

Ageing and Development

News and analysis of issues affecting the lives of older people

Issue 10 December 2001



Displaced older Afghans need to be ensured access to aid and support services that are available to the rest of the population.

Older Afghans 'could suffer most'

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has warned that older Afghans, both inside and outside their country, could suffer most in the crisis engulfing the region.

Older people who are displaced in Afghanistan or forced to flee the country are at risk of malnutrition and illness, as well as exposure to harsh climatic conditions, warns the IFRC.

Many older people will not be able to flee, due to the particular physical and mobility problems that older people face, and will be under increasing threat from the war. The resulting separation of older people from their families increases their vulnerability.

'It may not be necessary to provide special services for older people, but it is necessary to ensure that they have access to aid and support services which are available for the rest of the

population, and that they are not isolated,' says IFRC health and care officer, Jennifer Inger.

'Older people provide a valuable sense of continuity, culture and history, which could help displaced groups maintain their sense of identity and preserve the cohesion of their community.'

The IFRC has also insisted that older people be consulted on and involved in the delivery of humanitarian assistance – not just in emergencies, but also in longer-term development programmes.

Report recognises age

Increased global attention to ageing is also reflected in a report from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on the sex and age distribution of refugee populations.

The UNHCR states that gender and age are key factors determining the needs of a population and in planning

operational activities. It stresses the need to collect adequate statistical information in emergency situations, and has added the category of over 60s to its data collection.

More information: IFRC

<http://www.ifrc.org>

Afghan situation updates

<http://www.irinnews.org>

HelpAge International

Nadia Saim, Emergencies Officer

Email: nsaim@helpage.org

<http://www.helpage.ch>

Older people in disasters and humanitarian crisis: Guidelines for best practice

HelpAge International, London, 2000

(For language editions see page 10)

Email: cdobbing@helpage.org

Women, Children and Older Refugees: The sex and age distribution of Refugee Populations with a special emphasis on UNHCR Policy Priorities

Population Data Unit, UNHCR, Geneva, July 2001

<http://www.unhcr.ch>

See also item on refugee policy on page 5.

inside...

- 2 [News](#) UN ageing assembly, Madrid; Poverty reduction talks; EU ageing and disability resolution; Reports from Mozambique, Haiti, Ethiopia, and East and Central Europe
- 6 [Briefing](#) Ensuring the right to food
- 8 [Profile](#) Mauritius policy respects old age
- 9 [Talking point](#) Pensions for the poorest
- 10 [Resources](#) Publications, websites and events
- 12 [Research update](#) Studies in Western Asia and Ethiopia

HelpAge International

Leading global action on ageing

News round up

Developments that affect older people's quality of life

2

Madrid: a chance to end age discrimination

A second draft of the International Strategy for Action on Ageing was discussed at a meeting of government delegates in New York in December.

The new strategy will be adopted at the Second World Assembly on Ageing in Madrid in April 2002.

HelpAge International's *Action on Ageing* campaign aims to ensure that the demands of older people living in poverty are included in the strategy, and that the strategy will be effectively implemented and monitored.

As part of its campaign, HelpAge International is collecting the views of poor older people in the developing world and transitional economies, to feed into the strategy through national governments and international advocacy work.

A consultation organised by HelpAge Kenya, for example, identified health and nutrition, HIV/AIDS, contributions of older people, housing, abuse and violence, income security and social services as key areas to be covered. Older people reported that health workers often showed negative attitudes towards them. One older woman was told: 'Drugs are for young people, not old people.'

In consultations organised by the Sudanese Society in Care of Older People, older people discussed problems accessing health facilities.

An older woman who took part in discussions organised by the Bangladesh Women's Health

Coalition voiced a worry felt by many when she said: 'I am a widow. I have no earning member in my family. Now I am capable, but in the near future I will have to beg for my food and clothing.'

Drawing on these consultations, HelpAge International has identified ten actions to end age discrimination (see box), which it presented to delegates attending the meeting in New York.

Valencia Forum

Leading academics, teachers and practitioners in the field of ageing will meet in Valencia, Spain the week before the Assembly to provide scientific evidence to support policy decisions to be made at the Assembly.

The Valencia Forum on 1-4 April, auspiced by the International Association of Ageing, will discuss topics ranging from ageing and development to the role of carers, biology, demographics, health and social services, and rural ageing.

NGO Forum

NGOs and older people will have a chance to air key issues through workshops, panel discussions and exhibitions at the NGO Forum, to be held in Madrid on 5-9 April.



HelpAge International

In a consultation in Kenya, older people identify key issues to be covered by the International Strategy for Action on Ageing.

HelpAge International's ten actions to end age discrimination:

- 1 Recognise the human rights of older people and the benefits of population ageing for human development.
- 2 Allocate older people their fair share of national and global resources.
- 3 Guarantee adequate social protection and minimum income in old age.
- 4 Provide accessible and free health care for older people.
- 5 Make credit, employment, training and education schemes available to people regardless of age.
- 6 Put an end to violence against older people.
- 7 Ensure policy makers listen to and act on the views of older people.
- 8 Include and consult older people in emergency aid and rehabilitation planning after disasters and humanitarian crises.
- 9 Establish international practice standards to govern public policy on ageing.
- 10 Support older people in their role as carers.

Six main themes have been agreed for the Forum, each coordinated by an international NGO and a Spanish NGO. The themes are: Public policies and wellbeing; Rights of older people; Environment; Culture, training, participation and leisure; Ageing and Development; and Health.

More information:

Second World Assembly on Ageing
8-12 April 2002. Madrid, Spain
Alexander Sidorenko,
UN Programme on Ageing
Email: sidorenko@un.org
Conference details and draft strategy:
<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing>

Valencia Forum

1-4 April 2002. Valencia, Spain
Valencia Forum, c/o Centre for Ageing Studies, Mark Oliphant Building, Laffer Drive, Bedford Park SA 5042, Australia
Tel: +61 8 8201 7567
Fax: +61 8 8201 7551
Email: Valencia@finders.edu.au
<http://www.valenciaforum.com>

NGO Forum

5-9 April 2002. Madrid, Spain
Spanish organising committee
<http://www.madrid2002-envejecimiento.org>

HelpAge International Action on Ageing campaign

Andrew Humphreys, Campaign Coordinator, Action on Ageing, HelpAge International (address on back page)
Email: ahumphreys@helpage.org

Comment

Ageing strategy must take a gendered approach

Research studies and consultations with older people living in poverty consistently highlight differences between men's and women's experiences of old age.

As a result of gendered roles throughout their lives, men and women experience different vulnerabilities and disadvantages in old age.

For example, older women who are widowed often lack material assets, while older men may be rejected because they are not considered productive.

Increasing dependency puts older people at risk of abuse, to an extent that is just beginning to become apparent. A study in Mozambique (see page 4) indicates that women and men suffer different types of violence, with witchcraft allegations being the main issue for older women, and theft and beatings the main issues for older men.

It is essential that gender issues are incorporated into policies affecting older people, notably the new International Strategy for Action on Ageing – and that the focus is not only on older women, but on the different vulnerabilities and roles of older women and men.

Sylvia Beales Policy Development Manager, HelpAge International

Involving the poor in poverty reduction

Attendance by HelpAge International at a conference on poverty eradication in the UK in September led to older people's issues being raised at the 2nd Africa Forum on Poverty Reduction Strategies in Dakar, Senegal.

'Poverty eradication: meeting international targets', sponsored by the World Bank, IMF and European governments, brought together some 50 representatives of government and civil society from richer and poorer countries.

The debate ranged from the importance of empowering poor groups to raise their voices and concerns, to ways of monitoring

poverty eradication strategies, and the need for targeted action to seek out and include the poorest and most excluded groups for development aid.

The conference concluded that governments and international organisations that wish to act on the needs of the poor must challenge attitudes that merely regard the poor as a burden and see them as resourceful and central to any poverty eradication programme.

They must also change working methods and institutional arrangements, so that the poor can be seen and heard, and be supported to participate in a range

of solutions to their own and their countries' poverty and injustice.

As a result of attendance at the conference, HelpAge International was invited to address the 2nd Africa Forum on Poverty Reduction Strategies the same month, which brought together 400 delegates from 32 African countries and more than 20 donor agencies.

Programme officer Sarah Massengo presented a paper on the voices and wishes of the poor, based on experiences of older people in Tanzania, Rwanda and Mozambique. 'The poor need to be involved in developing poverty reduction strategies,' she said.

'Their thinking is very clear on how their levels of poverty could be reduced. They are the only ones who can change their situation. No one can reduce the poverty facing them without their participation. They need to be informed on a range of issues that will lead to their full and fruitful participation in poverty reduction initiatives.'

More information:
Poverty eradication conference
<http://www.wiltonpark.org.uk/conference644>

2nd Africa Forum
<http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/attackingpoverty/activities/dakarforum.html>

Hunger in Haiti

New research on poverty among older people in Haiti highlights hunger and lack of income as major difficulties.

The research, commissioned by HelpAge International, indicates that older men experience ageing and poverty differently from older women.

Researchers used questionnaires to gather information from 412 people aged 60 and over in five administrative regions of Haiti. They also used group discussions with older people and other interested parties. The research covered issues including housing, nutrition, health, income, and ownership of basic consumer goods.

Three-quarters of the older people interviewed said that they suffered from hunger 'often' or 'sometimes'. Most cited lack of money as the main reason for their hunger.

The proportion of those who went hungry was higher in rural areas. In both urban and rural areas, more men than women said they went hungry.

Over half the older people interviewed said they relied on help from their children. A further 38 per cent relied on income from trading or other work. Only 5 per cent received a pension.

Some of the younger adults said that poor older people were more likely to be rejected or mistrusted by their families than those who were well off.

Recherche sur la situation socio-economique des personnes âgées en Haiti

Comité de pilotage de la recherche sur les personnes âgées en Haiti (SHAA, ASSOLDO, FHACU, CADOR), October 2001 (in French)

More information:

*Jeff James,
Regional Representative,
HelpAge International Caribbean
Regional Development Centre,
PO Box 8300, Kingston CSO,
Jamaica.
Fax: +1 876 7547642
Email: helpage@cwjamaica.com*



Trading is an important source of income for many older people in Haiti.

Fiona Lloyd-Davies/HelpAge International

News round up

Developments that affect older people's quality of life

4

Poverty and isolation in Mozambique

Lack of income and isolation are serious problems for older people in Mozambique, according to a new report.

Participatory research involving 242 people aged over 60 at different levels of vulnerability in Tete and Gaza provinces was carried out by a team from government, non-government and community members, coordinated by HelpAge International.

None of the older people in the study said they receive a pension. Three-quarters still work on family farmland, mainly subsistence farming. Lack of income and other resources is compounded by exclusion from credit schemes, training and distribution of seeds, tools and other income-generating resources available to younger adults.

Many of the older people have not only themselves to support – almost half are caring for children aged under 15, or for sick or disabled adults. They make a major contribution to childcare, family healthcare, and managing the impact of HIV/AIDS within their families.

Access to formal healthcare facilities is very limited. Most older people said they rely on traditional healers, who have begun to demand payment in cash instead of kind, putting their services beyond the reach of the poorest.

War, floods, migration and HIV/AIDS have weakened family and community structures. Among the most vulnerable older people in the study, more than half live alone. They feel isolated. 'I have no one to help me,' said one older woman. 'One day I might not be able to cook or clean for myself. It fills me with sadness.'

In individual interviews, 13 per cent of older people reported instances of abuse. Witchcraft accusations were the main issue

for older women, while theft and beatings were the main issue for older men.

The report emphasises the importance of solutions that re-integrate older people in their families and communities, rather than relying on a welfare approach.

**Capacity and Connection:
A Study of Ageing in Mozambique**
HelpAge International, Maputo,
July 2001

More information:
Nec Chiptupa, Programme Manager,
HelpAge International, CP 4112,
Maputo, Mozambique
Fax: +258 1 416435
Email: haimoz@virconn.com



Andrew Humphreys/HelpAge International

Earning a living in Mozambique – but many older people are excluded from income-generation resources available to younger adults.

Resolution on ageing and disability

An important step towards ensuring older people's participation in society has been taken with the passing of a resolution by parliamentarians from Africa, Caribbean, the Pacific and Europe.

The Resolution on Ageing and Disability was passed in November 2001 by the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, a forum for elected parliamentarians and representatives of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states and the European Union (EU).

The resolution calls for European institutions to promote the United Nations Principles for Older Persons, fund the development of older people's organisations in ACP countries, adopt the International Strategy for Action on Ageing (see page 2), and give older people particular attention in EU development policy.

It stresses the need for EU and ACP governments to address the human rights of older people, and to engage with international institutions, such as the World

Health Organization, to improve health systems in developing countries.

The resolution will be passed to the ACP-EU Council, the European Commission, World Health Organization, UNDP and World Bank.

'The resolution is a clear sign that parliamentarians are aware of the need to address older people and disability issues in developing countries,' says Helen Holder, HelpAge International's representative in Brussels.

'However, it marks only the beginning of a process. NGOs and parliamentarians must continue to push this resolution, so that policy makers in both the EU and ACP countries move towards even more concrete and binding commitments.'

Budget breakthrough

For the first time, older people are specifically mentioned in the European Commission's draft budget. In October 2001, amendments to the draft 2002 budget were passed through the Development and Cooperation Committee, mentioning older people in budget lines for human rights and democracy, and poverty diseases (HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria). These amendments follow discussions between HelpAge International and members of the European parliament.

More information:
Helen Holder, EU representative,
HelpAge International
Email: helpage.brussels@skynet.be

Resolution on Ageing and Disability
http://www.europarl.eu.int/intcoop/acp/bru2001/pdf/res_011_en.pdf

Myths and misconceptions

In this column we highlight a popular myth about older people and explain what the situation really is.

Have you heard anything about older people that may be a myth?

If so, write to the editor or email: ctill@helpage.org

Children are the fastest growing sector of the population in poor countries

Today, children under 14 make up 32.7 per cent of the population in 'less developed countries', while people aged over 60 make up 7.6 per cent.

The number of older people in poor countries is nearly 400 million – almost two-thirds of the world population of older people.

By 2050, however, it is estimated that the number of people aged over 60 in poor countries will approximately equal the number of children aged under 14, and there will be three times as many people aged over 60 as children under 5.

Changing demographics require new social, economic and political strategies. The majority of older people in poor countries live in chronic poverty. Policies are

needed that support older people both in their roles as carers, wage earners, educators and arbitrators and as individuals in their own right.

For example, the extension of credit, training and education schemes to older people, as well as social protection and accessible health care, would make an enormous difference to poor families.

Source: US Bureau of the Census
<http://www.census.gov>

Voices in Eastern Europe

In the past few years, shared experiences of isolation, poor access to health and social care, and income insecurity have brought older people in East and Central Europe together in an increasing number of voluntary organisations.

Most of these organisations focus on welfare activities to supplement state provision, although a few seek to influence government policy.

A new publication, *Making our voices heard: Older people and decision-making in East and Central Europe*, builds a profile of older people, their groups and voluntary organisations in six countries – Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (with a particular focus on Serbia), Estonia, Macedonia, Moldova, Romania and Ukraine – and examines how voluntary efforts can relate to state sector provision.

The report summarises research on older people's situation and the role of government and voluntary organisations. It also includes case studies of individual organisations and contact details of nearly 180 organisations working with or for older people.

The countries covered encompass a wide range of social, economic and historical experience. For example, Romania and Estonia are both candidates to enter the

European Union; however, in Romania, one in two older people lives in poverty, whereas Estonia has relatively well-funded provision for older people.

In post-conflict countries such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia and Serbia, refugees and internally displaced persons are part of a transition society. Their growing voluntary sectors have largely been created from outside.

Some governments are increasingly interested in, and supportive of, voluntary sector activities. But the general picture is that strategic and operational links between the public and voluntary sectors have yet to be developed.

This is the second in a series of two publications. *Nothing about us without us: Older people and decision-making in East and Central Europe*, published in 2000, focused on Albania, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

A summary of both publications will shortly be available in Russian.

Making our voices heard: Older people and decision-making in East and Central Europe

HelpAge International 2001
Contact: Céline Hall,
Regional Programme Officer,
HelpAge International
Email: chall@helpage.org



Care services provided by Alzheimer's Society Romania, one of the organisations listed in a new report from East and Central Europe.

Céline Hall/HelpAge International

Older refugees 'a resource'

Older refugees are people with a wealth of accumulated experience and knowledge, well able to participate in decisions and activities that affect their own lives and those of their families and communities.

This view underpins the United Nations High Commission for Refugees' newly published policy on older refugees, *Older refugees: a resource for the refugee community*.

Refugees aged 60 and over make up 8.5 per cent of those of concern to the UNHCR, and in some cases more than 30 per cent. The majority of older refugees are women.

The policy stresses that older people's needs should not be addressed in isolation, and that older people need to be recognised and treated as active, contributing members of their families and communities.

More information:

Health and Community Development Section, UNHCR, Geneva Switzerland
<http://www.unhcr.ch>

Briefing

Analysis of current topics in ageing

6

Ensuring the right to food

Sylvia Beales explores the issues around food and older people, and explains why it is crucial that world leaders and national governments include older people in their targets for assuring food security for everyone.

Concern about world hunger is mounting. On 16 October 2001, World Food Day, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) called for a global alliance against hunger and poverty.

The World Food Summit +5, scheduled for November (now postponed until mid-2002 in the wake of the 11 September attacks in the United States), has as its slogan 'Fight hunger to reduce poverty'.

Basic human right

Adequate food is a fundamental human right, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and endorsed in a series of subsequent agreements.

At the World Food Summit in Rome in 1996, the international community declared: 'We... reaffirm the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger'.

There was also a pledge to halve the numbers of under-nourished people by 2015. In late 2000, that pledge was incorporated into the internationally agreed Millennium Summit goals.

Food security is also central to current debates on globalisation and trade. In November 2001, food security featured on the agenda of the World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting in Doha, Qatar, when the development community urged the WTO to commit itself to realising both the World Food Summit targets and International Development Targets.

A critical question is: How do older people figure in the achievement of these goals?

Older people's hunger

Poverty and hunger afflict over half the world's population. The FAO estimates that some 792 million people in developing countries are chronically hungry.

It is accepted that hunger is both a cause and a result of poverty, and that it is important to support local food production to combat both poverty and hunger. Yet food production is declining, and hunger is on the increase.¹ The FAO, in its preparatory reports for

the World Food Summit, states that unless government action against hunger is speeded up fourfold, the targets for 2015 – which may not take into account the hunger of older people – will not even be met by 2030.

Many older people in developing countries are subsistence farmers living in rural areas. They face an increasing struggle to obtain any food, let alone food that is 'safe and nutritious'. There is both widespread disregard for and lack

of understanding of the nutritional needs of older people, and discrimination against them in households and in communities with regard to their right to food.

Older people's need for food often comes ahead of their need for development inputs and access to basic services. 'If we don't have enough to eat, what good would a sanitation system do us?' said an older man in Naogaon, Bangladesh, in research led by HelpAge International in 1999.²



Brent Madison/HelpAge International

A rice bank run by an older people's association in Cambodia helps to prevent hunger – members borrow rice when they are short of food, and pay it back after the harvest.

In a HelpAge International consultation in Bosnia in October, one older woman said: 'We have house supplies, but food is the problem. We don't need clothing the most, we need food.'

When food is scarce, older people are likely to fare worst. In Blockhaus, Haiti, a 75-year-old woman told HelpAge International researchers: 'I have not eaten for several days now. My heart is breaking with hunger.'

Link with citizens' rights

Previous briefings in *A&D* have described how a person's wellbeing in older age is often linked to their ability to earn an income or contribute in other ways to the household. When this ability

declines, they are less likely to be given food. Although most families try hard to provide for older family members, they have to decide how to share scarce resources. In resource-poor households in the Bolivian highlands, it is reported that older people 'get the smallest plate of food'.

In a study in Mozambique, six out of eight focus groups linked vulnerability in old age to poor nutrition.³

Research from drought-stricken areas in Ethiopia shows that one of the early warning signs of drought is when older family members are refused food, or refuse to eat. Reports describe how older people retreat to the back of village compounds to die.⁴

Poverty-related research in Jamaica, the eastern Caribbean and Haiti consistently underlines hunger, and relates the lack of food and means of accessing it to the denial of citizenship rights. It also points to the failure of policy makers to understand the connection between older people's and younger people's food security. Farming expertise accumulated by older people, which could be used to develop sustainable farming programmes, is ignored; older farmers, both women and men, are excluded from development programmes and from credit and farming inputs.

Conversely, good health is linked with adequate food. In South Africa, respondents in HelpAge International research ranked access to nutritious food as both a core need, and an indicator of good health.

Benefiting the wider community

HelpAge International supports older people's right to food by supporting programmes promoting food security and income-generating projects, age-based nutritional assessment and advocacy. For example, projects in Ethiopia, Cambodia, Mozambique,

Tanzania and Bolivia support older people's efforts to help themselves, through activities including rice banks, grain distribution, milling services, revolving credit funds and agricultural production for specific markets.

An Africa-wide programme to train health workers, community leaders and development professionals on how to assess the nutritional status of older people is underway in areas affected by conflict, drought and emergency (including HIV/AIDS) as well as in regions that are simply poor.

Advocacy on nutrition and age is important to alert communities and policy makers to the fact that older populations are chronically hungry, and that action to improve the nutritional status of older people will have beneficial effects throughout the community.

HelpAge International believes that food security for the wider community can be achieved by ensuring improved food and material security for older people. A clear example of this is the use of the social pension for food and education of the young in South Africa – the pension is recognised as an effective mechanism for reaching both vulnerable and poor older people and poor children.⁵

In Peru, HelpAge International's support to an older people's association in an impoverished fishing town led directly to the establishment of a community soup kitchen run by older people, serving in the first instance poor and malnourished children.

At the Second World Assembly on Ageing, the international community will be asked to ensure that the growing population of older people will be included in strategies to reduce poverty by one half.⁶ In the run-up to the assembly, HelpAge International is asking that the full range of older people's rights, including the right to food, be acted on.

Sylvia Beales is policy development manager, HelpAge International.

'My heart is breaking with hunger.'

Older woman in Haiti

International agreements

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

<http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>

Millennium Summit goals

Agreed at the Millennium Summit in 2000

<http://www.un.org/millennium/>

International development targets

Agreed at the 1995 World Summit for Social Development

<http://www.developmentgoals.org>

World Food Summit

Preparatory reports for 'World Food Summit: five years later' conference to be held in mid-2002

<http://www.fao.org>

References

1. Food for all: Can hunger be halved? *Panos report no. 42*
The Panos Institute 2001
2. A Situation Analysis of Older People in Bangladesh: 'Uncertainty Rules our Lives'
HelpAge International et al 2000, p19
3. Capacity and Connection: A Study of Ageing in Mozambique
HelpAge International 2001
(see also item on page 4)
4. Older Persons and Poverty in Ethiopia
HelpAge International 2001
5. Large cash transfers to the elderly in South Africa
A Case and A Deaton
Discussion paper no. 176 Princeton, USA, 1996
6. Paragraph 48 of draft International Strategy for Action on Ageing
<http://www.un.org/esa.socdev/ageing>



Profile

Taking older people's interests forward

8

Mauritius policy respects old age

The Mauritius government has become the latest to agree and implement a national policy for older people. **Fiona Clark** describes how.

The Mauritius government places ageing firmly alongside development, globalisation, and sustainable human development. In May 2001, it approved its National Policy on the Elderly, which was developed by the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity & Senior Citizen Welfare and Reform Institutions in collaboration with national and international stakeholders.

Mauritius, an island 1,800 miles off the east coast of Africa, has a population of 1.2 million. The proportion of people aged over 60, currently 9 per cent, is projected to double in the next 30 years, setting Mauritius to have one of the 'oldest' populations in Africa.

The process of developing the policy began with the establishment of a committee in November 2000 to take stock of the needs, opportunities and challenges of the country's ageing population, and to formulate a policy.

Eleven sub-committees explored the main issues facing older people. A draft policy was produced, and discussed at a national workshop in February 2001 with the participation of organisations including HelpAge International's Africa regional centre, the Mauritius Council of Social Service and the Senior Citizens Council.

The policy was redrafted and submitted to the government. It was adopted in May, and by June implementation had begun.

Developmental approach

Entitled *Ageing with Dignity*, the policy takes its point of departure from the draft policy framework and plan of action on ageing that is under review by the African Union.

It is not based merely on demographics, but grows out of the government's commitment to sustainable human development and the creation of an inclusive society for all ages. Its overall premise is respect for the role that older people have played in making Mauritius the diverse, progressive and stable country it is now.

'The phenomenon of ageing... calls for a departure from the "beaten-track",' writes social security minister Samiollah Lauthan in the foreword. 'There is a need for the adoption of a more holistic and multi-disciplinary approach.'

Mauritius is one of the few countries in the world, which, despite worries over economic sustainability and against the advice of the World Bank, has a universal basic retirement pension as well as a contributory retirement pension plan. Other benefits include a basic invalid's pension for disabled older people, a basic widow's pension, and a carer's allowance for families caring for disabled older family members.

In parallel, older people are eligible for certain benefits under the government's National Savings Fund, such as additional allowances for those with special needs or dependants, rent assistance to older people living alone, and allowances of rice and flour to the very poor.

Other facilities include free spectacles, hearing aids and wheelchairs, 50 per cent reduction on bus fares, discounts on airfares and free home medical visits for people aged over 90.

Promoting an active life

The policy goes beyond the provision of basic services, however, to promote the rights of older people, as enshrined in the United Nations Principles for Older Persons. It emphasises especially the participation of

older people for their own security, independence, recognition, and access to information and knowledge.

It also recognises the increasing threat to older people's personal security from physical abuse, financial exploitation, rejection by the family and dispossession of property, and calls for a Protection of the Elderly Act.

Of particular note is the policy's emphasis on the establishment of a 'skills bank' to harness retired people's skills and knowledge, and put these to good use in the community and the development of the country. As one paragraph says: 'Retirement is not the end of an active life, but the beginning of a new one.'

'The policy reflects the value that the government and people of Mauritius place on older people,' says Tavengwa Nhongo, HelpAge International's Africa representative. 'Our hope is that other countries in Africa will emulate this excellent example.'

Fiona Clark is policy officer, HelpAge International

Ageing with Dignity
<http://ncb.intnet.mt/ssns/ministrypubli.htm>

Progress in Africa

Mali became the first African country to adopt a national policy on ageing in 1993. Tanzania is set to become the next. Rwanda, Uganda, South Africa and Kenya are developing policies.

At a meeting of government representatives in Nairobi in December, the African Union adopted a draft Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing.

'Retirement is not the end of an active life, but the beginning of a new one.'

Mauritius National Policy on the Elderly



Talking point

Understanding older people's experience

9



Hein du Plessis/HelpAge International

The pension drawn by Elias Maluleke (right) in Waterval, South Africa helps to support his family.

of older people (particularly, though not exclusively related to HIV/AIDS), as well as the part they play in providing financing for the education and small business activities of their children and grandchildren, are made possible by the social pension.

Reaching the poorest

Many problems remain, as the authors acknowledge. The extension of coverage to the informal sector (and above all to the self-employed) in poor countries is a major challenge, but not, they propose, insuperable. They argue that basic, universal social assistance set at very low levels for affordability, would not only begin to impact on old-age poverty, but also start to establish the viability of 'administrative mechanisms for effective outreach to the poorest households that [developing country] governments currently lack...'

Significant knowledge gaps also remain. Realities of formal pension provision in poor countries, the position of older people within poor households, social assistance for older people in poverty, and the relationship of formal and 'informal' social security systems, all need further study.

Nevertheless, *Pensions in Development* represents a substantial contribution to the small but growing literature making an increasingly compelling case for social policy approaches to old age support in developing and middle income countries which more evenly balance welfare and economic development agendas.

Mark Gorman is director of policy development, HelpAge International

Pensions in Development

Roger Charlton and Roddy McKinnon
Ashgate, 2001

£47.50

ISBN 1840 145 609

Email: orders@ashgate.com

Distributed by Bookpoint Ltd.

Tel: +44 1235 827730

Fax: +44 1235 832068

Pensions for the poorest

Welfare can be more evenly balanced with economic development to provide old-age security for everyone, argues a new book. Mark Gorman discusses how.

Mainstream development has largely ignored ageing issues – but a separate debate of profound relevance to older people in both the 'developing' and 'developed' world has grown around the evolution of social security and social protection strategies. A central element of this is pension policy.

Nearly all countries now provide some form of old-age social security benefit. Concern with the situation of the poorest people has led even resource-poor countries such as India and Bangladesh to introduce basic non-contributory pensions at very low levels (in India, roughly US\$2 a month).

Challenge to welfare approach

At the same time, a strong challenge to public welfare provision has been mounted in recent years. This has been led by the World Bank with its publication of *Averting the Old Age Crisis* in 1994.

Averting the Old Age Crisis questioned the sustainability of unfunded, pay-as-you-go state

pensions systems in the face of growing numbers of older people worldwide and declining formal workforces. It proposed mandatory savings by individuals in privately managed accounts, based on the model introduced in Chile during the Pinochet regime.

Since the mid-1990s, the World Bank has become a leading advisor on pension reform along these lines, to governments in Africa, Asia, Latin America and East and Central Europe.

Taking a broader view

In a new book, *Pensions in Development*, Roger Charlton and Roddy McKinnon present a strong critique of the tendency for the reform debate to become a 'monologue' with a single agenda, 'the explicit intent to reduce the role of the state'. They argue for a 'pensions in development' approach which emphasises 'the continuing appropriateness of active state involvement in the management of "pension" provision in developing countries'. Their wide definition of 'pensions'

includes both regular income and lump sum payments.

For those with a particular interest in ageing in the developing world, this discussion is of primary importance. Their call for the provision of '(small but regular) cash incomes... universally to all the elderly, including, especially, the "hard to reach" elderly poor' counters prevailing approaches to pension system reform with their strong orientation towards economic growth and their de-emphasis of pensions as welfare instruments for protection of vulnerable (and increasingly large) segments of populations.

The authors do not deny that fostering economic growth is the only way to reduce poverty in the long term, but argue for the potential of growth and equality as a viable dual goal.

Indeed, at a local level, pension transfers to older people can have not only a 'welfare' impact, but also significant redistributive effects. Evidence from South Africa indicates that the caregiving roles

Resources

New publications, websites, conferences and courses

10

Articles

A round-up of what is being written on ageing issues. For journal details please write to the editor or email: ctill@helpage.org

International

Can immigration alleviate the demographic burden?
H Bonin et al, Finanzarchiv 57:1 (2000)

Population exodus
H Chakravarty, Econ. Aff. 45:3 (Jul-Sep 2000)

Demographic ageing: anti-hazard and lack of future prospects
A Parant, Esp. Pop. Soc. 3 (2000)

Ageing in sub-Saharan Africa
B Schoumaker, Esp. Pop. Soc. 3 (2000)

The greying world: a challenge for the twenty-first century
A Kalache and I Keller, Science Progress 83:1 (2000)

Rural population ageing in developing countries
L Stloukal, Bold 11:1 (2000)

Creating a minimum data set on ageing in sub-Saharan Africa
P R Kowal et al, S. African J. Geront. 9:2 (2000)

Analysis of the essence and forms of social ageing
E F Molevich, Sotsis 4 (2001)

Inclusive development in an aging world
S Beales and S Graham-Brown, SGI Quarterly 25 (July 2001)

The future's bright, the future's grey
Report of global population forecast by the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA)
J Meek, The Guardian (2 Aug 2001)

National

Effects of the expected changes in numbers and structure of the Polish population
I E Kotowska, Gospodarka Narodowa 11:11-12 (2000)

The changing geography of morbidity and mortality in post-communist Poland
A H Dawson, GeoJournal 50:2-3 (2000)

Demographic ageing in China
F Peng, Esp. Pop. Soc. 3 (2000)

Political disempowerment among older people in Hong Kong
P K Kam, J. Cross Cult. Ger. 15:4 (2000)

Ageing in Brazil
L R Ramos, Ageing International 25:4 (2000)

Ageing in developing countries: The case in Hong Kong
Y F Hui, Ageing International 25:4 (2000)

Ageing in India: Some key issues
D Jamuna, Ageing International 25:4 (2000)

Using mobile medical units in emergency responses – HelpAge India's response to the Gujarat earthquake
Nadia Saim, Humanitarian Exchange, ODI (Sept 2001)

Taking the lead in an ageing society
Singapore Nurses Association, Singapore Nursing J. 27:1 (2000)

Singapore: a vision for the new millennium
J S Chan, S. E. Asian Aff. pp 259-275 (2000)

Population ageing in Japan: a brief survey
L MacKellar and D Horlacher, Innovation 13:4 (2000)

The poor in Singapore: issues and options
W K M Lee, J. Contemp. Asia 31:1 (2001)

Activities of contemporary Mayan elders
R C Harman, J. Cross Cult. Ger. 16:1 (2001)

Geographical distribution of elderly people in Croatia
I Heim et al, Collegium Antropologicum 25:1 (Jun 2001)

Changing roles of grass-root level health workers in Kerala
V M Nair et al, Health Pol. and Plan. 16:2 (Jun 2001)

Cross-cultural studies

Modeling life satisfaction among the aged: a comparison of Chinese and Americans
P Silverman et al, J. Cross Cult. Ger. 15:4 (2000)

Cross-cultural validation of the London Handicap Scale in Hong Kong Chinese
R Lo et al, Clin. Rehab. 15:2 (April 2001)

Introduction: positive adaptations to ageing in cultural context
D Shenk and J Sokolovsky, J. Cross Cult. Ger. 16:1 (2001)

Finance and welfare

The sustainability of welfare states into the twenty-first century
G Esping-Andersen, Int. J. Health Services 30:1 (2000)

The impact of modernisation and social policy on family care for older people in Japan
M Kono, J. Soc. Policy 29:2 (Apr 2000)

The ageing problem and investments in emerging markets
R Holzmann, Wirtschaftspolitische Blätter 47:4 (2000)

Social support exchange and quality of life among the Korean elderly
H K Kim et al, J. Cross Cult. Ger. 15:4 (2000)

Ageing and international capital flows: first results of the Ingenue model
Revue d'Economie Politique 3 (2001)

Population ageing, invisible debt and needed pension reforms: the case of Japan
N Srinivasan and F Perugini, Quart. Econ. Bull. 22:2 (June 2001)

Gender

The abandoned mother: ageing, old age and missionaries in early and mid nineteenth century South East Africa
A Sagner, J. Af. Hist. 42:2 (2001)

Modern Asia's anomaly: the girls who don't get born
New York Times, 7 May 2001

Women and reproductive health in a graying world
P Senanayake, Int. J. Gyn. and Obs. 70:1 (Jul 2000)

Exiled to the home: masculinity and ageing in urban Mexico
A Varley and M Blasco, Eur. J. Dev. Res. 12:2 (Dec 2000)

Health

Population ageing in developed and developing regions: implications for health policy
P Lloyd-Sherlock, Soc. Sci. Med. 51:6 (Sep 2000)

Health status as genealogical burden in the ageing process
S Blazekovic Milakovic et al, Collegium Antropologicum 24:1 (Jun 2000)

Urban hyperthermia and hypoglycemia in the elderly
Z Durakovic et al, Collegium Antropologicum 24:2 (Dec 2000)

Ageing society: challenges for the oncology nurse
Singapore Nurses Association, Singapore Nursing J. 27:1 (2000)

Clinical biochemistry values: evolution in ageing: Survey in the north eastern Argentine population
J A Coppo and N B Mussart, Prensa Medica Argentina 87:7 (2000)

Behavioural profile of Alzheimer's disease in Chinese elderly – a validation study of the Chinese version of the Alzheimer's disease behavioural pathology rating scale
L C Lam et al, Int. J. Ger. Psych. 16:4 (April 2001)

Socioeconomic status and health among older adults in Thailand: an examination using multiple indicators
Z Zimmer and P Amornsirisomboon, Soc. Sci. and Med. 52:8 (Apr 2001)

What psychiatry for the ageing North African immigrant?
A Aggoun, Homme et la Société 139:1 (Jan-Mar 2001)

Pharmacist medication history interview of elderly patients in a teaching hospital in Nigeria
O O Babalola and W O Erhun, Int. J. Pharm. Pract. 9:2 (Jun 2001)

HIV/AIDS

Caring for the Aids orphans
I Matheson, BBC News Africa, 26 June 2001
http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/africa/newsid_1408000/1408449.stm

Books

Population ageing in Hungary and the Netherlands: A European perspective
G Beets and K Mitényi (eds)
Thela Publishers (2000)
ISBN 9051705069

World ageing situation: Exploring a society for all ages
UN (2000). ISBN 9211302056

Global Survey of Older Persons
The International Federation on Ageing (December 2000). ISBN 0-9688407-0-1

Papers

Ageing in relation to health, violence, gender and poverty perspectives from the sub-Saharan Africa
Discussion paper for presentation at the experts group meeting on population, ageing and development in Malta, November 2001
Sarah Massengo, HelpAge International
Email: ahall@helpage.org

Old-age support in developing countries: labor supply, intergenerational transfers and living arrangements: Still working into old age – the Indonesia perspective
L Cameron and D A Cobb Clark IZA discussion paper (2001)
<http://www.iza.org> (downloadable from publications/discussion papers)

Social security reform and women's pensions: Reducing women's risk of poverty in old age

A Cox Edwards

GenderNet, World Bank (2001)
<http://www.worldbank.org/gender/prr/wp17.pdf>

Realising decent work for older women workers
 ILO (2000)

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/skills/older/download/olderwomen.pdf>

Social pensions in Namibia and South Africa: Safety net arrangements for elderly Africans

S Devereux
Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex (2001)
<http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/bookshop/dp/sp379.pdf>

Summary report of the co-chairmen and findings and recommendations of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies' Commission on Global Ageing
 CSIS (2001)

<http://www.csis.org/press/gaitokyosumrecs.pdf>

Publications

Annotated Bibliography on Ageing in Africa

Describes more than 100 books, papers, videos and websites about work with older people in Africa.
 HelpAge International, Africa Regional Development Centre, PO Box 14888, Westlands, 0200 Nairobi, Kenya
 Fax: +254 2 441052
 Email: helpage@net2000ke.com

A voice for older people in Africa
Leaflet answering questions about the Second World Assembly on Ageing.
 HelpAge International, Africa Regional Development Centre (see above)

Addressing the Nutritional Needs of Older People in Emergency Situations in Africa: Ideas for Action
 HelpAge International, Africa Regional Development Centre (see above)

Working with Video

Report of a workshop on 'Television in an Ageing Society' in Chiang Mai, Thailand in 2000, which includes practical information on using video with and for older people.
 Contact: Director, Asia Training Centre on Ageing, HelpAge International,
 Tel: +66 53 894805
 Fax: +66 53 894214
 Email: atcoa@helpageasia.com
<http://www.helpageasia.com>



Torbio Conde, who features in *Memorias de un Envejecimiento Activo*.

Older people in disasters and humanitarian crises: Guidelines for best practice

Now available in Mongolian and Bangla.

Contact: HelpAge International Asia/Pacific Regional Development Centre, c/o Faculty of Nursing, Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai 50200, Thailand

Email: hai@helpageasia.com
 English, French, Portuguese and Spanish editions are available from HelpAge International London office.
 Email: cdobbing@helpage.org

Memorias de un Envejecimiento Activo
 (Memoirs of Active Ageing)
Memoirs of eight older men and women from Bolivia, describing not only their poverty, but also their pride at being part of an organised movement, the Socio-Legal Centre for Older Persons.
 In Spanish.
 HelpAge International, Latin America Regional Development Centre, Casilla 2217, La Paz, Bolivia
 Fax: +591 2 231 0957
 Email: helpage.bolivia@unete.com

Conference reports

Symposium on Aging and Health: Environment, Work and Behavior
 14-15 September 2000
 Teikyo-Harvard Program, Harvard School of Public Health
<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/aging>

Ageing in the 21st Century
 15 June 2001
 Oxford University Graduate Conference on Ageing
 Email: hannah.zeilig@sociology.oxford.ac.uk

Oxford Ageing Initiative Week
 7-15 June 2001
 Fax Ms Ayesha Huda on:
 +44 1865 278 466

Widows Without Rights

6-7 February 2001
Empowering Widows in Development
<http://www.oneworld.org/empoweringwidows/conf1.htm>

ASEAN Workshop on Home Care for the Elderly

4-7 September 2001
 Seoul, Korea
 HelpAge Korea, PO Box 59, Youngdungpo, Seoul 150, Korea
 Fax: +82 2 26313215
 Email: helpage@nuri.net

Conference on abuse of older people
 22-24 November 2001
 University of Bio Bio, Chile
<http://www.ubiobio.cl/cmam>

Events

Development Studies Association Study Group on Ageing and Development meeting

16 January 2002
 London, UK
 Peter Lloyd-Sherlock
 Tel: +1603 592327
 Fax: +1603 451999
 Email: p.lloyd-sherlock@uea.ac.uk

Age of Connectivity
 3rd Annual Caring Communities for the 21st Century
 14 February 2002
 New York, USA
 International Council of Caring Communities
 Fax: +212 759 5893
 Email: iccc@undp.org
<http://www.un.org/events/agingcf.htm>

Connecting Generations – A Global Perspective
 2-4 April 2002
 Keele University, UK
 International Consortium for Intergenerational Programmes
 Tel: +44 1782 844036
 Email: generations@bjf.org.uk

UNRISD Conference on Ageing, Development and Social Protection
 9-10 April 2002
 Madrid, Spain
 The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
 Email: danloy@unrisd.org
<http://www.unrisd.org> (from early 2002)

Social Development in the Third Millennium
 30th International Conference on Social Welfare
 24-28 June 2002
 Rotterdam, The Netherlands
 Fax: +31 30 2306490
 Email: icsw2002@nizw.nl
<http://www.nizw.nl/icsw2002>

Courses

Ageing, Health and Well-being in Older Populations

15-19 April 2002
 London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, UK
 £550
 Contact: Deborah Curle, Course Administrator
 Tel: +44 20 7299 4648
 Email: deborah.curle@lshtm.ac.uk
<http://www.lshtm.ac.uk>

Ageing in Africa
 28 January - 1 February 2002
 HelpAge International Africa Regional Development Centre, Nairobi, Kenya
 US\$400
 Fax: +254 2 444289
 Email: helpage@net2000ke.com



Ageways is relaunched

HelpAge International has relaunched *Ageways* in a new format, with each issue focusing on a particular theme. *Ageways* is published three times a year to exchange practical information on ageing and agecare issues. Issue 58 (December) focuses on home care and volunteers. The next three issues will focus on violence and abuse, HIV/AIDS and livelihoods. *Ageways* is also available in Spanish (*Horizontes*), Russian and Ukrainian, and on the web. Contact: Caroline Dobbing, Publications and Marketing Assistant, HelpAge International
 Email: cdobbing@helpage.org
<http://www.helpage.org>

Corrections

The article 'DATAWATCH – population aging in developing countries' by L B Shrestha appeared in *Health Affairs* 19.3 (A&D9 p8). Agequake is written by Paul Wallace and published by Nicholas Brealey (A&D9 p8).

Research update

Major new projects

12

Carlos Reyes-Manzano/Andes Press Agency



A study in Western Asia highlights education and training for older people.

Demographic implications in Western Asia

A demographic study of ageing in Western Asia projects that the population of people aged over 60 in the region will increase from 13.32 million in 2000 to 31.88 million by 2025 – by a factor of 2.39, compared with 1.59 for the total population.

In some parts of the region, especially in rural areas, population structures are becoming skewed towards older age groups by younger adults moving abroad or to urban areas for work.

The study, *Demographic overview of the situation of ageing in Western Asia and its developmental implications*, calls for measures to support older workers in rural communities to be more productive. It highlights literacy education and vocational training, particularly for older women, as a priority.

The study also calls for measures to prevent old age disability; assurance of the minimum level of state-sponsored services to single older women and widows; and consideration of a new system of shared care by the family, private and public sectors.

Contact:

Kozue Kay Nagata, Social Affairs Officer, Social Development Issues and Policies Division, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Beirut, Lebanon.
Email: nagata.escwa@un.org or knagata@escwa.org.lb

Draft set of health and ageing indicators

A third draft set of indicators has been published by the World Health Organization's MDS Project, following a meeting with project partners in Tanzania in June 2001.

WHO has proposed 50 years of age and older as the general definition of an older person for the purposes of the project.

The MDS Project aims to establish a minimum data set on health and ageing – a set of indicators to assess the demographic, health, social and economic status of older people, in Africa, Caribbean and Asia.

Project updates are published in the *MDS Project Newsletter*.

Contact:

Paul Kowal, Technical Officer, Department of Evidence for Health Policy, WHO, 20 Avenue Appia, CH-1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland.
Fax: +41 22 791 4839
Email: kowalp@who.int
<http://www.who.int/whosis/mds>

Research in Ethiopia

Several studies have recently been commissioned or supported by HelpAge International in Ethiopia.

Burial associations

A study of indigenous burial associations, known as *iddirs*, suggests broadening their role to support vulnerable older people.

Iddirs play an essential part in enabling traditional burial and mourning ceremonies to be carried out. Some have also started being used to provide social support to

vulnerable older members, for example, by providing money for medical care.

Using data from institutions, *iddirs* and vulnerable older members in Addis Ababa, the study found that support from *iddirs* was directed primarily towards helping members maintain membership, by deferring or exempting payments or making loans. Older people were given no special exemptions. If older people who had contributed for years could not keep up their contributions, they risked losing membership.

Recommendations include raising awareness of the potential role of *iddirs* to support vulnerable older people, and financing activities such as credit schemes.

Iddirs and older people

Samir Kalifa
HelpAge International, 2001

Impact of HIV/AIDS

Research has been carried out with 219 older people, 33 others and eight organisations around Addis Ababa to find out what older people know about HIV/AIDS, its transmission and prevention, and its social, economic and psychological impact on older people.

Rights of older women

This research aims to document, from secondary sources, practices that violate the rights of older women in Ethiopia; highlight the proportion of cases that the Ethiopian Women Laws Association sees that relate to older women; explore reasons why older women do not access services; examine legal and customary redress; and provide recommendations for promoting paralegal services among older women and protecting and promoting the rights of older women.

Contact:

Peter Bofin, Programme Director, HelpAge International, PO Box 3384, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
Fax: +251 1 611563
Email: hai@telecom.net.et

HelpAge International is a global network of not-for-profit organisations with a mission to work with and for disadvantaged older people worldwide to achieve a lasting improvement in the quality of their lives.

Ageing and Development aims to raise awareness of the contribution, needs and rights of older people and to promote the development of laws and policies supporting older people. It is published three times a year by HelpAge International, with funding from Help the Aged (UK).

Copies are available in English and Spanish, free of charge on request to policy makers, programme planners and researchers. Please contact us with brief details of your work. If requesting multiple copies, please explain who these are for and how they will be distributed.

Ageing and Development is also available on the web at: <http://www.helpage.org>

Editor: Celia Till

HelpAge International
PO Box 32832
London N1 9ZN, UK

Tel: +44 20 7278 7778
Fax: +44 20 7713 7993
Email: hai@helpage.org

A&D email: ctill@helpage.org

Registered charity number: 288180

Regional centres

Africa
Email: helpage@net2000ke.com

Asia-Pacific
Email: hai@helpageasia.com
<http://www.helpageasia.com>

Caribbean
Email: helpage@cwjamaica.com

East and Central Europe
Email: chall@helpage.org

Latin America
Email: helpage.bolivia@unete.com

Any parts of this publication may be reproduced for non-profit purposes unless indicated otherwise. Please clearly credit *Ageing and Development* and send us a copy of the reprinted article.

Designed by TRUE. Printed on recycled paper by Palmers Print.

ISSN 1466-1616

Front cover photo: Jenny Matthews/Network