

# Connect

HelpAge

global network

Sharing information to strengthen the HelpAge global network in Asia-Pacific  
Issue 1, January 2018

*Looking into  
the future  
generations*

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## Editorial

Time flies, but the good news is that we are in the pilot seat, meaning that we foresee and influence the direction of our flight, even if the arrival point is still unclear.

Why do we say this? Well, we know that population ageing is one of the key factors shaping the future, defining the next decades and centuries. We also know that this process will have (and is having) deep social and economic implications. Moreover, we know for sure that if countries adapt their social and economic systems, the negative impact of a changed demographic configuration can be drastically reduced.

We know all that, but we are also aware that adaptation requires political will, know-how, social awareness and broad commitment. Gathering all those elements in the scope of a single purpose takes time, takes strategic patience, inquisitive minds and stubborn persistence. That is the task for 2018.

We build our perspective this year on the basis of the restructuring of the HelpAge Secretariat, globally and in the region. In 2017, we successfully completed the merging of the two regions in Asia – a complicated process – and APRO became one of the four hubs of HelpAge.

2018 will test our problem-solving capacity and will challenge our creativity. The task is huge, the resources are limited. But we are all committed – HelpAge and the Network – to contribute in an effective manner to building fair and equitable societies for current and future older people.

A major effort will be the regional conference 2018, to be hosted by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in partnership with the AFPPD and UNFPA.

Network development continues to be central to our work. Currently, there are 36 organisations from 17 countries in this region. Our broader partnerships range from civil society and mass organisations to UN bodies, Parliaments, academics and other international organisations. We have a great team in the region, so we have all the ingredients necessary to be confident that 2018 will see us flying steadily through the still blurry skies of adaptation.

**Eduardo Kliem**  
*Regional Director, Asia Pacific*

## Designing and implementing social transfer programmes

### ► Regional

Designing and Implementing Social Transfer Programmes, the social protection course offered annually by HelpAge International along with the Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI), the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and the Maastricht Graduate School of Governance, was held from 2-13 October 2017 in Chiang Mai, Thailand, with a total of 51 participants from 14 countries joining for the full two weeks or for one of the one-week specialised topic modules.

This year, HelpAge and the International Labour Organization joined forces to offer a new one-week course on the topic of Ageing and Pension Systems. The course provided eight participants from five countries with a solid foundation in understanding pension systems, including both contributory and non-contributory pensions. It covered the need for pension systems in ageing societies along with policy design, financing and the implementation of pensions. Case studies from Vietnam, South Africa, China and Thailand were used to show the practical implications of the content covered and a field visit took participants to the Ministry of Social Welfare to learn about Thailand's Old Age Allowance programme and then to the homes of transfer recipients.

(CL)



## Launching of new research report on older people's associations (OPAs)

### ► Regional

A study report entitled "Older People's Associations in East and Southeast Asia: a Four Country Study" was launched on 17 October in Hanoi, Vietnam.

There were presentations on the study (methodology, results and recommendations) made by Eduardo Kliem, and findings from the four countries made by representatives from Cambodia, China, Myanmar and Vietnam. A panel discussion on "The Role of OPAs in an Ageing Society" was led by Dr. Quynh Ngoc Nguyen from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Vietnam, along with 4 panelists, namely: Giang Thanh Long, Institute of Public Policy and Management; Britta Monika Baer, Technical Officer, Division of Health Systems, World Health Organization Regional Office for the Western Pacific (WPRO); Eduardo Kliem, Regional Director of HelpAge International Asia and Pacific Regional Office; and Duc Minh Thi Ha, Vice Director of the Department of International Relations, Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs. Thirteen members of local English media attended the event.

## Time to revisit the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA)

### ► Regional

An Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Third Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing was held from 12-14 September 2017 in Bangkok.

The meeting was attended by government representatives from Asia Pacific countries as well as UN agencies and international NGOs. Member states presented policy developments in their countries and together they reviewed the resulting document to ensure that the statements reflected the current population ageing situation.

HelpAge Asia Pacific Director Eduardo Klien joined a panel discussion on the topic 'Ageing and aged societies in the Asian and Pacific region: Towards an inclusive and sustainable future',

highlighting the need to adapt policies and mindsets to view older people as a resource. The ambition of sustainable development goals (SDG) to 'leave no one behind' was also an important topic of discussion during the session.

On 14<sup>th</sup> September, HelpAge International and UNESCAP co-organised a special session on 'Older People's Associations (OPAs) – from community to national policy'. They took this opportunity to soft launch a new report titled 'Older People's Associations in East and Southeast Asia: a Four Country Study', beginning the session with an introduction to the OPA concept by Quyen Tran, HelpAge Regional Programme Advisor. A 45-minute panel discussion on the theme of OPAs was held with the participation

of the following experienced panelists: Le Minh Giang, National Committee on Ageing, Vietnam; Wendy Walker, ADB; Thelma Key, Independent Expert, Singapore, and Asghar Zaidi, University of Southampton. This session explored the roles of OPAs, the opportunities and challenges which result from rapid population ageing such as the general wellbeing of older people, families and communities, supporting families with people affected by dementia or other health issues, long-term care and advocacy for policy changes.

(BM)

More information <http://mipaa.unescapsdd.org/third-review/intergovernmental-meeting-bangkok-12-14-september-2017>



## The 9<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Public Health Among Greater Mekong Sub-Regional Countries

### ► Regional

In greater Mekong sub-regional countries, the rise of chronic non-communicable diseases (NCDs) reflects changes in lifestyle and diet, as well as ageing. At present, cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes, and other non-communicable diseases have emerged as the leading causes of death and disability. The potentially devastating economic and societal costs of non-communicable diseases rise sharply with age and have

an ability to affect economic growth, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) report, *Global Health and Aging*.

The 9<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Public Health among Greater Mekong Sub-Regional countries was hosted by the University of Public Health in Yangon, Myanmar on 22-23 November 2017 with support from HelpAge International,

Myanmar Country Office under European Union support. The event provided a platform for over 500 academics, researchers, policy makers and public health practitioners from China, Thailand, Myanmar, Vietnam, Lao PDR and Cambodia to discuss strategies to prevent and tackle non-communicable diseases. Professional networking at the conference also played a vital role in enabling strategic alliances to address NCDs in the sub-region and beyond.

The conference aimed to promote sharing, discussion, coordination, collaboration and networking among public health institutions from countries within the sub-region in research, teaching, policy analysis and programmatic interventions on the prevention and control of NCDs.

(PN)

## South Asia Senior Citizen's forum holds third meeting



### ► Regional

The South Asia Senior Citizen's Forum (SASCF), a regional body of older civil society representatives, held its third meeting in Indore, India, on 5 November 2017. Representatives from organisations working with older people from India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives participated in this meeting.

The meeting comprised discussions among the members on various topics, such as weighing the merits and demerits of being registered within a regional NGO or civil society body, the values and strengths that each representative member nation could provide, finalising the Forum's working guidelines and interim constitution, and the Forum's own sustainability and roadmap for the future.

The Forum unanimously agreed to seek further technical capacity-building support from HelpAge on the priority areas of social protection, including disaster risk reduction (DRR), humanitarian work, health and care, among others. HelpAge has also confirmed its intention to host and organise the fourth meeting in Nepal in 2018 and to provide support in strengthening the forum's wider regional goals.

Pradesh Khaling Rai, Programme Representative for HelpAge International in Nepal, and Chhatra Pradhan, General Secretary of the Nepal National Senior Citizen's Federation (NASCIF) attended the aforementioned events. Both of them also attended the 17<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the All-India Senior Citizen's Confederation on special invitation as observers on 4-5 November 2017.

The HelpAge Nepal office and NASCIF have been working in Nepal since 2012, and among other things, they have helped deliver humanitarian support to over 10,000 older people affected by the 2015 Nepal earthquake. The partnership was also instrumental in the establishment of the SASCF regional forum in July 2016.

(PR)

## Older people's rights in Thailand

### ► Thailand

The rights of older people in Thailand are in the spotlight now – thanks to the process of writing the 4<sup>th</sup> National Human Rights Plan (2019-2023), which is led by the Rights and Liberties Protection Department, Ministry of Justice. The Foundation for Older People's Development (FOPDEV) is involved in the process as one of the advisors.

FOPDEV has also been involved for the last year in a series of workshops on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) organised by the Manushya Foundation, along with 22 other civil society organisations. As a consequence, FOPDEV received a sub-grant to implement a one-year project on "Ensuring the Realisation of the Rights of Elderly Persons following the Human Rights Principles and International Human Rights Obligations of Thailand", starting in June 2017.

This project was piloted in Banthi sub-district of Lumphun province and in Bangkok, and implemented by older people's clubs in each area.

A workshop on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) was held in September to provide an opportunity to discuss the rights of older people and deepen the dialogue on the UPR process. Forty representatives from local government, older people, youth and representatives from Chiang Mai Homecare Volunteers' Club (CHVC) attended the event.

Being aware that public health and financial security are key issues with regard to older people's rights in Thailand, the project also supports older people in their livelihood and income generating activities.



On the same day as the workshop, CHVC and FOPDEV took the opportunity to open a new centre for rights complaints. This centre was based on the ideas of older people as a result of having worked and received training on rights issues for many years.

CHVC works in Chiang Mai's municipality district, covering about 40 communities out of 96, and is eager to expand its working area by welcoming more volunteers from other communes to join its activities.

(WW)

## Event of the year

# HelpAge Asia Pacific Regional Conference 2018

In partnership with the Government of Iran, UNFPA and the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD), the HelpAge Regional Conference will be held this October in Teheran, Iran.

This year's conference will focus on family and state in the context of population ageing, and will deal with health and care, income security and social inclusion. More details will be announced in the coming months.



*Mark you calendar and stay tuned!*

## Myanmar learns from Vietnam's Self-Help Clubs

### ► Myanmar

With support from the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), five older people's representatives got the chance to visit Vietnam to learn about the activities of intergenerational self-help clubs (ISHCs) in Vietnam. The trip took place from 26 November to 30 November 2017.

The programme started with a visit to the HelpAge Vietnam Country Office in Hanoi. The group was briefed about the ISHC model before departing to Hai Duong Province to observe ISHCs in the company of HelpAge Vietnam staff.

The delegation visited ISHCs in different localities including Kinh Mon district, Thanh Mien district and Hai Duong city to observe ISHC monthly meetings and to meet with the Club Management Board (CMB) and local partners of the commune and district levels. These field visits enhanced the visitors' understanding of the ISHC model, management, reporting system and local fundraising. The group

also visited older people who have benefitted from homecare and livelihood support. There was a meeting at Hai Duong Provincial Association of the Elderly (HDAE) in which the President of HDAE explained the rationale underlying the ISHC model and how ISHCs have been supported and replicated in the province.

The president of the Myanmar Older People's Federation remarked about this trip, *"It was a very good exchange visit for us. We got a lot of experience and learning from the Vietnamese. The ISHC and OPSHG models are basically the same, but there are also many differences. I would like to thank all the staff at HelpAge Vietnam, all the ISHCs that we visited as well as Hai Duong Provincial Association of the Elderly (HDAE) and HelpAge Myanmar."*

(HM)



Delegates on the way to visit older people who have benefitted from ISHCs.

## Forum on policy implications of population ageing in Bangladesh



### ► Bangladesh

On 22 October 2017, the first conference on the policy implications of ageing was held in Bangladesh. It was jointly organised by the Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) and HelpAge International. High level government officers including Mr. Mohammed Nasim, MP and Honorable Minister, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Besides the presentations on global demographic change and the situation in Bangladesh, there were two technical sessions: Social Security and Protection in Old Age in Bangladesh and Provision of Health and Care in Old Age in Bangladesh. The HelpAge Bangladesh Office also launched a newly published brief titled "Old age income security in Bangladesh: Work, family and social protection" at the event.

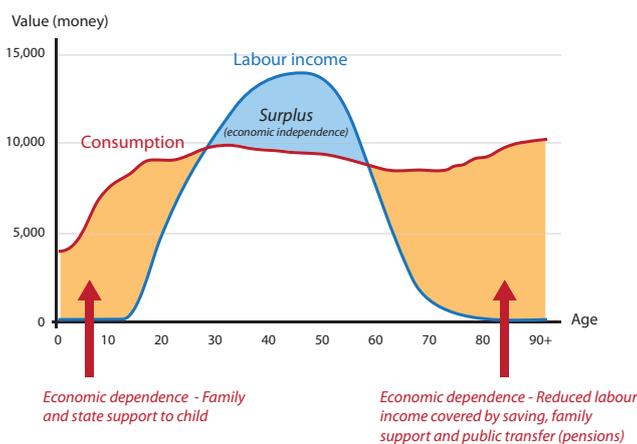


# National Transfer Accounts: A data set for policy-making on ageing

Year after year we have been highlighting the need to gather data that is inclusive of older people. This is gradually being achieved, but the new challenge is how to make effective use of the data acquired.

Taking this into account, HelpAge in collaboration with the East-West Center (EWC) of Hawaii and the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians (AFPPD), designed a workshop gathering policy makers (parliamentarians, government officials), academics, and civil society organisations (mainly HelpAge network), aimed at strengthening the effective use of data in policy making in the context of population ageing. The data analysis focused on the National Transfer Accounts (NTA) presented by the EWC.

The workshop was held last December 2017 in Chiang Mai, Thailand. There were 96 participants from 26 countries. The workshop examined how data can map the resource flows to reveal disparities in gender, location and income.



Source: Adapted from Mason and Lee, *Population Aging and the Generational Economy*, 2011

The graph shows the flow of resources across generations – from childhood to old age using two variables, consumption and labour income.

Generally, children and older people (after working phase) consume more than they produce through their work effort. The gap is covered in different ways. The options are using the surplus of income in working age for saving or sharing: saving for later life; or sharing with both older relatives and/or children (private transfers); or state support (public transfers).

In the case of older people (after working phase of life) the gap is covered by the families and government-supported programmes, but also by their own savings, investment and assets.

This event also discussed how to improve links between academics, governments, Parliamentarians, civil society and international organisations in defining policies to adapt to population ageing.

There are key “take aways” for civil society organisations and advocates of income security in old age.

The common trend is that, unless societies and economies have adapted to the different demographic configuration, the aggregate gap in income security in old age could expand, creating strong tensions, especially in the public and fiscal sectors and in family transfers. For example, the increase in consumption due to health and care costs can be managed and reduced through healthy lifestyles in younger ages and through appropriate long-term care systems.

The NTA methodology provides tools for developing well-informed advocacy. It strengthens the rights approach with a structured and effective use of data while broadening our understanding of the mix between contributory and non-contributory pensions, saving and asset acquisition, social protection and public investment, and family transfers.

It also allows us to “tailor” our areas of work/emphasis according to the specific mix of income security in each country or context.

Finally, it is clear that we need to strengthen HelpAge and the network’s role building consensual and multi-stakeholder approaches to adapting to ageing societies. The workshop last December provided the opportunity to maintain direct links with a broader range of policy-makers (Parliamentarians, Ministries of Planning, Finance and Health) besides our traditional link with social sectors.

(EK)



## Further readings

Resources from the workshop, including agenda, presentations, photos and participant list, are available online at <http://bit.ly/2Dt7SWx>

Workshop report can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/2BdwTjh>

For more information on the NTA project, please visit [www.ntaccounts.org](http://www.ntaccounts.org)



# Interview with the expert

*Sang-Hyop Lee is a Professor in the Department of Economics and Director of the Center for Korean Studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, and Senior Fellow at the East-West Center. He is also the Asian Team Leader of the National Transfer Accounts project.*

## What are 'National Transfer Accounts' and what is their key concept?

The economic life cycle is characterised by three distinct phases: two phases of economic dependence and one phase of economic independence. In most societies, children consume resources generated by adults, transferred to them by their family or by the public sector. The elderly, in turn, possess an accumulation of assets accrued during their active economic phase, and of resources produced and transferred by adults. NTA provides a complete accounting by age and gender of how economic resources are produced and consumed and how each country relies on government programmes, family systems, and financial markets to achieve the final distribution of economic resources among users and groups in each year. Research teams in more than 60 countries are constructing accounts which are designed to complement the UN System of National Accounts, population data, and other important economic and demographic indicators.

## What do NTA tell us about population ageing in Asia-Pacific?

Changes in age structure are occurring all over the world. Many countries in Asia-Pacific in particular are experiencing demographic transition at an unprecedented speed. NTA tell us about several important characteristics of Asia-Pacific. Rapid fertility decline increased the proportion of workers in the population, which accelerated rapid growth in per capita income. Countries in East Asia were particularly successful in realising large demographic dividends, in part, because their fertility decline was so rapid. However, many Asian countries are beginning to experience rapid population ageing. Because of this, there are increasing concerns about slow economic growth, fiscal problems and poverty of the elderly in the region.

## What are the advantages and benefits of using NTA data in designing policies, especially policies on ageing?

The NTA project is shedding light on many areas of importance to policymakers. Economic growth is one aspect. The first demographic dividend occurred in many Asian countries because of the effect of fertility decline on the number of dependent children. However, slow economic growth could happen due to a large dependent old-age population or low saving rates. Fiscal problems are another concern because tax revenues may not keep pace with entitlement programmes such as public pensions and publicly-funded health care. Limited participation of older people in the labor market makes them particularly vulnerable to poverty, lacking access to health care, and exposed to other risks. The adverse consequences of population ageing can be offset, however, by government policies. For example, if workers increase their savings to cover a longer life expectancy, or if the quantity-quality tradeoff leads to more investment in human capital and higher productivity, the adverse effect could be dampened.

## Are there any good examples of governments using NTA in responding to challenges in its country?

Thailand is a good example. The Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) have used it in their national economic planning. South Korea is planning to make the NTA national statistics public so that policy makers as well as researchers can use the official data in responding to challenges in its country. Researchers and government officials are actually using NTA profiles for their projections and planning although they do not quote them.

## For CSOs/NGOs working on ageing issues, how can knowledge of NTA support to their advocacy work?

It is important to emphasise the close link between NTA and development objectives for advocacy work which means that NTA data can be directly linked to development objectives. This could involve estimate flows separately by gender and income class or it could involve incorporating other age-specific measures or aggregate measures into the NTA database. In this regard, at least the first five Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are clearly related to NTA data; eradicating poverty, no hunger, good health and wellbeing, quality of education, and gender inequality. NTA can help develop new measures that are useful for achieving development goals for benchmarking, such as the performance of other countries in similar circumstances. This could be something as simple as public and private spending on education or consumption of the elderly compared to prime-age adults.



# Making our voices heard

## What did Age Demands Action campaigners achieve in 2017?



*In 2017, tens of thousands of older people in Asia Pacific and the rest of the world fought to protect their rights. From demanding better mental health services, to putting an end to elder abuse – Age Demands Action campaigners made their voices heard.*

*We would like to say a big thank you to all of our network members and the ADA campaigners who took part in ADA this year. To celebrate, let's look back at what campaigners in Asia Pacific achieved in 2017.*



### ADA on Health: closing the gap in health inequality

On 7 April, over a thousand campaigners fought against inequalities in older people's health rights in Asia Pacific.

ADA campaigners in Cambodia successfully campaigned for The National Policy for the Elderly of 2003 to be reviewed. As a result, the government introduced a new National Ageing Policy, which extends social protection coverage and improves health care for older people.

And thanks to campaigners in Nepal, the Ministry of Health and Population committed itself to expanding geriatric wards from seven to ten hospitals.

Finally, in Vietnam, the national proposal on healthcare for older people was approved by the Health Minister, setting a target of 100% of older people having a health insurance card by 2025.

### ADA on Rights: older women tell their stories

On World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (15 June), it is essential for us to campaign for a United Nations convention on the rights of older people. ADA campaigners held meetings with older people, their national governments and national human rights institutions to lobby politicians to attend the 8<sup>th</sup> Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Ageing in July.

To support campaigners' efforts, HelpAge released a report telling the stories of older women around the world and their

experiences of non-discrimination and equality, as well as the right to freedom from violence, abuse and neglect. Our network members in Cambodia and Nepal held focus groups with older women as part of the consultation.

As a result, government representatives from Bangladesh and the Philippines attended the OEWG, and expressed their support for a new convention. Representatives from Nepal were unable to attend, but also expressed their wishes for a new convention.

Meanwhile...

Older community representatives and ADA campaigners from across Myanmar called for the provision of social protection for older people. In June 2017, the Government of Myanmar funded and rolled out the first Universal National Social Pension Scheme. And in Thailand, partners asked the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand to organise a forum on human rights in each region so that laws can be improved.



### ADA Global: celebrating 10 years of Age Demands Action

On 1 October, ADA turned 10 years old! An incredible 10,000 people in Asia Pacific helped to celebrate this milestone!

In the Philippines, our partners took the opportunity to call for the government to introduce universal social pensions. Around 3,000 older people took to the streets to make their voices heard.

In Sri Lanka, 400 older people took part in the Elders Walk to commemorate the International Day of Older Persons alongside government representatives. A promise was made to expand services for older people provided by the southern provincial council for senior citizens.

### What's next?

A big "thank you" to everyone who has been a part of Age Demands Action in 2017.

Right now, we are busy getting ready for ADA on Health 2018! Get in touch with Panitee ([panitee@helpageasia.org](mailto:panitee@helpageasia.org)) to find out how you can keep up to date with our progress through our campaigns newsletter.

(EP)

*"We'll continue to mobilise older campaigners to demand government to protect their rights and support a United Nations convention on the rights of older people"*

## The 3<sup>rd</sup> Older People's Conference held in Kayin State, Myanmar



### ► Myanmar

One hundred and thirty Older People's Self-Help Groups (OPSHGs) from across the nation, in collaboration with HelpAge International Myanmar and the Myanmar Ageing Network Committee, held the third Older People's Conference on 6-7 December in Kawkalway Village, Hpa-an Township, Kayin State.

About 250 older people's delegates from five states/regions joined the conference to share the results of their annual activities and to discuss their plans to collaborate next year on fundraising and the formation of new Older People's Self-Help Groups (OPSHGs).

"Ageing cannot be stopped. But it is necessary to prepare well for old age. HelpAge cannot act alone to prepare for demographic changes. We count on the collaboration and accountability of the government, the ageing network, and all older people's associations to achieve those goals," said Aye Myat Phyu, Community Programme Manager, HelpAge International (Myanmar).

The fruitful outcomes of the conference brought enhanced networking among township network committees and ageing network members to strengthen the security of older people in the community.

(PS)

## Ageing China Development Centre (ACDC) initiates elderly care service model in rural areas

### ► China

In order to respond to the needs of the elderly in rural areas, the Ageing China Development Centre undertook a pilot project on 'Healthy Ageing for the Elderly in Rural Areas'. This project was funded by the central government to support the participation of social organisations in social service in 2017 with a total amount of 700,000 Yuan. The project's aim was to cultivate and support six Old People's Associations in Huangjia Village, Shituo Village, Beibai Di Village, Qingxing Village, Long Shou Village and Si Zhuang Village in Pucheng County, in order to carry out homecare, health support and social participation for the elderly.

Seventy volunteers were mobilised to assist the 211 targetted old people with disabilities, semi-disabilities, advanced age and poverty by cleaning, combing hair, cutting hair, washing face and feet, bath and toilet assistance, testing blood pressure and blood sugar, other medical treatments, psychological counseling and other home-based activities. Twenty-four health-education and volunteer-clinic activities were organized and conducted, and various community cultural activities attracted many old people to actively



Health education in Qingxing village

participate in them, which enriched their spiritual and cultural life. This project provided effective services such as elderly care, health support and social integration for more than 2,200 old people in six project villages. Through this project, the management and service capability of the old people's associations was improved, rural elderly care organisations were

strengthened, the network of community care services in rural areas was enriched, and a care and service system for elderly people in rural areas was established. This project has been highly praised by the elderly, the project village committees and the committee on ageing office at all levels.

(YX)

## Filipinos call for adoption of universal social pension system

### ► Philippines

In observance of the International Day of Older Persons in October 2017, the Coalition of Services of the Elderly, together with other civil society groups, international organisations and lawmakers called for the urgent adoption of a universal pension to include three million senior citizens who currently receive neither social nor contributory pension.

*“The Philippine pension system currently caters only to salaried formal sector workers through contributory schemes, and to the poorest through the state-funded social pension. This leaves out a significant section of the senior citizen population in the middle,”* explained Ms. Emily Beridico, Executive Director of Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE).

The ‘missing middle’ in the pension system consists of a large proportion of

more vulnerable senior citizens whose incomes are too meagre to contribute to social security earlier in their lives, but who fail to meet the strict eligibility criteria for the current social pension. They are mostly farmers, fisher folks, drivers, street and market vendors, unpaid family caregivers, low income Overseas Filipino Workers and even government contractual employees who receive no benefits.

Several lawmakers from the House of Representatives and the Senate have been helping COSE to prepare a law that will

improve the implementation and coverage of social pensions in the country, and as a result two bills were recently filed in the Senate to address the financing of a universal social pension. The President of the Confederation of Older Persons Associations of the Philippines (COPAP) insisted, “a Universal Social Pension system must be implemented to pay back every older person who has been contributing to nation-building since they were young.”

(HG)



## Humanitarian Assistance in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

### ► Bangladesh

Since 25 August 2017, renewed violence in Myanmar's Rakhine state has forced more than half a million men, women and children, to flee their homes – the largest mass movement of people seen in the region for decades.

People arrived exhausted and hungry in the Bangladesh coastal district around Cox's Bazar, many walking more than 50 km to safety, and they were then put into camps. The monsoon and heavy rains made the difficult situation even worse by increasing the spread of water-borne diseases, such as cholera, typhoid and malaria.

As of 19 December, the figure for new arrivals of refugees from Myanmar in Bangladesh was 655,000, bringing the total number to 866,000.

From 16 to 19 October, HelpAge, along with the Resource Integration Centre (RIC) and Youth Power in Social Action (YPSA), conducted a rapid needs assessment of older people in the Balukhali 2 camp. They used

questionnaires and focused on specific groups to identify the risks faced by older men and women, and to understand the different challenges facing the refugees. The questionnaire covered important aspects of living conditions that affect older people, including access to aid, caring and contact, health needs, and gender differences. Initial findings suggested that the top priorities for older people were food, fuel for cooking, health and shelter.

Together with the RIC and YPSA, HelpAge International has been running 'Age-Friendly Spaces', providing medical support, counselling/psychosocial support and recreational activities. Other ongoing activities conducted by HelpAge network members and partners include home visits and referral for health, shelter, water and sanitation and registration. The RIC also operated a one-day eye clinic at the camp with check-ups and treatments provided by eye specialists from the capital city of Dhaka.



To ensure that the staff were equipped with sufficient skills and knowledge to work in the camp, HelpAge ran several trainings on homecare, health and social protection, as well as providing technical support to other humanitarian groups

(cont.)



dealing with people of advanced age or with disabilities.

At the start of 2018, the RIC organised the distribution of winter clothes with the support of HelpAge International and the Polli Karma Sahayak Foundation (PKSF). Jackets, chadors and sweaters were among the items distributed.

The humanitarian response in Cox's Bazar was funded initially from the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) appeal, which raised GBP 225,000, and an additional GBP 50,000 from HelpAge International, making a total of GBP 275,000.

(BM)

## Community-driven development (CDD) training 2017 in Vietnam

### ► Regional

This was the third time that the HelpAge Vietnam Country Office had convened the CDD training. The training took place from 16-20 October 2017 in Hanoi. About 35 participants from Asia attended this one-week course. Participants from 10 countries included HelpAge staff, government officials and HelpAge network and programme partners.

The participants learned about the concept of community-driven development (CDD) activities and how to make the CDD model work using Vietnam's Intergenerational Self-Help Clubs (ISHCs) as an example. The course included a full-day field visit demonstrating the practical applications and sustainability of the CDD model.

## Vietnam Resolution to adapt to changing demographic

### ► Vietnam

On 25 Oct 2017, on behalf of the Party Central Executive Committee XII, the Communist Party of Vietnam's General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong signed Resolution 21-NQ/TW on the changing demographic of the country that contains important information relating to older people.

The Resolution specifies the targets for older people by 2030: life expectancy is expected to increase from 73.4 in 2016 to 75. During 75 years of living, at least 68 years should be healthy. All older people will have a health insurance card and their health profiles will be monitored, as well as having health check-ups and being taken care of at home or in the local community centre.

According to the Resolution, the Party's Central Executive Committee plans to improve national policies and laws on protecting, caring for and supporting older people; to encourage older people to participate in social-economic activities;

to define responsibilities, obligations and benefits for older people, both as employers and employees; and to actively establish a supportive working environment for older people.

Some other activities were also mentioned, such as improving the system of public social protection by creating a friendly and inclusive environment among the target groups in the future; enhancing the abilities of geriatric departments in health centres, and encouraging the establishment of older people protection institutions and centres that meet the social and cultural demands of older persons.

With the approval of this important Resolution, it is expected that the movement of population strategy away from family planning to population and development, such as taking advantage of the growing golden population and adapting to an ageing society, will continue.

(NPT)

## Congratulations on great achievements!



### COSE's 28th anniversary

On 28 November 1989, the Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE) started their journey to work with and for Filipino older people. In 28 years, they have achieved many improvements in the lives of older people, from successfully pushing for the social pension bill drafted in 2007 to the approval of the Expanded Senior Citizen Act guaranteeing pensions for the poorest older people in 2010.

COSE is continuing advocacy for a universal social pension system in order not to leave out any senior citizen.

Keep up the good work COSE!



### Help Without Frontiers Foundation Thailand turns 10 years old

Help Without Frontiers Foundation Thailand

is the umbrella of ForOldy, one of our network members in Thailand.

On 8 December 2017, they celebrated their anniversary and successes with many activities including talks, an art exhibition and performances based on the 10 years of Help Without Frontiers Foundation Thailand.

## Upcoming event

### Training course on long-term care

HelpAge Asia Pacific Regional Office is going to hold a training course titled "Developing long-term care services for older people" on 18-21 September in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The course was developed in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank (ADB). This training course aims to provide participants with a solid understanding of the essential considerations in developing long-term care (LTC) systems and the key policy and design decisions required.

For more details about the course and for application forms, please contact Caitlin Littleton at [caitlin@helpageasia.org](mailto:caitlin@helpageasia.org)

## Resources

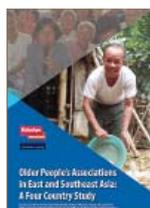
### Publications



**Preliminary Study on Effectiveness of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007**  
HelpAge India



**Impacts of migration on households in Myanmar's dry zone**  
HelpAge Myanmar Country Office



**Older people's associations in east and south-east Asia: a four-country study**  
HelpAge Asia Pacific Regional Office



**The ageing of Myanmar's farmer population**  
HelpAge Myanmar Country Office

### The series - "Old age income security: Work, family and Social protection"



With support from UNFPA, we published a report "Work, family and social protection: old age income security in Bangladesh, Nepal, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam".

Three country papers were developed to provide specific examples of income security in old age in Bangladesh, the Philippines and Thailand.

### Blogs

**A small social pension in Indonesia has a big impact (<http://bit.ly/2CU7n7N>)**

*Karishma Huda, Social Protection & Labor Markets Specialist*

**HelpAge Sri Lanka plugs its country's homecare gap (<http://bit.ly/2mdEQzq>)**

*Samantha Liyanawaduge, HelpAge Sri Lanka*

**As the Universal Declaration of Human Rights approaches 70, it is about time to address ageism (<http://bit.ly/2B9befR>)**

*Bridget Sleep, Senior Rights Adviser, HelpAge International*

*All HelpAge publications are available to download. Please refer to resources section on our website. You can access our blogs from above URLs.*

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In addition, we welcome articles for consideration. Please send articles at any time to:

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**HelpAge International is a global network of organisations promoting the right of all older people to lead dignified, healthy and secure lives.**

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

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