

Handout 5:

‘Shared and combined’ domain case studies

Case study: Grigoriy Atanov, Ukraine

“I live in the town of Stanitsa-Luganskaya in eastern Ukraine. I was born and raised here. Before the conflict, there were about 17,000 inhabitants, but now there are about 7,000 locals and a lot of internally displaced people.

Most older people and people with disabilities who live here are very poor. Prices are rising all the time, and pensions are not enough to pay for medicine and bills. People survive mainly on the earnings from vegetable gardens or leasing rooms in their homes to internally displaced people, and this is only possible for those who have spare rooms.

Humanitarian organisations provide some food, money, medicine and materials to reconstruct housing, but it is already clear that there is less and less assistance. [...] HelpAge’s community safe space provides somewhere that we can get together, discuss our problems and decide how we can protect our rights. We get new knowledge, are consulted on various issues, and we become more united. If we remain silent, our lives will not change for the better”.

Case study: Valentina Solodova, Tajikistan

“I’m a lonely pensioner. After reaching retirement age, I had to stop working even though I could carry on. Overnight, I was left without work, with a small pension, and I lost my social environment, my co-workers. I felt discriminated against because of my age. Nobody will hire us for work. I soon realised the situation for older people has to be better.

I knew from acquaintances about a charity that helps lonely older people. Doctors work there. They give out medicine, food and clothes, and there are communication clubs where older people get together to discuss their interests. I came to the club where I met other single pensioners.

Since I had legal knowledge and leadership qualities, the group selected me as the coordinator of one of the clubs. I found that many did not know their rights. They have very low self-esteem, do not know what to do, are in a state of depression. In a worse state than I am.

Age Demands Action is a school for all older people. We organise seminars, identify our problems [...] and ultimately solve our problems. ADA has improved our self-esteem. We have learned to speak about and defend our rights”.