

Annual Review 2008

*Older people can
bring about change.*

Read how...



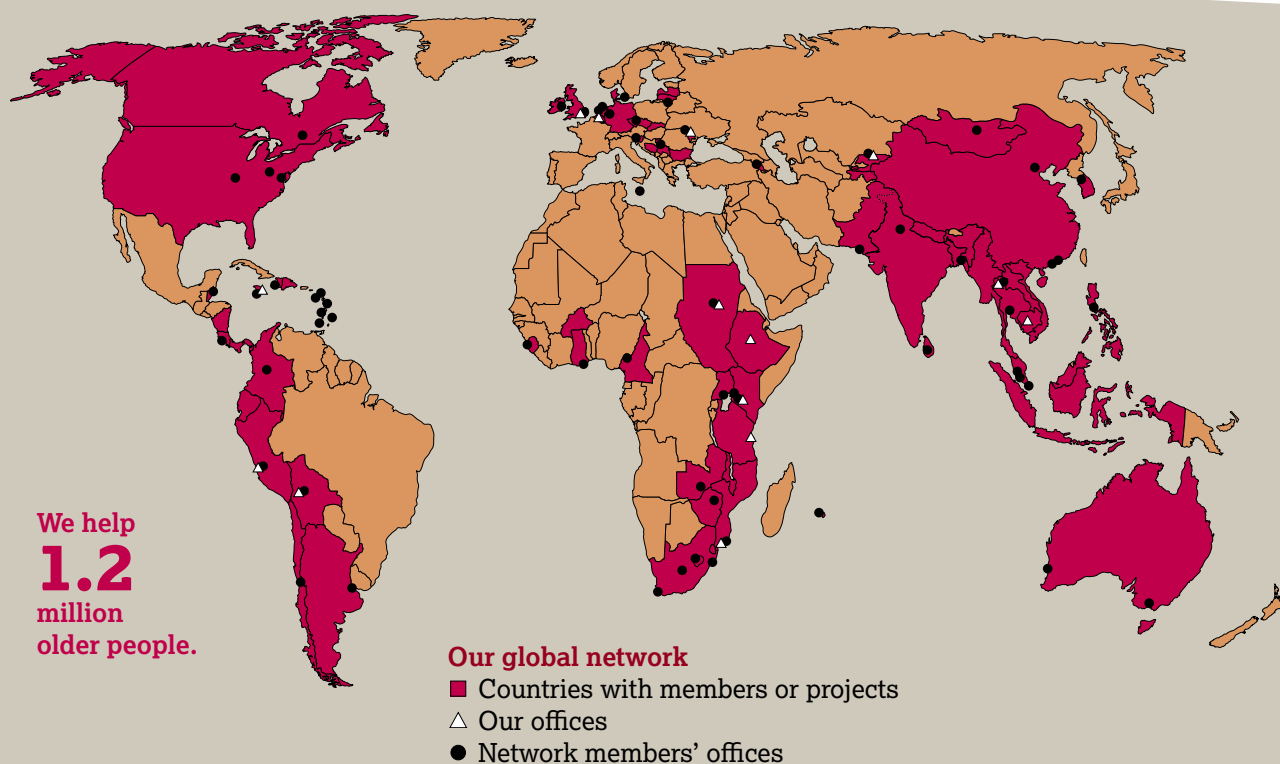
**HelpAge
International**

age helps

We believe age helps. With age comes experience and understanding. The contribution older women and men make to society is invaluable.

HelpAge helps older people around the world lead full and secure lives. Through our projects we build expertise on ageing issues, and older people challenge the injustices they face.

We run the only global network focused on the needs and rights of older people.



Older people have so much to give

Older people contribute so much to their communities. If grown-up children become ill or move away in search of work, older people often step in to look after the grandchildren left without parental care – usually paying for their food and school fees too.

When emergencies strike, older people use their experience to rebuild lives. And without their will to work hard and bring in an income, many families would be in financial crisis. Mediators, educators, advisors... older people play all these roles and more.

Time for recognition

But what do they get in return? 100 million older people struggle to survive on less than a dollar a day. Their economic and social capabilities go unrecognised and unsupported. They are the forgotten generation, excluded from policies on poverty, HIV and human rights.

And yet we live in an ageing world: by 2050 one in five of the world's population will be over the age of 60, with over three-quarters in developing countries. So we need to invest in older people, starting now.

Our global network brings people from all walks of life together in a growing movement for change. We work to give older people a voice and find their own solutions to the problems they face, so that they themselves can

shape the world they live in. We campaign to put ageing issues on government agendas and we are proud to have earned our place as the international authority on ageing.

A worthwhile investment

It's a big challenge. But we know the resources are there to make progress, with older people's own experience the most powerful tool of all. Investments in older people have provided thousandfold returns, as this generation simply has so much to give. At the same time, our unique body of knowledge on older people's issues provides an excellent foundation for all the projects we support.

Our warm thanks go to our partners, staff, board members, donors and all the older people we have worked with for their incredible support in this, our 25th year. Let's continue to help older people solve the challenges still holding them back as we move into our next 25 years.

Eric Kimani
Chair

Richard Blewitt
Chief Executive Officer

We live in an ageing world,

let it not be an ageist world.



Maxim Ahner/HelpAge

Older people are often the lowest priority for state financial support and healthcare

In developing countries, if older people are affected by an age-related condition such as cataracts, they often find it hard to get treatment. And without treatment, they may lose the independence that means everything to them, as it does to us all.

Improving the system

Even where governments offer older people benefits such as free healthcare, subsidised medicines or pensions, few older people know they are entitled to them.

Working through our partners, we train older people to test access to state entitlements – an initiative now spreading the benefits of healthcare and financial support to more older people in nine countries, including Bangladesh, Tanzania and Bolivia.

Pensions bring possibilities

But governments must do more to get healthcare and financial protection to older people.

We are working to make that a reality – for instance, advising governments on designing social pension schemes, and helping the African Union develop social protection plans across the continent.

We also spread the word globally about how affordable and socially beneficial pensions are. Quite simply, they

support not just those who receive them directly – but every generation living in their household: older people are skilled at using their resources for everyone's benefit.

But pensions for all will not be introduced overnight – and older people need support in the here and now too. This year, we provided business loans and grants to 140,000 older people in 25 countries, and eyecare services to 45,000 people in six countries.

“No one listened to us, now we are saving lives”

Prafulla, president of a Bangladeshi older people's association, supported by HelpAge and Resource Integration Centre, tells his story: “Before we set up the association, we got no respect as older people. Many of us felt vulnerable, helpless and upset.

Now things are different. If an older person goes to the district commissioner with a problem, they will be listened to. Recently we won a pension for one of us by going to the council.

Last year we were active in helping our community prepare for Cyclone SIDR. We saved lives, and are proud of the job that we have done.”

Vidarsahi de Silva Wijeyeratne/HelpAge



Older people want to contribute to society, just as we all have a right to

Sadly, ageist attitudes mean older people are often denied employment, education and healthcare – even turned out of their homes or physically attacked.

These wrongs must be righted – and HelpAge is leading the way in enabling older people to campaign for change.

A force to be reckoned with

On 1 October 2007, for instance, we launched a global campaign called Age Demands Action, in which delegations of older people, across 27 countries, met government representatives to assert their rights.

They achieved some fantastic breakthroughs – from a promise of more identity cards for older people in India, to better access to water in Ethiopia. And with even more people signed up to take part in 2008, the campaign looks set to be a major grassroots force for change.

Justice starts here

Meanwhile, we continue to support diverse projects around the world, all tackling ageism head on:

- In Bolivia and Peru, socio-legal centres run by partners have allowed 10,000 older people to claim their rights.
- In Tanzania and Mozambique, we train older people to provide legal advice to others – particularly older women likely to lose their homes because of discriminatory inheritance laws, or face violence, and even death, due to witchcraft accusations.

We are also making sure the UN rights system includes older women's issues. One great result: an influential UN committee is now using our evidence of violations of older women's rights in Tanzania and Mozambique to press for change with these governments.

At the same time, we are ensuring that older people are involved in monitoring their governments' implementation of the 2002 UN Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing – the only global action plan that champions older people's rights. We funded older people's organisations in eight countries to produce progress reports and present them at UN regional and global meetings.

“I could barely eat, now I have an income”

Flora, who visited a socio-legal centre supported by HelpAge and Horizontes Foundation in Bolivia, tells her story: “I am 75 years old, and live alone. For me, the socio-legal centre has been a blessing.

I came to the office for help, as I could not claim my pension – my birth certificate had been registered twice with different dates of birth.

The socio-legal centre team helped me go to the Court of Justice to update my documentation. I now have my pension which means I can eat – it is my only income.”

Tom Weiler/HelpAge



We work in
75
countries
worldwide.

We want dignity,

not dependence.

Older people know their communities; they know who to help in a crisis

As ever, older people are often ignored in emergencies and the last to receive support.

With climate-related emergencies on the rise, we are expanding our work in this area. This year, we worked with local partners to provide relief and longer-term support in 11 countries.

Working together in times of crisis

We have helped strengthen older people's organisations – which, we know, can be a huge asset to their communities in an emergency:

- We have trained staff and community organisations in Asia and Latin America on developing disaster risk-reduction strategies involving older people.
- In Bangladesh, older people's associations conveyed early warnings about Cyclone SIDR and identified vulnerable older people in need of relief.
- In Peru, teams of older people provided relief to more than 1,200 older people and their families after the 2007 earthquake.
- We have set up social centres for vulnerable older people in 12 displaced people's camps in Darfur, enabling them to look out for each other and learn new skills.

Using our influence

We made key recommendations to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Working Group, the highest-level policy-making body in the humanitarian system, on how other aid organisations can include older people in their emergency programmes.

As things stand, agencies rarely develop policies aimed at older people. But thanks to our ongoing influence, this will change. UNHCR has, for instance, asked us to second a member of staff to help improve its response to older people's needs.

“I was getting weaker and weaker, now my youthful spirits have come back”

Nagjat, 63, from a displaced people's camp in West Darfur, tells her story: “I was getting weaker and weaker in the camp. Some people were saying I was mad. They stole everything from my shelter. I had nothing left, no clothes, not even a blanket for night-time. I have never felt so alone.

Then some older people helped me by asking me to come to an older people's social centre [supported by HelpAge] in the camp. After some weeks I began to organise social events and celebrations at the centre. I am once more in a condition that reminds me of my good old youthful days.”

John Cobble/HelpAge



Our experience of life

helps us find solutions.

HIV and AIDS are having a huge impact on the lives of older people

In families affected by HIV it is often older people who care for sick sons and daughters, or who look after orphaned grandchildren. But what if they have health and financial problems of their own? It can make day-to-day life a relentless struggle.

We are there to enable older people to find their own solutions. For instance, we have worked with partners in 16 countries across Africa and Asia to enable 22,000 older carers to earn a living, claim benefits, enrol children in school, learn how to care for people with AIDS, and set up self-help groups. In Vietnam, 60 self-help groups are now allowing older women to support each other.

Knowledge that saves lives

Older people also want to learn about AIDS so they can protect themselves and educate younger members of their families. We are meeting this need by training older people as community educators. For example, in Tanzania, we have worked with a retired teachers' association to set up information and advice centres on AIDS – which are now really helping challenge stigma and ignorance.

At the same time, older people themselves are at risk of HIV. We are pressing home the need to collect data on older people and include older people in prevention, care and treatment programmes. We are also helping UNAIDS prepare new prevention guidelines which take into account the needs of older people.

“My daughter died of AIDS, I want my grandchildren to live”

Antoinette, 60, from Uganda, tells her story: “One of my daughters died of AIDS. My other daughter has HIV and is very weak. My seven grandchildren are now living with me.

I wanted to help others with AIDS in my community, so I was trained as a home-based carer by Uganda Reach the Aged Association. I visit people who are bedridden and give them counselling and advice on their health.

I now know how to protect myself from HIV and am teaching my grandchildren. Since older people have learned more about HIV and can tell the younger ones about it, people have started to respect us more.”



We support
2,500
older people's
associations.



***The person of wisdom
is the person of years.***

***Age makes a
difference.***

“I am pleased that the Department for International Development (DFID) has a strong partnership with HelpAge to take forward the shared objective of increasing the number of older people in developing countries with access to a non-contributory basic pension.”

Gordon Brown, Prime Minister, United Kingdom

Our income has risen to more than £16 million. Our biggest donor is Help the Aged, which raises funds for our work from the UK public. Our other sources are the European Commission, Comic Relief, DFID, Irish Aid, the Big Lottery Fund and many trusts, foundations and statutory bodies.

Full details of our finances are given in our audited accounts which can be downloaded from **www.helpage.org**

HelpAge is governed by a board of trustees: six men and nine women from 13 countries around the world. At least seven of our trustees represent members of our global network.



Help the Aged provides core funding to HelpAge and is also a leading member of HelpAge's global network.



HelpAge, PO Box 32832
London N1 9ZN, UK

Tel +44 (0)20 7278 7778
Fax +44 (0)20 7713 7993
hai@helpage.org

www.helpage.org

Registered charity no. 288180
Company limited by guarantee
Registered in England no. 1762840

Design by TRUE www.truedesign.co.uk
Print by Palmers www.palmersprint.co.uk
Printed on Corona Offset, 100% recycled,
NAPM and Blue Angel accredited

Front cover photo: Kate Holt/HelpAge