

AgeNews

East Asia/Pacific

*Sharing information
to strengthen
HelpAge Network*

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**HelpAge
International**

global network

Editorial

The adaptation to the rapid demographic change happening in the region requires strong social consensus and clear political will. We are not there yet, but important steps have been taken in the last few months in this region.

The first one relates to knowledge. By this we mean two parallel processes: one, production of new understanding of the social and economic implications of ageing; two, the sharing of experiences between countries in their policies and practices for adapting to ageing.

A major study on ageing in East Asia-Pacific was launched in Beijing on 9 December by the World Bank. This report not only highlights the implication of ageing but also points out that countries need to proactively develop coherent strategies for adaptation. Other studies by International Labour Organization (ILO) "The state of social protection in ASEAN at the dawn of integration" and World Health Organization (WHO) "World report on Ageing and Health" and "China country assessment report on ageing and health" also add to the scope of knowledge necessary to adapt to change.

Ten member states of ASEAN adopted, last November, the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Ageing aimed at empowering older people in ASEAN. Following the Declaration, a meeting of representatives of older people's associations (OPAs) was held in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Besides sharing experience on OPA management, they studied the declaration and made recommendations to be presented at the next ASEAN OPA meeting.

2016 promises to be a very interesting year. The HelpAge regional conference will take place in September and the theme is "Economic implications of ageing". The preparations for the 2017 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) review will also be undertaken, led by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP).

But for now it is time to take a few days with family and friends. I wish you, in the name of all HelpAge staff, our very best wishes for the festivities and the New Year.

Eduardo Klien
Regional Director, East Asia/Pacific
HelpAge International

The International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics (IAGG) congress 2015: Healthy Ageing Beyond Frontiers

► Regional

The IAGG Asia/Oceania Congress was held from 19-22 October in Chiang Mai. It was hosted by the IAGG and the Thai Society of Gerontology and Geriatric Medicine (TSGM) and was co-hosted by HelpAge International along with three other organizations. The event attracted 1,115 primarily academic participants from around the world to present research in the latest developments in the area of ageing under the theme Healthy Aging Beyond Frontiers. Presentations, symposiums, and posters were categorized into four categories: clinical science, behavioral and social science, biological science, and policy planning and practice.

The congress allowed HelpAge and some of our network partners to share what we've been learning through our work. We organized symposia on the role of government in social care services, the active role of older people in emergency response and disaster preparedness, and how older people's associations contribute to health and wellbeing. We also participated in sessions on empowering older people and the value of older people and their contributions to society. Through these sessions and through our booth, which had posters, video, and publications on these and other topics, HelpAge was able to give strong representation to civil society and community-level work in low and lower-middle income countries.



One specific theme of interest to HelpAge's work in the region was developing holistic, person-centered health and care approaches. The World Health Organization presented its recently released landmark World Report on Health and Ageing and other healthy ageing initiatives in the region. There was an impressive amount of research presented on mental health, cognitive decline, population health, long-term care systems, community health care systems and the like. These reinforced the importance of working with all countries to shift perspectives so that, in 5 or 10 years there will be a broad, underlying understanding about person-centered older people's health and care.

(CL)

Visit the IAGG conference website:
<http://iaggchiangmai2015.com/>



Older people's associations (OPAs) exchange visit: Learning exchange among older people

► Regional

A regional OPA exchange visit took place for 22 representatives of Older People's Associations (OPAs) and partners from the South East Asia Region including Cambodia, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Myanmar. The visit was held in Chiang Mai Thailand on 24-26 November 2015 hosted by HelpAge International with support from the European Union (EU) and Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). The main themes of the learning exchange were OPA management, resource mobilisation and fund raising of OPAs, and networking and cooperation between OPAs and local administration, government and other community-based organisations.

The meeting focused on information exchange and relationship building between OPA leaders, as well as capacity building (focussing on OPA management and local fundraising) and discussing the ASEAN Declaration on Ageing and formulating a response to this document. OPA leaders examined the declaration and recognised many of its positive points, as well as acknowledging its weaknesses, which include no specific



mention of social protection and social pensions. The leaders also made recommendations for future action, particularly in relation to the development of a plan of action to support the declaration's implementation.

During this event, all participants joined a field visit to Nong Hoi Community, located in Chiang Mai Municipality. They learnt about the fund-raising methods and project management of older people's groups in Thailand. The participants also met different community-based groups, government agencies and local administration representatives to discuss cooperation regarding resource mobilisation for community development and older people's association



sustainability. The participants also enjoyed the Loi Krathong Festival with people from the Nong Hoi community and learnt about traditional Thai culture.

At the end of the workshop, representatives presented their country's workplan for the next two years regarding the improvement of OPA management and fund-raising strategies. Most of the participants provided positive feedback about the OPA exchange visit, especially concerning the opportunity for OPA leaders across the ASEAN region to share their experiences and their ideas about the ASEAN Declaration on Ageing.

(TS)

Ongoing research on Older People's Associations in Southeast Asia

► Regional

HelpAge International and its network members have over 15 years of experience working with older people's associations (OPAs) in 11 countries in the East Asia/Pacific region. These multi-functional, community-led organisations aim to enhance equitable and inclusive local development. Through project evaluations, case studies and individual testimonies, HelpAge has seen that OPAs are making a difference in the lives of older women and men and to their communities. Governments, international organisations and others have recognized the innovative approach to OPAs and have included multi-functional OPAs in their policy and programmes across the region. However, there is a dearth of robust academic evidence on OPAs.

Therefore, the Oxford Institute on Population Ageing (OIPA) is undertaking a multi-country, primarily qualitative study of OPAs with support from HelpAge International, the World Health Organization Western Pacific, and Age International. The study will assess the impact of the OPA approach on income security, health and social participation of older people. It will also look at the replicability and sustainability of OPAs. It will consider what factors play a role in the strength of OPAs and will draw lessons for future work with OPAs.

Field visits to a core sample of multifunctional OPAs in Cambodia, China, Myanmar and Vietnam from June-October provided the bulk of the data. Dr Kenneth Howse, the lead researcher from OIPA, and his research team conducted group discussions with

OPA leaders, and 10-14 semi-structured interviews per community with OPA members and non-members. Questionnaires which provide some quantitative data are supported by case studies and OPA profiles. In addition, HelpAge network members, HelpAge Cambodia and Sichuan Yihe Development Centre for Ageing, and country offices in Vietnam and Myanmar collected administrative data on a larger sample of communities.

The research team is now collating the data and filling any gaps that remain. Analysis will lead to a first draft of the report in January 2016. The final report should be ready by the end of March 2016 and will be available on our website www.ageingasia.org.

(CL)

Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Ageing: empowering older people in ASEAN

The Development of the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Ageing 2015

In recognition of the challenges and opportunities of population ageing, Malaysia proposed the inclusion of a regional declaration on ageing with the theme “Empowering Older Persons in ASEAN” during the 10th Senior Official Meeting of Social Welfare and Development (SOMSWD) held in November 2014, Vientiane, Lao PDR. A draft declaration was developed, reviewed, and circulated to ASEAN member states for consultation and feedback. Relevant stakeholders provided input at the national level and suggestions for improvement were submitted through the ASEAN Secretariat, and they were then forwarded to Malaysia for consideration. A draft of the amended document was endorsed via a Joint Ministerial Statement during the 13th ASEAN Socio-cultural Community (ASCC) Council Meeting on 26 March 2015 in Melaka, Malaysia. The Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Ageing was finalized during the 11th SOMSWD Meeting in September. During the 19th

Senior Officials Meeting for the ASCC (SOCA) and 14th ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Council meeting in October 2015, a final version of the Declaration was endorsed and this document was adopted by the heads of states during the 27th ASEAN Summit which was held from 18 till 22 November 2015 at the nation’s capital.

Based on the key principles of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA, 2002) and incorporating elements from the earlier Brunei Darussalam Declaration on Strengthening Family Institution: Caring for the Elderly (2010), the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Ageing 2015 is cognisant of the fact that promoting healthy, active and productive ageing in an enabling and supportive environment is key to the well-being of older persons. Older persons are valuable members of the family, community and society with responsibilities towards the self and others in national development. The document outlined concrete actions

towards the empowerment of older persons by promoting a shared responsibility approach, improved intergenerational solidarity, equitable access to facilities and services, as well as mainstreaming population ageing issues.

The declaration also recognises the importance of human capital development in gerontology, geriatrics and other related fields to meet current and future demands for health and social services for the aged. Data on ageing is needed to provide reliable, evidence-based and empirical input to policy and decision making. A key strategy is to encourage the development of older people’s associations (OPAs) and to improve their capacity to work together with the government in addressing population ageing issues.

The Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Ageing 2015 is an extension of the current ASEAN Strategic Framework on Social Welfare and Development (2011-2015)

10 commitments of the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Ageing

1. Promote a shared responsibility approach in preparation for healthy, active and productive ageing by supporting families, care givers/care workers and strengthening communities in delivering care for older persons;
2. Promote intergenerational solidarity towards a society for all ages by raising public awareness on the rights, issues and challenges of old age and ageing;
3. Promote rights-based/needs-based and life-cycle approach and eliminate all forms of maltreatment on the basis of old age and gender through equitable access of older persons to public services, income generation, health care services, and essential information, as well as preventive measures, legal protection, and effective support system;
4. Mainstream population ageing issues into public policies and national development plans, and programmes, which may include flexible retirement age and employment policies;
5. Promote the development of human capital and expertise in gerontology, geriatrics and other related professional and para-professional manpower including care workers to meet the current and future demands for health and social services for older persons;
6. Promote the development of reliable information, evidence-based and gender-disaggregated data on ageing, including improved capacity to bridge the gaps in policy, research and practice;
7. Strengthen the capacity of government agencies, corporate bodies, civil society organizations, including voluntary welfare organisations, communities, and relevant stakeholders, for better coordination and effectiveness in the delivery of quality services for older persons at local, national and regional levels;
8. Encourage the development of older people’s associations or other forms of networking including elderly clubs and volunteers networks in each ASEAN Member State by strengthening their capacity, and providing them with multisectoral platforms of dialogue with the government on ageing issues;
9. Promote age-friendly communities/cities in the region through sustainable and accessible infrastructure;
10. Build and strengthen the networking and partnerships within and among ASEAN Member States as well as with Dialogue Partners and Development Partners including UN Agencies, civil society organisations, private sector, and relevant stakeholders in supporting and providing adequate resources and effective implementation of the commitments reflected in this Declaration.

where income security for old age as well as active and healthy ageing were among the identified themes for regional project implementation activities. With this new Declaration, the member states, together with development partners including UN agencies, civil society organizations, private sector and other key stakeholders, will seek to coordinate and collaborate to develop a regional action plan on ageing to empower older persons in ASEAN. The document marks a new chapter in the region's awareness and action for population ageing from a multidisciplinary perspective.

Special thanks to:

Professor Dr Tengku Aizan Hamid
Director, Malaysian Research Institute on Ageing,
Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Malaysia

Datin Nor Azah Omar
Under Secretary, International Relations Division,
Ministry of Women, Family and Community
Development, Putrajaya, Malaysia



The 27th ASEAN Summit and Related Summits were held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 21 to 22 November 2015. It was preceded by preparatory meetings from 18 to 20 November 2015.

The Declaration on Ageing is available online. Please visit the ASEAN website to read the official document at <http://bit.ly/1HRN5JR>

Interview



Ms Siriwan Aruntippaitune, Expert on the Elderly from the Department of Older Persons, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Thailand.

The HelpAge Network joins others in the celebration of the adoption of the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Ageing, which demonstrates shared recognition of the importance of ageing issues in our region. It serves as an opportunity for ASEAN nations to further review, revise, and develop policies and concrete action plans on ageing.

For better understanding of the government response to the Declaration, HelpAge spoke with Ms Siriwan Aruntippaitune, an expert on the elderly from the Department of Older Persons, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Thailand.

Please briefly introduce your organisation as it relates to ageing.

This year, Thailand scaled up work on the empowerment of older people by creating this department, recognising the need for emphasis on ageing as Thailand's demographic profile shifts towards an aged society. Its main role is older persons' policy development and planning as well as providing care services for older persons who are in need, such as through elderly homes.

How does the Department of Older Persons relate to the development of the Kuala Lumpur Declaration of Ageing?

The Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Ageing was developed through a process with many consultation meetings and, as representatives of Thailand's Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, we regularly attended the events and provided feedback to the drafts through to finalisation.

What does the Declaration contribute?

This Declaration will be another international guideline for moving forward ageing issues among ASEAN member countries at policy level and also in implementation of inclusive programmes. It joins the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA), which is the existing UN framework for all countries to follow and practice and will be under review in 2017.

In the Declaration, there is a commitment in principle to a list of actions towards the empowerment of older persons. Do Thailand's existing policies require any revision?

The overall messages which are included in the declaration are in line with the Thailand National Plan on the Elderly (2002 - 2021) and the Act on the Elderly: 2003, implemented through our department. The Declaration may result in scaling up and improvement of all member states' policies and implementation relating to ageing.

What will be the next steps?

The ASEAN Secretariat will design and share the process for next steps in order to translate the Declaration into a concrete regional action plan on Ageing taken up at the national level. I believe that some policy initiatives, social security and care services should be further introduced. We hope that this Declaration leads to a better quality of life for all older people and a move towards caring society.

Read in-depth interview on the same topic with the Secretary General for the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, Malaysia at <http://bit.ly/1m2OzqV>

Handover of first multipurpose centres to older people organisations in the Philippines

► Philippines

The construction of 83 Fransis Kupang Centres (FKCs) for Older People Organisations will strengthen the project implemented by HelpAge-COSE to rebuild the lives of older people in Cebu and Leyte, Philippines. They will be fitted with solar panels to be environmentally sensitive as well as saving costs. The first set of completed FKCs have already been handed over to older people organisations in West and East Leyte, and North Cebu.

The FKCs will serve as a place for older people's organisations (OPOs) to meet as well as store their Disaster Risk Reduction Management basic equipment/materials. They will also house the

'Wellness Centre' that will sell herbal medicines which are affordable and in common use. In addition, they will provide other health and wellness services like massage therapy and monitoring of vital signs, with the assistance of community health volunteers.

These centres provide the OPOs with status in the community and an operational centre for their activities. They are being built on a partnership basis with the local government and older people organisations who provide paint and labour assistance through their volunteer and cash for work programmes.

(GP & HG)



Cambodia National Policy on Ageing under review

► Cambodia

HelpAge Cambodia (HAC) has continued to provide technical support and consultation on ageing policy to the National Committee for the Elderly, with several workshops held at national and sub-national levels along with other key ministries, NGOs, and experts on ageing.

On 18 September 2015, HAC helped the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY) to organize a sub-national Consultative Workshop with representatives of OPAs, local authorities and NGOs from different areas to discuss their views on the current draft of the policy on ageing. This workshop provided MoSVY with useful input to update to the current draft of the Policy for the Elderly. Then on 20 October 2015, HAC assisted MoSVY in organizing a consultative workshop at national level with technical ministries and departments to discuss the draft of the Policy for the Elderly.

HAC, together with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), have been encouraging MoSVY to undertake a comprehensive, high quality and consultative policy review process so that the new policy is evidence-based and incorporates community input; links to the national budget process; is endorsed

at the highest government levels; and has support from all relevant Ministries.

The new policy is now expected to be finalized and endorsed by 2017. HAC organized a workshop on 12 November, and invited an international expert on ageing policy, Ms. Camilla Williamson, to share information about regional policy review processes and good practices of national policies and laws on ageing from ASEAN and Pacific countries, with the technical department of MoSVY and other key ministries at national level. This workshop led MoSVY to better

understand the importance of an effective policy review process and the elements of a good policy on ageing.

For this key event, students from the National Institute of Social Affairs were also invited to join and take part in the discussions. Their participation and enthusiastic engagement is an encouraging sign for the future of policy development on ageing in Cambodia.

(BV)



Piloting cash transfer programme in response to limited social protection mechanisms available in Myanmar

► Myanmar

A Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement (MoSWRR) workshop on introducing a universal social pension was held at the MoSWRR meeting hall on 14th May 2015 in Mandalay.

The participants discussed the findings of the Report on Technical Options for implementing a Universal Social Pension in Myanmar to reach consensus on an appropriate implementation system while keeping clear the roles of the relevant stakeholders. In addition, they discussed the options for financing a

cash transfer for older people in Myanmar in the future and a roll-out programme was also implemented.

As a result of this workshop, the MoSWRR prioritised piloting cash transfers in Moe Gaung Township in Kachin State and Pyapon Township in Ayeyarwaddy Region with technical support from HelpAge International Myanmar and financial support from the Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund (LIFT). The main aims of the cash transfer pilot schemes are to test the efficacy and the appropriateness of the implementation systems while also bringing about improvements in the lives

of the beneficiaries.

In Moe Gaung, 733 older people have been identified based on supportive evidence of eligibility and registered for a social pension of MMK 10,000 per month to be paid quarterly for 12 months. In Pyapon, a phased approach is being tested for 12 months with a cash grant of MMK 10,000 per month in quarterly payments to 154 older persons, and also with cash grants of MMK 10,000 per month for 55 pregnant mothers and MMK 7,000 for 219 children under 2 years of age to be paid monthly.

[Read life story of a beneficiary below.](#)

Stories from the field

Social pension makes father of six happy

U Khin Nyein, 82, who suffers from hypertension, is a father of six children. He and his 73-year-old wife live in Chaung Dwin Village, Pyapon Township of the Ayeyarwaddy Region. They have to stay in one child's house, then move to another's in the same village, so as not to burden any one for too long. After a recent visit to a clinic in Pyapon, U Khin Nyein is now taking medicine.

From time to time, his sons and daughters give him money, which he spends mostly on food. Every morning, he buys coffee which costs 200 Kyats (0.15USD) and sometimes he spends 400 Kyats (0.31USD) on bread as it is cheap. However, since June 2015, he has been receiving a regular social pension payment from the government.

With his first payment (10,000 Kyats a month) he was able to buy a better choice of food, including milk and some snacks. He gave some money to his grandchildren and also donated to the temple for the monks' food.

His wife has also recently enrolled in a cash transfer program so she will shortly receive an allowance, which will enable her family to have a small but valuable addition to their income.

U Khin Nyein said "The money is not a very big amount—only about a tenth of my monthly needs—but it is the first pension I have received in my life. I value it and use it well on good things like donations to the temple and for my health as well. This regular allowance means I am well-thought of and not forgotten. I am so happy about that.



Homecare volunteers brighten lives of elderly couple

Mr. Vu Van Khuong, from Xuan Thanh Village, Ngoc Phung Commune, Thuong Xuan District, Thanh Hoa Province, is 93 years old and lives with his 83-year-old wife. Though the couple have never suffered extreme poverty, they have to deal with various medical conditions while most of his children have relocated far away for work.

Khuong's wife, Mrs. Le Thi Sao, fell and broke her leg while hiking in the nearby forest. Ironically, she was considered too weak to recover from the required surgery, so she is now paralyzed and living with a part of her tibia protruding from her leg. Khuong's health is no better. He has been through two intestinal operations, and at one point, he was unable to even defecate.

"I come here every day with Mr. Vu Ngoc Son to take care of the couple," said Mrs. Bui Thi Tuoi, a homecare volunteer from the Intergenerational Self-help Club in Xuan Thanh Village, who is tasked with helping Khuong's family. "When we first started visiting a few months back, both of them were extremely lonely and in many difficulties. We often come by their house and take care of the chores: doing laundry, cooking, cleaning, massaging their muscles, talking to them and so on. We just want to help their family situation by doing whatever we can."

As of November 2015, with help from the club's volunteers, Khuong is now able to walk again. He often walks to his wife's bed on the other side of the room, where the two share moments of encouragement and compassion in order to get themselves through all the hardships in this later stage of their lives. "We're just trying to better their lives through small yet meaningful actions. It's only what we think we should do in order to contribute to our neighbourhood," said the two volunteers, Tuoi and Son.



The 5th AgeTalk by HelpAge Korea

► Republic of Korea

HelpAge International, HelpAge Korea and the National Human Rights Commission of Korea (NHRC) held the 5thAgeTalk on 12 October, 2015 at Unesco Hall, in Seoul - one month after the worldwide launch of the Global AgeWatch Index on 9 September.

The rankings of the Republic of Korea in the Global AgeWatch Index have been a hot issue due to its low status compared to the country's high economic level. Therefore, this event was planned to discuss the reality of the current welfare level of older Korean people and the global and Korean social pension system in terms of the human rights of older persons.

Mr. Toby Porter, CEO of HelpAge International, explained the purpose and meaning of the Global AgeWatch Index, including the results in Korea.

Professor Hye-ji Choi from the Social Welfare Division of Seoul Women's University presented 'The implications of the Global AgeWatch Index result for Korea'. Utilizing domestic statistics results, Prof. Choi pointed out that the



result of the index is not far from the reality of older Korean people's life.

Ms. Usa Khiewrod, Regional Programme Manager of the East Asia Pacific Regional Office of HelpAge International, argued that social pensions as a form of income security in old age should be the concern of people of all ages, not just those who are vulnerable, and she insisted that social security in old age is a human right.

Professor Eun-sun Ju from the Social Welfare Division of Kyunggi University pointed out how the social pension schemes of Korea should be developed, suggesting that the most urgent issue of



the Korean social pension scheme is to sever links with National Pension and Basic Pension.

The key conclusions from the 5th AgeTalk were as follows:

- The basic pension of Korea should be sufficient for basic survival.
- The government should guarantee to cover all medical expenses for older people, as the major expense for older Korean people is on health care.
- The expansion of coverage of medical insurance can deliver greater benefits than increasing the income of older people.

(JK)

National Summit on Ageing in the Philippines: A Celebration and A Challenge



► Philippines

The Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE) organised the first National Summit on Ageing in the Philippines with the title "A Celebration and A Challenge" on 24 November 2015 in Manila. It aimed to discuss the changing demographic structure of the country and set an agenda on Ageing that demands actions fit for the challenges of today and the future.

Elder leaders spoke about the situation of older Filipinos and their hopes for a caring society for an ageing population. The 2016 Election Candidates were invited as guest speakers. The event was attended by a thousand participants.

Emily Beridico, Executive Director of COSE, explained. "We should rejoice at growing longevity for Filipinos, but at the same time prepare for the challenges it brings. The demands on primary health care will increase significantly as we

become an ageing population. However, since most of the formal support systems are still underdeveloped in the Philippines, at present older people can only rely on their own savings and family support to provide their daily needs."

In the Philippines, the ageing sector accounts for 6.3 million or 6.8% of the 2010 total population, and is considered the fastest growing sector of the population. Proportionate to this changing demographic structure are the accompanying challenges in relation to caring for the ageing population and providing basic income security in later life, to which Philippines society has responded promptly but inadequately. However, when older people share their ideas, great progress can be made. They can transmit knowledge, history and culture and play an important role in their family and the community.

(HG)

Typhoon Haiyan two-year anniversary: Older people key actors in the recovery

► Regional

To mark the two-year anniversary of the devastation wrought by Typhoon Haiyan on 8 November 2013, HelpAge East Asia and Pacific Regional Office and partners, HelpAge-COSE and the Foundation for Older People's Development (FOPDEV), organised a media visit to Leyte, the area worst affected by Haiyan, to give journalists first-hand experience of how older people are rebuilding their lives.

This field trip provided the opportunity to learn how Older People's Organisations (OPOs) are finding new ways of building stronger houses, helping each other to access their rights and earning money to support their families.

A pension delivery helpdesk was established to assist older people in accessing legal documents and Senior Citizen ID cards, which allow them to claim services from the government. The helpdesk provided not only legal and operational assistances, but was also staffed by older volunteers who gave emotional support by listening to older people recounting their difficulties. To be able to see how older people took care of each other was immensely impressive.



Journalists also met older carpenters who were trained in new building techniques for other older people in the community. In return for building a house, these carpenters get around 10,000 pesos each, which is enough to put their lives back on track. The beneficiaries said that they were very grateful to get stronger houses.

Apart from this support, HelpAge-COSE initiated other activities that benefit older people in the longer term.

At remote communities like Isabel in West Leyte, a mobile health service was established to provide health check-ups and free medicines that are delivered right to the door of the elderly people.

Training in crop diversification was also provided to older farmers. In the communal garden, older farmers worked together planting various crops and performing other activities related to farming, like the reproduction of earthworms and fermentation. Now they can increase their household income with improved harvests of more resilient crops.

Many older people said that joining in these Older People's Organisation activities made them realise how they could contribute, helping them to feel part of society again.

(PN)



2015 Designing and Implementing Social Transfer Programmes

A short course on Designing and Implementing Social Transfer Programmes was held in Chiang Mai from 5-16 October. The course is offered annually by the Economic Policy Research Institute and HelpAge International in partnership with UNU-Maastricht and the Institute of Development Studies. It provides policymakers, government officials and practitioners with an in-depth understanding of the conceptual and practical issues involved in the development of social transfer programmes. In the second week, participants choose from among several specialised topic modules.

Nearly 60 participants attended this year from 16 countries, bringing the total reach over the past eight years to over 400. In attendance from HelpAge International was a large group from HelpAge Myanmar, including their partners, and one or two each from HelpAge Kenya, HelpAge Nepal, HelpAge EAPRO, and Kate Wedgwood our new Director of Policy, Advocacy, and Campaigns in London.

NACSCOM Malaysia 25th birthday celebration

On the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the National Council of Senior Citizens Organisations Malaysia (NACSCOM), NACSCOM in collaboration with HelpAge International organised a regional symposium on the topic: "Income security of older persons in an ever-changing world". The symposium was held on Sunday 11 October 2015 at the Seri Pacific Hotel in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The conference was attended by 50 people including speakers from United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), HelpAge, the Malaysian Institute of Gerontology and the Tsao foundation, Singapore. The presentations covered a range of topics, from demographic changes in Malaysia and its implications to income security, financial inclusion, and redesigning societies for an ageing population.

The celebration dinner on the evening of 11 November was attended by more than 600 NACSCOM supporters and sponsors.



► Vietnam

On 16 November 2015, the Awards Ceremony for the “My grandparents and I” writing competition, which was co-organized by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and HelpAge International in Vietnam (HAIV), was held at the Green One United Nations House in Hanoi, Vietnam. Out of 403 entries, 25 contestants were given awards.

Coinciding with the 25th anniversary of International Day of Older Persons and the Month of Action for Older People 2015, the competition aimed to not only change the social norms and stereotypes about older persons, but also to educate young Vietnamese to be more aware of the realities of an ageing society.

In her opening remark at the Ceremony, Ms. Ritsu Nacken – UNFPA Representative a.i. – said that through this competition, she wanted to contribute towards a sustainable society where older people and younger generations can enjoy life together.

Ms. Tran Bich Thuy – Country Director of HAIV – was deeply touched by the submitted papers: “I have read all the winning essays and I am truly moved by the vivid portraits of your grandparents that appear on every page. Whether as caregivers, friends, mentors, mediators,

“My grandparents and I”: Towards a sustainable world for all generations



role models, or sources of encouragement, your grandparents are clearly a source of inspiration. No matter what, they always play the part of unsung heroes and can always be relied on, providing something that we sometimes only manage to appreciate once it is gone forever.”

Each of the 403 essays received was a memory of the student about their grandparents. These grandparents are not stereotyped as frail or fragile, but are portrayed to be active and loving, such as a youthful grandfather who regularly plays tennis and stays up late to watch

tennis games, or a devoted grandmother taking care of her grandchildren throughout childhood.

The first prize was awarded to Ta Quoc Anh, from class 9A of Hanoi-Amsterdam High School. According to Ms. Trang Ha, a well-known Vietnamese writer, his essay published in various national and local media showed a compassionate message for the deceased grandfather, which was full of understanding and respect towards him.

(PA)

Coordination of research on ageing in ASEAN

► Regional

A new consortium is being developed to pursue greater coordination of research related to ageing in the ASEAN region. With academic and other representatives from across ASEAN, the Regional Expert Forum on Ageing and Development was held at the Malaysian Research Institute on Ageing, Universiti Putra Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur on 15-16 September 2015. This is a Malaysia-sponsored ASEAN activity designed to mobilise regional partnerships and collaborations for ageing research, training and education. In addition to country presentations on ageing, the forum discussed an agreement on the establishment of the ASEAN Consortium for Research on Ageing (ACRA), a regional Ageing Research and Development Network (ARDeNt) and recommendations on a charter of Rights for Older Persons in ASEAN.



With the upcoming adoption of the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Ageing 2015 during the 27th ASEAN Summit, the planned activities for ACRA and ARDeNt will be proposed for inclusion under the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Blueprint and Plan of Action.

The ASCC was established for the purpose of “forging a common identity and building a caring and sharing society which is inclusive and harmonious, and where the well-being, livelihood and



welfare of the peoples are enhanced”. This goal includes promoting and protecting the rights and welfare of the elderly. The Forum organisers will produce a report from the meeting to be submitted to the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development in Malaysia for follow-up action with the ASEAN Secretariat. A compilation of the country papers is expected for publication in 2016.

(PM)

Campaign: Age Demands Action

The 25th International Day of Older Persons

Thousands of older activists across East Asia and the Pacific region, from Mongolia to Fiji, participated in Age Demands Action (ADA) events and took to the streets on October 1st to celebrate the International Day of Older Persons (IDOP). The purpose of these events was to encourage older people to take action and campaign on issues that are important to them. It was a good opportunity to push towards a convention on older people's rights at the UN Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG). It was also an appropriate opportunity to raise awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) released by the UN and to deliver a message to global leaders that they should be accountable for achieving these goals.

Cambodia

The Federations of older people's associations (OPAs) in several districts organised campaign parades and hosted a radio talk show. HelpAge Cambodia also helped the Federations to conduct a series of dialogues and consultations with government and development partners at national, provincial and local levels so as to address the current situation and needs of older people.

Fiji

The Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS) conducted a series of consultations with various media agencies during September. On 24 September, FCOSS hosted a cocktail event to raise awareness about Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the UN convention on older people's rights. Participants also discussed issues such as poverty, inequality and climate change.

On 1 October, HON. Rosy Akbar, the Minister for Women's and Children's Poverty Alleviation gave a presentation on poverty, inequality and climate change as they affect the elderly to mark the International Day of Older Persons. Community consultations were organised at district levels as well.



Mongolia

In Mongolia, the Centre for Human Rights and Development (CHRD) in partnership with the Mongolian Women's Fund Campaign (MWFC) took part in an Age Demands Action (ADA) campaign for the first time. Several activities were organised in October.

On 5 October, the two groups held a National Advocacy Event with the participation of key decision makers in the capital Ulaanbaatar. Press releases and interviews were distributed to media in the country, reaching an audience of approximately 300,000. Apart from this event, the CHRD and MWFC organised awareness raising activities and mobilised community-based organisations in suburban districts and rural provinces throughout the month of October.

Myanmar

On 1 October 2015, 488 participants from Older People Self-help Groups (OPSHGs) across the country, government departments, UN agencies, as well as international NGOs, and civil society organisations (CSOs) joined together to celebrate an International Day of Older Persons event hosted by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement. The event focussed on the integral role of older people in society and advocated the protection of those who are particularly vulnerable and in need of support. Her Excellency Dr. Daw Myat Myat Ohn Khin

concluded the event by encouraging people of all ages to work towards a safer environment for older people.

Philippines

To mark the 25th International Day of Older Persons and Elderly Filipino week, the Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE) organised the Annual Walk for Life to campaign for an improved social pension for the elderly, and in particular to demand a Universal Social Pension.

On the same day, an exhibition and photo booth was set up to provide information on the results of the Social Pension Review conducted by COSE and HelpAge and also to solicit the general public's and older people's opinions on a Universal Social Pension.

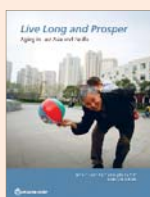
Vietnam

In Hanoi, the Vietnamese Association of the Elderly (VAE) organised a meeting to introduce the content of the new draft of the UN Convention on Older People. Representatives of older people were invited to attend the meeting.

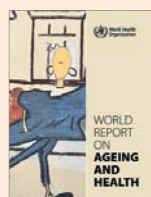
In the evening, a live show entitled "Dream of Golden Age" took place and around 1,500 people attended. During this event, which was broadcast on national television, the chairwoman of the VAE presented the key messages from the morning's meeting to government leaders. The event was broadcast live on national television.

Resources

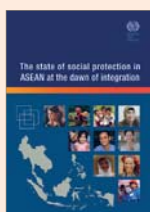
Publications



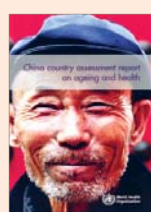
**Live Long and Prosper:
Aging in East Asia Pacific**
World Bank



**World report on Ageing
and Health**
World Health Organization
(WHO)



**The state of social protection
in ASEAN at the dawn of
integration**
International Labour
Organization (ILO)



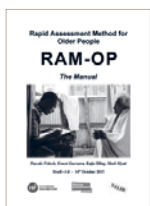
**China country
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World Health Organization
(WHO)



**Review of good practice in
national policies and laws on
ageing**
HelpAge East Asia/ Pacific



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comprehensive policy
frameworks on ageing in
Asia and the Pacific**
HelpAge East Asia/ Pacific



**Rapid Assessment Method for
Older People (RAM-OP)**
HelpAge International



**Climate change in an ageing
world**
HelpAge International

Blogs

Older People's Association in South-East Asia (<http://bit.ly/1JUnrBv>)
Kenneth Howse, Oxford University

Learning, sharing and connecting at the IAGG Asia/Oceania 2015 Congress (<http://bit.ly/1OKrwKE>)
Caitlin Littleton, HelpAge International

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HelpAge International helps older people claim their rights, challenge discrimination and overcome poverty, so that they can lead dignified, secure, active and healthy lives.

AgeNews East Asia/Pacific aims to highlight issues of ageing and the rights of older people in East Asia/Pacific as well as share experiences of working with and for older people.

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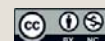
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