

# Ageing and Development

News and analysis of issues affecting the lives of older people

Issue 18 July 2005



Hawaya, a widow, has been living on her own in a camp near El Geniena, West Darfur since her house was burnt down by the Janjaweed.

## Isolation in Darfur

**The continuing crisis in Darfur highlights the devastating effect of internal conflict on older people when traditional support systems are taken away.**

The United Nations estimates that there are nearly two million internally displaced people in Darfur, Sudan. More than 700,000 are living in camps in West Darfur. About 10 per cent of these are older people.

Tensions over access to land have existed in the region for decades. But since 2003, the situation has steadily escalated into armed conflict. Many people have fled to other countries or to camps supported by humanitarian agencies. Research by HelpAge International shows that older people in camps live in chronic poverty, feel neglected and are often isolated.

Before the conflict, older people were taken care of by community support mechanisms. Those with disabilities were supported by family members and neighbours. Older

people usually had status and financial security, through assets such as land.

Now, approximately 50 per cent of all older people in the camps live alone. Almost 40 per cent are widows, who complain that reduced social contact makes them feel invisible at times.

Some older people have lost sons and daughters in the conflict. Around a third care for orphaned children, not always related.

Sixty-five year old Muhammad, who lives in Mornei camp with his grandson, is blind. As a sheikh in his home village he was a respected man. Now he begs for food and money in the market, selling the food to pay school fees.

Opportunities for older men to earn money through casual work are limited, resulting in low self-esteem.

Disability stops some older people from getting aid. Those unable to get to registration centres

frequently miss out on food and health programmes.

HelpAge International has been working in West Darfur since July 2004 and has set up older people's committees in five camps. Committee members identify vulnerable older people through home visits. Older people are also targeted with appropriate aid such as fuel-efficient stoves.

Susan Erb, HelpAge International's programme manager in Darfur says: 'Older people have been left without any support by the Darfur crisis. They are in danger of becoming the most marginalised group in Darfur unless humanitarian agencies specifically target them.'

**Health and nutrition assessment of older people - West Darfur**  
*HelpAge International, February 2005*

**Situation analysis report: West Darfur, Sudan**  
*HelpAge International and UNICEF, April 2005*

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## HelpAge International

Leading global action on ageing

# News round up

Developments that affect older people's quality of life

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## World Bank calls for pensions in poor countries

**A new report from the World Bank argues for social pensions as a means of alleviating old-age poverty in low-income countries.**

*Old age income support in the twentieth century draws on the*

World Bank's experience of working on pension reform in over 80 countries, many in the developing world.

The report recommends basic income security and poverty alleviation across the full breadth

of income distribution. This means that all countries should ensure that people with low lifetime incomes, or who only participate marginally in the formal economy, are provided with basic protection in old age.

The report calls for an additional 'zero pillar' in its multi-pillar framework, which would be non-contributory and take the form of a 'social pension' providing a minimum level of protection. This would complement other 'pillars' of the framework, including those that in various ways provide for pre-funded contributory pensions.

The report makes the economic and social policy case for pension reform and provides a detailed discussion of reform options as well as design and implementation issues. It defines the conditions for adequate, affordable, robust and sustainable pension systems. It spells out some of the major questions relating to the process of pension reform, which are particularly relevant in poor countries where there may be intense competition for scarce resources.

HelpAge International welcomes the report. 'The report is timely in view of the growing interest in the potential of social protection mechanisms to reach the older poor,' says Mark Gorman, HelpAge International director of policy development.

Holzmann, R, Hinz R and World Bank staff, *Old age income support in the twentieth century: an international perspective on pensions systems and reform* World Bank, Washington DC, 2005  
[http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPENSIONS/Resources/Old\\_Age\\_Income\\_Support\\_Complete.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPENSIONS/Resources/Old_Age_Income_Support_Complete.pdf)



Hen du Plessis/HelpAge International

HelpAge International's report on the MDGs calls for older people's contribution to be acknowledged.

## Target the poorest, says special report

**The Millennium Development Goals commit the world to halving extreme poverty by 2015, but older people, who are among the poorest, are invisible in the targets and indicators.**

As preparations gather pace for the Millennium Summit review in New York this September, HelpAge International has published a special report, *MDGs must target poorest say older people*, distributed as a supplement to *A&D*.

The report argues that if the MDGs are to deliver fair and equitable development that reaches the very

poorest, an explicitly rights-based approach to poverty reduction is needed, in addition to greater financial commitment.

Specifically, the report calls for social protection measures, including social pensions, to be incorporated into poverty reduction strategies.

It also recommends disaggregation of poverty data by age and gender

as well as ethnicity and disability, and the acknowledgement of older women and men as effective agents of change and contributors to the MDGs.

**MDGs must target poorest say older people**

HelpAge International, 2005  
Available at: [www.helpage.org](http://www.helpage.org)

## Comment

### **Making poverty history for all**

The year 2005 is a watershed for development. Demands of G8 leaders meeting in Scotland in July include more and better aid, as well as debt relief and fair trade.

G7 finance ministers agreed in June to universal access to HIV treatment by 2010. The Millennium Summit in New York in September will affirm and renew global goals to eradicate poverty and deliver a safer and more equitable world for all.

But how will the poverty, insecurity and HIV/AIDS-related problems of older women and men, already

among the poorest and most excluded in the poorest of communities and nations, be taken into account? Their voices are still struggling to be heard. HIV/AIDS means they are the primary carers for increasing numbers of orphaned children – but support to them is still minimal and they have very limited access to treatment.

Better aid promises should benefit people of all ages. For older people, better aid means well-resourced and accessible social protection, including HIV/AIDS treatment. Cash transfers should be core elements of national poverty reduction strategies.

**Sylvia Beales** Policy Development Manager, HelpAge International

## Governments step up social protection

**Governments in three developing countries have announced allowances benefiting older people.**

The Government of Swaziland has set a precedent by receiving money from the Global Fund to support carers of orphans.

More than a third of adults in Swaziland are HIV-positive and 75,000 children have been left orphaned. The government has announced a monthly allowance of roughly US\$30 for 10,000 people caring for orphans. The vast majority of these are likely to be older women.

The Government of Bangladesh has announced an increase in the amount and extent of its old-age allowance.

From July 2005, the means-tested allowance, paid to very poor people aged 57 and over living in rural areas, will be raised from 165 taka (US\$2.60) to 180 taka (US\$2.83) per month. Coverage will be extended from just over 1.3 million to 1.5 million people.

The Government of St Lucia has raised its public assistance payment, which for older people is a form of non-contributory pension.

The amount went up from \$60.00 (US\$22) to \$85.00 (US\$323) per month from June 2005. However, it remains the lowest in the Eastern Caribbean.

## Child poverty report highlights older carers' role

**A new report on child poverty highlights the interdependency of different generations within a household.**

In developing countries, 30,000 children die every day and 183 million are malnourished.

*Achieving our dreams for 2015* calls on world leaders to listen carefully to children, young people and their carers, many of whom are older people, if child poverty is to end.

The report, published by the Grow Up Free from Poverty Coalition of 21 UK-based NGOs, faith groups and civil society organisations, is based on consultations with more than 4,000 poor children and their

older carers in 18 developing countries.

It points out that older people and children in their care are at most risk of chronic poverty.

It proposes a new approach to poverty reduction that is intergenerational and multi-sectoral, and takes forward the rights of children and those that care for them.

**Achieving our dreams for 2015**  
*Grow Up Free from Poverty Coalition, 2005*  
[www.grow-up-free-from-poverty.org](http://www.grow-up-free-from-poverty.org)

# Older tsunami survivors call for support

**Six months after the Asian earthquake tsunami, an estimated one million people are still displaced and struggling to rebuild their lives.**

The disaster hit those who were already poor the hardest. Many were older people, who lost their houses, livelihoods and support networks. A study by HelpAge International in India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Thailand shows that nearly 93,000 older people have been displaced in these countries.

Before the tsunami, older people in coastal villages worked in a range of formal or informal employment, such as labourers, fishing or supporting industries, trading, farming, market vending or in small businesses, often family-owned.

Older people who lost their livelihoods are calling for support to restore them. In Sri Lanka, Kanagasooriyam, 60, a goldsmith, needs to replace the tools he lost to restart work. Seller, 73, wants

to start a bicycle repair shop. Arukanapathipillai, 66, a fisherman and bicycle repairer, who lost his wife and daughter, is hoping for help to start working again.

Older people who lost sons and daughters on whom they depended for income now have to find a way to support themselves, and, in some cases, their grandchildren. Manikam Chinnapulla, 75, a widow in Sri Lanka who lived with her son and daughter's family, lost her son and son-in-law. 'Now we are only women here and we have lost everything,' she says. 'I am hoping that we can start a shop here and make a living that way.'

Some older people are benefiting from income security schemes. In the Indian state of Kerala, a fishermen's cooperative runs a pension scheme. Members contribute a nominal amount until the age of 60, after which they receive a monthly pension. This means that older fishermen who lost their belongings in the

tsunami at least have some assured income.

The study by HelpAge International shows that, despite being identified as a vulnerable group by the Sphere guidelines which set out minimum standards for disaster response, older people were not targeted for relief supplies and services in any of the camps studied.

'Older people's needs and contributions were clearly overlooked during the relief stage,' says Bill Gray, Emergencies Manager, HelpAge International. 'Those responsible for reconstruction and rehabilitation need to ensure they receive targeted support in future plans. Schemes such as the fishermen's pension in Kerala show how older people can be protected from losing everything in a disaster.'

**The impact of the Indian Ocean tsunami on older people: issues and recommendations**  
*HelpAge International, 2005*  
[www.helpage.org](http://www.helpage.org)



Manikam Chinnapulla with her daughter in Kalmunai, Sri Lanka.

# News round up

Developments that affect older people's quality of life

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Astrid Walker/HelpAge International



Older men discuss access to health services in Arusha, Tanzania.

Older people logged their experiences during hospital visits. The findings revealed that:

- 40 per cent said the tone of language used by medical staff was mocking
- 94 per cent were charged for the consultation
- 30 per cent were not aware of how to apply for free health care
- over a third had to wait four hours or more to see a doctor
- nearly half had to pay their own fare to get to the hospital.

As a result of negotiations between the Arusha Retired People's Association, a local councillor and the secretary of the health committee, all older people in Monduli district, Arusha were issued with letters to grant them access to free treatment.

HelpAge International supported the older people's groups as part of its older citizens monitoring project, funded by the UK Department for International Development. The project has also been running in Bangladesh, Bolivia, Kenya and Jamaica (see Profile on page 8).

## Spotlight on healthcare in Tanzania

**Groups of older people in northern Tanzania have found that medical staff in health centres often treat them disrespectfully.**

In one district, however, older people have lobbied successfully for their local government to grant them their entitlement to free health care.

Government policy is for all vulnerable people aged over 60 to be exempt from paying fees for government health services. However, implementation of this policy is patchy.

Older people's committees were set up in Arusha with support from the Arusha Retired People's Association and HelpAge

International. They received training in gathering and analysing information on health services.

Older people's key concerns were quality of health care, cost of treatment and medicine, and distance to services. One older person was told by hospital staff, 'Go home, you are not ill, just old.'

## Older people enter into EU aid policy

**Older people are included for the first time in key documents guiding European Union development policy.**

The EU is the largest multilateral donor for developing countries: 50 per cent of aid comes from the EU and its member states combined. One-fifth of this aid is managed by the European Commission (EC), which also has the right to initiate policies in the area of development cooperation.

Older people are referred to in a communication from the European Commission that reflects the EU's thinking on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – *Speeding up progress towards the MDGs. The EU's contribution* (COM(2005)132 final), published in April 2005.

The communication has a section on social equity in Africa that mentions the benefits of local, decentralised development for older people's lives. 'Local development allows children and old people to have their place in the society. It creates a social safety net and limits on migration.'

In April 2005 the EC also, for the first time, acknowledged older people as carers of orphans and vulnerable children, and as a vulnerable group with regard to HIV/AIDS and TB, in its main policy document on poverty diseases – *A European programme for action to confront HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis through external action (2007-2011)* (COM(2005) 179 final).

The document suggests that strategies to tackle HIV/AIDS should include an 'age dimension', and reflect the crucial role that family and community-based care often plays.

Specifically, it acknowledges that older people, who have higher rates of TB infection (often undiagnosed), and who are also often left to take care of orphans and vulnerable children, may need support in the form of social protection or allowances.

Stronger EU commitments to involve and support older people by all EU poverty reduction policies and programmes are yet to be made, however, and have been requested on several occasions by the European Parliament.

Earlier this year, the *EU report on Millennium Development Goals 2000-2004* (SEC(2005) 456) also found that 'addressing the needs of the most affected and vulnerable groups – especially children, younger women and elderly' should be seen as additional priority actions in relation to MDG 6 to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and TB.

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[http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/index_en.htm)

## Diary

■ The world is ageing fast. Globally, the number of persons aged 60 years or over is expected almost to triple by 2050, to nearly 1.9 billion, according to the 2004 revision of the United Nations population estimates and projections. Whereas today, six out of ten older people live in developing countries, by 2050, eight out of ten will do so.

[www.un.org/esa/population/unpop.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/population/unpop.htm)

■ Small amounts of money can help older people improve their lives. A report from Zambia notes that older women receiving the government's pilot social cash transfer of about US\$7 a month (A&D16) have revived a traditional form of saving at one of the scheme's pay points. This enables each in turn to make a capital purchase (for example, a goat or clothes for their grandchildren).

Similarly, in Lesotho, three older women who receive the old-age pension of US\$22 a month, introduced last November, have formed a revolving loan scheme that they will use to build pit latrines (also see page 12).

■ Singapore's women are in a particularly vulnerable position in later life. This arises from lack of income over their lifetime, an old-age income security system that is not structured to include those who have not worked in formal

employment, lack of an adequate and inclusive healthcare financing mechanism that covers people who have not worked in formal employment, and a family situation that can no longer sustain its careng role for older relatives. These findings are in *Beyond youth: women growing older and poorer*, published by the Tsao Foundation and Association of Women for Action and Research (AWARE).

[www.tsaofoundation.org](http://www.tsaofoundation.org) or [www.aware.org.sg](http://www.aware.org.sg)

# Older people ease tension in Kyrgyzstan

**Older people in southern Kyrgyzstan are helping to ease border tensions.**

The creation of a border between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan after the collapse of the Soviet Union has divided communities and hindered access to resources such as farmland, water supplies and public services. Competition for resources has exacerbated tensions between communities on either side of the border.

Over the past few months, groups of older people in Djalal-Abad and Osh oblasts in southern Kyrgyzstan have volunteered as mediators.

In one village in Djalal-Abad, a group of older people has organised roundtable discussions with representatives of two villages in Uzbekistan, helping to improve

relations and encouraging people from different communities to mix socially at festivals.

In another village, a group of retired militia with experience of working in border areas has trained younger police and customs officers in conflict awareness.

Another group has organised meetings with local government representatives to address violations of the rights of the Uzbek minority in southern Kyrgyzstan.

'Whereas younger people are more likely to regard people across the border as enemies, older people remember what the situation was like before the collapse of the Soviet Union. They still have contact with people from these communities, and they realise that they share many of the

same problems,' says Catherine Hine of HelpAge International's Central Asia programme.

The older people's groups have been supported by Kyrgyz NGOs,

UMUT and Foundation for Tolerance International, and HelpAge International, with funding from EC TACIS IBP Programme.



A group of older men from different ethnic backgrounds in Kyrgyzstan.

## Support systems in Laos

**A study of traditional approaches to older people's wellbeing has been carried out in northern Lao PDR.**

The study, a partnership between HelpAge International, the Lao Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Lao Red Cross and Lao Women's Union, used participatory methodology to seek

the views of older people and other community members in six villages in Luang Prabang and Luang Namtha provinces.

Researchers looked at perceptions of poverty, old age and vulnerability; provincial, district and community profiles; health issues; livelihoods; social, cultural, and spiritual aspects of older

people's wellbeing; support systems for older people; and gender and ethnic considerations.

In all six villages, support systems for older people were found to consist of family and community only. Families assist with care, food and medicine when elders are ill. Communities often assist families when elders are sick. Lending rice is a common practice during these times. In rare cases

where an older person has no family nearby, the community may be the only source of support.

Older people added that the community assists them to observe traditional practices and rituals.

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# Briefing

Analysis of current topics in ageing

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## Views from Africa on social protection

**Social protection, including cash transfers, is being recommended as an effective way to deliver aid to the poorest. The question is: are donors willing to invest? Sylvia Beales discusses the views of donors and African governments.**

High on the agenda of the G8 Summit in Scotland in July 2005 is the response of the rich world to the crippling, persistent poverty and disempowerment of the poor world. The call for more and better aid for the world's poorest people will also be the centre-piece of the July-December 2005 UK presidency of the European Union.

In May 2005, European Union member states announced a doubling of aid by 2010 to reach the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of GDP. How this aid will reach the poorest will also be discussed in the UN member states' review of the Millennium Summit in New York in September 2005.

Africa is a special focus of attention at these events. On the table are a package of proposals developed by the Commission for Africa, a team of 17 high-ranking academics, politicians and serving ministers, nine of whom are African.

The Commission's report, *Our common interest*,<sup>1</sup> places action on the poorest at its heart, calling for 'investment in people'. This means not only increasing aid to Africa by US\$50 billion a year by 2015, but also developing social protection strategies, including cash transfers, in all African countries by 2007.

Donors are asked to support the African Union's NEPAD programme to develop a rights and inclusion framework, and to support countries to develop social protection strategies. Commissioners are calling for long-term and predictable funding for social protection, with the allocation of US\$2 billion funding immediately, rising to US\$5-6 billion by 2015.



A survey shows African governments recognise the importance of social protection for their older and younger vulnerable citizens.

Henri du Plessis/HelpAge International

HelpAge International consulted widely with its network in Africa on core issues for the Commission for Africa, and input evidence regularly to the commissioners. Older women and men highlighted the urgent need for better governance and equitable social protection, including regular cash transfers.

### Potential of cash transfers

Recommendations from these consultations are echoed in a survey by HelpAge International and Development Initiatives on the attitudes of African governments, regional institutions (including the African Union and NEPAD), donors and multilateral agencies to social protection and cash transfers.<sup>2</sup>

The main finding was that African governments and regional institutions all recognised the importance of social protection for their older and younger vulnerable

citizens, and the potential role of cash transfers within an integrated social protection framework.

In particular, they recognised that social protection, in the form of child and foster care grants, school support programmes and social pensions for older carers, could be an effective mechanism to support households dealing with poverty and HIV/AIDS.

### Constraints and concerns

Another key finding was agreement on barriers to implementing social protection programmes. Foremost among these is the fact that social welfare ministries responsible for social protection, with the exception of South Africa, receive little support from governments or from donors.

Although poor people, when asked, are calling for better social services and for social protection to help them access these services, poor financing to date of social protection

programmes, together with poor targeting, has compromised citizens' belief in their governments' commitment to social protection. This in turn weakens the effectiveness of existing social protection programmes.

Survey respondents also commented on constraints caused by donors' differing definitions of social protection. Some donors see social protection primarily as a response to extreme vulnerability, while others regard it as a mechanism to 'put people at the centre' in development. These discrepancies may be hampering discussions on the place and funding of social protection in development policy.

The survey also highlighted concerns about the possible connection between corruption and social protection schemes. In view of this, there was a strong recommendation that the rollout of social protection, especially cash transfers, should be linked to sensitisation of recipients about their rights and entitlements, to enable them to monitor delivery. A clear synergy was noted between the desire by African governments and some donors to improve accountability between citizen and state, and the promotion of social protection.

### Pilot programmes

African governments and regional institutions are undertaking partnerships with a range of UN and government agencies, as well as NGOs, to test out affordability and implementation of social protection programmes.

The German development agency, GTZ, is supporting a social assistance scheme in Kalomo, Zambia. The International Labour Organization (ILO) is working with national governments, including Tanzania, to pilot and cost a range of social insurance and cash transfer schemes.

UNICEF is undertaking a survey with a number of partners, including HelpAge International and Save the Children UK, of the effect of cash

and material transfers on vulnerable children and their carers in sub-Saharan Africa.

Current African Union/NEPAD analysis on how to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Africa will consider the impact of social protection in reducing social exclusion. Some of the poorest African governments are already taking steps to establish universal schemes to target their older citizens (see box).

The UK Department for International Development has supported a range of social protection studies, including the HelpAge International and Development Initiatives survey, the compilation of a database on 'Social assistance in low income countries',<sup>3</sup> ILO surveys on financing, and a review by the International Poverty Centre (IPC) of the impact of conditional cash transfers in Africa.<sup>4</sup>

The ILO is also undertaking a 'social security enquiry stocktake' across Africa to obtain up-to-date data comparable to that held on OECD countries. It hopes that this will support the development of social protection policies and programmes across the region.

#### Link with poverty reduction

The HelpAge International and Development Initiatives survey reviewed comparative studies of the impact and cost of conditional cash and material transfers (dependent on school attendance, for example), and food transfers, as opposed to universal 'social' cash transfers. A number of studies already show that cash transfers are more sustainable and cost-effective than food transfers. The IPC study argues that conditional cash transfers need to be pitched at a relatively high level in relation to GDP to be of real value to poverty reduction and MDG achievement.

The HelpAge International and Development Initiatives survey emphasised again the need to link social protection strategies with

poverty reduction plans. African governments and institutions agreed that properly funded social protection programmes would come about only when donors and recipient governments developed consistent policies and costing approaches, which were integrated into poverty reduction policies.

#### Donor opinion

Despite donor emphasis on 'country ownership' of aid programmes, the survey highlighted how influential donor opinion is on the form that development aid takes. Donors may still be having an undue influence on the outcomes of national poverty consultations and related budget support processes.

Concrete action to reduce extreme poverty among the poorest groups may be more subject to donor opinion than we care to think.

It will be important for the Millennium Summit to consider honestly why the MDG Project has failed to reach the world's poorest people. Approaches to reaching the poorest will only have the remotest chance of success if there is political will and courage to follow through. Giving social protection the profile and funding it requires to target the poorest across all age groups, abilities and ethnic origins involves such political will and courage.

*Sylvia Beales is Policy Development Manager, HelpAge International.*

1. *Our common interest*, Commission for Africa, 2005, [www.commissionforafrica.org](http://www.commissionforafrica.org)

2. Beales S and German T, *Situation analysis of social protection and cash transfers in Africa*, HelpAge International with Development Initiatives, 2005

3. Barrientos A and Smith R, *Social assistance in low income countries database*, Institute of Development Policy and Management, University of Manchester, February 2005

4. Kakwani N, Soares F et al., *Conditional cash transfers in African countries*, International Poverty Centre (IPC), Brasilia, March 2005

#### Social protection schemes in Africa

- Lesotho introduced a social pension for 70-year-olds and older in November 2004, at a cost of approximately 2 per cent of GDP (US\$22 per month per recipient, with 62,000 registered to date).
- The Tanzania government is exploring the cost and delivery of cash transfers, after identifying social protection and transfers to the poorest as a goal in its revised poverty reduction strategy, published in 2005.
- Zambia's forthcoming national social protection strategy has cash transfers as a core element.
- Rwanda has established a social protection unit in its Ministry of Local Administration, Good Governance and Social Affairs. Programmes include a cash-for-work scheme funded by the European Union and a Fund for Genocide Survivors providing school fees and access to healthcare for children of survivors.
- Swaziland announced a budget of US\$4.9 million for 'social welfare' grants to older people in April 2005. It intends to complete a database on older people to support the payments system by July 2005, and an integrated package of support to older people by 2006. Older carers of orphans and vulnerable children now receive regular cash transfers with funding from the Global Fund.
- Social protection, though not necessarily cash transfers, is identified as a key theme in the poverty reduction strategies of Ethiopia, Mozambique and Uganda.
- Cash transfers for identified groups form part of nationally-funded government policy in Botswana, Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia and South Africa.
- Ghana envisages 'mainstreaming the needs of the vulnerable and excluded into general public policy', including expanding the social security scheme.
- Kenya's poverty reduction strategy advocates a focus on the poorest and most vulnerable, especially through healthcare and education.

#### What is social protection?

Social protection is defined by the ILO as 'the provision of benefits to households and individuals through public or collective arrangements to protect against low or declining living standards'.

Social protection measures include basic education and healthcare, child and foster care grants, school support programmes, cash and food transfers, and social and contributory pension schemes. For older people, pensions are a key element of social protection systems.

HelpAge International uses the term 'social pension' to describe regular, non-contributory cash transfers.<sup>5</sup>

5. *Age and security: how social pensions can deliver effective aid to poor older people and their families*, HelpAge International, 2004

#### 'Make Poverty History' for older people

Make Poverty History is a 2005 campaign by UK-based NGOs, trade unions and faith groups for trade justice, debt cancellation, and more and better aid to Africa.

HelpAge International and Help the Aged are calling specifically to Make Poverty History for Older People, advocating cash transfers to the poorest and most vulnerable older women and men in Africa, as a cost-effective way to tackle long-term, extreme poverty.

[www.makepovertyhistory.org](http://www.makepovertyhistory.org)

# Profile

Taking older people's interests forward

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Simeon Lewis, member of a senior citizens club in rural Jamaica, takes the microphone at a meeting with government representatives.

Neil Cooper/HelpAge International

## Raising rights in Jamaica

**In Jamaica, the St Catherine Community Development Agency is helping to bring grassroots experience into government thinking. Celia Till describes how.**

About twenty older men and women are gathered for a meeting in a church building. The discussion revolves around social security benefits. Most of those present have registered for the government's income security scheme, but some have not yet received any benefits. Some have tried to register for a subsidised drugs scheme but been turned down because they do not have the necessary documentation.

These men and women are members of a senior citizens club in rural Jamaica, who have added advocacy to their craftwork and social activities, with support from

a local NGO, the St Catherine Community Development Agency (SACDA).

Living conditions in the rural areas of St Catherine are difficult, especially for older people. Most have worked as subsistence farmers or casual labourers and very few receive pensions. With high unemployment, few can rely on their children for financial support.

Long distances to towns and lack of subsidised public transport make services hard to reach. Government social assistance programmes provide an important safety net.

SACDA has been working in three communities in the Parish of St Catherine since 1993, supporting a range of integrated community development activities, including children's rights clubs, parent education, support to small businesses, health promotion, skills training and career guidance.

Its director, Nellie Richards, a former social worker for the Ministry of Security and Social Justice, seems to know everybody in the community, and is as much at ease talking with a group of young men by the roadside as mingling with ministry officials.

### Health a priority

SACDA began working directly with older people in 1996. Health was an immediate priority. 'More than 90 per cent of the older people in the community were unwell,' says Nellie Richards. 'Some had not seen a doctor for three years.' SACDA arranged for a doctor to see older people at a local clinic and make home visits. 'It was one of the best projects in terms of impact – once people felt better, they could participate in community activities and do more for themselves.'

SACDA has established senior citizens clubs in three communities in St Catherine. With a total membership of around 200, the clubs are a vehicle for improving health and nutrition, providing material and financial assistance, supporting craft training, vegetable gardening and poultry rearing, and for social activities.

### Promoting community action

Underlying all SACDA's work is a commitment to participation, self-reliance and sustainable development. Since 2003, SACDA has been supporting an older citizens monitoring project, in which older people monitor their access to three government social assistance programmes – a small cash benefit for poor households and two subsidised drugs schemes – and raise their voices with policy makers.

Elected leaders in each community visit older people in their neighbourhood to talk about the programmes, find out who is accessing them and what problems they are having. They bring their findings to club meetings and agree how to follow up – for example, by visiting pharmacies to encourage them to participate in the subsidised drugs scheme and petitioning the Ministry of Labour and Social Security to speed up registration.

SACDA organised bulk registration for one of the subsidised drugs schemes after older people drew attention to problems.

### Negotiating with government

In February 2005, older people spoke direct to government representatives at a meeting in the capital, Kingston, highlighting reasons why the programmes were failing to reach many older people in rural areas. Older people have also used skills developed with support from SACDA to advocate on other issues, such as the poor state of the roads and distribution of inputs in the wake of Hurricane Ivan in September 2004.

The project has also helped to raise the profile of SACDA nationally. 'It is providing the kind of feedback necessary for effective policy formulation,' says Jenny Jones of the government's social policy evaluation team, JASPEV. JASPEV has invited SACDA onto the consultation panel for developing indicators to track progress towards goals relating to older people.

And the future for older people? 'Our biggest priority is to continue to educate older people and sensitise them about their rights, because it is paying dividends,' says Nellie Richards.

*The older citizens monitoring project is supported by HelpAge International with funding from the UK Department for International Development.*

### More information:

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# Talking point

Understanding older people's experience

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## Mainstreaming ageing in Uganda

**The Ugandan Government is acting on its commitment under the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing to mainstream ageing issues into development policy. Mandy Heslop describes how.**

It is now three years since 159 governments signed up to the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. At the heart of this plan is the recognition that older people everywhere have a right to participate fully in, and benefit from, development processes.

To achieve this, older people's needs and contributions must be recognised and integrated across all sectors of government policy. Moreover, the plan links its recommendations to the Millennium Development Goals, committing governments to including older people in strategies contributing to the global goal of halving extreme poverty.

Translating these intentions into reality is a huge challenge, but the responsibility for this is shared by civil society organisations, governments, and international agencies alike. The United Nations General Assembly has endorsed a 'bottom-up' approach to review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan, which recognises the need for older people and civil society groups to participate in shaping government policy and programmes.

### Innovative partnership

In 2003, an innovative partnership came together in Uganda, to promote mainstreaming of ageing in government policy. The partners included the Uganda Reach the Aged Association (URAA), HelpAge International's Africa Regional Development Centre, and members of the Government of Uganda.

The programme was launched during a stakeholder meeting in

which government and NGO representatives presented research on the situation of older people and considered ways of integrating ageing issues across all policy areas.

To carry out the work, a 12-member cross-ministerial working group was formed from the Ministries of Health; Gender, Labour and Social Development; Agriculture; and critically, Finance and Economic Planning, as well as the two NGO partners. During the first working group meeting, members agreed a one-year workplan.

An early task was a detailed review of policies and sector plans, identifying opportunities for greater inclusion of older people. A key document was the Uganda Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), which outlines the overall policy framework and budget priorities.

The PEAP identifies older people among vulnerable groups to be targeted through social protection, and recognises their role as carers of people with HIV/AIDS and of orphans and vulnerable children. On the other hand, the HIV/AIDS plans and programmes lack interventions to support older carers.

For most of the group it was the first time they had analysed the national policy response to ageing, and, for many, the first time they had considered policies outside their own departments. The working group member from the Ministry of Finance was simultaneously working on a revision of the PEAP, and was able to feed the analysis into that process.

Later in the year, experienced researchers within the working group led a survey on the health and socio-economic situation of older people in six districts of Uganda. District-level research was divided between the group members, who trained and led a small team of local researchers in each district. After two months, the working group reconvened to collate findings and plan dissemination activities.

### Raised awareness

The cross-sectoral representation generated learning within the group and raised awareness of how issues of ageing impact in every sector of policy. In particular, awareness of older people as a vulnerable group has been raised within the Ministry of Finance through the presence of a ministry representative on the working group.

The Ministry of Agriculture's five-year strategic plan includes older people as a target group.

The Ministry of Health's draft five-year strategic plan has a section on the health care of older people.

Relationships are also being developed with organisations that have not previously prioritised older people in their programming, including the World Food Programme and UNICEF.

### Success factors

This was an impressively motivated team of senior people with heavy workloads of their own. The team was formed as a result of a long collaboration between

the NGOs and a champion within the Ministry of Health, who, understanding the need for integrated approaches, provided further contacts.

Several factors contributed to the success of this group. Members were able to plan time for the working group in advance, and endorsement by the respective ministries of their participation was granted at the beginning of the programme. Moreover their time was valued through payment of honoraria.

### Key success factors included:

- Time taken to establish good contacts
- Cross-section of departments represented
- Programme located within the government, not NGO
- Working group had secretarial support
- Time planned ahead and resources available to undertake tasks
- Team of champions developed within government to continue mainstreaming work
- Track record and credibility of NGO partners.

*Mandy Heslop is Research and Training Manager, HelpAge International.*

### More information:

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Email: dbusolo@helpage.co.ke*

**'Focusing on the aged will tap their experience, target resources to them and give them a sense of hope as an important group of society.'**

*Uganda Ministry of Agriculture's five-year plan*

# Resources

New publications, websites, conferences and courses

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## Journal 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](mailto:ctill@helpage.org)

### National

Actual and de facto childlessness in old age: evidence and implications from East Java, Indonesia

Schroeder-Butterfill E and Kreager P, *Population and Development Review* 31:1, March 2005

Growing old in St. Lucia: expectations and experiences in a Caribbean village  
Kelly L, *J. Cross Cultural Gerontology* 20:1, March 2005

Ageing in the shadow of the law: the case of elder guardianship in Israel  
Doron I, *J. Aging and Social Policy* 16:4, 2004

Receipt of assistance and extended family residence among elderly men in Mexico  
De Vos S, Solis P and De Oca V M, *Int. J. Aging and Human Development* 58:1, 2004, pp. 1-27

Older persons of Ghana  
Chuku J, *Bold* 15:1, November 2004

South African doctors and elderly patients  
Ferreira M, *Bold* 15:1, November 2004

Disease and disability burden of elderly women in India  
Goyal R S, *Bold* 15:1, November 2004

Older women in India: a case of multiple jeopardies  
Datta A, *Bold* 15:2, February 2005

Ageing in Nigeria: blessing or curse?  
Makinwa M, *Bold* 15:2, February 2005

The elderly of Indonesia: current policy and programmes  
Abikusno N, *Bold* 15:2, February 2005

### International

Global aging: the challenge of success. How population ageing will challenge all countries  
Kinsella K and Phillips D R, *Population Bulletin, Population Reference Bureau, 2005*  
[www.prb.org/pdf05/60.1GlobalAging.pdf](http://www.prb.org/pdf05/60.1GlobalAging.pdf)

Ageing and development  
Forsyth D, *Age and Ageing* 34:1, January 2005

A 'new' general theory of population ageing  
Michel J-P, *The Geneva Papers* 29:4, October 2004

### Social security

Pension reform in the EU accession countries: challenges, achievements and pitfalls

Fultz E, *International Social Security Review* 57:2, April 2004

Reality and challenges of pension schemes in Tunisia

Houssi C, *International Social Security Review* 58:1, January 2005

Long term care policy for functionally dependent older people in the Republic of Korea

Sunwoo D, *International Social Security Review* 57:2, 2004

Preferences for Korean seniors' housing

Lee E and Gibler K M, *J. Property Investment and Finance* 22:1, 2004

Long-term care policy for the elderly in the Zaporozhye region of Ukraine: a case study of social development following the collapse of Communism  
Palley H A and Romanenkova L A, *J. Aging and Social Policy* 16:3, 2004

Chronic poverty and social protection  
Barrantes A and Hulme D (eds), *European J. Development Research* 17:1 (special issue), March 2005  
[www.chronicpoverty.org/Publications.htm](http://www.chronicpoverty.org/Publications.htm) (subscribers only)

Economic security for older women in India  
Asharaf A, *Bold* 15:2, February 2005

The impact of adult mortality on the living arrangements of older people in rural South Africa

Hosegood V and Timæus I, *Ageing and Society* 25:3, May 2005, pp. 431-444

Older aged parents: the final safety net for adult sons and daughters with AIDS in Thailand

Knodel J and Saengtienchai C, *J. Family Issues* 26:5, July 2005, pp. 665-698

### Labour force

Ageing and employment policies; Czech Republic  
OECD, *Source OCDE Finance et Investissement* 2004:16, July 2004

OECD economic surveys Czech Republic: immigration policy: addressing the needs of an ageing labour force  
OECD, *OECD Economic Surveys* 2004:17, January 2005

### Cross-cultural

The volunteer and the Sanyasin: archetypes of retirement in India and America

Savishinsky J, *Int. J. Aging and Human Development* 59:1, 2004

Linkages between migration and the care of frail older people: observations from Greece, Ghana and the Netherlands

Van der Geest S, Mul A and Vermeulen H, *Ageing and Society* 24, May 2004, pp. 431-450

### Research in Africa

Special issue of *Generations Review*, 15:2, April 2005:

Research on ageing in Africa: the need to forge directions  
Aboderin I

30 years of African research on ageing: history, achievements and challenges for the future  
Apt N

Exploring the links between old age and poverty in Anglophone West Africa: evidence from Nigeria and Ghana

Ogwumike F O and Aboderin I

Researching the impact of the AIDS epidemic on older-age parents in Africa: lessons from studies in Thailand  
Knodel J

Racial differences in marital status and living arrangements of older persons in South Africa  
Mba C

Research on ageing in Africa: what do we have, not have and should we have?  
Ferreira M

Research capacity on ageing in Africa: limitations and ways forward  
Gachuhi J M and Kiemo K

Research and the formulation and implementation of ageing policy in Africa: the case of Nigeria  
Asagba A

The role of research in the work of HelpAge International in Africa  
Nhongo T

## Reports

*Old-age income support in the 21st century: an international perspective on pension systems and reform*  
Holzmann R, Hinz R and World Bank staff, *World Bank*, May 2005  
See news item on page 2

Ageing and poverty in Africa and the role of social pensions

Kakwani N and Subbarao K, *Africa Human Development, World Bank*, March 2005

[www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2005/05/03/000160016\\_20050503103912/Rendered/PDF/321780white0co1udy0P08313601public1.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2005/05/03/000160016_20050503103912/Rendered/PDF/321780white0co1udy0P08313601public1.pdf)

Government old age allowances as a social pension for the rural poor and vulnerable older people in Bangladesh

Khan A H and Gorman M, *HelpAge International*, April 2005

Email: [mgorman@helpage.org](mailto:mgorman@helpage.org)

## MDGs must target poorest say older people

Supplement to *Ageing and Development*



The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) cannot be used to help the poorest people in the world. The goal of halving extreme poverty by 2015 is unrealistic for the poorest people in the world. The MDGs are not designed to help the poorest people in the world. The MDGs are not designed to help the poorest people in the world. The MDGs are not designed to help the poorest people in the world.

They are often the most difficult to reach in the world, the poorest and the most vulnerable. They are often the most difficult to reach in the world, the poorest and the most vulnerable. They are often the most difficult to reach in the world, the poorest and the most vulnerable.

HelpAge International  
[www.helpage.org](http://www.helpage.org)

MDGs must target poorest say older people

*HelpAge International*, 2005

See news item on page 2

Do children act as old age security in rural India?: evidence from an analysis of elderly living arrangements

Pal S, *Cardiff Business School*, 2004

Coping without children: comparative historical and cross-cultural perspectives. The role childlessness can play in the social exclusion of the elderly

Kreager P  
[www.ageing.ox.ac.uk/publications/papers/oa%20wp%20104.pdf](http://www.ageing.ox.ac.uk/publications/papers/oa%20wp%20104.pdf)

Rural parents with urban children: social and economic implications of migration on the rural elderly in Thailand

Knodel J and Saengtienchai C, *Population Studies Center, University of Michigan, Institute for Social Research*, 2005  
[www.psc.isr.umich.edu/pubs/pdf/r05-574.pdf](http://www.psc.isr.umich.edu/pubs/pdf/r05-574.pdf)

Czech welfare state: changing environment, changing institutions  
 Potucek M et al., *Center for Social and Economic Strategies, Czech Republic*, 2004  
[http://ceses.cuni.cz/downloads/studie/sesit04-07\\_potucek.pdf](http://ceses.cuni.cz/downloads/studie/sesit04-07_potucek.pdf)

Pension reform: how macroeconomics may help microeconomics – the Czech case: how to reform pensions: a win-win scenario  
 Schneider O et al., *Institute for Social and Economic Analyses, Czech Republic*, 2004

Between thriving and decline: the Jewish people 2004. Preserving Jewishness for the future  
 Jewish People Policy Planning Institute, Israel (2005)  
[www.jpippi.org.il/downloads/2004\\_Annual\\_Assessment.pdf](http://www.jpippi.org.il/downloads/2004_Annual_Assessment.pdf)

Labour force withdrawal of the elderly in South Africa: the old age pension helps lift many older South Africans out of the most extreme forms of poverty  
 Lam D et al., *Development Policy Research Unit (DPRU), University of Cape Town, South Africa*, 2004

Non-contributory pensions and poverty reduction in Brazil and South Africa  
 Barrientos A, *IDPM, Manchester*, 2005  
[www.eldis.org/static/DOC17786.htm](http://www.eldis.org/static/DOC17786.htm)

The state of aging and health in Latin America and the Caribbean: health statistics and service provision for the elderly in Latin America and the Caribbean  
 Merck Institute of Aging and Health; PAHO, 2004  
[www.miahonline.org/resources/reports](http://www.miahonline.org/resources/reports)

Ageing and employment policies: Korea  
 OECD, Keese M, *Reforming the employment situation of the elderly in Korea, 2004:18, October 2004*

World population prospects: the 2004 revision highlights  
 Department of Economic and Social Affairs  
[www.un.org/esa/population/publications/WPP2004/2004Highlights\\_finalrevised.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/WPP2004/2004Highlights_finalrevised.pdf)

World demographic trends: report of the Secretary General  
 UN-NGLS, *Overview of major global demographic trends, 2005*  
[www.un-ngls.org/World demographic trends - N0463983.pdf](http://www.un-ngls.org/World%20demographic%20trends%20-%20N0463983.pdf)

Dynamics of population ageing: how can Asia Pacific respond?  
 Section of Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific, UNESCAP, 2005  
[www.unescap.org/pdd/publications/survey2005/index.asp](http://www.unescap.org/pdd/publications/survey2005/index.asp)

Population ageing in the Caribbean: an inventory of policies, programmes and future challenges  
 UN ECLAC, 2004  
 (LC/CAR/G.772/Corr.1)

#### Union for African Population Studies reports

The challenge of ageing for social security in South Africa: challenges to social assistance in South Africa  
 Samson M, 2004

Policy and programmatic measures taken to meet the needs of the elderly: Africa's response to a budding challenge  
 Sembajwe I, 2004

The changing role of older people in African households and the impact of ageing on African family structures  
 Nhongo T M, 2004  
[www.uaps.org/confageing/tavengwa.pdf](http://www.uaps.org/confageing/tavengwa.pdf)

The erosion of traditional forms of care for the elderly and its implication for the elderly in Nigeria  
 Okoye U O, *Department of Social Work, University of Nigeria, Enugu*, 2005

## Conference papers

Proceedings of Asia-Oceania Regional Congress of Gerontology and the International Association of Gerontology: Partners in Gerontology Information Exchange and Networking  
 Gutman G, *Geriatrics and Gerontology International 4:sl, September 2004*

Precarious classes, neo-liberal globalization and older women  
 Targ H, Targ D and Cormier C, *Purdue University and West Virginia University, Paper from Center for Global Justice (Mexico) 2005 Conference on Women and Globalization*  
[www.GlobalJusticeCenter.org](http://www.GlobalJusticeCenter.org)

Social protection in old age: a Bolivian case study  
 Skinner E, *University College London and Oxford Institute of Ageing, paper for Social Policy Conference, Oxford, 15 June 2005*

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Terms behind pensions discussion: definition of terms used in pension systems  
 World Bank, 2005  
[www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)

National archive of computerized data on ageing (NACDA): database of bibliographic citations of publications on ageing  
 Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, USA  
[www.icps.umich.edu/NACDA](http://www.icps.umich.edu/NACDA)

Towards age-friendly primary health care  
 Set of principles published by the World Health Organization to provide better care for older people  
[www.who.int/hpr/ageing/af\\_report.pdf](http://www.who.int/hpr/ageing/af_report.pdf)  
 Email: ageing@who.ch

## CD-Rom

Preparing for China's ageing challenge: the demographics and economics of retirement policy in the 21st century  
 Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2005  
 Email: knakashima@csis.org

## Events

Ageing with Dignity – New Challenges – New Possibilities – New Solutions  
 International Psychogeriatric Association 12th Congress  
 20-24 September 2005, Stockholm, Sweden  
 Symposia include 'Challenges of ageing research in low-income countries'  
 Email: Stockholm2005@ipa-online.org  
[www.ipa-online.org/ipaonline3/home/default.asp](http://www.ipa-online.org/ipaonline3/home/default.asp)

World Ageing and Generations Congress  
 29 September-1 October 2005  
 St Gallen, Switzerland  
[www.viva50plus.org/startup\\_e.htm](http://www.viva50plus.org/startup_e.htm)

Mainstreaming Ageing in Health Systems and Rural Development  
 International Conference organised by PHILL Project: BRAC, Bangladesh; Health Strategy and Policy Institutet, Vietnam; Karolinska Institute, Sweden; University of East Anglia, UK  
 28-30 November, 2005, Dhaka, Bangladesh  
[www.phillproject.net/events.htm](http://www.phillproject.net/events.htm)

Global Ageing: Ageing Together  
 8th Global Conference of the International Federation on Ageing  
 30 May to 2 June 2006, Copenhagen, Denmark  
 The conference will stress that ageing is both a global phenomenon and a global responsibility  
 Themes: economics of ageing; opportunities of ageing; active ageing – ageing well; empowerment – participation  
 Secretariat: ICS A/S Copenhagen  
 Tel: +45 3946 0500  
 Fax: +45 3946 0515  
 Email: global-ageing@ics.d

## Course

Demographic aspects of population ageing and its implications for socio-economic development, policies and plans  
 7-18 November 2005  
 Closing date for registration: 31 July 2005  
 International Institute on Ageing, 117 St Paul Street, Valletta, VLT 07, Malta



Antonie Omos/HelpAge International

A PAHO report focuses on ageing and health in Latin America.

# Research update

Major new projects

12



Jon Bugger/HelpAge International

Pervasive poverty affects older people in Cambodia.

## Urban migration in Thailand

Research from Thailand suggests that for many, probably most rural Thai older parents, the migration of children to urban areas contributes positively to their material wellbeing.

*Rural parents with urban children: social and economic implications of migration on the rural elderly in Thailand* by John Knodel and Chanpen Saengtienchai (PSC research report 05-574, April 2005) explores the circumstances under which the migration of rural adult children to urban areas takes place, with attention to how parents and their situation influence these decisions, and the consequences for the social and economic wellbeing of parents who remain behind in the rural areas after the children leave.

Negative impacts of migration on social support, defined in terms of maintaining contact and visits, have been attenuated by the advent of technological changes in communication and also by improvements in transportation. Phone contact, especially through mobile phones, is now pervasive, in sharp contrast to the situation 10 years earlier when it was extremely rare.

### Contact:

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Email: jknodel@umich.edu

The report can be downloaded from [www.psc.isr.umich.edu/pubs/current-abs.html](http://www.psc.isr.umich.edu/pubs/current-abs.html) or obtained from PSC Publications Population Studies Center at the address above.

## Impact of pensions in Lesotho

A pilot study of the impact of the old-age pension in Lesotho is to be carried out by the Institute of Southern African Studies, National University of Lesotho, part-funded by the university and HelpAge International.

In November 2004, the Lesotho Government introduced a universal pension of M150 (US\$22) a month to all citizens aged 70 or more. The pension represents around 1 per cent of national income, 3 per cent of government expenditure and 44 per cent of the health and social welfare budget.

The study, in the Roma Valley, will look at the short-term impact of the pension on the wellbeing of older people, changes in relationships within and between households, including whether family members have moved, changes in the status of pensioners, and changes in their expenditure. It will also look at whether pensions affect grandparents' willingness to care for orphans and other children affected by HIV/AIDS, and whether families put pressure on them to do so.

### Contact:

Mark Gorman, Director of Policy Development, HelpAge International, PO Box 32832, London N1 9ZN, UK  
Email: mgorman@helpage.org

## Data for national policy in Zambia

Research into the social, economic, cultural and political situation of older people in Zambia is to be carried out with a view to developing a national policy on ageing.

The study, coordinated by HelpAge International with funding from the World Health Organization, will identify the livelihood strategies, needs and contributions of older people.

It will also identify social services available to older Zambians and consider how accessible these are. Special attention will be paid to older people's access to health services, and their role as carers in the context of HIV/AIDS.

The research will employ a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches including a literature review, a survey of older people and their families in selected households in some provinces, and interviews with other stakeholders.

### Contact:

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Email: mmunavu@helpage.co.ke

## Pervasive poverty in Cambodia

*Older persons in Cambodia: a profile from the 2004 survey of elderly* by John Knodel, Souvan Kiry Kim, Zachary Zimmer and Sina Puch (PSC research report 05-576, May 2005) provides a basic but comprehensive demographic, social, economic and health profile of Cambodia's older population, based on a survey of persons aged 60 and over in Phnom Penh and the five largest provinces.

More than two-fifths of the current generation of older people in Cambodia lost at least one child during the Khmer Rouge rule during 1975-79. Close to a quarter of older women lost a husband.

Given the lack of alternatives, Cambodian elders rely heavily on filial support, as indicated by high levels of co-residence and contributions of modest amounts of money and material goods from children.

Both the economic situation and health of Cambodian elders is generally unfavourable, reflecting the pervasive poverty and under-development of the country in general.

The report calls for greater recognition by the government and aid agencies of the needs and potential contribution of this 'important but hitherto largely ignored segment of the population'.

### Contact:

John Knodel (details above)  
[www.psc.isr.umich.edu/pubs/pdf/r05-576.pdf](http://www.psc.isr.umich.edu/pubs/pdf/r05-576.pdf)

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 twice a year by HelpAge International, with funding from Help the Aged (UK).

Copies are available 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 available on the web at: [www.helpage.org](http://www.helpage.org)

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## Regional centres

**Africa**  
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**Asia-Pacific**  
Email: [hai@helpageasia.com](mailto:hai@helpageasia.com)

**Caribbean**  
Email: [helpage@candw.lc](mailto:helpage@candw.lc)

**Eastern Europe and Central Asia**  
Email: [chine@helpage.org](mailto:chine@helpage.org)

**Latin America**  
Email: [info@helpagela.org](mailto:info@helpagela.org)

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