological survey of the socioeconomic of the aged in less developed countries
Akhabe A. Okharedia

Toward a national policy for the elderly in Ghana
Osei Darkwa

Ageing in the city-state context: perspectives from Singapore
G Shantakumar

Resources

New publications, websites, conferences and courses

11

Age is power: the Israeli Association of Senior Citizens
Raffel Barkan-Benkler

Older workers and retirement issues (due out soon):

Employment of Chinese older workers in Hong Kong: cultural myths, discrimination and opportunities

Sammy Chiu and Raymond Ngan

Singaporeans' perceptions and preparations for retirement: a crosscultural inquiry

Kalyani Mehta

Ageing in developing countries (in production)

Introduction: P V Ramamurt

Ageing in India: some key issues

D Jamuna

Growing old in the new South Africa

Monica Ferreira

The case in Hong Kong

Y F Hui

Ageing in Brazil

Luiz R Ramos

Ageing International

Published quarterly by the International Federation on Ageing.

Subscription via web: www.ifa-fiv.org

Putting ageing in the centre of the development agenda and the needs of older persons in the mainstream of policy-making

Aurelio Fernandez

The challenge for NGOs is to increase the impact of community based organisations

Todd Petersen

The demographics of ageing: an overview of global ageing trends

Kevin Kinsella

Challenges in the Americas

Martha Peláez

Coalition '99 Update

July/August 1999. Produced by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) every two months.

Available on the internet at: www.coalition99.org

Politics of pension sharing in urban South Africa

Andreas Sagner, Raymond Z Mtati

Ageing and Society

Vol 19, part 4, July 1999. Published by Cambridge University Press six times a year.

Website: www.journals.cup.org

Elder abuse and neglect in residential settings - different national backgrounds and similar responses

Frank Glendenning, Paul Kingston (findings from Israel & South Africa among others)

Dealing with institutional abuse in a multicultural South African Society

Gerna Conradie

Journal of Elder Abuse and Neglect

Vol 10, no1/2 1999. Published by Haworth Press Inc, Alice Street, Binghampton, NY 13904-11580, USA

Tel: +1 607 722 5857

Respect for the elderly in Asia: stability and change

Berit Ingersoll-Dayton, Chanpen Saegtienchai

International Journal of Aging and Human Development

Vol 48, no 2 1999. Published by Baywood Publishing Company Inc eight times a year.

Fax: +1 516 691 1770

Email: baywood@baywood.com

Website: www.baywood.com

Responding to dementia in East Asia: Developments in Japan, China, Taiwan and South Korea

B Neichen

Ageing & Mental Health

Vol 2, no 4, November 1998.

Published by Carfax

Fax: +44 1235 401550

Website: www.tandf.co.uk/journals/carfax/1360-7863.html

Comparative perspectives on living with HIV/AIDS in late life

Andrea Sankar, Mark Luborsky, Tim Rwabuhemba

Research on Aging

Vol 20, no 6, November 1998.

Published every two months by Sage Publications

Fax: +44 20 7374 8741

Website: www.sagepub.com

Emergency aid - planned by older people (southern Sudan)

Ploughing with oxen: cash loans make it possible (Ethiopia)

Preventing and treating incontinence

Helping older people at home

From sunrise to moonrise: training of age care trainers in Africa

Collecting case studies and photos

Ageways 52, October 1999

Published quarterly by HelpAge International (address on back page).

Websites

Ageing and Development and HelpAge International's gender briefings can be downloaded from the website. Other publications will be available soon.

www.helpage.org/publications/index.html

Books

Reader on Women and Ageing and Portraits of Ageing Women

An essential reader and accompanying case studies of eight women from around the world, with useful analysis of older women's experiences of ageing and health.

Available from Trudy Van Ommeren, Coordinator, Wemos Foundation, PO Box 1693, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Email: wemos@wemos.nl

Website: www.wemos.nl

Human Rights and Older Persons

A booklet published by the United Nations Information Service includes excerpts from the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of Older Persons; key points from the Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing; and a list of international endorsed policies in relation to older people.

Further information from: www.unog.ch

Reports and case papers

Welfare in transition: trends in poverty and wellbeing in Central Asia

Jane Falkingham, ESRC Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, London School of Economics.

ISBN: 14605023

Income transfers to the elderly in East Asia: testing Asian values

Huck-ju Kwon, ESRC Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, London School of Economics

ISBN: 14605023

The locus of care - families, communities, institutions and the provision of welfare since antiquity.

Peregrine Horden, Richard Smith

References to China and South Africa. Published by Routledge 1998, price £50

ISBN 0415112168

Older and safer? How to achieve economic security in old age

Armando Barrientos

Latin American focus

University of Herefordshire Business School

Tel: +44 1707 285 462

Email: a.barrientos@herts.ac.uk

Conference reports

Iran's 'First international conference on ageing'

19-21 October 1999 Tehran

Primarily an Iranian/Islamic focus but covers a very wide range of topics from socio-economic to medical.

Details at: www.iaed.org/iran

New ideas about old age security

World Bank conference 14-15 September 1999.

Details on: www.worldbank.org/knowledge/chiefecon/conferen/security.htm

Active ageing: promoting prevention and rehabilitation

18 November 1999, Speakers include *Alexandre Sidorenko, Martha Peláez, G Curtis Kline, Nikolay Akhaladze, Mathew Lee.*

Details at: www.un.org/events

Radio

BBC Visionaries series

Two HelpAge International board members, Dr Mary-Ann Tsao and Professor Nana Apt, spoke on the BBC World Service Visionaries series in January. The series invites leading international academics and specialists to give their vision of the 21st century.

For transcripts see:

www.bbc.co.uk/essentialguide

Conferences

Rural aging: a global challenge

7-11 June 2000, Charleston, West Virginia, USA

Details at:

www.hsc.wvu.edu/rural-aging

World conference on gerontology

1-6 July 2000, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Details at: www.harbour.sfu.ca/gero or Fax: +604 291 5066

5th global conference on ageing

September 2000, Argentina.

Details on the International Federation on Ageing website: www.ifa-fiv.org or Email: ifa@citenet.net

29th International conference on social welfare

23-27 October 2000, South Africa
Email: ICSW@globalconf.co.za

Research update

Major new projects

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Africa

Basic data for developing policy

The World Health Organization is collaborating with HelpAge International (HAI) to identify categories of information required to develop policies on ageing and health in four African countries - Ghana, South Africa, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. At a workshop in Harare in January, WHO, HAI and government representatives met with academics, demographers and data systems experts to review existing data and policies and discuss the content and structure of minimum data sets. Each country will develop a strategy for taking the work further. Country meetings will be held in May.

Contact: Dr Paul Kowal, Technical Officer, WHO Ageing and Health Programme, 20 Avenue Appia, 1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland.

Tel: +41 22 791 4379
Fax: +41 22 791 4389
Email: kowalp@who.ch

Safety nets in Tanzania

HelpAge International has been commissioned by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) to research methodology for establishing networks and groups to support the most vulnerable older people. The research is part of a larger programme being developed by DFID to strengthen village and neighbourhood organisations. Fieldwork is taking place in early 2000 and the report will be available in April.

Contact: Liz Holmes, Programme Director, HelpAge International Programme, PO Box 9846, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
Fax: +255 51 700015
Email: helpage@udsm.ac.tz

Asia

Poverty and economic survival Thailand

'Old age, poverty and economic survival: urban and rural case studies from Thailand' is a research project funded by the

UK Department for International Development from September 1999 to September 2000. Findings from the initial qualitative stage of the project include the importance of merit (donations to Buddhist temples) as a channel of income redistribution between older people in poor communities. A questionnaire survey is now under development.

Contact: Peter Lloyd-Sherlock, School of Development Studies, University of East Anglia, Norwich.
Tel: +44 1602 592327
Email: p.lloyd-sherlock@uea.ac.uk

Ageing trends in Malaysia

The University of Malaya is charting ageing trends in Malaysia in order to support government initiatives to improve services for older people. The research is revealing that the majority of older people in Malaysia are not benefiting from the social security system, and that there are marked gender and rural/urban differentials in the wellbeing of older people. Ethnic Chinese and Indian populations are facing particular insecurities. The research is pointing to strategies that both support family caring and reinforce governmental and voluntary organisation partnerships.

Contact: Dr Roziah Omar, Head, Department of Anthropology and Sociology, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur

Email: jb-antro@umcsd.um.edu.my

Studies on elder abuse in Korea

The Institute of Science for Better Living for the Elderly in Seoul, Korea, is undertaking studies on the extent and nature of elder abuse. The studies reveal that abuse of older people is a growing and serious problem, and is related to ageing trends in Korea. The work explores definitions of abuse and personal, family, socio-political and socio-cultural factors which relate to its occurrence. It offers a model for prevention which places equal emphasis on the family, the individual and both formal and informal societal responses.



Better living for older people - reading with a volunteer in Korea.

HelpAge Korea

Contact: Dong Hee Han, Director, Institute of Science for Better Living for the Elderly
Email: dongheeh@chollian.net

Caribbean

Key issues in St Lucia

The St Lucia government has commissioned HelpAge International to carry out a study, funded by the European Union, on the situation of older people, with a view to developing a national policy and programme for older people. Three key issues stand out: the extent of neglect and loneliness of older people mentioned by both primary and secondary stakeholders; the low level of income and lack of financial security among older people; and the low level of awareness of ageing issues, particularly among younger people.

Contact: Jeff James, Regional Representative, HelpAge International Regional Development Centre, PO Box 8300, Kingston CSO, Jamaica
Fax: +1 876 7547642
Email: helpage@cwjamaica.com

Older people in Barbados

Towards the end of 1999, the Barbados government embarked on research to determine the situation of older people.

Contact: Jeff James, Regional Representative, HelpAge International (see above)

HelpAge International is a global network of not-for-profit organisations with a mission to work with and for disadvantaged older people worldwide to achieve a lasting improvement in the quality of their lives.

Ageing and Development aims to raise awareness of the contribution, needs and rights of older people and to promote the development of laws and policies supporting older people. It is published three times a year by the HelpAge International Secretariat, with funding from Help the Aged (UK).

Copies are available in English and Spanish, free of charge on request. Please contact the Secretariat with brief details of your work. If requesting multiple copies, please explain who these are for and how they will be distributed.

Ageing and Development is also available on the web at: <http://www.helpage.org/publications/index.html>

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Email: helpage@net2000ke.com

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Website: <http://www.helpageasia.com>

Caribbean

Email: helpage@cwjamaica.com

East and Central Europe

Email: phinchli@helpage.org

Latin America

Email: helpage.bolivia@unete.com
Website: <http://www.latinwide.com/helpage>

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