

# ETHIO Ageways

## Editorial

*Although population ageing is one of humanity's greatest triumphs, older people face a number of social and economic challenges in many parts of the world.*

*In Ethiopia, there are strong traditions of community and family support across ethnic groups and geographic regions of the country, however these are breaking down, due to factors such as urbanisation, recurrent drought and the like.*

*HelpAge International is network of like-minded organisations that is the only international institution committed to working on the multitude of issues affecting older people around the world. We have been working closely with our local partners aiming for the betterment of the lives of older people.*

*This newsletter is the first of the quarterly briefs, reviewing some of our major achievements in our programme work in Ethiopia on emergencies, health and HIV & AIDS, secure incomes and global/local movement.*

***Let's put older people on the development agenda!***

## Age Demands Action

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## HelpAge International wins the Hilton Humanitarian Award

17 April 2012

By Navdha Malhotra

HelpAge International received the prestigious 2012 Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian Prize on 16 April in Washington. The award was given by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation at a special ceremony at the 2012 Global Philanthropy Forum annual conference in Washington. The award is the world's largest humanitarian prize, and is presented each year to an organisation that has delivered extraordinary work to alleviate human suffering. Older people are their own best advocates. Steven M. Hilton, CEO and president of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, presented the award to HelpAge International CEO Richard Blewitt. (Continued on page 7)



Richard Blewitt, HelpAge CEO receives the Hilton Humanitarian Prize.

# Events

## 27 February to 1 March 2012

With support from UK based partner, HelpAge International hosted UK celebrity grandmother and professional gardener Jane Fearnley-Whittingstal. She visited two partners in Dire Dawa and Addis Ababa and conducted interviews with beneficiaries of the projects.

For Jane Fearnley Fearnley-Whittingstal personal account of the visit, go to [www.ageuk.blog.org.uk/tag/jane-fearnley-whittingstal/](http://www.ageuk.blog.org.uk/tag/jane-fearnley-whittingstal/) and/or listen to her interview on BBC's Women's Hour [www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b01fhrhz/Womans\\_Hour\\_Grandparents/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b01fhrhz/Womans_Hour_Grandparents/).

## 21 March 2012

HelpAge and its partners convened for a planning meeting in Addis Ababa and concluded with the formation of older people platform.

## 16 April 2012

HelpAge International received the Hilton Humanitarian Award from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation appreciating HelpAge efforts to improve the lives of older people worldwide. In addition,

## 24 to 27 April 2012

HelpAge International participated in the exhibition of the 13th World Congress on Public Health.

## 09 May 2012

HelpAge International delivered a half-day training on social protection to the staff of Irish Aid upon request.

## 3 – 5 March 2012

EU funded project 'Empowering Older People and their Associations to have a lasting impact on the welfare of vulnerable older people in Ethiopia' was launched. HelpAge International with the Ethiopian Elders and Pensioners Association (EEPNA) and the Ministry of Social and Labor Affairs will carry out the capacity building project in three regions - Amhara, Oromia and Southern Nations and Nationalities People's Region (SNNPR).

## March – May 2012

HelpAge International together with EEPNA provided capacity building trainings to over 200 people including representatives from older people associations and government offices in Addis Ababa, Oromia, Tigray, Southern Nations Nationalities People's Region on leadership, planning, monitoring and evaluation, awareness raising, fund-raising and the like.

## 30 May – 1 June 2012

HelpAge International held its bi-annual staff retreat at Sodere Resort Hotel, where the staff shared its objectives, learning and appreciation and appreciation.

## 04 – 15 June 2012

HelpAge International hosted its affiliate HelpAge Germany during visits to emergency projects implemented by local partners in Borena and Tigray.

## Upcoming

04 July 2012	EEPNA Strategic Plan & Management Validation Workshop
05 July 2012	First older people platform meeting in Addis Ababa
20 July 2012	World Population Day
23 July 2012	International Conference on HIV and AIDS in Washington DC
01 October 2012	UN International Day of Older Persons

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# Rebuilding the lives of older people

By Erna Mentenot Hintz

In 2010, an unexpected and altogether devastating flood hit Alemata district in southern Tigray, affecting over 13,000 people. The local community endured severe losses to their livestock, their harvests and their traditionally built mud houses. Many were left vulnerable, with older people hugely affected, as is the case in most emergencies. Their futures seemed dim with their assets destroyed or washed away by the natural disaster.

HelpAge International and the Relief Society of Tigray (REST) joined forces to support 7771 of the most vulnerable people in five kebeles (the lowest level of government administration), with a special focus on older people headed households. Funding for this endeavour was made possible by UN-OCHA, HelpAge Germany and NAK-karikative.

(c)Erna Mentenot Hintz/HelpAge International/2012



*One of the older beneficiaries, Kassaye Tegegn, a 66-year-old farmer (seen here with his family standing in front of their new house) stated: "I would have been helpless if it wasn't for the crucial support I received from HelpAge, especially in regard to rebuilding my house which was in a dire condition."*

## Efforts to rebuild a community

HelpAge began its response by providing household items such as 5l jerry cans enabling 176 older people and their dependants to easily collect water, blankets to keep them warm, as well as plates, cooking pots for eating and drinking.

Together with its partner HelpAge, continued its efforts, to rebuild the livelihoods of the 1581 families of which 663 were comprised older people

and their dependants.

One aspect, which set this particular project apart from many of its kind, was the relocation and construction of larger and stronger houses, built with inputs from the community -introducing a sense of ownership. The core materials such as eucalyptus trees, nails of different sizes, tie wire, corrugated iron sheets for the roof, windows and doors along with locks and hinges, as well as fees for carpenters were provided. The remaining building, usually locally available, such as wood to strengthen the structure filling the gaps between the poles and earth, hay, and water for plastering was to be provided by the local communities. This element supported 329 families, including 126 older people, enabling them to move into safe comfortable 2-roomed houses. The houses were designed in an elevated manner preventing future floods from causing similar destruction. Furthermore, HelpAge allowed 146 older women to participate in income generating activities to support themselves and their families, by providing them each with 4 small animals, namely goats and sheep, to breed and sell. HelpAge provided another 215 older men and women with 43 kg of teff (indigenous crop of Ethiopia) seeds and farm tool packages to pursue their work on their land

## Unanticipated challenges with opportunities

Throughout the entire project, HelpAge ensured the voices of the community were heard and respected by collaborating closely with the local authorities.

Although, there were challenges, like the hesitation of the beneficiaries to relocate causing a delay in shelter construction and the failure of the seasonal rains, the project brought about

(c)HelpAge International/2011



(c)HelpAge International/2012

By Aman Wabe

Edited by Erna Mentenot Hintz

Recently, HelpAge was approached by an older people association (OPA) in the Southern Nations and Nationalities People's Region requesting for technical support on associational development. An interesting visit highlighted the importance of the role played by older people at a local, national, and global development.

Established in 2003, the Boloso Sore OPA was initiated by a group of retired civil servants driven by factors such as the derogatory attitude towards ageing and pressing economic and social problems. Today, the association has 47 members strong.

Initially, there were many obstacles. The idea of forming an association was deemed pointless by many, prejudiced by misconceptions about older people.

## Major achievements

After gaining legal personality, the association firmly demanded farmland from the local authorities, and secured 10 hectares. Turning the degraded and marginal land into a prosperous forest, by planting over 160,000 trees of different species - including gravilia, eucalyptus, fruits and sugarcane - the older people were able to demonstrate their ample potential. The forest can be considered a vital contribution to the global efforts towards mitigation on climate change as well as to the social activities of the community. Even the local administration offices have begun presenting the forest to high officials as one of the distinctive achievements of the district.

The association also engages in farming, harvesting an average 80 quintals of maize and root crops every year which is distributed to members, sold to cover various costs and to support more than 30 destitute older people.

With a vision to expand operations, it has integrated animal fattening into its activities involving at present, 13 oxen. In future, it intends to involve in eco-tourism undertakings if the funds can be raised.

## Challenges for older people associations

In spite of the successes, significant challenges still exist. One is accessing credit services due to restraining policies of financial institutions in the area and another is accessing agricultural inputs like fertiliser and quality seeds. In addition, appropriation of land by individuals has been an issue often necessitating lawsuits; and low awareness of government officials of older people's needs with the dynamically changing public administration personal system have negatively affected the association.

The leaders have appealed to HelpAge International for support to scale up operations, and we are invested in raising the necessary funds to support them in their remarkable initiatives.



IG/Denabo Deseba/HelpAge International/2012

## The older people proudly enjoy ownership of the forest.

*"Member of the association had to work very hard to plant and protect these trees and fruits. Like other members, I worked hard preparing land and planting up to 80 seedlings per week. I never imagined they would grow to become a forest. I used to spend my time and pension in Tej Bet (local beer houses). But now I pass time walking in this forest." (Member of the Boloso OPA)*



IG/Denabo Deseba/HelpAge International/2012

# Representing older people at the World Congress on Public Health

By Erna Mentenot Hintz  
Edited by Navdha Malhotra

As part of the Age Demands Action on Health, HelpAge participated in the 13th World Congress on Public Health held in Addis Ababa on 23-27 April 2012. The event brought together 3,000 health practitioners, experts and organisations from around the world to share their experiences and ideas. The theme for this congress was "Towards Global Health Equity: Threats and Opportunities" and included various panel sessions, discussions and an exhibition.



(c)Eyoube Kassa/HelpAge International/2012

## An exciting opportunity for HelpAge

Our team took this opportunity to introduce and share HelpAge's work with and for older people with the participants. We were amongst 35 exhibitors including organisations like World Health Organisation, Pfizer, Save the Children Norway, and Save Your Generation Ethiopia.

Over 350 people visited the booth to learn about our work on older people's right and access to health. There were numerous other booths displaying initiatives that could help achieve a world where older people lead secure, active and healthy lives. Save Your Generation Ethiopia, shared their work with a local taxi driver to raise awareness around societal issues through a newsletter and entertainment programmes. It would be useful to collaborate with them to work directly with transport authorities and providers to make their services age-friendly.

We also had the chance to meet representatives from the Ethiopian Public Health Association and the Ethiopian Nurses Association. Hopefully, this can be the start of forming a partnership that will strengthen our influence with decision makers for Age Demands Action.



(c)Eyoube Kassa/HelpAge International/2012

## Raising awareness of older people's health

On the final day, Tilahun Abebe, an ADA leader in Ethiopia and HelpAge staff members walked through the main hallway of the Millennium Hall holding placards and messages on ageing and health. That definitely got people's attention! A large group of participants who were on their coffee break enquired about our work and the messages.

Another health event in Addis is planned for later in the year, which is a further opportunity to promote our main message for the ADA campaign in Ethiopia, "a specialised and age inclusive health environment".

# Emergence of a platform for older people in Ethiopia

By Denebo Dekeba

Edited by Erna Mentenot Hintz

HelpAge International in Ethiopia and its partner charities and older people associations established a forum of collaboration for older people. This milestone was the outcome of a partner consultative meeting organised by HelpAge in Addis Ababa on March 20, 2012 with the objective of enhancing partnerships amongst older people associations and older people focused NGOs working in Ethiopia. Ethiopian Elderly and Pensioners National Association (EEPNA), on behalf older people associations, as well as leaders of 15 NGOs attended the occasion.

## Founders of the Forum for Older People

Addis Hiwot Integrated and Sustainable Development Organisation
Assegedech Asfaw Older People Association
Community Based Integrated and Sustainable Development Organisation
Destitute Elders Welfare and Development Association
Eneredada Elders People Association
HelpAge International
Integrated Holistic Approach Urban Development Programme
Rift Valley Women and Children Development Organisation
SOS Sahel Ethiopia
St. George Welfare Association
Tesfa Social and Development Association
Voluntas Day Institute (VDI)
Agar Ethiopia
Ethiopian Elderly and Pensioners National Association (EEPNA)
Medhin Ethiopia Positive Older People Association
Relief Society of Tigray (REST)

The steering committee

### The way forward

To address the challenges, consensus was reached by the participants to combine their efforts to establishing a forum for older people focused organisations operating in Ethiopia.

The first platform meeting is to be held on 28 June 2012. Committed to strengthening the voice of older people, HelpAge pledged financial support while its partner; Agar Ethiopia undertook to facilitate the venue.

### Older people organisations: The prospects and challenges

During the discussions it was pointed out the major prospects for the older people associations and older people focused organisations lay in the dedication of its leaders, the operations at grassroots level and confidence amongst the stakeholders including the targeted older people.

In contrast, the major challenges faced by the respective institutions included lack of strategic linkage and effort integration among the institutions, poor documentation of best practices and lessons, low level of experience sharing, absence of organised mechanism of communications, low level of awareness of government line departments and of the public of the socio-economic needs of older people.

### Objectives of the platform

- To facilitate experience and knowledge sharing among the institutions,
- To jointly influence government line departments and other NGOs and agencies to include older people in their plans and programmes,
- To create strategic linkage and networking among institutions working for older people, and
- To facilitate regular consultative meetings.

*Continued from page 1*

.... He said: "Over the past three decades, HelpAge International has demonstrated that older people are their own best advocates and with support can claim their rights to healthcare, social services and security.

"HelpAge's work is even more urgent today as the world faces a monumental demographic shift, particularly in developing countries where the proportion of older people is growing fastest. By 2050 nearly one in five people in developing countries will be over age 60."

Draw attention to the global ageing challenge

HelpAge CEO, Richard Blewitt said: "It is a great honour to receive the Hilton Prize and join such a prestigious group of Hilton Prize Laureates. The Prize is especially meaningful to draw the world's attention to the historic transformation being brought about by global ageing and the plight of millions of older people who face overwhelming hurdles every day."

The Hilton Foundation's recognition of the global ageing challenge is timely. Worldwide we are living longer and having fewer children. By 2050, more than two billion people in developing countries will be aged 65 and over, more than three times the number today. This global ageing shift is without parallel in human history.

He said: "In the years since, I have come to understand the need to work across generations - both in immediate relief and in longer-term development. Today, I am shocked when I see how few resources are allocated to older people. Compared to other vulnerable groups, they are neglected. And, as I learn more every day, this gap is not just a matter of a moral lapse. It is a short-sighted view of the world that will lead to financial disaster. Truly, we fail both our ethical and economic obligations when we ignore ageing populations.

Lack of public health program for older people

"There is no UN agency dedicated to older people. How is it that we have a serious, planned and effective immunization program for children - a wonderful achievement of public health in many countries globally, but nothing of the sort for ageing adults?

"There are only very few NGOs helping older people in poor countries. In contrast, there are hundreds of organisations doing great work with children. We must all move to a life course perspective in all our work."

A tribute to ageing populations

Richard Blewitt said: "Receiving this award is a major opportunity for HelpAge. We believe that it will help us shine a light on older people in the developing world, on their contributions as well as their needs. This is a responsibility too, to fulfill the trust that the Hilton Foundation has put in us. Recognising that the ageing challenge calls for the broadest possible response, we want to work collaboratively, forming alliances with like-minded partners.

"This award is a tribute to the millions of older people throughout the world who struggle daily with extreme poverty and discrimination. By their achievements and example, they have made the world a better place for their grandchildren and ours. This award is theirs and it is our privilege to support them."

## ***Tribute to an Advocate for Older People***

Gariya Tullu was 35 years old. He was a journalist drawn to the issue of older people.

He enthusiastically volunteered in the Older People, Livelihood and Poverty Technical Working Group (TWG) established by HelpAge International since 2009. Gariya passionately contributed to the awareness raising movement by conducting research in communities as well as producing a short documentary film.

On 23 May 2012, Gariya's young life tragically in a car accident passed as he travelled to attend a review and planning meeting organised by HelpAge International in Dire Dawa,.

The HelpAge team extends our deepest condolences to his family during this difficult time.



*Gariya (1977 - 2012), during a media workshop (Sep 2011).*

## Staff updates

Meet the HelpAge International team in Ethiopia



(c) Jeff Williams/HelpAge International/2012

### *Tribute to a partner and valued member of the Age Demands Action campaign*

Bekele Atnafe was a pensioner and one of the leaders of the movement for the well-being of older people in Ethiopia.

Dissatisfied with the socio-economic and political situation of his peers, Bekele was one of the visionaries founding the national umbrella association - Ethiopian Elderly and Pensioners National Association. For the past 6 years, he took on the role of leading the association as the coordinator of programmes.

On 28 June 2012, Bekele passed away at home due to natural causes at the age of 80.

HelpAge's staff expresses its deepest sympathies for the loss of a passionate and dedicated individual.

May his soul rest in peace.



*Bekele Atnafe (1932 - 2012) participating in the Ethiopian Great Run (November 2012). He was one of the older people proving that older people can, finishing the 10km race.*

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## Farewell

**Alison Rusinow**  
*Country Director*

## Welcome

**Alfred Mondwa**  
*Senior Emergency Programme Manager*

**Gabriel De Barros**  
*Interim Country Director*

# HelpAge International

*age helps*



Hilton Humanitarian Prize  
2012 recipient

The contribution older women and men make to society – as carers, advisors, mediators, mentors and breadwinners – is invaluable. But growing older is not without its problems. HelpAge International helps older people to overcome poverty, so that they can lead dignified, secure, active and healthy lives. Our work in over 75 countries is strengthened through our global network of like-minded organisations – the only one of its kind in the world.

For further information on our work, go to

[www.helpage.org](http://www.helpage.org)

Feedback from readers are welcome.

Please forward your comments to:

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