

Ageways

ISSUE

58

Practical issues in ageing and development

DECEMBER 2001



Home care and volunteers

*The growing need for
care at home*

Setting up a programme

*Successful volunteer-based
projects*

Learning to be a carer

HelpAge
International

Leading global action on ageing

Comment

Care and companionship

Welcome to *Ageways* 58 – and the new format. This issue highlights the growing need for home care for older people and, in the International Year of Volunteers, the crucial role that volunteers can play. It shows that volunteering can be highly rewarding, both for the older person and the volunteer.

A key point, however, is that home care does not come free. Volunteers themselves, whether family members or from the community, need support and recognition, and there is an important role for paid home carers. More state support will be needed to develop and sustain home care initiatives.

If you have any comments on this issue or wish to share your experience with other readers, we would be glad to hear from you.

Celia Till
Editor

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Future issues

The theme of *Ageways* 59 (March 2002) will be violence and abuse.

Letters

Benefit of volunteers

I saw *Ageways* for the first time yesterday, and was fascinated with its content. I work on a voluntary basis as the project coordinator of Nightingales Elders Enrichment Centre (NEEC), a new concept in agecare in Bangalore, India.

NEEC is benefiting from the involvement of volunteers, and I take a lot of interest in encouraging them. What one cannot do individually for the elders in our society, we can do collectively through centres such as ours.

Vilasini Kumar, Project Coordinator (Honorary), Nightingales Elders Enrichment Centre, Bangalore, India. Email: vilakku@satyam.net.in

Literacy brings pleasure

I was pleased to read about literacy for older people in *Ageways* 56. My Nepalese mother-in-law, in common with many women in Nepal, did not go to school. In Britain, something stimulated my husband to spend an hour each evening teaching his mother to read and write.

My mother-in-law is now able to write to us from Nepal. She is delighted with her new empowerment because she does not have to wait on other people's convenience for reading and writing letters, and she does not need to share her private thoughts to us with interpreters. Once she began to read and write, my mother-in-law also took up line drawing. She developed an intricate style of her own, the detail in each picture clearly expressing many thoughts and stories.

Now, ten years on, we take great pleasure in the letters and pictures we receive from Nepal.

Ruth Hope, daughter-in-law of Mrs Lachshmi Devi Oli, Budhabare Village Ward #9, Jhapa, Nepal.



Shanti CAM

Community care in Sri Lanka.

Family support is crucial

Our organisation has, for the past 14 years, been implementing a community-based programme for elders, serving an impoverished shanty community of about 20,000 people, living along the canal banks of Colombo-South.

The home care programme is supported by a network of elders' day centres, located within the community. Community workers and volunteers form the cornerstones of this programme. We are pleased that HelpAge Sri Lanka provided financial support for three years.

We wish to share with readers one aspect of our experience – the importance of promoting a family support system. This is necessary to build up confidence of the family and carers in looking after their elders.

Rev Fr Michael Catalano, General Animator, and Dr Terence Perera, Animator, Health and Elders, Shanti Community Animation Movement (Shanti CAM), 106/3, Saranankara Road, Dehiwala, Sri Lanka. Fax: +94 1 585260.

We welcome letters from readers.

Please write to: The Editor, Ageways, HelpAge International, PO Box 32832, London N1 9ZN, UK or email: ctill@helpage.org Letters may be edited.

New publications

Annotated Bibliography on Ageing in Africa describes over 100 books, papers, videos and websites on work with older people in Africa.

More information: *HelpAge International, Africa Regional Development Centre* (see above).

A voice for older people in Africa

is a leaflet answering questions about the Second World Assembly on Ageing (see above). It advocates that the contributions and needs of older people in Africa are recognised in the new International Strategy for Action on Ageing and that African traditions and values are reflected in it.

More information: *HelpAge International, Africa Regional Development Centre, PO Box 14888, Westlands, Nairobi, Kenya.*

Tel: +254 2 444289 Fax: +254 2 441052
Email: helpage@net2000ke.com

Making our voices heard: *Older people and decision-making in East and Central Europe* is a directory of organisations working with and for older people in East and Central Europe. It reviews the situation of older people in eight countries – Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (focusing on Serbia), Estonia, Macedonia, Moldova, Romania and Ukraine – and makes recommendations to local and national government.

More information: *Celine Hall, Regional Programme Officer, East and Central Europe, HelpAge International, PO Box 32832, London N1 9ZN, UK.*
Email: chall@helpage.org

Courses

Ageing, Health and Well-being in Older Populations

Five-day course for those working with and for older people, including health and social workers, policy makers, planners, service providers and researchers. Topics include demography of ageing; health promotion; planning and financing services; social influences on ageing; minority ethnic groups; common health problems; mental health; data for planning.

**15-19 April 2002
London, UK**

£550 (excluding transport, accommodation and meals).
Limited number of bursaries available.

More information: *Deborah Curle, Course Administrator, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, 50 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3DP, UK.*
Tel: +44 20 7299 4648. Fax: +44 20 7323 0638. Email: deborah.curle@lshtm.ac.uk
<http://www.lshtm.ac.uk>

Ageing in Africa

Five-day course for social workers, volunteers, carers, academics, policy makers, trainers, media representatives and those working with organisations of older people from community to government level. The course aims to provide a broad understanding of basic issues, including social, psychological and biological aspects of ageing; the demographic situation and its socio-economic implications for Africa; older people's rights; health; HIV/AIDS; gender; conflict and emergencies; income/social security; national, regional and global policy initiatives on ageing.

**28 January – 1 February 2002
Nairobi, Kenya**

US\$400 (including meals, accommodation and airport transfer) or US\$150

More information: *HelpAge International Africa Regional Development Centre, PO Box 14888, Westlands, Nairobi, Kenya.*
Tel: +254 2 441052 Fax: +254 2 444289
Email: helpage@net2000ke.com

Action on Ageing campaign

HelpAge International's global campaign, Action on Ageing, aims to ensure that the demands of older people living in poverty are included in the new International Strategy for Action on Ageing, and that resources will be available to implement the strategy.

The strategy will be debated at the Second World Assembly on Ageing, to be held in Madrid from 8-12 April 2002. A second draft was published in August 2001.

HelpAge International has been holding consultations across the world with poor older people and their organisations, and forwarding the results to the United Nations Programme on Ageing, to feed into the draft strategy.

HelpAge International is also trying to identify ways for older people to attend the World Assembly.

More information: *Andrew Humphreys, Campaign Coordinator, Action on Ageing, HelpAge International, PO Box 32832, London N1 9ZN, UK*
Email: ahumphreys@helpage.org

The draft strategy is available on the United Nations Programme on Ageing website at:
<http://www.un.org/esa.socdev/ageing>

The growing need for care at home

What do we mean by 'home care' and why is there a need for it? Joseph Pannirselvam discusses different models of home care and the crucial role played by volunteers.

Across the world, populations are ageing rapidly. As family units become smaller, and younger adults move to find work, increasing numbers of older people are left to cope alone. Most want to stay in their homes if their quality of life can be maintained. The result is a growing need for home-based care services.

What is home care?

'Home care' refers to a range of services provided to a person in their own home, to enable them to continue living as actively and independently as possible. Home care services fall broadly into two categories – social care and health care.

Social care includes both practical and emotional support. It includes home help (housekeeping), delivering or preparing meals, carrying out errands, escorting (accompanying the older person on essential visits, for example, to the doctor), paperwork (filling in forms, writing letters), contact with outside agencies, some assistance with personal care, and befriending the person. Social care is usually provided by family members, friends, neighbours, volunteers and social workers, both trained and untrained.

Health care includes carrying out health checks, health education (in self-care), nursing, therapy and health-related home improvements. Health care services are usually provided by



Anne-Marie Sharman/HelpAge International

Home care enables older people to continue living at home with dignity.

trained people under the supervision of professional health workers, such as doctors, nurses, social workers and therapists, or by health workers themselves.

Home care services are needed by the small but growing proportion of older people who have difficulty managing daily living and accessing health care services, and lack family support. This applies particularly to women, many of whom outlive their husbands. In many societies, older women, particularly widows, have low social status and low incomes, making them vulnerable to abuse and neglect.

Models of home care

There are many different types of home care programme:

Volunteer-based home help services usually form part of a home care programme which has limited financial and professional resources. Volunteers play a crucial role in maintaining older people's quality of life, by providing social care and friendship.

Paid home help services usually include personal care, housework, laundry, household management, shopping, preparing or delivering meals, and escorting.

Home nursing services provide short-term nursing care, often for a specific purpose, such as treating pressure sores. Some home nursing services include training carers.

Home-based medical services play an important role in creating access to medical care for very frail, older people on a low income. However, they are expensive, and doctors for home-based care are often in short supply.

Case management services include assessing the older person's needs and coordinating a network of both formal and informal services to provide a package of care and support.

Home care services may be provided by individuals, community-based organisations, such as resident committees, NGOs, housekeeping companies, and government bodies such as Departments of Health and Social Welfare and local government departments.

Wider benefits

Home care programmes have a range of social, economic and political benefits. They enable older people to continue living with dignity, in line with the United Nations Principles for Older Persons, and help to prevent abuse and neglect. By easing the burden of care on families, and allowing family members more time for paid work, they help to reduce family conflict, and contribute to the household economy.

Home care programmes encourage families and communities to seek solutions to older people's problems, and they provide a means to contribute, often by older people themselves (as described in the article on page 6, for example).

Most older people who are served by home help programmes require regular health checks or medical treatment, but access to services is often limited by lack of transport or the means to pay. Links established by home carers and case management coordinators can help to improve older people's access to services.

Home care programmes have great potential to influence government policies and programmes. They produce evidence of older people's needs, and of gaps in services, which can be used with policy makers to argue for improvements.

'I have learnt that older people can feel loneliness, even though they are living with their families. Their needs can be overlooked and we can be their eyes and ears.'

Volunteer with the Mongolia Red Cross Society

Scope of volunteer programmes

Volunteers:

- provide friendship and practical assistance with daily tasks
- enjoy a 'feel-good' factor from volunteering
- may also gain professionally
- may be older people themselves
- are relatively inexpensive.

However, volunteers:

- cannot usually meet the older persons' healthcare needs
- may not be available when the older person needs them most
- cannot support older people with chronic illnesses or multiple needs
- can disappoint their clients if they leave the programme
- are not cost-free – there are costs of recruiting, training, supervision and support.

State support

Some governments already support home care initiatives. In China, for example, home-care schemes are run by government-sponsored community committees, community-care centres and medical institutions. In South Korea, the government has a programme of volunteer and paid home-helpers.

The draft International Strategy for Action on Ageing, which will provide a framework for national government policies (see page 3) notes that family carers need assistance, and formal community care systems often lack sufficient capacity – indicating a need for formal support for home care.

A key need will be to raise health workers' awareness of health issues relating to older people, and to establish and monitor care standards in keeping with the United Nations Principles for Older Persons.

In summary

Experience of home care programmes in Asia and the Pacific shows that:

- Families need support from the state, if they are to continue in their role as carers.
- Public awareness of home care issues is very low.
- Home care programmes need to be designed to suit local needs, resources and culture.
- Care needs to be comprehensive and centred on the needs of the older person.
- Carers – paid or unpaid – need training.
- Longer-term funding is a key issue for many programmes.
- There are not enough trained carers, affecting the quality of home care programmes.
- There is more demand for home care services than can be met.
- Communication between different community-based services and agencies needs to be improved.
- Programme developers need to take gender aspects into consideration.
- The skills and capacity of age care organisations need to be increased.
- Information and experiences between programmes, countries and regions needs to be shared.
- More research is needed on the need for home care, especially in rural, disadvantaged and minority ethnic communities.

Joseph Pannirselvam is regional programmes development advisor, HelpAge International, Asia/Pacific. He manages HelpAge International's regional home care initiative, which includes providing training and practical support to members and partners, and advocacy on home care.

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Volunteering makes me feel younger

Second Breath, a gerontological association in the eastern European state of Moldova, recruits older people from its rehabilitation programme to visit older people at home. Irina Baicalova, president of the association, and Tatyana Timfeevna Ryabova, a volunteer, explain.



Second Breath

Active older people are encouraged to volunteer as home visitors.

Irina Baicalova writes:

We set up Second Breath because we realised that older people felt overwhelmed by financial and practical difficulties. There is a great sense of isolation. Many older people who could go out stay at home, because they have nothing to do.

The cornerstone of our work is to change the way public opinion in Moldova views the care of older people. Older people feel they have been forgotten, as everyone struggles to cope with daily life.

We are developing home and community-based services to improve medical care and social support for older people in the city of Balti. We have a rehabilitation programme at our day-care centre and a home visiting programme. We look after 35-40 older people at home. A doctor, nurse and volunteer visit each person.

We encourage active older people who have been to our day-care centre to volunteer as home visitors. Ten volunteers have been recruited this way. Each volunteer visits three or four clients under the supervision of a nurse. We work hard to ensure good quality – staff visit our clients to check that everything is all right.

The volunteers provide practical services and companionship. We also have a 'warm house' project, in which a group of volunteers get together to bring some food to an older person's flat, and they have a party. Everyone gets to know each other a little better, and the housebound older person is included in a social group.

Older people find it very hard to live on their pension, so we try to provide meals and other items. We also try to give our volunteers a bag of basic groceries each week as a 'thank you'.

Tatyana Timfeevna Ryabova writes:

On becoming a pensioner, I had many plans. But the poor economy and inadequate pension changed my dreams. Moreover, I found that nobody cared for my experience and capabilities. Then my husband had a stroke and a heart attack.

We both went on the rehabilitation programme organised by Second Breath. We were guided by doctors, given nutritious meals and taught how to protect our health, including gymnastics and mental exercises. My husband recovered and we both became stronger.

We discovered that volunteers from the centre were working at home with older people who needed care and human warmth. My husband and I decided to do this. We have been volunteers for two years now. We had special training, and we continue to attend seminars, lectures and meetings.

Our life experience and profession as teachers help us in our new activity. We try to be kind-hearted and helpful. We shop, clean, do laundry and take care of the older person's personal hygiene. We also keep in contact with the doctor and nurse.

Our visits are awaited with eagerness. We, too, are always happy to see the older people we visit. Before, nobody cared for us in society, but now, our capabilities, knowledge and experience are being put to good use. We really feel that we have become younger.

More information: Irina Baicalova, President, Second Breath, str. Bulgara 142 ap.45, Balti, Moldova. Email: secondbr@beltsy.md Website: <http://www.beltsy.md/secondbr>

Second Breath is supported by the Open Society Institute and the Soros Foundation (Moldova).

Rebuilding a sense of community

Older people in Mozambique whose lives have been disrupted by floods have mobilised family and community support for vulnerable people in the community. Necodemus Chipfupa describes how.

The effects of severe flooding in February 2000 left many older people in Chokwe, a rural area in southern Mozambique, feeling traumatised. On returning to their villages, they took little interest in a rehabilitation programme organised by HelpAge International and local NGO, Vukoxa. 'We lost everything we had worked for during our lives,' said one older woman. 'We do not know how and where to start.'

Discussions with project staff helped older people understand how the ability of families and the community to support vulnerable older people had been weakened. They realised they needed to mobilise with the community.

A team of three older people – one man and two women – were tasked to visit vulnerable older people and their family members to discuss their problems. They found that older people were willing to speak to them, because they were older themselves and would understand them.

The team discussed their findings with village leaders and project staff. It was agreed to start a volunteer-based home visiting programme in eight villages for sick, disabled and older people.

Learning to listen

Home visitors, many of them older people themselves, were selected by the community to receive training.

Training covers four main areas: the ageing process, vulnerability, counselling and problem-solving. Learning to listen was recognised as a key skill, and the first group of home visitors called themselves *vaingeseli* – the listeners.

Through their visits and wider discussions, home visitors have raised awareness of ageing issues in the community, and provided practical support (for example, with agriculture) and counselling. The home visitors are issued with bicycles to travel to villages, and receive a modest gift in the form of household items such as salt, sugar, soap and cloth.

Family carers

Home visitors found that family members caring for people at home could benefit from training in home care. A two-day training programme has been developed, covering practical care and ageing issues. Home visitors identify family members, who are invited by village leaders to attend training. To date, 35 people have received training. Between them they care for nearly 200 older people, sick and disabled people and children.

The project has done much to change attitudes and improve the situation of vulnerable people in the community. As one home visitor said: 'I wish I had had this knowledge before. I feel I owe older people an apology for the manner I sometimes treated and thought about them.'



HelpAge International

Families members receive training.

Lessons learnt

Training methods need to be suited to people's literacy levels. Drawings and discussions were used to train home carers. After training, carers were given written materials and encouraged to ask family members or neighbours to read and discuss these with them.

The community as a whole needs to agree who should receive training for work in the community. Some of those who received training were not accepted. A meeting was held with community leaders to agree criteria for selecting people for training.

More information: Nec Chipfupa, Programme Manager, HelpAge International, CP 4112, Maputo, Mozambique. Fax: +258 1 416435 Email: haimoz@virconn.com

A training manual for home carers is being developed in Portuguese.

Setting up a programme

Every volunteer-based home-care programme is different, but they all have four elements in common – programme development, recruiting and supervising volunteers, training volunteers, and networking and collaboration. This article offers practical tips on each.

Programme development

A starting point for developing a programme is to study existing programmes – if possible, by visiting or contacting them. You can adapt them to suit local needs and resources – there's no need to reinvent the wheel.

Use methods such as surveys or participatory research to assess the need for home help services for older people. Draw up clear aims for your programme. Be realistic about what your programme can be expected to achieve, in view of your clients' frailty and the limitations of a volunteer-based service (see box on page 5).

You will need a system for assessing older people's needs and criteria for deciding who is eligible to receive services. You will need to plan for clients' long-term needs, as most of them will need services for the rest of their lives. Include a system for regularly reviewing your clients' needs and the services they receive. Discuss your ideas with relevant agencies, including government departments, and propose a project that the government may support or implement.

Develop a three-to-five year plan and apply for funding. Volunteer programmes are not 'cost-free'. There are costs of recruiting, training, motivating and supporting volunteers, and monitoring quality of care. You will need at least one paid

coordinator to support and supervise volunteers – preferably someone with training or experience, who can commit themselves for, say, three years. You may need to reimburse volunteers' expenses such as travel and meals. Make sure you have ongoing funds before promising

reimbursement – volunteers may feel that something has been taken away if you discontinue it.

Many programmes are funded from more than one source. Some receive funding or technical support from the World Health Organization or other international agencies, some have overhead costs paid by a non-governmental organisation (NGO) or government department, such as office space in a local government office, and some use a combination of government subsidies and their own fundraising.



HelpAge International

Participatory research can be used to assess the need for home care.

Getting started

HelpAge Korea ran an Adopt-A-Granny scheme (providing money and essentials) for very poor older people, then started a volunteer home help programme, and then added a paid home helper service. RECAS in Vietnam began with paid home helpers, then used their contacts to recruit and train volunteers.

Publicity pack

HelpAge Korea has produced a publicity pack. It uses the pack to recruit volunteers through groups, the media, local businesses and NGOs. The most effective technique is a story in the media, followed by a story of the experience of a newly recruited volunteer.

Recruiting

Publicising the programme and recruiting volunteers is an essential part of the programme. Methods that have worked in Asia include appeals to local community leaders; contact with religious institutions, local clubs and government organisations; and using the media – this has been particularly successful.

Encourage volunteers to involve their own friends, families and colleagues. Publish a personal story of a volunteer and the older person that they visit. Draw on the experience of other volunteer models, such as volunteer carers for people with HIV/AIDS.

Training and support

Training helps both to ensure quality of care, and to retain volunteers.

You need to plan for both initial and ongoing training. HelpAge Korea has a compulsory 20-hour training programme for volunteers. HelpAge Fiji's pilot project offers a five-day programme and requires volunteers to identify older people in their own communities as clients, before they are admitted to training.

Training should cover areas such as the physical and emotional effects of ageing, practical skills (such as safe lifting techniques), communication skills, and the role of the volunteer.

The training schedule will need to take into account volunteers' commitments – training sessions may

need to be in the evenings or at weekends. It helps to intersperse theory with practical experience.

The training team should be multi-disciplinary, including a combination of doctor, nurse, therapist, social worker, family and or informal carer, home helper and volunteer, to provide a broad perspective.

Suit the style of training to the volunteers. Use culturally sensitive, adult learning principles which are suited, for example, to middle-aged women, or those with little formal education.

When matching volunteers to older people, take into consideration their age, sex, language, cultural background and how near to them they live.

Try to ensure that your volunteers have realistic expectations – teach them that it takes time to build trust and closeness with the older person. It helps to team a new volunteer with one who is experienced, to guide them through the early stages.

Volunteers need ongoing support and supervision, including counselling, training and monitoring. Ensure that every volunteer has a staff contact to discuss problems with, or who can step in and organise additional services, such as medical care.

Some programmes monitor volunteers' work by asking them to complete activity forms; some use telephone calls; many hold regular meetings to share experiences, solve problems, provide further training, and

strengthen the bond with the organisation; and some ask older people what they think of the service.

An important aspect of support is recognising volunteers' contribution. Ensure that programme staff understand the vital role that volunteers play. Hold an annual party to thank your volunteers, and make the most of opportunities such as national awards or the International Year of Volunteers.

Networking and collaboration

It is important to develop the programme in collaboration with a wide range of groups. Build on existing contacts with religious organisations, clubs, community centres, volunteer-based schemes, women's groups, service providers (doctors, community nurses, district health centres), NGOs and international organisations. If possible, piggyback onto existing services. Contact any nearby universities, for example, to link the programme with volunteer trainers or service providers. Keep in contact with appropriate government departments.

Approach local leaders early for help in developing the programme. Look for opportunities to share resources, such as staff or office space, both to reduce overheads and enrich the service.

Discuss the needs of the older person with them, their family, and health and social services, to develop a care plan for the older person. This will help to ensure that there are no gaps or duplication in the services they receive.

Forming bonds

The most critical period for a volunteer is often the first one to two years, when they have not yet formed strong bonds with the older person or the programme. It is especially important to keep in contact, motivate and support them during this period.

Essential links

Social workers employed by HelpAge Korea develop and monitor care plans, and identify and secure services for the older person, which are provided either by HelpAge Korea or other service providers. They follow up on referrals, advocate on behalf of older people receiving home help, and work closely with other age care agencies.

Adapted from 'Programme Analysis' in 'Ageing In My Own Place: home care for older people in the Asia-Pacific region' by Susan Mende, published by HelpAge International (details on page 12).

Learning to be a carer

People become carers in different ways. It can happen suddenly – for example, if a parent has a stroke – or gradually. These exercises and checklists are designed to help carers prepare for some of the practical and emotional challenges they will face.



Fiji Council of Social Services

Be prepared for the fact that the person may require more help as time goes on.

Are you a carer?

This exercise helps people to recognise whether they are a carer. It can be done individually, but people will gain more by doing it with a partner or in a group. Ask people to discuss their answers and see what they can learn from other people's answers.

People who may be caring for more than one person should answer the questions separately for each person they care for.

The following are lists of things that carers may do. Tick all that apply to you.

Financial care

Do you help an older person:

- pay for food?
- pay for clothes or other necessities?
- pay for medications?
- pay for doctor's visits?
- pay for a hospital stay?
- pay rent?

Social care

Do you:

- keep in contact, perhaps by phone, to see how things are?
- visit regularly?
- help clean the house, or do laundry?
- go shopping with the person or for them (for example, for clothes)?
- spend time chatting with the person?
- include the person in family gatherings or festivals?

Physical care

Do you:

- shop for food or cook meals for the person?
- help the person move about or do exercises?
- help the person take medication?
- arrange visits to the doctor, dentist or eye doctor?
- help with bathing?
- help with cleaning teeth?
- help with visits to the toilet?
- help the person to get dressed?
- help with special treatments (such as changing a dressing, or massage)?

Environmental care

Have you:

- invited the person to live with you?
- modified your home to accommodate the person?
- ensured your home is safe for the person?

If you have answered 'yes' to any of these questions, you are a carer – even if it is only one item. As time goes on, the person may require more help, and you may be called upon to do more of these things.



Tips for carers

Whether a person is caring for a family member, friend or neighbour, they are adding extra tasks to their schedule. They will almost certainly feel stressed at times. It may help if they put this list of tips somewhere where they can read it easily, and work to apply one tip at a time.

- Don't let the person you are caring for run your life. Be loving, firm, set limits.
- Help the person remain in charge of his or her life.
- Don't be afraid of the person.
- Help the person do as much as possible for themselves.
- Don't feel guilty for not doing everything.
- Keep the person informed of what is happening.
- Try to understand what it means to get old, lose independence and be unable to do even some of the simplest everyday tasks.
- Value the time you have left with the person.
- Help the person appreciate what they can still do for themselves, as well as receiving help.
- Keep a sense of humour.
- Try to make the person feel good about themselves.
- Be good to yourself. Don't let yourself become burned out.

Planning for the future

The following are things that a carer can do to prepare for the future. They should consult as much as possible with the person whose future they are discussing, before making any decisions.

Make a list of all the things that need to be done for the older person. Next to the list, write down the name of a person or organisation who can help, including family members, friends and community resources. Remember, no one can do everything on their own.

Have a family meeting and include the person you are caring for.

Together talk about:

- medical conditions
- finances
- legal matters
- living arrangements
- day-to-day care.

You may not cover all the issues or come to any definite conclusions,

but opening the discussion is a first step.

Have a plan. It can make a big difference in a difficult situation. Plan when things are calm. Don't wait for a crisis.

Attend training to learn the skills required to care for the person. This will reduce stress and hopefully help you to provide better care.

Know the location and status of:

- will
- birth certificate
- identity card
- marriage certificate
- passport
- insurance information
- bank account information
- deeds and mortgage information.

Learn about community resources that can support you as a carer, such as day centres, respite care, befriender services and meal deliveries.

If appropriate, **talk with the person** and learn what they would like to happen when they die.

Adapted, with thanks, from training material produced by the Tsao Foundation, Singapore.

More information: Dr Mary Ann Tsao, Chief Executive Officer, Tsao Foundation, 5 Temasek Boulevard, #12-01 Suntec City Tower, Singapore 038 985

Fax: +65 3379719

Email: tsao1@pacific.net.sg

Web: <http://www.tsaofoundation.org>

The Tsao Foundation, a member of HelpAge International, runs programmes to help older people continue living at home. In 2001 the Tsao Foundation started working with the Ministry of Health to recruit and train nurses and therapists to train family members as carers.

Resources

Asia Training Centre on Ageing (ATCOA)

Runs a wide range of nursing, caring and age awareness courses in Asia.

More information: Dr D Wesumperuma, Director, c/o HelpAge International Asia/Pacific Regional Development Centre (address on page 15).
Email: wesum@helpageasia.com

Elder Care Train the Trainer Manual

A CD-ROM for training carers, produced by the Tsao Foundation, Singapore.

Ageways readers can obtain a copy for S\$200 from the Tsao Foundation. Hua Mei Training Centre, # 02-05/06 Community Services Complex, Alexandra Hospital, 378 Alexandra Road, Singapore 159964.
Tel: +65 4717740 Fax: +65 4720318.

Ageing in Africa training manual

HelpAge International's Africa Regional Development Centre runs age care training courses. It will shortly publish a training manual which includes a substantial section on care.

More information: Amleset Tewodros, Regional Training Coordinator, HelpAge International, PO Box 1488, Westlands, Nairobi, Kenya. Fax: +254 2 441052
Email: helpage@net2000ke.com

A year as a carer

A pilot project in which younger adults spend a year as a volunteer carer for an older person has been launched by HelpAge Sri Lanka, with support from the Ministry of Health. Mr Wijewantha describes the programme.

Older people who live with their families are often left alone at home during the day, while their families are at work or school. We have started a volunteer-based project designed to enable poorer older people to continue living at home with dignity.

We have selected 20 volunteers through interviews. All have secondary school qualifications and most are in their thirties. They have agreed to work in their local area as volunteer carers for a year. They will receive a modest payment to cover food and other expenses, as this will be a full-time activity.

Between them, the volunteers will care for 200 poorer elders. Elders

have been identified by community leaders and staff of the Ministry of Health's newly created Department of Youth, Elderly, Disabled and Displaced.

The volunteers will provide basic practical, health and nursing services, and companionship. They will also train family and community members in practical caring skills and ageing issues, to help them care for the person in the longer term.

The volunteers themselves are following a three-month course led by trainers from HelpAge Sri Lanka. The training includes practical skills, including basic nursing, health problems of old age, and active ageing. It also covers counselling, and

cultural differences between different ethnic groups. The volunteers visit clinics and day centres to get some practical experience.

Ministry of Health staff will monitor and supervise the volunteers. The Ministry has also undertaken that volunteers on this pilot project who successfully complete the assignment will be able to join their staff.

The concept of young people giving up a year to do voluntary work is new in our country. We need more trained younger people to help care for our growing older population, and we are hopeful that this scheme will bring many benefits.

More information: Mr N W E Wijewantha, Executive Director, HelpAge Sri Lanka, Age Care Centre, 102 Pemananda Mawatha, Raththanapitiya, Boralesgamuwa, Sri Lanka. Fax: +941 811 147 Email: helpage@itmin.com

Resources

Model set-up and pilot operation of home help service programme for the elderly in Korea

Describes research undertaken to develop and test a successful home care model, and includes a home help service manual developed for carers, with practical and ethical guidelines.

Published by HelpAge Korea, 2000

More information: HelpAge Korea, PO Box 59, Youngdungpo, Seoul 150-650, Korea Fax: +82 2 26313215 Email: helpage@nuri.net

HelpAge International Asia/Pacific Regional Development Centre (see above)

Year of Volunteers

The United Nations has designated 2001 the International Year of

Volunteers to increase recognition, facilitation, networking and promotion of volunteering.

More information: <http://www.iyv2001.org>

Articles in Ageways

Ageism and images of age (training exercises) – issue 56

Helping older people at home (workshop in Asia) – issue 52

Mobile support groups for carers (HelpAge Ghana) – issue 51

Community care in Korea (HelpAge Korea) – issue 48

For copies contact: Caroline Dobbing, HelpAge International, PO Box 32832, London N1 9ZN, UK. Email: cdobbing@helpage.org

Back issues can also be downloaded from: <http://www.helpage.org>

Ageing In My Own Place

Report of a survey of home care programmes for older people in 15 countries in Asia/Pacific, with individual country case studies. Discusses regional demographics and social trends, the role of the home carer, research on the need for home care, an overview of home care programme models, recommendations, and contact details for programmes surveyed.

Written by Susan Mende. Published by HelpAge International, 2001

More information: Joseph Pannirselvam, Regional Programmes Development Advisor, HelpAge International Asia/Pacific Regional Development Centre, c/o Faculty of Nursing, Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai 50200, Thailand. Email: joseph@helpageasia.com

How to recruit staff

Of all the assets of an organisation, the most important are its staff. This article provides a step-by-step guide to good recruitment practice.

Recruitment is more than simply placing an advert, interviewing and employing someone. It is made up of a series of stages, which starts with drawing up a recruitment policy and ends with checking references.

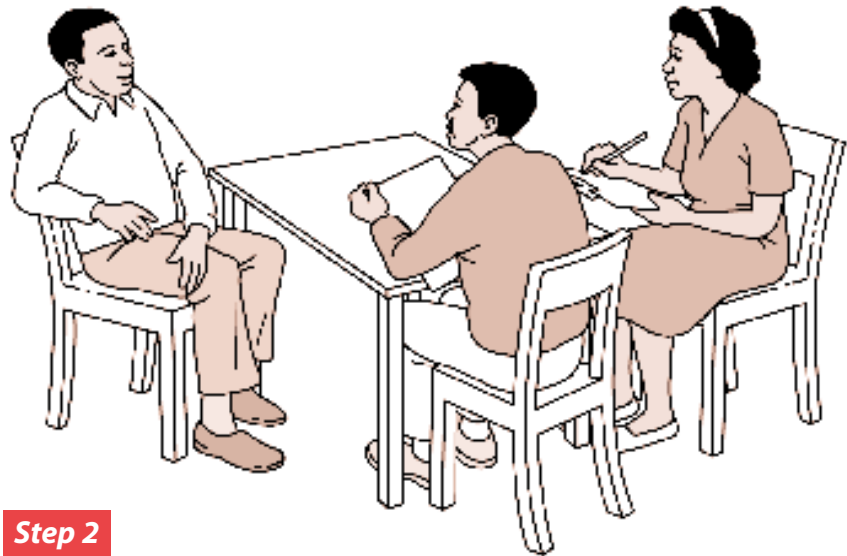
The senior manager of the organisation holds overall responsibility for recruitment, but the 'recruiting manager' (usually the line manager of the post to be filled) is responsible for leading the recruitment process. The process needs to be planned step by step, working within the timescale and budget.

Ten steps to a new employee

Step 1

The recruitment policy

An organisation needs a written recruitment policy to promote good practice, set standards and clarify the roles, responsibilities and expectations of everyone involved. The policy should take into account any laws relating to staff employment, your organisation's aims and values (for example, promoting equal opportunity) and good management practice. This last point includes preparing for recruitment, targeting the best candidates and selecting the best person for the job.



David Woodroffe/HelpAge International Source: Where there is no artist

Step 2

Designing the job

If a job is poorly designed, the person who takes the job may lack the skills, time, support or motivation to carry it out properly. Ask yourself:

- Is it necessary to create a new post?
- Would a temporary post or consultant be more cost-effective?
- Are you asking for a realistic combination of skills and experience?
- Will the employee have sufficient authority, resources and management support to be able to achieve the job's purpose?
- Does the job overlap or conflict with other positions?
- Is the workload reasonable?
- Will the job keep the employee motivated and interested?

Step 3

The job description

The job description explains the purpose, roles and responsibilities of the job and its relationship to other posts within and outside the organisation – so it's an information, communications and publicity tool. It also helps set performance objectives, which are useful when monitoring work performance; and it can be used to compare the job with

others in the organisation, to help set pay levels.

The job description should include:

- background (the history and outlook of the organisation)
- job purpose (how the job fits in with the organisation)
- key responsibilities (no more than 15)
- special features of the job.

Step 4

The person specification

The person specification accompanies the job description. It describes the education, qualifications, knowledge, ability, skills and experience that a person needs to be able to do the job – indicating those that are essential, and those that are desirable, but not essential. The person specification should be clear, precise and well thought through.

Beware of listing criteria that are unnecessarily high – the person may not need a formal qualification if they have sufficient practical experience. Overstating the requirement for a qualification unnecessarily limits the number of applicants who can meet the criteria, and can be discriminatory.

(continued)

How to recruit staff

continued

Step 5

Advertising the post

Advertising widely helps to target the best people for the job and avoid discrimination. Most organisations will want to advertise a post internally (through noticeboards, emails and correspondence) and externally (through formal and informal networks, newspapers and other publications, websites, organisations and educational institutions).

The advert should briefly describe the context of the job, the job itself, skills and experience required, and how to apply, and give a closing date. Ask applicants to request further information. You then send them a pack including background information, job description and person specification, terms and conditions, and information about how to apply (either on an enclosed application form or by letter and CV). Specify a closing date.

Step 6

The selection process

The selection process helps to weed out applicants who do not meet the person specification closely enough. To ensure objectivity and fair judgements, those involved in selection – the selection panel – need to be aware of their personal preferences, and be as balanced as possible in terms of gender, age and ethnic background.

Your selection methods will probably include shortlisting and interviewing, and possibly a test (useful for checking applicants' computer skills, numeracy, written ability or presentation skills). Ensure that methods you choose will help you make an objective decision, and agree in advance what you are looking for.

Step 7

The shortlist

The recruiting manager and at least one other person should shortlist applicants for interview, in a systematic way. Look at all the whole person specification and read each application to see whether the person has each requirement. Then make an overall judgement, remembering that although there are many essential requirements, some are actually more important than others. For example, experience of management may be more important than computer skills. Make notes in case you need to justify your decision.

Step 8

The interview

Interviewing is a two-way process. Interviewees will use it to see whether they want to work for your organisation, so you should create a good impression by projecting a professional image and making sure that interviewees feel comfortable. The recruiting manager is responsible for:

- organising the interview process
- providing full details about the interview process to interviewees
- selecting people for an interview panel (or at least one other person)
- familiarising the interview panel with the job description and applications
- introducing everyone present, time-keeping and note-taking
- ensuring that questions are appropriate, relevant, consistent and encouraging
- allowing interviewees to ask questions, and confirm when they will learn the outcome.

Step 9

Making the decision

At the end of the selection process, the recruiting manager must ensure that each panel member makes their judgement about the candidate solely according to the agreed criteria. Ideally, the decision will be a consensus among the panel. However, the recruiting manager must make the final decision and must be able to justify it.

Step 10

Final checks

Take up at least two references – one from the candidate's current or most recent employer, and another, either from another recent employer, or from someone else who can comment on the candidate's ability to do the job. If this is not possible, ask the candidate for referees, such as former tutors. Personal referees are unlikely to be objective.

Depending on legal requirements of your country, it may also be necessary to check details such as whether the candidate has the right to work in the country, or whether they have a criminal record. Check the legal requirements in your country.

Taken from new guidelines on 'Human resources: Recruitment' in the manual 'Strengthening your organisation', published by HelpAge International.

A copy of the guidelines is available from Caroline Dobbing, Publications and Marketing Assistant, HelpAge International, PO Box 32832, London N1 9ZN, UK. Tel: +44 20 7278 7778 Fax: +44 20 7843 1840 Email: cdobbing@helpage.org

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Extended Care Through Hope and Optimism (ECHO), Grenada
HelpAge Barbados/Barbados National Council on Aging*
HelpAge Belize*
National Council of and for Older Persons/HelpAge St Lucia
Old People's Welfare Association (OPWA), Montserrat
REACH Dominica*
Society of St Vincent de Paul (SVP), Antigua

Africa

Associação dos Aposentados de Moçambique (APOSEMO)
Elim Hlanganani Society for the Care of the Aged, South Africa
HelpAge Ghana (HAG)*
HelpAge Kenya*
HelpAge Zimbabwe*

Mauritius Family Planning Association
Muthande Society for the Aged (MUSA), South Africa*
Regional Centre for Welfare of Ageing Persons in Cameroon (RECEWAPEC)
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Sudanese Society in Care of Older People (SSCOP)
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Asia / Pacific

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Elderly Woman's Activities Centre, Lithuania
Eurolink Age, UK
Help the Aged (UK)*
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), UK
Mission Armenia

Slovene Foundation (Slovenska Fondacija), Slovenia
Zivot 90, Czech Republic

Latin America

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Caritas Chile
CooperAcción, Peru
FAIAF, Argentina
Fundación Centro de Estudios e Investigaciones del Trabajo (CESTRA), Colombia*
Lima Co-ordinating Group (Mesa de Trabajo de ONGs Sobre Ancianidad), Peru*
Red de Programas Para al Adulto Mayor, Chile
Pro Vida Bolivia*
Pro Vida Colombia*
Pro Vida Ecuador
Pro Vida Perú

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HelpAge International Regional development centres

These offices can put you in touch with members in their region.

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If anyone else in your organisation would like to receive *Ageways*, please photocopy this form and ask them to complete and return it.

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A day to remember

Across the world, older people joined forces with other age groups on 1 October, to celebrate the International Day for Older People.



From dancing in Bolivia...

In **Ethiopia**, posters designed by an older artist, highlighting next April's Second World Assembly on Ageing, and a calendar illustrating key issues affecting older people were distributed. Drama was used to inform audiences about older people's poverty, HIV/AIDS and the need for intergenerational support. More than 800 representatives of government, non-government and older people's organisations celebrated at an event in the capital, Addis Ababa. Activities were organised by 35 HelpAge International partners.

T-shirts and caps with the slogan 'Old is Gold' helped raised the profile of older people in **Tanzania**. A great variety of events took place across the country, ranging from the launch of a revolving loan fund, the inauguration of houses for vulnerable older people, and a special eyecare programme, to sports events, music, dancing and drama, and handicraft displays.

In **Laos**, more 300 people, old and young, walked down the main avenue of the capital, Vientiane, accompanied



...to walking in Laos.

by a children's band, dancers and singers. A declaration was made by the Vice-Minister of Labour and Social Welfare.

Activities in **Sudan** included a forum on the needs and rights of older people, attended by 250 NGOs, officials, older people and the media. A health day at a women's prison, public lectures and a photo exhibition also marked the event.

In **Argentina**, producers of the radio programme 'Older People's Words' (featured in **Ageways** 56) broadcast a special programme, in which a panel of older people discussed rights and responsibilities, and highlighted the need to regain respect for older people.

In the village of Ramayampet in Andhra Pradesh state, **India**, 150 older people attended cultural programmes, a community lunch and discussions on income-generation.

In **Bolivia**, people celebrated with music and dancing in La Paz and El Alto.

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.

Ageways exchanges practical information on ageing and agecare issues, particularly good practice developed in the HelpAge International network. It is published three times a year by HelpAge International, with funding from Help the Aged (UK).

Copies are available in English, Spanish (*Horizontes*), Russian and Ukrainian, free of charge on request to project staff, carers and older people's organisations. Please complete and return the form on page 15.

Ageways is also available on the web at: <http://www.helpage.org>

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