A post-2015 framework for all ages:

Transforming the future for youth and older people

Key messages

- The post-2015 framework is being developed at a time of major demographic change including rapid population ageing.

- The aim to "leave no one behind" in the post-2015 framework means that no goals can be met unless they include people of all ages. Youth and older people are calling for age-specific targets to ensure they are not missed in development.

- Improved data broken down by age and sex, and better use of existing data are essential to guide development and monitor progress.

- The new framework should build on and further the implementation of existing agreements on youth (World Programme of Action for Youth) and older people (the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing).

- The Commonwealth Youth Development Index and the Global AgeWatch Index can be used to measure progress of the post-2015 framework and point to areas for investment in new data.

Background

The world's population is changing at an unprecedented rate. Advances in healthcare, nutrition, sanitation, education and economic prosperity have led to declining fertility rates, lower infant mortality, and people living longer lives, resulting in larger numbers and proportions of older people. People aged 60 and over now make up nearly 12 per cent of the global population.[1]

The proportion of people aged 15-24 is also at an all-time high of 17 per cent of the global population.[2] For this generation to reach old age that is secure and dignified, there is a need for decent employment, access to healthcare and adequate social protection throughout life. Ageing well starts at birth; childhood nutrition and education, for example, have a significant impact on a person's wellbeing in later life. Taking a life-course approach to development allows understanding of how life experiences and choices in earlier years accumulate and shape the later years.

In February and July 2014, representatives of youth and older people held informal discussions with Member States and UN agencies to look at how to include people at all stages of life in the new set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) being developed, to realise the UN Secretary-General's aim "to leave no one behind".[3]

At these meetings, youth delegates and older people affirmed their commitment to continue and deepen intergenerational dialogue within their immediate environments and at the United Nations. They noted that many issues for young people and older people were of a similar nature. They spoke of the importance

Brief 5

"Lessons have been learned from the MDGs, especially the fact that at that time 'the development glasses did not see everyone'. Older persons were not seen at all. The young of today will become the old of tomorrow. The youth bulge will become the ageing bulge."

Amina Mohammed, UN Special Adviser on Post-2015 Development Planning, at the Transformative Human Development side event, 9 July 2014

of doing things differently with priority given to social policies that reach out to and include people of all ages – through social protection floors, decent work, education across the life course and ensuring long and healthy lives. Intergenerational solidarity must be put into practice – groups must not view each other's concerns as competition for attention and resources, but as opportunities to support commonalities. They proposed building on existing frameworks of the World Programme of Action for Youth and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.

The basis of these conversations was that longer lives are opportunities, not only challenges, and that demographic predictions for 2030 should be used for policy making to benefit all generations. The consensus was that the new set of goals and targets that will succeed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) should be specific enough to support people of all ages and abilities to realise their potential.

The goals could build on existing internationally agreed programmes for action, such as the World Programme of Action for Youth and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. The frameworks of the Commonwealth Youth Development Index and the Global AgeWatch Index could be used as references to ensure that issues of age are fully integrated into the post-2015 framework.

It was also suggested that demographic trends should be acknowledged in the SDG narrative and vision, and that there should be an age lens for all goals and indicators.

Jiri Starha/HelpAge International

Close connections

Jaroslava, 71, is a retired nurse from Prague, Czech Republic. She organises trips for an older women's group and prepares meals for an older neighbour. Her grandson Karel, 24, is a hotel receptionist who lives a few bus stops away. He visits Jaroslava most weeks. Sometimes he takes her to doctor's appointments or accompanies her to the opera.

"One of the best things about older age is having grandchildren," says Jaroslava. "Karel and I are similar in many ways; for example, we are both interested in the opera."

Karel says: "My grandmother is the one person who I can always talk to about anything without any arguments. I have realised the issue of ageing populations is bigger than it was in the past. I have also learnt that it is older people themselves who are most active in calling for change to improve the lives of older people across the world."

1. United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision, DVD Edition, 2013

2. United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs

3. High-Level Political Forum side event, 9 July 2014, 'Transformative human development' report (unpublished)

4. Side event on 'Transformative Human Development - How Can a New Sustainable Development Framework Support People of All Ages?', 9 July 2014, www.new-york-un. diplo.de/Vertretung/newyorkvn/en/__pr/ speeches-statements/2014/20140709-thoms-on-transformative-human-development.html?archive=2984650

5. *A world that counts: mobilising the data revolution for sustainable development,* Independent Expert Advisory Group on a Data Revolution for Sustainable Development, November 2014, p.2 and p.22, www.undatarevolution.org/wp-content/ uploads/2014/11/A-World-That-Counts.pdf

6. Open Working Group proposal for Sustainable Development Goals: Full report of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals, Document A/68/970, October 2014, http://undocs.org/A/68/970

7. www.youthdevelopmentindex.org

8. www.helpage.org/global-agewatch

Data revolution to support progress

For the new set of SDGs to promote the full range of human rights of people of all ages, good demographic data disaggregated by age, sex and other variables is needed to inform legislation, policy and programmes.

Otherwise, certain groups will be left behind, as was the case with the MDGs. The MDGs provided a road map for development interventions, including halving extreme poverty, but did not specify how these would reach different population groups. Consequently, with the exception of HIV and AIDS programmes that were developed to target people aged 15-24, MDG-related policies and programmes have not reached out systematically to youth or older people. The SDG process and the call for a "data revolution" to underpin the measures by which the goals can be seen to reach all people provides a historic opportunity to remedy these weaknesses.

The 2014 report of the Independent Expert Advisory Group on the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development recognises shortcomings of data for development, stating that: "Data needs improving. Despite considerable progress in recent years, whole groups of people are not being counted." The report goes on to recommend that "data should be disaggregated across many dimensions, such as geography, wealth, disability, sex and age."[5]

The current proposals for goals and targets contain important references to age, and data disaggregation by age and sex is specifically highlighted. Age and age-related targets are mentioned in nine of the 17 goals and in the document's introduction. Targets 2.2, 11.2 and 11.7 refer to "older persons", target 1.2 and goal 3 refer to "all ages", and target 10.2 refers to "all, irrespective of age". Education- and employment-related targets make a special mention of young people. There are also a number of references to "for all", "all" and "lifelong". There are commitments in the introduction to ensure that no one is left behind and in goal 17 to disaggregate data by age.[6]

For some of the proposed indicators, it is possible to use internationally available data which currently forms the basis of the Commonwealth Youth Development Index[7] and the Global AgeWatch Index.[8]

The Commonwealth Youth Development Index, developed by the Commonwealth Youth Programme, measures the status of young people aged 15-29 in 170 countries around the world. It ranks countries according to 15 indicators grouped into five domains: Education, Health and Wellbeing, Employment, Civic Participation and Political Participation.

By incorporating physical, social, cognitive and vocational opportunities and development, the Index presents youth development as a process by which young people are able to meet the requirements for building successful lives. Basic needs such as health, nutrition and adequate education are measured, along with secondary needs such as political, economic and social participation.

The Global AgeWatch Index, developed by HelpAge International, ranks 96 countries according to 13 indicators grouped into four domains: Income security, Health status, Capability (employment and education) and Enabling environment.

The Index was inspired by the Human Development Index, which puts people at the centre of economic policy, and the Active Ageing Index. Its premise is that older age can be a time for people to expand their horizons and that every country has room for improvement. The domains and indicators were identified after consultations with 1,300 older people in 36 countries.

The Index uses data in the international domain to show which countries are doing best for their older populations and how their performance links with policies on pensions, health, employment, education and the social environment in which older people live.

HelpAge International helps older people claim their rights, challenge discrimination and overcome poverty, so that they can lead dignified, secure, active and healthy lives.

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Both the Commonwealth Youth Development Index and the Global AgeWatch Index cluster the concerns of youth and older people into the domains of secure income, appropriate and accessible healthcare, employment and education (proxies for capability) and opportunities to participate in society and live without fear of violence and discrimination (enabling factors) (see Figure 1). Their domains and indicators could be used as a starting point in the SDG process.

Figure 1: **Domains and indicators used in the Commonwealth Youth Development Index and the Global AgeWatch Index**

Income and employment	Health and wellbeing	Capability and education	Enabling environment and participation
Pension income coverage	Life expectancy at 60	Mean years of schooling	Social connections
Poverty rate in old age	Youth mortality rate	Youth literacy	Youth volunteering rate
Youth unemployment	Healthy life expectancy at 60	Educational status of older people	Percentage of youth who help strangers
Youth unemployment ratio	Cannabis use	Education spending as a percentage of GDP	Youth policies and representation
Relative welfare of older people	Tobacco use		Physical safety
GDP per capita	Teenage pregnancy rates		Civic freedom
	Psychological wellbeing		Voter education
	HIV prevalence		Youth ability to express political views
			Access to public transport

Key to coloured bars

Commonwealth Youth Development Index (darker tints)

Global AgeWatch Index (paler tints)

In the draft post-2015 framework, tackling income insecurity is at the heart of the poverty goal, and health and wellbeing for all at all ages is the content of the health goal. Education and work feature prominently throughout, as do aspects of the enabling environment, such as participation.

Even though there are gaps in the data sets for youth and older age, there is data which is comparable between countries, which can be used to measure progress. The gaps in available data identified by these indexes can give directions for the "data revolution" that is needed to leave no one behind, and show where investment in data collection, analysis and use is needed.

Recommendations

- The post-2015 framework should give priority to a life-course approach to development, with issues affecting people of all ages and abilities at the centre of sustainable development.

- The SDGs should support the opportunities created by longer lives and further the implementation of existing agreements on youth (World Programme of Action for Youth) and older people (Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing).

- All the goals in the new framework should be underpinned by age-specific data, which requires filling in the gaps highlighted by the existing indexes on youth and age, with corresponding investments.

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