

AgeNews

East Asia/Pacific

*Sharing information
to strengthen
HelpAge Network*

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HelpAge

global network

Caroline Canham/HelpAge International

Editorial

For the times they are a-changin' (Bob Dylan song)

Yes, times are changing and we are changing with the times. The first thing we need to do is to understand the nature of those changes. The second is to act collaboratively. This is valid for change at all levels. Global warming, conflict, migration and refugees or ageing populations represent riddles of the 21st century that have no solution in the formulas of the 20th century. But in all cases change or adaptation requires consensus; it needs the gathering of wills.

With this consideration in mind, the next regional conference on ageing will take place in Hanoi, on 6–8 September, focusing on the economic implications of ageing. The key purpose is to advance in our joint understanding of the economic and fiscal implications of ageing and to promote collaborative action to adapt to this changed situation. You can read more about this event in the inside pages. The regional conference will also be a unique opportunity to connect or link between people and organisations, thus promoting not only a sense of direction but also a sense of collaborative work.

HelpAge, as the Secretariat of the network, will also change. We will strengthen our work with and for the network and will streamline our own operations. We will do so this year, while at the same time continuing our engagement in key processes and strategic involvement in key areas. A change in these conditions is always challenging, like redesigning an airplane while flying. But this can be done and will be done so as to have a network that continues to be a beacon of hope for ageing populations in years to come.

We hope to see you in Hanoi.

Eduardo Kliken
Regional Director, East Asia/Pacific
HelpAge International

Expert consultation meeting: brainstorming on economic implications of ageing

► Regional

In preparation for the upcoming HelpAge Asia/Pacific Regional Conference on “the Economic Implications of Ageing”, a meeting of experts was held from 29 February to 1 March 2016, with 11 high level participants from the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the International Labour Organization, academics from Vietnam, Malaysia, Japan, and the government of Thailand, and two others joining by teleconference (Mr John Beard from the World Health Organization and Mr Robert Palacios from the World Bank).

The purpose of the meeting was to develop a shared understanding of what the economic implications of ageing are and to find ways of sharing these implications with a wider audience. There were brief presentations on the effects of ageing on economic growth and health and a very enlightening question and answer session on pension systems.

The working definition was decided as follows: “The economic implications of ageing refer to the effect of ageing on future performance of the economy, the wellbeing of individuals and the fiscal space of government budgets”. Within this definition, three areas of enquiry are macroeconomy (labour force, productivity etc.), income security including pensions, and health. Each of these areas can be viewed through the lens of impact on macroeconomy, wellbeing and fiscal space.

(CL)

ASEAN+3 Regional Conference on “Age-Friendly Environment”

► Regional

This event was organised by Chiang Mai University’s Faculty of Architecture, Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Nursing, Faculty of Humanities and the Social Research Institute in collaboration with the Department of Older Persons, from 25-26 February, in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Participants from 10 ASEAN countries along with Japan, the People’s Republic of China and the Republic of South Korea, joined the conference. HelpAge International Regional Programme Managers, Clare Danby and Usa Khiewrord were also invited to take part in the meeting.

The conference discussed an ageing society from the perspective of an ‘Age-Friendly Environment’. Case study presentations from seven countries gave information on national demographics, policies, implementation and best practice.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), an ‘age-friendly environment’ is an environment that fosters health and well-being and the participation of people as they age. Age-friendly environments are accessible, equitable, inclusive, safe, secure, and supportive. Such environments can help to reduce discrimination against older people. An age-friendly environment can increase the safety of natural and created environments as well as the security and protection of older people in the community.

The Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Ageing: Empowering Older Persons in ASEAN was committed to promoting age-friendly communities/cities in the region through sustainable and accessible infrastructure. It is important that the concept of an age-friendly environment is well understood by governments and key stakeholders so that in its implementation, countries provide appropriate solutions to create an environment that is inclusive of and beneficial to older people.

(BM)

Prince Mahidol Awards Conference 2016

► Global

The Prince Mahidol Award Conference (PMAC) is an annual international conference focusing on policy-related public health issues of global significance. The latest conference was hosted from 26 -31 January 2016 by the Prince Mahidol Award Foundation, the Royal Thai Government and other prestigious global partners. The theme of the conference was “Priority Setting for Universal Health Coverage”.

The conference is influential among people working in international public health, particularly with academics and governments. The majority of government participation came from the South Asia/ East Asia Pacific region but there was also representation from across the world. Two representatives from HelpAge East Asia/Pacific attended the conference, along with participants from other international organisations.

The predominant message of the conference was that priority setting and Universal Health Coverage (UHC) are processes that never end as technologies and contexts are constantly changing. In terms of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Universal Health Coverage,



PRINCE MAHIDOL
AWARD CONFERENCE 2016
PRIORITY SETTING

the sense was that the UN and governments are overwhelmed when it comes to deciding where to start in thinking through country planning processes. The general feeling at the conference was that we need to start somewhere and learn from others’ experience where possible. There were also doubts about the appropriacy of health technology assessment/cost effectiveness, given a renewed focus on person-centred health and outcomes, and although the importance of assessment and cost effectiveness of preventative and promotive interventions were highlighted, few examples were given.

In terms of universal health coverage priority setting practice, it was pointed out that in countries with limited capacity in terms of human and financial resources to generate evidence and to use this to

make decisions on coverage, global evidence may not fit well or be applicable in the context of a lower income country. Where countries have some capacity, seven case studies in the Asia Pacific showed silo based decision-making, poor decision-making criteria, strict controls on research and the undue influence of ‘expert opinion’. These priority setting processes were weak in terms of transparency and stakeholder engagement. Gaps were also found between priority setting and actually having the health system capacity, particularly the primary health care capacity, to deliver prioritized benefit packages.

(CD)

Visit the website: <http://pmaconference.mahidol.ac.th>

Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors: The Global South Meeting in India

► Global

Social protection is a basic human right. It is a proven tool for reducing poverty and inequality and promoting inclusive development. Recognising the important role of social protection, including the UN social protection floor initiative, the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors (SPF) was formed by a large group of non-governmental organisations from all over the world in 2012 to advocate at different levels for the improvement and expansion of social protection. The coalition has been effective in its collective international advocacy efforts and has contributed to progress in social protection including the explicit inclusion of social protection in the Sustainable Development Goals. HelpAge is an active member of the coalition, focusing on promoting social protection, especially social pensions for older people through

its network partners in different countries and regions.

The Global South Meeting on 27-29 January 2016 in New Delhi, India, hosted by the Programme on Women’s Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (PWESCR) with support from Bread for the World, was an attempt by the coalition to initiate a similar advocacy process in the region. The meeting aimed to enhance understanding of the Social Protection Floor concept, encourage good practices, face challenges and determine how civil society organisations (CSOs) can effectively engage in global, regional and national advocacy for SPF and social security for all. Nearly 30 representatives from Africa, Asia, the Middle East and South America representing CSOs, networks and individuals working on social security and social protection issues, including HelpAge and network



staff from HelpAge East Asia/Pacific Regional Office as well as the Myanmar country office, and the Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE) in the Philippines attended the meeting.

The meeting produced a set of recommendations from the perspective of the global south that calls for universal social protection floors. Please see the full recommendations at <http://ageingasia.org/?p=8300>.

(UK)

Indonesia launches its Dementia Plan

► Indonesia

Indonesia launched its National Dementia Plan on 10 March 2016 in Jakarta during a ceremony at the Ministry of Health, pledging approximately US\$105,000 to support implementation of the plan during the first year.

It is the first dementia plan in Southeast Asia and the 24th globally. Key elements of the plan include:

- Awareness, risk reduction, promotion of a healthy lifestyle
- Advocacy – human rights for people with dementia and their caregivers
- Access to information and quality services
- Early detection, diagnosis, holistic management of cognitive problems
- Strengthening human resources and overall system – infrastructure
- Promoting a life-cycle approach
- Supporting research on cognitive and dementia issues

During development of the plan, many consultations were held. Eva Sabdono, Director of Yayasan Emong Lansia (YEL) – HelpAge partner in Indonesia, was involved and provided comments representing the voices of older people along the process.

“This plan marks a significant milestone in our fight against this disease in terms of raising awareness and reducing stigma. We will be working hard to ensure all partners and stakeholders contribute to improving the quality of life of people with dementia and supporting their caregivers, promoting healthy lifestyles and exploring methods of reducing the risk of falling prey to the disease”, said DY Suharya, founder and Executive Director of Alzheimer Indonesia.

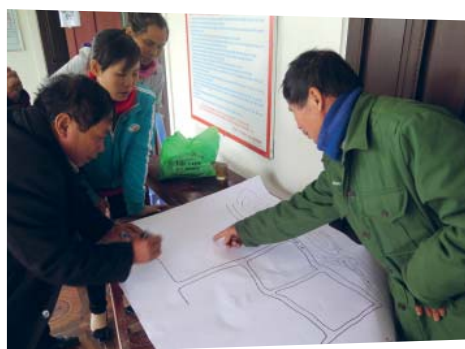
Marc Wortmann, Executive Director of Alzheimer’s Disease International, based in London, witnessed the launch and stated that “By launching this plan,



Indonesia has taken an important step towards preparing for the ageing of its population. There are already 1.2 million people with dementia in the country and this number is expected to increase to over 4 million by the year 2050 if we do not find a cure or ways to delay the onset of the disease. I hope the implementation of this plan soon starts to benefit all these people and their families.”

(DS)

Beaming start for Disaster Resilience project in Vietnam



► Vietnam

Eight three-day training sessions on Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation (CBDRR & CCA) for local partners and members from 80 Intergenerational Self-Help Clubs (ISHC) community groups were carried out in Ha Tinh Province, Vietnam.

These training sessions, facilitated by HelpAge International in Vietnam (HAIV) which is part of a consortium supported by the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), marked the start of field activities for project VIE056. The

consortium also includes the American Red Cross, Catholic Relief Services, Plan International and Save the Children International. The coalition aims to enhance resilience to natural hazards in four provinces of Central Vietnam. As a member, HAIV is set to integrate CBDRR and CCA into 40 communes using 80 existing ISHCs that have been established in Ha Tinh Province since 2010.

Data from a survey conducted by HAIV and local partners in four targeted districts and one municipality (Nghi Xuan, Loc Ha, Cam Xuyen, Ky Anh

districts and Ky Anh municipality) have shown that in the past 5 years, on average, each community had faced around 3 major disasters per year ranging from typhoons, floods to drought, soil and water salinisation.

This emphasises an ongoing need for better preparation in order to reduce the community’s vulnerability to recurring disasters; a role in which older people are certainly resourceful due to their accumulated knowledge, experience, and skills.

“I feel much more confident after the training and I believe that I can implement what I’ve learned here today to respond to future disasters.”

Nguyen Anh Duc, vice-chairman of No. 6 ISHC, Thach Bang Commune, Loc Ha District, Ha Tinh Province, Vietnam.

(NTS)

HelpAge Asia/Pacific Regional Conference 2016

We are pleased to announce the upcoming HelpAge Asia/Pacific Regional Conference 2016 to be held in Hanoi, Vietnam from 6-8 September 2016.

The conference is organised by HelpAge International in collaboration with United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the national host, Vietnam's Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs.

The theme of this year's conference is **The Economic Implications of Ageing**.

It is now commonly accepted that changing demographics will have a profound economic impact on the Asia/Pacific region, although the pace of population ageing varies substantially by country.

Governments, civil society and the private sector need to anticipate changes by adapting policies, services and programmes affecting areas such as health care, the labour market, pensions, savings and consumption.

This multi-stakeholder conference will discuss this topic from three perspectives:

1. The implications of ageing for macroeconomic performance: A common negative assumption is that population ageing will lower economic growth in coming decades, partly because of a shrinking and less-productive workforce. Providing an objective and evidence-based contribution to this debate, this conference will highlight a handful of key variables that will affect future economic growth in ageing societies and offer a few clear messages for governments on how to adapt to economic challenges and prepare for economic opportunities arising from the coming demographic changes.
2. The implications of ageing for equitably shared growth: Governments in the Asia/Pacific region have historically been focused on economic growth, with remarkable success. Only recently have inequality and the fair distribution of economic benefits come to the fore. Even if Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is rising rapidly, vulnerable families may be slipping behind, and the costs associated with dependency among older household members can add to that vulnerability. The conference will examine the critical role of measures to ensure that economic growth is shared equitably and that growth reduces poverty and vulnerability among ageing societies.
3. How the ageing demographic will affect public budgets is of huge concern to governments. For example, the rising costs of providing health care or long-term care for an ageing population and ensuring income security through sustainable pension schemes are making some governments worry about future debt obligations and unsustainable trajectories in public expenditure. The conference will examine key steps governments can take to maintain manageable budget trends while honouring a commitment to improve the welfare of older citizens as their numbers increase.



HelpAge
global network



Every two years, the HelpAge Network hosts an Asia/Pacific regional conference on Asia with a view of developing consensus and promoting collaboration on key themes of importance to improving the wellbeing of older people.

The last conference in 2014, held in Chiang Mai, Thailand discussed the perception and the role of older people as a resource. More than 200 participants from different sectors attended the conference. The conference summary and report is available at <http://ageingasia.org/regional-conference-2014/>

This year, the regional conference "The Economic Implications of Ageing" will be held from 6-8 September 2016, at the Sheraton Hanoi Hotel in Vietnam.

If you have any enquiry, please contact: events@helpageasia.org

For more information on the conference, view our official website:

www.ageingasiaconf2016.org

(PM)



Let's note the date
and stay tuned.

Consultation meetings on the National Social Pension System in Thailand

► Thailand

Five civil society networks, namely the Older People's Network, the Informal Workers' Network, the People's Movement on National Security Network, the Slum Network of the Four Regions, and the Community Welfare Network in Thailand, in collaboration with HelpAge East Asia/Pacific organised three consultation meetings on the national old age pension system with invited academics and civil society organisation (CSO) networks' members in the Southern region on 17 March, in Bangkok on 18 March, and in the Northern region on 31 March.

Several academics, legal experts, economic experts, social protection experts and public health experts from

the Prince of Songkhla University, the National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA), the Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI), the Health Insurance System Research Office (HISRO), and Chiang Mai University joined the panel discussion in those different meetings. A total of 87 CSO network representatives and seven academics participated in those three events.

The main discussion during the meetings concerned possible ways to improve the current national pension system and challenges regarding how to finance the system, including taxation reform and savings promotion to support a higher level of old age pension benefit. After



each panel discussion by the invited speakers, the CSO networks held meetings to discuss ways of developing an appropriate pension system and how to advocate CSO network's strategy on national pension system reform at the regional and national level.

(TS)

In brief

A country of old people: Dealing with ageing societies in Asia

On 23 February, the Foreign Correspondent's Club of Thailand (FCCT) held a panel discussion to explore the options for Thailand and other countries facing the tectonic demographic shift towards an ageing society.

Representatives from the Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI) and the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB), along with Mr Eduardo Klien, HelpAge Regional Director, were invited to present different ageing scenarios in the region and the implications of this shift in all countries in the region. There has been a lot of media interest in demographic change, which will have a profound impact on the macro-economy, households, individual behavior and educational systems.

(PN)



Listen to the panel discussion
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p0-EEZMJfT8>

Congratulations to Thailand NGO Awards 2015 winner

► Thailand

The Foundation for Older Persons' Development (FOPDEV) won a Thailand NGO Award in 2015 along with seven other non-profit organisations. The event was organised by the Resource Alliance and Thai Internet Foundation, with funding support from the Rockefeller Foundation. It took place on 18 March 2016 in Bangkok, Thailand to celebrate the most effective NGOs in Thailand in 2015.

The awards were divided into three categories, according to the size of organisations based on their revenue:

- Large Organisation: annual revenue over 10 million Baht
- Medium Organisation: annual revenue between 2 – 10 million Baht
- Small Organisation: annual revenue of under 2 million Baht

Applications from NGOs across the country were considered by the regional committee, then the shortlisted organisations were interviewed and evaluated on five criteria: 1) Programmes and impact, 2) Resource management (Human, financial and other resources), 3) Good governance, accountability and transparency, 4) Resource mobilisation/



Fundraising sustainability plans, and 5) Overall impact and sustainability.

FOPDEV was a finalist for the 'Medium' category and, moreover, won the popular vote for the "People's Choice Award" for having the most attractive exhibition among the finalists.

In addition to the recognition plaque and certificate, FOPDEV was awarded a prize of 100,000 Baht (US\$2,845). As a National Award winner, the FOPDEV is also eligible to enter the Global Awards in Fundraising Competition which will be hosted by the Resource Alliance in October 2016.

(WWW)



National Forum on Social Protection and Ageing in Myanmar

► Myanmar

The first ever national forum on “Social Protection and Ageing” was organised by HelpAge Myanmar, with the collaboration of Older People Self-Help Groups across the country, the National Older People’s Federation, Ageing Network Committee members, and the Department of Social Welfare including other local authorities from 14-16 December 2015, in Bagan Bo Village, Patheingyi Township, Ayeyarwaddy Region. A total of 150 participants attended this event.

On the first day, the concept of social protection, progress and specific issues facing each community were discussed, leading to ways to expand the Social Protection Strategic Plan, which was approved by the former President. The role and responsibilities of Older People’s Self-Help Groups (OPSHGs) and their linkage with related government departments were also discussed.

On the following days, the National Older People’s Federation led a discussion reviewing the 2015 annual plan and the yearly budget for activities carried out by each township network committee (TNC). Then all federation members, TNCs, and

members of the Ageing Network Committee provided feedback on last year’s activities and worked together on the 2016 workplan, including the OPSHG replication action plan and the participation of INGOs, NGOs and the government in the plan.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Officer of HelpAge, Czarina Pan Po said, “This national forum is really valuable for our older people members as they can all gather together in the same place at the same time to exchange their experiences and difficulties, and they can generate more concrete action plans as a group. I found out that they are very willing to continue hosting the forum in the coming years too. Some of the townships have already begun preparing for next year’s meeting, such as making plans for fundraising activities. As a HelpAge staff member, I am very happy and proud to take part in this kind of event to promote the role of our ageing population.”

The second national forum will be held in November 2016, in Pyin Oo Lwin Township, Mandalay Region.

(PS)



Phyu Sin/HelpAge International

Events

Community Driven Development (CDD) training in Hanoi open for applications

14-18 November 2016
Hanoi, Vietnam

Community Driven Development (CDD) is a one-week capacity building programme with field visits to foster sustainable community driven development. This training is an opportunity for development practitioners, change agents and community members to understand various approaches to community driven development and to develop the proper tools and abilities to put knowledge into practice.

The course is offered by HelpAge International, Vietnam country office (HAIV), which has over 10 years experience in community driven development (including OPAs) and capacity building of development practitioners at national and international levels.

This expertise will be shared and transferred to participants using a participatory approach, case studies and group focused learning, including field visits to demonstrate how the concepts are applied to achieve sustainable results.

Application forms can be downloaded from <http://ageingasia.org/cdd-training/>

Optimizing Healthcare Quality: Teamwork in Education, Research, and Practice

22-24 June 2016
Chiang Mai, Thailand

With support from the China Medical Board and the WHO Thailand office, the Faculty of Nursing, Chiang Mai University will organise an international conference entitled “Optimizing Healthcare Quality: Teamwork in Education, Research, and Practice” from 22 to 24 June 2016.

This three-day international conference will focus on ways to improve teamwork within healthcare services. It will serve as an opportunity for healthcare practitioners to gather and share experiences, lessons learned, successes and challenges in order to create more efficient and coordinated interprofessional healthcare teams.

Several one-hour workshops and panels will be offered, which will present an opportunity to learn more about a particular topic or to deepen practitioners’ skills.

For more details, please visit <http://www.teamworkconf2016.com/>

Age Demands Action on Diabetes

Age Demands Action provides a platform for older people around the world to campaign on issues most important to them. Whether at the local, national or international level older people's voices are being heard. Older men and women mobilise all year round but their activities gain momentum around three key dates in the year.

- World Health Day 7 April
- World Elder Abuse Awareness Day 15 June
- International Day of Older Persons 1 October

Beat diabetes

This World Health Day people of all ages came together to campaign on diabetes and other health related issues. Older men and women want policy makers and service providers to know that the prevalence of diabetes in older age groups is high and that this prevalence is growing rapidly.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) diabetes related deaths are expected to rise by over 50 per cent in the next ten years¹ and so it will not just be today's older people affected by this non-communicable disease.

Currently global data sets do not routinely record data for older people, meaning there are low levels of awareness of diabetes amongst older people themselves as well as amongst service providers. This means older people are missing out on early detection, treatment and care, increasing the risk of the condition worsening and developing other associated health conditions.

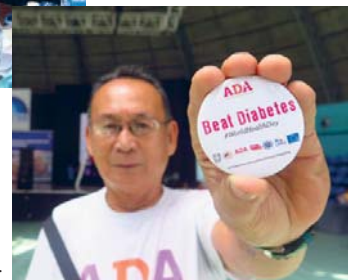
As well as meeting Ministers of Health and health care specialists on World Health Day, older campaigners called for policy makers to recognise that **'what gets measured gets done'**.

According to the International Diabetes Federation, approximately 10 per cent of the East Asia and Pacific region's health budget was spent on diabetes-related care in 2015.²

This year campaign partners in Cambodia, Mongolia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam, raised awareness of the increasing prevalence of diabetes and the need to take action on it.



100 older people received a free diabetes check-up in Vietnam.



Older people joined an ADA campaign organised by the Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE) in the Philippines.

Key activities taking place:

In **Cambodia**, the HelpAge office hosted a one-day workshop for local older people's associations (OPAs) on the most effective way to make an impact in their campaigning activities.

The Centre for Human Rights and Development in **Mongolia** met representatives of the Ministry of Health and hosted a group of older and younger campaigners to raise awareness of diabetes among the public.

In the **Philippines** our partner, the Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE), hosted a forum with healthcare officials to determine policy gaps in long term care. Older people themselves spoke of their personal experiences.

Our campaign partner in **Thailand**, FOPDEV (Foundation for Older Persons' Development), presented an action plan on diabetes prevention for older people to local health authorities and marched with representatives from local OPAs to promote the need to implement such a plan.

In **Vietnam**, the Vietnam Association of the Elderly (VAE) held a meeting with doctors who shared information on diabetes and nutrition to help prevent the condition. A medical check-up and blood test for 100 older people also took place.

Find out what our partners did on 7 April by following us on twitter and liking us on Facebook. If you would like to know more about campaigning have a look at our website or email the campaigns team campaigns@helpage.org.



1. WHO, 10 facts about diabetes, 2014
 2. International Diabetes Federation, IDF Diabetes Atlas 7th Edition, 2015



Interview

Take 5 minutes with Dr Hai-Rim Shin and Ms Anjana Bhushan from the World Health Organization (WHO)

Together on the front lines against diabetes

On World Health Day 2016, the World Health Organization calls for action to halt the rise in diabetes.

We are privileged to have an interview with Dr Hai-Rim Shin, Regional Coordinator, Noncommunicable Diseases and Health Promotion and Ms Anjana Bhushan from the World Health Organization Regional Office for the Western Pacific (WPRO) on the topic of diabetes and ageing.

Why is Diabetes a major concern in the Western Pacific Region?

Globally, it is estimated that 422 million adults aged 18 and above were living with diabetes in 2014. This is a significant increase from 1980 when the number of people living with diabetes was 108 million. Almost a third of this number (131 million) comes from the WHO Western Pacific Region.

With Asia/Pacific being home of a third of people living with Diabetes, what is the most urgent step for governments and individuals?

Governments should continue to commit to addressing diabetes as a priority in national noncommunicable disease (NCD) responses in terms of legislation, regulation, financing, service delivery and surveillance.

In terms of prevention, individuals should work towards maintaining a healthy body weight, eating a balanced diet of fresh and whole foods, engaging in regular physical activity and reducing exposure to tobacco. These steps can prevent the onset of diabetes or reduce its complications.

The region is an 'Ageing Society', what are appropriate responses to NCDs?

Tackling ageing and health involves ensuring healthy ageing across the life course and **preventing disease and functional decline among older people.**

WHO advocates a **life-course approach to healthy ageing**. Good health in older age depends largely on choices made earlier in life.

Ensuring **age-friendly environments** can empower older people to maintain their health and wellbeing. Depending on the policies and actions in place, the economic, physical, political and social environment can enable older people to maintain their functional independence, health and wellbeing.



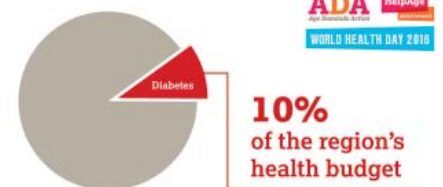
The **health system needs to be re-oriented** to adequately respond to NCDs and older people's other health needs. Age-friendly health systems can promote universal health coverage through health sector leadership on ageing and health, ensuring a continuum of care through integrated service delivery, appropriately skilled health workers, equitable health financing and essential age-friendly health technologies.

What is the economic implication of NCDs?

The direct annual cost of diabetes to the world is more than US\$ 827 billion. From 2003 to 2013, the total global health-care spending on diabetes more than tripled due to the significant increase in the number of people with diabetes.

What can civil society do to tackle this issue?

Civil society is an important stakeholder in the fight against diabetes. They can raise awareness about the public health burden caused by diabetes and advocate for policy development, allocation of resources and behavior change to name a few things.



Approximately USD106 billion to USD191 billion was spent on diabetes-related care in the East Asia and the Pacific region in 2015, approximately 10% of the region's total health budget.

Source: International Diabetes Federation

#AgeingEcon

For the full version of the interview, see <http://ageingasia.org/interview-together-on-the-front-line-against-diabetes>

Vietnam's National Committee on Ageing reports progress on policies concerning the elderly

► Vietnam

On 15 March 2016, Vietnam's Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Vu Duc Dam, met members of the Vietnam National Committee on Aging (VNCA) in a biannual meeting in Hanoi to discuss how to increase health insurance cover among older people and to share feedback on the progress of the National Proposal for an Intergenerational Self-Help Club (ISHC) model. At present, 76 per cent of the general population of Vietnam has health insurance. This includes those covered by social health insurance (the poor, almost poor, and those over 80 years of age). However, people aged 60-79 have a lower than average coverage rate, with only 60 per cent holding health insurance. The Deputy Prime Minister asked the Vietnam Association of the Elderly (VAE) and other relevant agencies in the healthcare sector and people's unions to make a



concerted effort to increase enrolment in health insurance for older people, a policy that the ISHC model promotes, recognising the ill-effects of high out-of-pocket payments for health care for the uninsured.

Later, Ms. Cu Thi Hau, Chairwoman of VAE and Deputy Chairman of VNCA, reported on progress of the National Proposal for an Intergenerational Self-Help Club (ISHC) model, a proposal which aims to increase mobilisation of local/international funds to replicate ISHCs throughout the country. This aims

to support the implementation of the National Plan of Action on Ageing 2012-2020 which targets 50% of communes to have an ISHC by 2020. Five organisations, which are the Ministry of Labour, Invalid and Social Affairs; the Ministry of Health; the Ministry of Investment and Planning, as well as the National Assembly and the VNCA have reviewed and made comments on the proposal. With support from the related ministries, the VAE has asked the Government to consider approval of the proposal soon.

(LMH)

HelpAge Cambodia's Climate Change responses

► Cambodia

According to the World Risk Report 2014¹, Cambodia is one of the countries most seriously affected by climate change and is highly vulnerable to natural disasters, with regular drought and flooding.

Because of this situation, HelpAge Cambodia launched a three-year Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction project in October 2015, with financial support from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (or BMZ) and HelpAge Deutschland (HAD). The project aims to build coordinated, age-inclusive, disaster resilient communities to reduce underlying vulnerabilities to climate related hazards through implementing disaster risk reduction activities, with a specific focus on improving disaster preparedness and response, and strengthening resilient livelihoods.

The key objective of the project is the establishment and strengthening of Older People's Associations (OPAs) to assess their disaster context and to work with



community stakeholders to develop age-inclusive disaster risk reduction plans for strengthening community resilience. The project will focus on providing training and input for farmers to increase their crop productivity, resilience and diversification and improve water resource management.

During the past three months, the project has provided a 10-day training course on resilient farming techniques to 10 master trainers from the provincial department of agriculture and OPA federations. Following that, the master trainers

continued to provide this training to 150 farmers selected from 10 target villages. In addition, DRR/CCA issues have been brought to the attention of OPA management committee members by project staff. Eleven community ponds are under construction in 10 target villages in order to improve farming and domestic water consumption for beneficiaries of the project.

(TV)

1. <http://ehs.unu.edu/news/news/world-risk-report-2014.html#files>

Regional Symposium on “Income Security of Older Persons in an Ever-Changing World”



► Malaysia

The National Council of Senior Citizens Organisations Malaysia (NACSCOM) together with HelpAge International jointly organised a regional symposium on 11th October 2015 at the Seri Pacific Hotel, Kuala Lumpur to commemorate the 25th Anniversary on the founding of NACSCOM.

The theme of the symposium was “Income security of older persons in an ever-changing world”. The objective was to discuss issues related to the financial security of older persons in view of the growing population of senior citizens and to alert the relevant authorities of the need for action on this issue.

The Symposium began with welcoming remarks by NACSCOM President, Datuk Dr Soon Ting Kueh, Regional Director of HelpAge International, Mr Eduardo Klien and Deputy Under-Secretary, Mr Chua Choon Hwa, representing the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development.

Five presentations were delivered, from the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, the Institute of

Gerontology and three international presenters from UNESCAP, HelpAge International and the International Longevity Centre, Singapore.

The symposium was a success, with excellent presentations by the speakers and an enthusiastic response from the participants. After each session, the participants raised important questions that were answered appropriately by the presenters.

As concluding remarks, Datuk Dr Soon summarised the issues raised at this symposium. Firstly, Malaysia, as well as other countries in the region, is experiencing rapid growth of its ageing population and governments need to pay more attention to the financial and socio-economic issues affecting older persons. Secondly, he emphasised the role of the family in caring for the elderly. Finally, he advocated more concerted efforts to enhance a more inclusive society engaging the individuals and family, government and corporate sectors as well as civil society, for the betterment of the community and society as a whole.

(STK)

Stories from the field

Fighting poverty with her little goat herd



Luong Thi Thoat, a 63-year-old woman of Thai ethnicity, and her husband are the senior members of a poor family residing in Xuan Thanh village, Ngoc Phung Commune, Thuong Xuan District, Thanh Hoa. In addition, the couple have four orphaned grandchildren to take care of. At first, the family’s farm consisted of two goats. However, due to the lack of adequate investments, Thoat’s family didn’t manage to achieve the necessary economic stability with their livestock.

As a member of a local Intergenerational Self-Help Club (ISHC), Thoat asked for two more goats as ‘income generating activities’ (IGA) revolving input with a value of 4 million dong (US\$177).

“Raising these goats does not cost much since they mostly feed on grass and leaves. Having dealt with previous problems concerning high medical costs for the herd, I decided to apply traditional herbal medicine techniques in order to protect them from diseases” said Thoat. As a result, the family had more money to spend on improving food and shelters for the herd.

The results have been positive so far as the goats have begun to breed. It is estimated that Thoat would be able to sell her goats for three million dong each after six months, which equals nearly 1 million dong in profit. The herd is capable of producing around eight offspring in a year. This means that the family would be able to gain approximately nine million dong of profit in the next 12 months. “The input has been so helpful to us. Without it, we would have never got out of the situation we were in. Since I am over 60, I can only ask for regular bank loans under the name of another person. Even if I did so, success would still be uncertain.”

(NTS)

Resources

Publications



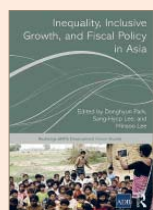
Imagine Tomorrow
World Health Organization



Closing the health gaps for the elderly: Promoting Health Equity and Social Inclusion in Thailand
World Bank



Assessing Results of UNFPA's Piloted Community-based Model on Care for Older Persons in Ben Tre and Hai Duong Provinces (English translation)
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)



Inequality, Inclusive Growth and Fiscal Policy in Asia
Asian Development Bank (ADB)



Good Practices and Barriers in the Use of Data for Policy and Advocacy On Ageing in Asia-Pacific
HelpAge East Asia/ Pacific



The Philippine Social Pension at Four Years: Insights and Recommendations
The Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE)



5 keys to successful Typhoon Haiyan Emergency Response
HelpAge East Asia/ Pacific



Universal social pension: feasibility in the Philippines
The Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE)

Blogs

Data-driven policy and advocacy on ageing: good practices and lessons learned (<http://bit.ly/1PHaNW1>)
Bjorn Gelders, Development Pathways

Philippines must move towards a universal social pension (<http://bit.ly/1TkqQHf>)
Emily Beridico, the Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE)

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AgeNews Editor
HelpAge International East Asia/Pacific
6 Soi 17 Nimmanhemmin Road
Suthep, Muang, Chiang Mai 50200 THAILAND
hai@helpageasia.org

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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.

HelpAge International East Asia/Pacific

6 Soi 17 Nimmanhemmin Road
Suthep, Muang, Chiang Mai 50200
THAILAND

Tel: +66 53 225440, 225081

Fax: +66 53 225441, 894214

hai@helpageasia.org

www.helpage.org

Contributors

Baralee Meesuk (BM)
Beth Howgate (BH)
Caitlin Littleton (CL)
Clare Danby (CD)
DY Suharya (DS)
Eduardo Klien (EK)
Le Minh Hai (LMH)
Nguyen Tung Son (NTS)
Panitee Nuykram (PN)
Peter Morrison (PM)
Phyu Sin Thant Lu (PS)
Soon Ting Kueh (STK)
Tassanee Surawanna (TS)
Tum Vira (TV)
Usa Khiewrord (UK)
Wiraphat Wilaisilpdelert (WW)

Editor

Ron Emmons

Coordinator and designer

Wajee Ruangpornwisut

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