

## Introduction

Age Demands Action (ADA) Global takes place every 1 October on the International Day of Older Persons and this year's theme is ['Take a Stand Against Ageism'](#). We would like to use this opportunity to highlight how ageism manifests itself across the world and leads to the discrimination, stereotyping and abuse of older people everywhere.

Like previous years, campaign partners are free to campaign on whichever issues they want to, and we encourage campaign partners to follow up on previous pledges and promises made by their governments, both on policy and decisions made by their governments.

This year a large focus of our campaign will revolve around encouraging campaign partners to start a conversation around ageism and to discuss with older people what ageism means to them and how they experience it. Stereotyping people because of their age is unacceptable, we want this to change. HelpAge with other organisations is excited to be starting a long-term campaign to end ageism and we hope you will join us!



The next six months also provide unique opportunities to build political support and create space to have more of a discussion on what should be in a convention. We therefore encourage partners to continue to put pressure on governments to attend the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing.

## Objectives for the 1 October

- 1)** Increase awareness of ageism among HelpAge network members, online supporters, ADA campaign partners, campaigners and our supporter base
- 2)** Increase visibility of older people's lived experience of ageism
- 3)** Increased participation of Member States at the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG)

## What is ageism?

**'Stereotyping and discrimination against individuals or groups on the basis of their age; ageism can take many forms, including prejudicial attitudes, discriminatory practices, or institutional policies and practices that perpetuate stereotypical beliefs'** – WHO *World Report on Ageing and Health*.<sup>1</sup>

We will be using the WHO definition of ageism for ADA Global and in our communications. This definition may change as the campaign develops and we begin to learn more from older people about their perceptions of ageing and getting older.

Have you felt that someone has stereotyped you or treated you differently because of your age? Are there practices or traditions in your country that reinforce these behaviours? These are some of the things we want to explore on ADA Global.

## Key messages



- Ageism is all around us.
- All older people are different but ageism assumes that growing older is the same experience for everyone.
- We must question ageism and how older people are often stereotyped in a certain way because of their age.
- We live in a world where older people's rights are denied. This must change!
- Ageism leads to age discrimination, which, like all discrimination, legitimises and sustains inequalities.
- Describing or depicting older age as something to resist or even delay reinforces ageist stereotypes and suggests living longer is a negative experience for everyone.
- Ageism puts unnecessary pressures on ourselves to achieve certain goals at a certain time in our lives before we are deemed 'too old' to do them.
- No one can get younger but we can live in a world where living longer is celebrated and not dreaded.
- Let's begin to appreciate our diversity throughout our whole lives including in later life.

## What you can do?

- Start a consciousness raising group in your community
- Organise a forum theatre workshop using the resource pack to start a conversation on ageism

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<sup>1</sup> WHO *World Report on Ageing and Health* p.226

- Collect testimonies from older people about their experience of ageism and share with your local media, including encouraging older people to share their stories on the radio
- Meet with other older people in your community and re write proverbs or sayings that depict old age negatively
- Invite younger people to your discussions and ask for their input
- Host a drawing competition encouraging participants to draw a world without ageism
- Draft your own definition of ageism and share with your community and decision makers
- Collect and share testimonies from older men and women on ageism and ask decision makers to consider the impact of ageism and how it can be tackled.

## **What is consciousness raising?**

Consciousness raising is a tool to unpack social perceptions and prejudices and allows for participants to draw on personal experiences with others.

Consciousness raising discussions use these personal experiences to allow new thinking among those who take part.

Participants can share and compare stories which often help others to understand similar or different experiences of a topic.

Consciousness raising groups are confidential and therefore the media should not be invited. Nor should responses be shared on social media unless names have been changed and ALL participants have given their permission.



## **How can I start a consciousness raising group?**

You can start your own consciousness raising group to discuss your personal experiences of age discrimination with the resource packs we will provide campaign partners.

These will give guidelines on how to hold a consciousness raising group, how many people should attend and how often you should meet as well as discussion starting points.

The idea for these CR groups is make it easier to talk about ageism and how it affects our daily lives with the aim to establish how we address ageism most effectively. Opening up a space to discuss ageism allows us to explore its impact.

You are not obliged to hold your own CR group, this is down to individual campaign partners to determine how useful it is as a tool for you.

## **Roleplay workshops**

As one of our suggested activities we are encouraging campaign partners to organise roleplay workshops to explore ageism. We will provide three scenarios which older people will be able to act out within a group. These scenarios will explore a common situation where an older person experiences discrimination.

Theatre is all about stories, about the collective act of sharing stories. We hope that by using roleplays older people will be able to explore certain scenarios but also have the chance to share and act out their own experiences. We will provide guidelines so campaign partners can organise a roleplay workshop with ADA campaigners.

## **Resources**

We hope the resources we provide will enable discussions around ageism and achieve our objective to increase the visibility of older people's lived experience of it. We will send campaign partners a number of resources on the 6 September 2016 including an action pack.

Your action pack will include:

- A two page document on how to run a consciousness raising workshop, guidelines for consciousness raising groups and sample discussion starters
- Ageist role play scripts for forum theatre workshops
- A social media toolkit
- A communications brief to help you engage with local media

## **Link to the convention and OWEGA**

One of our overarching aims for ADA has been to campaign for a UN convention on the rights of older people. Highlighting the prevalence of ageism across the world will strengthen the case for a new convention and need to protect our right to live free from violence and abuse and discrimination in every part of our lives in older age. We hope that raising awareness about

ageism will continue to build on how partners have been campaigning towards a convention.



Esther at the UN for the OEWGA in 2015 © HelpAge International

## **Opportunities for the OEWG process this year**

The Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons will present her report to the Human Rights Council in September. The Independent Expert's report can be used to re-generate the discussion on what should be in a new convention at the national, regional and international levels, including at the OEWG in New York in December.

The report will be released in August and we will provide campaign partners with key talking points so they can discuss the report with their governments.

## **Key messages for governments**

Governments can take the following practical steps to increase support for a UN convention on the rights of older persons:

### **UN Human Rights Council, 33<sup>rd</sup> Session, 13<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016**

- 1.** Meet with older people, civil society, and the national human rights institution to discuss what is in the UN Independent Expert's comprehensive report (when it is published) and what this means for the contents of a new UN convention.
- 2.** Make a statement on the rights of older persons during the interactive dialogue on the UN Independent Expert's comprehensive report at the Human Rights Council session in September 2016.

### **UN Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, 7<sup>th</sup> Session, 12<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> December**

- 3.** Attend the 7th OEWG on 12-15 December 2016 and talk about what they would like to see in a new convention if we had one.
- 4.** Send instructions to their Permanent Mission to the UN in New York to attend the OEWG and to ensure the agenda is designed so Member States can discuss the contents of a new convention.
- 5.** Meet with older people, civil society and national human rights institutions before the OEWG to discuss the Independent Expert's report and what this means for the contents of a new convention.
- 6.** Include an older person on their Government delegation to the OEWG to ensure that older people's views are represented.

You will have received country factsheets for ADA on Rights, which includes specific messages for your country as well as background information about your government's involvement in the OEWG so far. This will also be useful in your meetings with government officials.

## **What you can do**

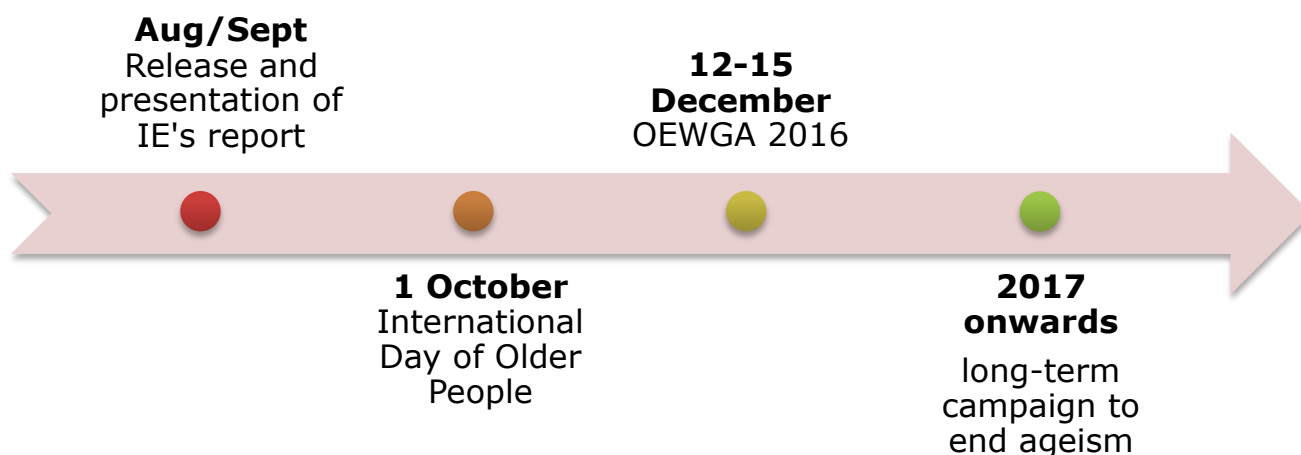
If you are hosting an event for this 1 October or want to meet key decision maker there is plenty you can be talking to them about in relation to the OEWG including:

- The release of the Independent Expert's in August and the presentation at the Human Rights Council in September means you can ask decision makers if they have read the report. Share with them what you believe to be missing or what you found most interesting. Ask your Ministers to get back to you on their observations.
- Encourage your Minister of Foreign Affairs to attend the OEWG this December. If they are not willing to attend ask them to send instructions to their Mission in New York who can attend on their behalf. Assure them that this is a very important year as the

group moves to discussing the contents of a convention. The Independent Expert's report will hopefully provide a basis for this new discussion.

## Timeline

**ADA Global will take place on 1 October this year but there are other dates in our advocacy calendar**



## We need a convention to:

- Establish legal standards that challenge and replace stigmatising and dehumanising ageist attitudes and behaviour
- Clarify how human rights apply in older age
- Ensure states understand their human rights obligations to us in our older age
- Better understand and assert our rights in our older age
- Improve accountability of states for their human rights obligations towards us in older age
- Provide a framework for policy and decision making.

## A convention must:

- Provide a comprehensive and systematic framework for the protection and promotion of all our human rights in older age
- Prohibit discrimination on the basis of older age in every aspect of our lives
- Articulate how each human right specifically applies to us in older age
- Provide for a strong implementation, monitoring and accountability system.

## **Document your events**

### **Publish what's been done**



Use your website, social media or the media to create noise around your events. Let the wider public know what happened, who attended and any outcomes to trigger more discussion on what you are trying to achieve. ***Please think carefully about***

**if it is appropriate to communicate to the wider public. If you are organising a closed meeting you will be not be able publish the discussions.**

### **Take photographs**



Consider hiring a professional photographer to take photos of your event. Try to get photos of older people speaking to policy makers or older people taking part in campaign actions. These can accompany your posts on social media or can be sent to the media.

### **Spread the word**

As well as organising meetings with decision makers or organising public campaigning activities, using social media and sending out press releases is another way to raise awareness of your Age Demands Action activities. We will be sending a social media and media plan closer to the campaign day. If you have any questions you can contact [ben.small@helpage.org](mailto:ben.small@helpage.org) or [beth.howgate@helpage.org](mailto:beth.howgate@helpage.org)

### **Advocacy calendar**

<b>Activity/Event</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Independent Expert releases report - <i>Campaigners encourage governments to read and discuss the contents</i>	Mid-August
Independent Expert's report is presented at the Human Rights Council during interactive sessions	Mid-September
International Day of Older People, ADA Global and start of a campaign to end ageism	1 October
<i>ADA campaigners follow up with Ministers of Foreign Affairs to attend the OEWGA</i>	November and December
Open-ended Working Group on Ageing session	12-15 December

**If you have any questions about your campaigning for ADA Global this year please contact [campaigns@helpage.org](mailto:campaigns@helpage.org)**