

Connect

HelpAge

global network

Sharing information to strengthen the HelpAge global network in Asia-Pacific
Issue 5, May 2019

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Editorial

A popular saying highlights that “the path to hell is paved with good intentions”. I am frequently reminded of this when looking at the many well-intended policies, laws and decrees which are seldom implemented. In this sense, I am mildly sceptic. However, a couple of weeks ago, I joined an experts’ meeting, organised by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) together with ESCAP, to discuss the regional action plan to implement the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Ageing.

What struck me as different was the emphasis not only on highlighting actions, but also on going down to activities, and defining clear, measurable indicators of success (or lack of success). To me it became clear that the leadership role of ASEAN aims at ensuring not only social protection but also advancing adaptation to ageing societies.

Global events in the last month have also led us to try to find ways to navigate in a world of uncertainties: economic downturn, climate change, expanded migration, conflict – it is natural that we have a certain apprehension about the future. No one has the right answers but one thing is predictable, population ageing. We need to be more focused in supporting adaptation in order to benefit current and future generations of older people. Our concern must focus particularly on the wellbeing of those who are at risk of facing poverty, exclusion and deprivation. One way of doing that is asking ourselves constantly, in everything we do – How is it going to affect older people? How is our society as a whole benefitting from those actions? How much space is created for the meaningful participation of older people? How to smooth out our acquired inefficiencies and how to build upon our successes?

To do all this, we need to use our knowledge and our experience but also our inspiration, to be audacious in our initiatives, to know when and how to take risks, and especially to always keep older people at heart.

Eduardo Kliem
Regional Director
Asia-Pacific Region

Resource development workshop for HelpAge Cambodia



HelpAge Cambodia

► Regional

Resource development is one of the biggest challenges for NGOs everywhere, and the network members of HelpAge International are no exception. Of the 36 network members in the Asia Pacific Region, five have been selected for intensive resource development support for the next two years, including HelpAge Cambodia. A two-day resource development workshop was part of this strategy, and it took place on 31 January and 1 February, facilitated by Jerry Clewett, the Regional Resource Development Manager.

The content of the workshop was largely dictated by HelpAge Cambodia on the basis of consultation with the 15 staff who were to attend. Two days was never going to be enough time to cover all chosen topics adequately, so the final content had to be carefully prioritised. It included sessions on understanding what resource development is; trends in donor funding; marketing tools for resource development; how to strengthen project design; problem tree analysis: what a concept note is for and how to structure a good concept note; how to develop the objectives of a project; basic understanding of a logical framework; core funding and unrestricted funding; and theory of change.

It was helpful to have real HelpAge Cambodia projects at the stage of design to work on as this made applying the theory of logical frameworks and concept notes much more practical, and gave the participants a real insight into the challenges of developing a good design, based on situations with which they were very familiar. There was also some time following the ‘official’ two-day workshop to do some small group work on developing a logical framework for a new BMZ (German Government) funded project. This enabled at least some of the participants to develop their practical skills further.



<https://helpage.exposure.co/it-means-we-can-save-their-lives>

Photo blog

“It means we can save their lives”

Check out how older people are volunteering on the health frontline in Myanmar.

Asia-Pacific SDG Forum

► Regional

The 6th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) was held in Bangkok from 27 to 29 March 2019.

This year, six Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) were being reviewed. We need to encourage life-long learning and create learning platforms that are suitable for older people. For example, some older people in Nepal attended a basic literacy class so that they can read and write in order to live a meaningful life in society.

Many older people have little chance of employment and unequal access to adequate healthcare and finance. An inadequate social protection system in most countries in the region leaves the vast majority of older people without income security.

Climate change means that the world is facing all kinds of natural disasters, so we must ensure that disaster preparedness and response programmes include older people.

Prior to the event, there was a 3-day civil society forum with a similar name, the Asia-Pacific People's Forum on Sustainable Development (APPFSD), as a preparatory meeting for the APFSD. The forum has been held annually since 2014. The number of participants has grown as well as the information and learning. Seventeen constituencies were formed as part of the organising committee to ensure wide representation of civil society groups, large or small. Older People is one of the constituencies.

Emily Beridico, Executive Director of the Coalition of Services of the Elderly Inc. in the Philippines and the focal point for the older people constituency, said, "I want to see more organisations joining the older people constituency, and as the issue of ageing cuts across boundaries, I hope that it is being addressed and looked at by the government. I am encouraging organisations working with older people to join because in policy advocacy, more people means louder voices".



SDG Goals under review 2019



United Nations ESCAP

The Financial Security of Older Women in Southeast Asia – side event

As part of this week-long event, the Tsao Foundation, along with HelpAge and the Malaysian Research Institute on Ageing (MyAgeing), Universiti Putra Malaysia, co-organised a side event on "The Financial Security of Older Women in Southeast Asia".

The discussion was based on research of the same title, highlighting the financial security of older women, and how it is inextricably linked to progress towards sustainable development.



The panel consisted of Susana Harding, Senior Director, ILC Singapore; Supriti Bezbaruah, Research Fellow, ILC Singapore; Usa Khiewrord, Regional Programme Adviser, HelpAge International; Prof Tengku Aizan Hamid, founding Director of the Malaysia Research Institute on Ageing at Universiti Putra Malaysia; and Vanessa Steinmayer, Population Affairs Officer, ESCAP (from left to right).

In 2050, it is estimated that the number of older people in Asia Pacific will be 1.3 billion, and older woman will be the majority. Evidence suggests that older women are more disadvantaged than older men, facing higher rates of poverty, and less access to income, assets, savings and pensions. These gender inequalities are the cumulative outcome of gender-based discrimination encountered by women throughout their lives. This issue must be addressed at policy level.

"The obstacles that prevent women from having financial security can be separated into three groups—individual, cultural, and structural" said Prof. Tengku Aizan from the Malaysian Research Institute on Ageing at Universiti Putra Malaysia.

Gender equality and the empowerment of women is the core principle of the 2030 Agenda. The intersection of gender and ageing cuts across multiple goals of the 2030 Agenda, such as poverty eradication, equality in education, decent work and reduction of inequalities.

"If we overlook the issues concerning older women, SDGs will not be achieved" said Supriti Bezbaruah, a Research Fellow at ILC Singapore.

Learn more about APPFSD <https://www.unescap.org/events/apcfsd6>

Battling against drought with the ‘Water Nutrition and Health’ programme

► India

Water is a cherished commodity in the Thar desert of Rajasthan in India. It is in those rural communities that *Gramin Vikas Vigyan Samiti*, or GRAVIS, has been working with older women and men for many years. With support from the Sponsor a Grandparent (SaG) programme, it initiated the Water Nutrition and Health in Thar programme in 16 drought-hit villages.

Last year, 71 ‘*tankas*’ – traditional rain water harvesting tanks – were constructed. *Tankas* use locally available material. Their construction offers employment to the local community. For up to six months each year, a *Tanka* provides a valuable supplementary source of water. Instantly, access to safe water improves the health of family members. Common diseases such as diarrhea lessen immediately. It also saves time,

especially for women, who otherwise spend a long time fetching water, as they may have to go up to 10-15 km for a round trip.

Also, 67 Agri-Horti Units were established for selected senior beneficiaries in 2018. These small plots of land offer an opportunity to grow local produce such as *goonda* (citrus fruit), *ber* (desert plum) and lemon. The gardens are managed by older people with the support of their family. This saves precious funds (up to 1,500 Indian Rupees per month) for the household to use for other necessities, such as medicine, clothes and pocket money for the grandchildren.

GRAVIS supports the communities through awareness raising on health and nutrition. Self-care and self-reliance for older persons are cross-cutting themes and priorities of those trainings. For



Gramin Vikas Vigyan Samiti (GRAVIS)

The older men and women happy to received Tanka for harvesting the rain water for their domestic use and drinking purpose

example, they are guided on how to increase the intake of nutritious food. In turn, the Village Older People’s Associations (VOPA) play a role in providing access to government facilities, such as a bus pass and pensions. The project also organises regular health checkup camps. In 2018, 936 male and 1,045 female older villagers, together with 4,230 family members, benefited from such health camps.

For more information about GRAVIS’ work in the Thar desert, see “Battling against Drought” (<https://bit.ly/2PT6gJx>)

Bridging the generation divide–Vietnam’s ISHCs

► Vietnam

Growing old brings with it problems, such as weakening health, non-communicable diseases and depression, which is often caused by loneliness. This problem can be acute in Vietnam, a developing country with a high rate of ageing. Normally, older Vietnamese people feel shy about showing their emotions in public because of cultural and social norms. However, at Intergenerational Self Help Club (ISHC) meetings, participants are encouraged to laugh as much as they can and develop close bonds with their fellow members. A key feature of ISHCs is that at least 30 per cent of the members must be under 60, which guarantees interaction between generations.

On 19–23 March 2019, a 5-day training by HelpAge International in Vietnam in establishing ISHCs took place in Hoa Binh Province. The training explained how to set up, operate and manage the clubs, how to conduct monthly meetings and understand club activities. Also during the training, participants played

lots of games together which made them laugh wholeheartedly.

“Joining this training course, I feel very happy. We laughed so much and were full of joy. This makes me feel fresh,” said 60-year-old Bui Van An, from Cao Phong District in Hoa Binh Province. This is just one of many positive comments about the course.

“Laughing brings us many physical and mental benefits, so in this training course we create as many chances for you to laugh as possible. Joy is the goal that we hope you will achieve after the training course. Only through happiness, can you spread these benefits widely in your clubs,” Quyen Tran, Regional Programme Adviser, said as he introduced Laughing Yoga to the participants.

After many years implementing ISHCs in Vietnam, HelpAge knows that having fun is one of the main reasons that people join the club, and then they can share their ideas across the generations.

“Joining this training course, I feel very happy. We laughed so much and were full of joy. This makes me feel fresh,”



Do Hoang Anh/HelpAge International

Bui Van An (blue shirt), 60 years old, is laughing happily when joining in the game with his colleagues in the training course.

Annual meeting of the Mongolian Association of Elderly People

► Mongolia

The Mongolian Association of Elderly People started implementing its programme activities from the outset of 2019. We successfully organised our annual meeting for the heads of our local elders' organisations on 21–22 February in Ulaanbaatar city. This traditional event was attended by the heads of elders' organisations operating at the level of the capital city and its districts, provinces and sums (smallest administrative units), and also elders' councils and committees from some economic units. Participants discussed many issues related to older people, including the implementation of a law on older people, social protection, health care services, pension, benefits and employment. Managerial-level representatives of relevant ministries and agencies and also specialists participated in the event and made presentations on issues related to older people.

During the event Mr U. Khurelsukh, Prime Minister of Mongolia received representatives of participants for a meeting at the request of the Mongolian

Association of Elderly People. The head of the government stressed that the government planned to do more to improve the welfare of older people to reflect the country's economic growth. Meanwhile the older people's representatives shared their older generation's rich experience and exchanged views on various issues.

One of the key priorities for the Mongolian Association of Elderly People is to strengthen the capacities of local organisations of elderly people. We aim to achieve this through effective training. Thus, we organised phased training courses on themes relevant to elders' legislation in all districts of the capital city Ulaanbaatar from 5 March through to 1 April. The participants were granted a certificate of "instructor-teacher". Similar training courses are expected to be held in other regions. Our elders' organisations will be able to initiate and carry out activities beneficial to older people, provided that they are equipped with the necessary knowledge about elder-related



Top: The Prime Minister presided at the Mongolian Association of the Elderly annual meeting.

Bottom: A capacity building training course for local organisations.

legislation, have the ability to prepare reports and accounts and to conduct a comparative study in order to access development projects.

Mongolian Association of Elderly People

The new Cambodian Ageing Network

► Cambodia

At the end of February 2019, the new Cambodian Ageing Network held its first quarterly meeting with 18 members to review and formulate strategic plans for the year 2019-2020.

The first-ever Cambodian Ageing Network was successfully established on 13 November 2018 with technical support from HelpAge Cambodia in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation. This new network consists of 18 institutions who formed the founding members, including civil society organisations, older people's associations and federations, with a total of 16,269 members across the five main provinces of Cambodia.

The Cambodia Ageing Network (CAN) is a platform where OPAs, federations, NGOs, and its founding partners gather for dialogue and debate, and work together to improve the quality of life for

older people. They also contribute to the Royal Government of Cambodia's development policies to effectively benefit older people in Cambodia.

This new network envisions all ageing Cambodians enjoying healthy well-being, living with dignity, having a good quality of life and sufficient rights. Their mission is to strengthen the capacity of older people and other stakeholders so they can play a vital role in policy dialogue to improve the lives of older people in Cambodia.



By early April 2019, this network had mobilised around 2,280 members in 4 provinces, including Battambang, Banteay Meanchey, Siem Reap and Kampong Thom Provinces, to organise Age Demands Action campaigns during World Health Day to call for a free health check-up for older people in communities and to seek funding from their local government.

As a result of these events, 305 older people, including 219 women, received a free health check-up from the health agencies and promises were made by the local government to provide health awareness for older people at communities more regularly and to provide annual funding for their OPAs.

HelpAge Cambodia

Life stories

Happiness crossed the border

► Nepal

Ram Kumar Mijar, aged 60 from Dupcheshwar Rural Municipality 3, Nuwakot in Nepal, did not have citizenship when the disastrous earthquake hit the country in 2015. At the age of 10, he had gone to work in India and became disabled due to a bus accident. He came back to Nepal with the plan of starting a small business in his village and was determined not to go back to India. Mijar said, “25 April 2015 was the most unforgettable day of my life. Around noon the earth was shaking so badly and several houses collapsed within two minutes in our village. Some people were buried by the debris of the houses and some managed to escape. My mind was totally blank and I could not understand what was going on.”

When the Nepal government representatives came with the reconstruction programme for his village, he wanted to construct a new house but he could not receive support from the government because he did not have document to prove his Nepali citizenship as he had been in India for many years. He was frustrated in his efforts to acquire citizenship.

Finally, Mijar could get citizenship and he recalled how it happened. “One day, a surveyor from the Purnima/Sambodhan Project came to my damaged house and collected my personal information. The team also helped to gather the required documents to get citizenship. Finally, I have got citizenship at the age of 60. This means I will be able to receive different types of social services and medical treatment.”

Nepal Participatory Action Network (NEPAN),



Muji Hartini pursues her passion

► Indonesia

On 13 August 2018, Tridadi Village Authority officially launched the formation of the Berseri Intergenerational Group (IG), whose members come from Beteng, Dukuh and Pisangan subvillages. In accordance with its abbreviation, the group wants its members to be lively, healthy and independent. Each month, Muji Hartini (57 years old), who has been living alone these five past years, eagerly awaits the monthly meeting. Years ago she suffered from an illness and needed to take medication, so she was rarely involved in any meeting of the women's group in the village. For her, the IG monthly meeting is fun because she can enjoy meeting other members, laughing and singing together, and gaining new knowledge. “In the last monthly meeting I was taught to make bean sprouts, then the other day we also tried to make something from banana stems. I tried to make them at home, and the results were good but I didn't know what to do after that. Finally, I asked a vegetable seller whether he could help me to sell the sprouts, and luckily he said yes,” said Hartini. Not only that, but also as an IG member, Hartini was able to apply for micro-credit that was managed by IG. She used this loan to pursue her hobby—making batik.

“I thought batik would be fun, as I could do it alone at home when I have time”. It takes time to make a good batik, but with micro-credit support, Hartini can now focus on designing attractive patterns without the need to worry about the money to buy equipment. She hopes her batik will be sold at a good price, so she will no longer depend on the generosity of her sisters.



YAKKUM Emergency Unit

Is income security possible in Asia without social pensions?

Social protection has increasingly been recognised as one of the most effective measures to tackle poverty and inequality. The International Labour Organization's (ILO) Social Protection Floors Recommendation (no. 202) promotes four guarantees to ensure basic income security throughout the life cycle. Target 1.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals specifically calls for social protection for all, including social protection floors. The Asia and Pacific region has seen noticeable expansion in social protection coverage in this century. For example, a number of programmes have been introduced in the ASEAN countries, supported by the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection and an action plan for its implementation.

However, **the majority of people continue to lack basic social protection benefits.** According to the ILO, 61 per cent of people in Asia and the Pacific continue to be unprotected by any type of social protection. Governments often claim that financial constraints are the reason for the persistent low coverage of social protection, yet many low- and middle-income countries have accepted this important role of government to protect its citizens and have introduced sustainable and affordable programmes.

Pensions are the main form of social protection for older women and men in the world, including in this region. Yet nearly half (45 per cent) of older people do not receive any type of pension. Contributory and non-contributory pensions are the two main approaches. Offering pension coverage through the contributory channel, which requires individuals to contribute throughout their working lives, has been challenging. The coverage gap is particularly glaring in



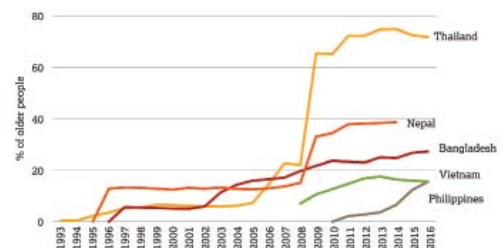
countries where there is persistent informality in the labour force, which is the reality of most low- and middle-income countries. Once it was optimistically assumed that as countries developed economically, an increasing share of their workforce would be covered by formal employment-based protections. The evidence suggests this anticipated trend has been elusive. People in the informal sector are typically unable to save for old age, usually having low and irregular incomes. Women are particularly disadvantaged due to their lower wages and shorter and more frequently interrupted working lives, as they are often the main carers of dependent family members – young children and family members who are older, ill or have disabilities.

On the other hand, universal social pension* programmes have been effective in increasing pension coverage in many low- and middle-income countries, as the coverage of contributory systems has stagnated. Women benefit disproportionately because a social pension responds to their cumulative disadvantages over the life-course, and more women benefit as they outnumber men because of their longer lifespans.



HelpAge International

Coverage of social pensions has risen significantly over the last two decades



Source: Knox-Vydmannov C, *Work, family and social protection: old age income security in Bangladesh, Nepal, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam*, HelpAge International, 2016

There has been a rise in the introduction and expansion of social pensions in recent years. For instance, Thailand changed from a poverty-tested scheme to a near-universal national programme in 2009, the Philippines introduced a poverty-tested scheme in 2010, and Myanmar introduced a universal national pension in 2017, as described in the box.

Universal social pension in Myanmar

The journey towards a universal social pension for Myanmar began with the National Social Protection Strategic Plan, approved in 2014, which aimed for the introduction of eight measures, including social pension. From the beginning, HelpAge, along with other development partners, advocated for a broad, inclusive social protection system with a life-course approach. To give the government greater confidence and experience to put the Strategic Plan into action, in 2015 HelpAge worked closely with the Department of Social Welfare to conduct an expert feasibility study followed by a one-year pilot social pension, delivered through the existing government structure in one selected township. When a civilian-led government was elected later that year, the new government followed the same track and soon accelerated, based on the pilot experience. Through its team embedded within the national Department of Social Welfare headquarters and with support from experts, HelpAge built a unique and trusted relationship with the department through a flexible, strategic, and adaptive approach. By April 2017, Myanmar's first universal social protection programme, the National Social Pension, was rolled out across the country. This was a substantial achievement combining political will with technical support. In the long run, HelpAge's challenge in supporting the department will be strengthening the capacity of governmental structures in the context of rapid system expansion.

*Social pensions are tax-financed, non-contributory cash transfers paid to older people on a regular basis.

Interview

At the 10th session of the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG), we spoke with Bridget Sleaf, Senior Rights Policy Adviser at HelpAge International. As a HelpAge representative, Bridget has been attending the OEWG since its first session in 2011 in order to amplify older people's voices.



We understand that the OEWG is now included in the UN calendar. What is the significance of that and what does it mean for the meeting schedule?

This is a very important development because it raises the status of the OEWG. Full interpretation into the 6 UN languages and other administrative services are guaranteed and the organising committee (known as the Bureau) can ensure the meeting takes place at a convenient time of year. When the OEWG was not part of the official calendar, it had to take place whenever meeting rooms were free, which was usually in July or August when all the diplomats were on holiday!

Can you tell us briefly about the thematic focus of this 10th session?

The 10th session had two parts: 1) a general discussion on older people's rights to social protection, to education and to lifelong learning, and 2) a more in-depth look at the components of the older people's rights to autonomy, care and support and palliative care.

What are the key challenges faced by older persons globally in regard to education and life-long learning?

Ageism was identified as a major barrier because education is usually seen as something only for the young and because older people are perceived as not being able, or not wanting, to learn. Equally important is the fact that older people are not given a say in what they want to learn and how they want to learn it. Many say they don't have the skills or knowledge they need or want to live dignified, meaningful and fulfilling lives. What is exciting about looking at education and learning from a human rights perspective is that it provides an opportunity to rethink

how we understand learning in older age, what its purpose is and how older people themselves can shape what and how they learn.

Social protection and social security are issues that are raised repeatedly. What are the key elements of these issues?

The first thing to establish is the purpose of the right. Once you've established that, then the different normative elements (or components) of the right fall into place. A growing consensus is emerging that human rights in older age are all about ensuring we can live dignified, autonomous and meaningful lives and participate fully in society.

In order to do this, the right to social protection and social security must guarantee that all older people have access to social protection and social security schemes that are of a high enough value so they can live dignified lives and participate as full members of society.

These schemes must be available to older people without discrimination of any kind. Information about schemes and who is eligible must also be made available. Schemes must be acceptable to older people and appropriate to the different types of risks they face. Support must be available to older people so they can make their own decisions about how they use the income or other entitlements, and there must be complaint or appeal processes they can use when they are denied any aspect of this right.



Older activists from Africa and Asia, including from Nepal, India and Bangladesh, joined world leaders to call for a UN convention on the rights of older people.



Ishwari Swar from Ageing Nepal (third from left) in the 10th session of Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing from 15–18 April 2019 (UN, New York).

How many HelpAge network members were there? What were their roles?

Fifty one network members and partners have officially registered to take part in the OEWG process. Nineteen sent written information in advance of the session and eleven attended, including two from Nepal and one from Bangladesh. Network members play a critical role before and during the OEWG sessions, ensuring the voices of older people in their communities inform and influence the discussions. Those present in New York spoke to their government representatives, made interventions during the plenary discussions, took part in lunchtime events and were an active part of the growing civil society presence.

As HelpAge, what are we planning to do to achieve the realisation of a UN convention on the rights of older people?

We know the most important thing all of us in civil society can do to get a new convention is to lobby at home in our own capital cities. This is where governments decide if they support the convention. At the 10th session, Nigeria and Cameroon came out in support of a new convention for the first time. Civil society organisations in these countries decided this was what they wanted and made it happen through their efforts. Support for a convention is growing but we still need more countries to join us so we can get an agreement from the UN to start drafting. It is people in civil society who have the power to make change happen, and our advocacy with governments is the key to progress.

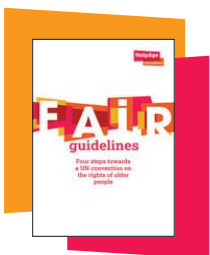
Together we will get the convention we need to secure the fair and just society we all want to live in.

How do we get them to listen?

Whether you are new to advocacy, find yourself stuck at a certain point, or are already an expert and would like to up your game, our new FAIR guidelines can help. These guidelines will take you on a step-by-step journey with practical tips and clear milestones towards securing the support of your government for a new convention as you:

- F** – Find out your government’s position
- A** – Argue your case
- I** – Involve older people
- R** – Review your progress

By following these steps, you will build up an evidence base relevant to your country, engage with older people more effectively and find the right strategy to bring your government on board.



FAIR guidelines: four steps towards a UN convention on the rights of older people

Available at <https://www.helpage.org/resources/publications/>

Read more at <https://www.helpage.org/newsroom/latest-news/new-advocacy-guidelines-launched-for-a-un-convention/>

How older people see their rights - Let's hear their voices

► Bangladesh

The Resource Integration Centre (RIC) has established older people's associations (OPAs) in five districts of Bangladesh. Recently, the RIC conducted five consultations to gather opinions from older men and women on various issues and to get their comments on the agenda of the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG). Some of the topics were new to older people in Bangladesh, such as palliative care, autonomy and independence, but they continued to think about them beyond the interview.

Autonomy and independence: Interviewees realised the need to create an enabling environment and to exercise their autonomy and independence with help from the State.

Life-long learning: rural and illiterate older people have had no expectation of education and learning. Generally, they feel limited by the barriers of availability, accessibility and concerns about their adaptability.

Palliative care: older people expressed that they might need such caring in later life but their communities lack adequate facilities, so they are used to being taken care of by their family members.

Long-term care: In Bangladesh there are many difficulties and barriers to older people receiving appropriate long-term health care and support needs. Most long-term care is provided at home and a lack of such facilities in the community deprives older people of their rights.

Social protection: Interviewees recommended that the state should increase the amount of the Old Age Allowance for beneficiaries and demanded the introduction of a universal pension for all older people of Bangladesh.



Resource Integration Centre (RIC)

“We need different types of health services and we should have more choice.”

Zaman, a retired school teacher



► Sri Lanka

Heavy rainfall in northern parts of Sri Lanka during December caused severe flooding in all five districts of the Northern Province. As a result of this emergency situation, 125,519 people (40,278 families) were affected, according to the Disaster Management Centre.* Two people died and two others were reported missing, 500 houses were destroyed and 4,632 houses were partially damaged.

Worst affected by the flood were farmers. The disaster came during the harvesting season and the crops were destroyed by this flood. So the farmers had to wait another 4 months for the next harvest, during which time they had no money. Among the older people living in these

Older people receive assistance to restart their life after floods

districts, more than 30 per cent of them depended on farming, another 30 per cent were self-employed and 40 per cent of older people have no source of income. Hence older people were very vulnerable in this situation. Therefore, HelpAge Sri Lanka (HASL) selected two districts where more people were affected and HASL had a presence.

According to the statistics, 111,079 people belonging to 35,599 families in Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi districts had been affected. This was 88 per cent of the total number of affected people in the country.

HelpAge Sri Lanka conducted an Emergency Flood Response project with a Regional Emergency Fund (REF) sponsored by Margaret A Cargills Philanthropies to support these affected older people and their families. About 300 of those received food and non-food items, while older people were specially provided with supplementary nutrition food items. Drinking water bottles were

also provided to older people until their water sources were clean. HASL also provided mats, clothes, towels, soap, other hygienic items, mosquito nets and some medicinal items which they required on a daily basis (first aid need). Around 1,200 people benefited from this food, non-food and drinking water distribution.

This project took place between 1 January and 28 February 2019.



HelpAge Sri Lanka

* *The Disaster Situation Report, Disaster Management Centre, reported at 0900hrs, on 31 December 2018.*

HelpAge India leads advocacy on long-term care

► India

HelpAge India has been working for the last 40 years for the benefit of older people in the country. In recent years, it has become increasingly aware of the need to address the care needs of the population. India does not currently have an organised long-term care (LTC) system and nearly all people with care needs rely solely on family caregivers, which is not always available or sufficient.

Since 2018, HelpAge India has been piloting a home-based care project in three locations of India (Shimla, Leh and Cuddalore) with the aim of developing viable home care models to improve care service provision for older people with long-term care needs and to work with the government to improve health and care for older people. So far 820 caregivers have been trained and they are now providing 1,752 older people with at least two home care visits a week. HelpAge India has adapted and developed a training manual for home care volunteers and caregivers based on the

ROK-ASEAN Home Care manuals originally developed together with the Tsao Foundation for the ten-year volunteer-based home-care project from 2001–2011. HelpAge India partnered with the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) to adapt these materials to the Indian context in three states, testing them with caregivers in each state and updating the model as necessary.

The results from the project indicate that there is a pressing need to find smart policy solutions. HelpAge India organised an advocacy event–National Conclave on Long-Term Care for the Elderly–in New Delhi on 18 March. The event aimed to showcase and document the impact of home care for older people and to discuss solutions and multistakeholder engagement. A short film from the home-based care pilot project and an advocacy report on LTC systems were released. The report is a clarion call for the government and others to be aware of the need for a national long-term care

system and to give recommendations on how they can respond effectively to realise the rights of older people as provided by the Indian constitution.

The event was attended by high-level officers from the National Health Mission, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the private sector, and representatives from Delhi's Senior Citizens Club. Caitlin Littleton, Regional Programme Adviser, HelpAge International also joined the meeting.



For more information, please contact Imtiaz.Ahmed@helpageindia.org.

You can find the URL to HelpAge India short film on the back cover.

A network of civil society organisations for implementation of older people's law

► Pakistan

Pakistan is one of 15 countries in the world where the number of people aged 60 and above is more than 10 million, and HelpAge International has formed more than 200 older people's associations across Pakistan. As a result of their successful advocacy, three provinces in Pakistan have approved a new "senior citizens act", which is the first legislation dealing with the protection of the rights of older people.

HelpAge International in Pakistan with the support of German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) is now supporting two provincial governments in the implementation of their senior citizen acts. HelpAge International has recently formed a network of 14 civil society organisations in Karachi, the objective of which is to press for the speedy implementation of the Sindh Senior Citizens Welfare Act and then to monitor the implementation activities. The network will not only



HelpAge International

encourage its member organisations to include the protection of rights of older people in their programmes and policies but will also raise awareness on needs, issues and the rights of older people.

HelpAge International along with its partner the Sindh Rural Support Organization is sensitising and building the capacity of older women and men, public representatives, civil society and

media to create awareness on ageing issues and carry out advocacy for the rights of older people and to hold the relevant public institutions accountable for the implementation of the Act. The team recently met the Minister for Women's Development, Ms Shehla Raza. She was sensitised to the needs and issues of older people and a copy of the act was presented to her.

"We should work together to raise awareness for the rights of older women."

Shehla Raza, Minister for Women's Development

The "Power of Older People" network

► Thailand

The name of the network speaks for itself. The coalition made up of 14 Thai civil society groups, working with and for older people, got together for the second time to demonstrate the spirit and power of older people who were determined to make positive changes to Thai society.

On 24 April 2019, amidst the heat and congestion of Bangkok city, members of Thai civil society groups, both young and old, met and planned how they would take the network forward. Following the first meeting in November last year, word

about this network spread and several more organisations attended the meeting this time.

The group talked about their expectations and how they foresee the future together. "I think in principle, we have to respect and listen to one another; that way we can work smoothly," suggested Thananchay Sawittananchai from the Older People's Club, the Catholic Council of Thailand.

Firsthand experiences of living as older persons in Thailand were shared, ranging from being ignored by a bus driver as they were waiting at the bus stop, to being shamed when presenting an identification card to get a discount when using public transport. With such challenges facing older people today, advocacy work to reduce ageism is one area that the group plans to work on together.

By simply being in the same room and getting the know one another, the group

was able to exchange good practices and learn that between them they have plenty of resources and knowledge. The knowledge within the room was rich and the willingness to support one another was evident.

Oranuch Lerdkulladilok, Director of forOldy, one of the HelpAge network members who spearheaded the Power of Older People network, said that "Each organisation has its own agenda and goodwill to work for older people, so by coming together we can be even stronger and make our voice louder. Together we can offer more benefit for older people".

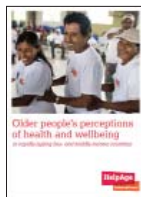
Many more steps and support are needed to ensure the sustainability of this network, but these firm first steps should lead to a positive future. The work of this network should benefit not only older people in Thailand today but those of tomorrow too.



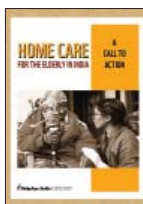
forOldy

Resources

Publications



Older people's perceptions of health and wellbeing in rapidly ageing low- and middle-income countries
HelpAge International



Home care for the elderly in India: A call to action
HelpAge India



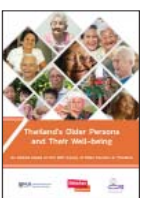
More at risk: How older people are excluded in humanitarian data
HelpAge International



Living, not just surviving
HelpAge International



Closing the Gap: Empowerment and inclusion in Asia and the Pacific
The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)



Thailand's Older Persons and Their Well-being: An Update based on the 2017 Survey of Older Persons in Thailand
College of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University and HelpAge International

Blogs

Social protection is key to realising older women's rights and sustainable development (<https://bit.ly/2EOJNbB>)

Cecilia Mbaka, Trustee of HelpAge International

Testing out electronic pension delivery in Myanmar (<https://bit.ly/2JOfOGm>)

Aye Myat Phyu, Programme Manager, HelpAge International

Older people's perceptions of health and wellbeing – learning from Health Outcomes Tool (<https://bit.ly/2J91FTS>)

Rachel Albone, Global Adviser – Health and Care, HelpAge International

We are all equally invisible (<https://bit.ly/2IXAvOO>)

Verity McGivern, Agenda 2030 Advocacy Manager, HelpAge International

Videos

Home care pilot project in India (<https://bit.ly/2WwgBxE>)

HelpAge India

Basic Literacy Class for Older Persons (<https://bit.ly/2Q2bzX2>)

Ageing Nepal

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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.

Connect 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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