

# Poverty Reduction in Multigenerational Households Affected by Migration

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*Older persons are intermediaries between the past, the present and the future. Their wisdom and experience form a veritable lifeline in the society. (Kofi Annan, UN General Secretary)*

## In this issue:

- “Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing”
- HelpAge calls for campaign “Grandparenting on the edge”
- Older Citizens Monitoring
- “My Granny”- children's writings
- Its worth knowing: ageing in figures



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International**

age helps

## Dear reader!

This is the second issue of the “Poverty Reduction in multigenerational households affected by migration” project Newsletter. The project is funded by the European Union. In this issue we will tell you about our achievements and activities that have been accomplished by Older People Groups so far. You will learn about their successes, problems and about their everyday life.

You will also hear much useful information regarding ageing and about older people’s rights. Specifically the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. This document is fundamental tool in protection of older people’s rights. And what is more important this document protects older women's rights. We hope that this information will help everyone who cares about older people, who is sincerely interested in developing safe and decent environment for older people.

We have also published migrants’ children's letters about their grandparents. With much love children write about their grannies and granddads who take care of them, share problems and happy moments in their lives. We hope that these children's parents will also have opportunity to read these letters.

We understand that older carers need support in bringing up their grandchildren. They expressed their pain concerning migration of young people and of younger children left without parents.

*“Our grandchildren grow without their parents. How can 75-80 years old women and men provide appropriate support to their grandchildren? Who will educate our grandchildren? There are no kindergartens in the villages. All we can do is make tea for them. Who will work on the fields? How will we survive? Who will support us?” (An older carer from Bokonbaevo village).*

On behalf of HelpAge International I would like to express my sincere thanks to all older people in Kyrgyzstan for their patience and the kindness with which they take care of their grandchildren in spite of very challenging times that we all go through!

Sincerely,

Begaim Eralieva,  
HelpAge Project Manager



HelpAge International

*«We have densely populated villages with a lot of multi - generational families with old carers who have been left without support.»  
(Nurjagdiev Rasuljan, the head of raion department of social protection)*

## Grandparenting on the edge

HelpAge International is inviting civil society to think about how we can help older carers. Grandparents are caring unsupported for millions of children worldwide because of HIV and AIDS, migration and displacement. This puts immense financial and emotional pressure on grandparents affecting them and children they care for.

Households consisting of grandparents and children are particular poor and this campaign will target attention and build support for them, it has potential to change lives. The issue demonstrates how age helps and the crucial role of older people as contributors to society.

It has been strongly evidenced by the children's NGOs that the best place for a child to be brought up is in a family. A child's rights are more likely to be met in a supportive and caring family environment than in an institutional one, not matter how good the latter is. But this family environment must be supported. We can not assume that grandparents can simply take on this role. Parenting for second time is a global issue on which older people are actively campaigning. In the US 6.4 million grandparents have their grandchildren living with them.

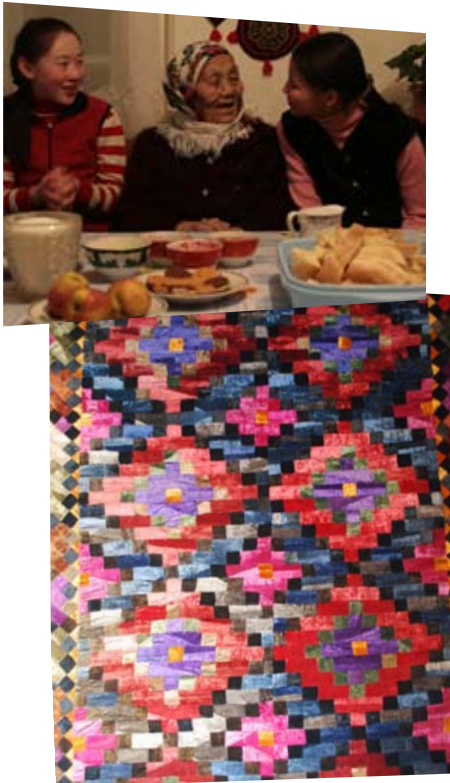
Currently governments and service providers fail to recognize the vital role grandparents have in bringing up children today. Without grandparents, hundreds of thousands of children would be living in orphanages, alone or as street children and facing other risks such as trafficking.

Our project is focusing on multi-generational households (MGH) affected by migration and headed by older people.

*“We have densely populated villages with a lot of multi – generational families with older carers who have been left without support.” (Nurjagdiev Rasuljan, the head of raion department of social protection).*

*“Thank you very much for a good idea! I am so glad that there is someone who wants to help us as older carers and our grandchildren, someone who thinks about us, about how we are surviving.” (An older carer from Boknbaevo village)*

During the project implementation we have found out that older carers who are forced to take care of their grandchildren do not have parental rights and thus are not entitled to government support such as allowances for dependent children left by their parents (child benefit).





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(An older carer from Bokonabevo village)*

Alois Schiaefter/HelpAge International

It's been reported by MGHs heads affected by migration and by social workers of target communities that migrants leave their children without any financial support expecting that they will transfer funds as soon as they start working. However, it doesn't happen in many cases. It takes time for migrants to find job, to settle in and start to transfer regular remittances. And more over HelpAge study of 90 ultra-poor families overwhelmingly consisting of only older people and children in Kyrgyzstan in 2009 showed that remittances made up approximately 1% of income.

Grandparents are facing many challenges. As an example of the financial challenge for grandparents living without support of their children: older people receive little financial support - state pensions where available are inadequate to provide for the needs of growing grandchildren.

Since most of the older women especially in rural areas spent many years just bringing up their children and didn't officially work their pension is very low and doesn't allow them to adequately support their grandchildren.

Grandparents also face emotional and physical difficulties in caring for their grandchildren. Many report that their children struggle to survive. Many of migrants can not visit their parents since they are illegal migrants and have problems with visas. As many of the heads of MGHs stated they are old and it's becoming very hard for them physically to take care of younger children and they need support of the society.

Many grandparents face challenges in carrying out new responsibilities that they are forced to take over. Besides of the daily practical tasks of raising children older carers have to deal with children missing their parents and with their emotional state. They also lack knowledge of the new education system and find it hard to provide appropriate support to their grandchildren in schooling. Lack of knowledge about health caring also cause many problems for older carers.

How can we support grandparents caring for their grandchildren? What can we do to reward grandparents for their hard work and patience, and wisdom and courage with which they care for small children? What can we do to demonstrate our recognition of grandparents' contribution to the development and their role in family life?

We would like to invite our readers to discuss these questions in our Newspaper. We are looking forward to your ideas and suggestions!

## Our achievements

For the reported period the project has implemented a lot of activities to achieve the project goals.

- Twenty Older People Groups (OPG) have been developed by the partners: 286 older people have been involved in the developed groups including 32 men and 254 women.

Total # of OPG members	Female	Male	50-59 years old	60-69 years old	70-80 years old	+80
286	254	32	119	100	45	6

- The project connected with civil society organizations such as Zamandash Association, Resource Center for Elders, Center for Public Technologies, NGO Citizens against corruption, Secretariat on Human Rights and relevant government structures working on issues of poverty, migration and ageing in the Kyrgyz Republic and local authorities.
- The project implemented activities to raise the awareness of local authorities, civil society, communities and national level authorities about the vulnerability of Multi Generational Households (MGH). We held community meetings, meetings with Local Authorities (LA), Project Advisory Group (PAG) meeting with the participation of national authorities and Civil Society Coordination meetings under the Ministry of Social Protection.
- The project has began a review of existing legislation and programs for migrants' families to analyze their access to social services and entitlements. The local NGO Center for Public Technologies was engaged to carry out this task.



Japar Kanaev/FSHG



Japar Kanaev/FSHG

*"Thank you so much for this training. It was very comprehensive. I am not a young woman and at first scared that I would not understand it. Life is hard but it becomes easier when you know that there are people like you and they want to work together. (Joldosheva Salima, Kara Suu rayon older person)"*

- Older Citizens Monitoring, Budget Hearings, Participatory planning, implementing and monitoring of community development initiatives trainings (3) have been conducted with OPGs and Local Authorities (LA).
- The project has visited multi-generational households. Overall 14, 391 Multi-generational Households (MGH) have been identified and 1,097 MGHs with skipped generation have been visited regularly.
- Two hundred seventy children and 195 older carers from MGHs in 20 communities actively participate in Home Work Clubs. Intergenerational activities such as high school children assistance to older carers with housekeeping and field work, older people's skills transfer activities in sewing workshop or in the Folklore Club have been conducted by the project.
- Twenty micro-projects have been started in 20 communities by OPGs in close collaboration and support of local ayil okmotu.
- The first issue of the project Newsletter (250 copies in Kyrgyz/Russian languages) has been published and disseminated among civil society, local authorities and OPGs in the target villages. Publication of the project newsletter aimed at MGHs and community based organizations working with vulnerable groups of people shared information about the project goals and activities to wider public. Copies in the Kyrgyz and Russian languages were distributed to all project OPG and target communities local authorities, MGHs. Electronic version was distributed to national and local authorities through AgeNet Central Asia.
- Research on the poverty and vulnerability of MGHs affected by migration has been started and will be carried out over twelve months period by the members of Older People Groups.

# Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing

*Older persons are intermediaries between the past, the present and the future. Their wisdom and experience form a veritable lifeline in the society. (Kofi Annan, UN General Secretary)*

Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing was adopted by the Second World Assembly on Ageing (MIPAA) in 2002. The overall goal of the MIPAA is the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of all older persons.

The following are three priority directions of the MIPAA:

- Priority direction I: Older persons and development**
- Priority direction II: Advancing health and well-being into old age**
- Priority direction III: Ensuring enabling and supportive environments**

The Kyrgyz Republic was among the first countries that conducted assessment of older persons' needs with the help of UN in 2004. The International conference to promote Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in the Kyrgyz Republic was also conducted in Bishkek. Thus the Kyrgyz Republic demonstrated its commitment to MIPAA in the country

MIPAA is planning to facilitate partnership between all levels of government, civil society, the private sector and older persons themselves in translating the International Plan of Action into practical action:

- a) The full realization of all human rights and fundamental





Alois Schaeffer/HelpAge International

- freedoms of all older persons;
- b) The achievement of secure ageing, which involves reaffirming the goal of eradicating poverty in old age and building on the United Nations Principles for Older Persons;
  - c) Empowerment of older persons to fully and effectively participate in the economic, political and social lives of their societies, including through income-generating and voluntary work;
  - d) Provision of opportunities for individual development, self-fulfilment and well-being throughout life as well as in late life, through, for example, access to lifelong learning and participation in the community while recognizing that older persons are not one homogenous group;
  - e) Ensuring the full enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, and civil and political rights of persons and the elimination of all forms of violence and discrimination against older persons;
  - f) Commitment to gender equality among older persons through, inter alia, elimination of gender-based discrimination;
  - g) Recognition of the crucial importance of families, intergenerational interdependence, solidarity and reciprocity for social development;
  - h) Provision of health care, support and social protection for older persons, including preventive and rehabilitative health care;
  - i) Facilitating partnership between all levels of government, civil society, the private sector and older persons themselves in translating the International Plan of Action into practical action;
  - j) Harnessing of scientific research and expertise and realizing the potential of technology to focus on, inter alia, the individual, social and health implications of ageing, in particular in developing countries;
  - k) Recognition of the situation of ageing indigenous persons, their unique circumstances and the need to seek means to give them an effective voice in decisions directly affecting them.

The Kyrgyz Republic having demonstrated its commitment to MIPAA has to formulate a state strategy on interaction of all interested parties to ensure older people rights in the country. Older people rights have not been paid adequate attention so far. The rights of older people have to be entered on the agenda of laws, budgets, programs and projects. The government of the Kyrgyz Republic, civil society, government structures, every citizen of the country have to recognize the contribution of older people into the development and have to formulate a strategy to help them lead the safe and dignified lives they deserve



## Older Citizens Monitoring

Older Citizens Monitoring (OCM) methodology has been developed with HelpAge International partners in a number of regions, including Central Asia. A notable example from the Kyrgyz Republic was a study of the Unified Monthly Benefit (UMB) carried out by older people during the winter months of 2008-2009. The findings directly contributed to a government review and revision of eligibility criteria for receipt of this benefit.

A training on OCM was carried out in October 2010. Leaders of 20 OPGs, social workers, members of local self government in the oblasts of Osh, Chui and Issyk-Kul participated in the workshops in order to design and undertake a study of vulnerable households within their own rural communities.

**The study began in November** and will be carried out over twelve months by the members of Older People Groups. Data across all year will capture seasonal variances affecting poverty (winter time), remittance fluctuations or energy shortages, expenditure patterns, income sources and nutrition. Overall information will be gathered through semi-structured interviews with local self government bodies (aiyl okmotu and keneshes) and with the heads of MGHs affected by migration. The main respondents are older people in MGHs. A number of small local surveys will be undertaken such as 'Spending patterns and income sources', 'Health spending', 'Prices of coal and basic food items', 'Temperature and food intake'. Older people will monitor these indicators at household level.

*MIPAA is a project for a better tomorrow*

**It is expected** that the study findings will contribute to the development of government and civil society plans to reduce poverty within these vulnerable multi-generational households.

Azuma Nakahira/ HelpAge International



## Older Citizens Monitoring Activities

Older People Groups conducted Baseline Survey in order to map capabilities of 200 vulnerable MGHs, 20 OPGs' members and key players in 20 ayil okmotus.



Japar Kanaev/FSHG

Older People Group leaders identified respondents/ participants of the survey with the help of community members, ayil okmotu heads and social workers, community group leaders. The main respondents are the heads of MGHs affected by migration.

Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions are the main methodologies of the research. Focus groups' discussions were conducted for ayil okmotu specialists and for MGHs heads separately. These focus groups consist of 4-6 participants. Some discussions included visual instruments such as diagrams and maps. Interviews also included key and additional questions to get better understanding of the situation.

Mapping capabilities will allow the project to understand characteristics of poverty that is not necessarily linked to income but to confidence to influence change and to make decisions. The survey aimed to analyze whether people have a sense of impact in their environment.

Basic information on demographics and services has been collected for each participating community. OPGs' leaders conducted interviews with local authorities and MGHs to collect reliable data and background information.

Overall for the reported period the following **research activities** have been conducted:

1. Background Information (meetings with local authority, community leaders, social departments etc.)
2. Local authority perception of vulnerability in MGHs and support (focus group discussions)
3. Livelihoods and seasonal vulnerability in MGHs (interviews with MGHs heads, home visits)
4. Baseline and follow up in vulnerable MGHs (structured questionnaire)
5. Intergenerational relations (focus groups' discussions)

## Micro-projects

20 OPGs in target communities have been provided small grants in the amount of 500 euro.

Types of micro-projects under implementation by OPGs are many. In some communities these are Resource Centers for both older carers and children, some of the projects are income generating: small stock farming, agricultural activities such as growing potatoes, green houses for growing flowers and there is a project on developing a



sewing workshop.  
Micro-projects have been running since November and we will inform you about the progress over the year.

A number of activities for older carers and their grandchildren will be conducted in the Resource Centers from which MGHs will benefit. Older carers will meet there to discuss their problems. Lectures on health issues will be conducted by the specialists from Village Health Committees. It was also agreed with OPGs that MGHs will benefit from income generating projects. Income generating projects' profit will be shared with vulnerable MGHs. The OPG's leaders will provide transparency in the profit sharing through reporting to communities. Information will be posted regularly at the project information boards.

Micro project activities are growing the partnership between community groups and local authorities. Both community groups and LA are gaining practical experience in planning and collaboration. Local authorities are supporting OPGs in income generating projects by providing them with technical support on animal husbandry. It was agreed that LA in Osh oblast will carry out vaccination of bought cattle. In Kara Suu rayon Kirov village the LA arranged a space for OPGs to conduct their regular meetings and share experiences and also contributed 20 000 soms to micro-project. In the Issyk Kul oblast Kok Moinok village aiyl okmotu (village administration) contributed to the livestock project by buying a sheep. In Temir Kanat village (Issyk Kul oblast) aiyl okmotu provided land for OPG to grow potatoes. In Bokonbaevo village (Issyk Kul oblast) aiyl okmotu contributed 20 000 soms to rehabilitate a space for sewing workshop and Resource Center. LA's contribution to the development of the micro-projects demonstrates their recognition of OPGs. It is expected that by the end of the project 70% of micro projects will achieve their stated objectives.

*"I am so glad that there are people that are willing to visit us and hear our problems. I don't feel alone any more. Thank you for your help!" an old woman from Tamga village.*

Japar Kanaev/FSHG



## The table below demonstrates types of micro –projects by communities

Oblast	Rayon	Target communities	Type of micro-project
Osh	Aravan	1. Uigur Abad	Sheep breeding
		2. Kesov	Sheep breeding
		3. Arab	Sheep breeding
		4. Jangi Abad	Sheep breeding
		5. Chertik	Sheep breeding
	Kara Suu	6. Kirov	Sheep breeding
		7. Telman	Sheep breeding
		8. Konurat	Sheep breeding
		9. Prisavai	Sheep breeding
		10. Miyaly	Goat breeding
Chui	Kemin	11. Kaindy	Sewing workshop
		12. Tegirmenty	Green House
		13. Shabdan	Sheep breeding
		14. Kemin	Resource Center
		15. Ak Tuz	Bull breeding
Issyk Kul	Ton	16. Eshperov	Bull breeding
		17. Temir Kanat	Potato growing
		18. Kok Moinok 1	Bull breeding
		19. Bokonbaevo	Sewing workshop
	Jeti Oguz	20. Tamga	Resource Center

## I love my Daddy!

My name is Maksatbek and my father's name is Orozaly. I was born in 1992 in December. I have a mother, a father, a brother and a sister. My mother, father and sister work in Russia. When my parents work in Russia we live with my grandmother and granddad. They are the kindest people in the world.



We love them and respect very much. I am especially proud with my dad. He is a Man with a capital letter. He always helps people. He worked in militsia for 32 years and protected people. Currently my grandad is a pensioner. He teaches us to be kind. He wants us to study well and respect elder people and helped small children. He teaches us not to lie. My grandad says: "If you are a real man you have to serve in the Army and protect your Motherland. This is your soldier's duty." When I grow up will join our Army and then will study in militsia school in Bishkek. I will become a Man with a capital letter like my grandad. My granny is the kindest one in the world. She cooks very tasty dishes, worries about us and always waits for us to come from school. When we grow up we will take care of our grandparents. We will buy nice clothes and shoes, make nice food for them. I will have my own car and a house. My grandparents will live with me. My parents live and work in Russia. They send us money but sister says that we need our parents here. Sometimes I miss my mother very much because she always understands me.

Maksatbek  
Kirov village, Kara Suu rayon,

## My Granny and Grandaddy

My Granny has brought me and my sister up. My mother works in Moscow. My father is sick and he can't work. My Granny is a pensioner. My sister and I study at school. I participate in the School Club: we dance, sing and play komuz. I don't miss classes at school. When I have free time I help my Granny to do housework. My Granny can do many things, she takes care about us but she can not help us with schooling because she doesn't understand what we learn at school.



Japar Kanaev/FSHG

*My Granny is participating in trainings. I am so proud of her!*



HelpAge International

*When we raise children we give our love, time, health and energy in the hope that when our children grow up they will support us in our old age.*

Even if I don't have much free time I participate in school activities: I dance, sing songs and play komuz. I also help my little sister with her classes. I try not to let my grandparents down. They are very old and tired but do their very best to take care of us.

I want to become a doctor after I finish school that's why I try to study well. I want to help my father. I want him become strong and healthy again. My mother is working in Russia. She often calls us and we speak by phone. Every time she says: "I am very far from you because I want to earn money for your decent future. Please, don't fail me and study well. Be good girls." and I always want to cry when I talk with her. I miss her very much! But we don't have any other choice. The money that my mother sends us we spend for medicine for our father. I ask God to give my mother strong health. That's why I think I have to grow as a person that will help my country. That's what my mother is asking for.

Meerim Shainazarova,  
Kara Suu rayon

## The happiest day in a year

Both my sister and I live with our Granny and Granddaddy because our mother left to earn money. Our Granny and Granddaddy are pensioners and often don't feel well. My Granny has diabetes. I don't know the name of Granddaddy's disease but his legs often hurt. For the last two years my Granny's eyes have got worse and once in a month we visit an eye doctor. My sister and I try to work very hard to do well at school and to manage to do a house work. Our mother comes to visit us once in a year but she often calls us and asks us to take care of Granny and Granddaddy. She says that she misses us all and wants to be back at home. We also miss her and often cry after we talk with her. We try not to show her that we miss her not to hurt her.

When mother comes home she stays with us for a couple of weeks. We feel bad because of a short time. But she can't stay with us for a longer period because she has to work very hard to support us and our grandparents. Our mother is very beautiful. She has a higher education and is very energetic. She wants us to study well and to get a higher education as well. We will try to make her dreams true. Our mother asks us to listen to our Granddaddy and Granny. We love her very much, miss her and want her always be with us. If there was much work in Kyrgyzstan our mother wouldn't leave us. We always wait for her next visit with impatience. We are waiting for the happiest day in a year! Our mother is the light of our life!

Asel Joldoshbekova,  
Ak Tus village

## Ageing in figures:

- The twentieth century saw a revolution in longevity. Average life expectancy at birth has increased by 20 years since 1950 to 66 years and is expected to extend a further 10 years by 2050. This demographic triumph and the fast growth of the population in the first half of the twenty-first century mean that the number of persons over 60 will increase from about 600 million in 2000 to almost 2 billion in 2050 and the proportion of persons defined as older is projected to increase globally from 10 per cent in 1998 to 15 per cent in 2025.
- The increase will be greatest and most rapid in developing countries where the older population is expected to quadruple during the next 50 years.
- The remarkable demographic transition under way will result in the old and the young representing an equal share of the world's population by mid-century. Globally, the proportion of persons aged 60 years and older is expected to double between 2000 and 2050, from 10 to 21 per cent, whereas the proportion of children is projected to drop by a third, from 30 to 21 per cent. In certain developed countries and countries with economies in transition, the number of older persons already exceeds the number of children and birth rates have fallen below replacement levels.





This Newsletter is published in Kyrgyz, Russian and English. Hardcopies are distributed amongst any interested groups; however, it is also accessible on our website [www.helpage.org](http://www.helpage.org).

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Useful links:  
Campaign "Age Demands Action":  
<http://www.helpage.org/Researchandpolicy/AgeDemandsAction>

Global Population Data:  
<http://www.helpage.org/Researchandpolicy/tateoftheworldsolderpeople/Globaldata>