

Ageing and Development

News and analysis of issues affecting the lives of older people

Issue 6 July 2000



Coping in a crisis... new recommendations focus on recognising older people's role in emergencies and addressing their specific needs.

Action on older refugees

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees is working on a plan of action for older refugees, based on recommendations from HelpAge International.

These recommendations are now published as *Older people in Disasters and Humanitarian Crises: Guidelines for Best Practice*.

The guidelines aim to assist humanitarian agencies working with older people, suggesting practical ways to meet older people's needs and to recognise their potential in emergency situations.

The plan of action will be an important step towards addressing an issue that is critical to the welfare of refugees. The UNHCR estimates that on average, 10 per cent of refugees in humanitarian crises are over 60 years old. In some cases, the proportion can rise as high as 30 per cent. The majority of these older refugees

are women. The neediest older refugees are often the least visible.

During 1999, the International Year of Older Persons, the UNHCR drew up a policy on older refugees and, with the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO), supported HelpAge International's broader research project on how aid agencies handle the needs of older people in both natural disasters and humanitarian crises.

Adopting a participatory approach, the researchers sought the views of older people with experience of living through emergencies, as well as community leaders, people in other age groups and aid workers.

Older people consistently asked:

- to be seen, heard and understood
- to have equal access to essential support services
- to have their potential and contributions recognised, valued and supported.

The research concluded that most aid agencies recognise older people as a vulnerable group in emergencies but rarely assign them the priority given, for example, to children. Humanitarian organisations frequently lack the particular expertise and capacity to address older people's needs. This can result in discrimination and unnecessary hardship.

The best practice guidelines sum up the operational lessons of the research. They suggest ways to integrate elders' needs into agencies' emergency response. Simple changes in practice and attitudes can make the difference between death and survival.

UNHCR <http://www.unhcr.ch>

Older People in Disasters and Humanitarian Crises Available free in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish from Emergencies Unit, HelpAge International Secretariat. Email: nsiam@helpage.org Also in English at: <http://www.helpage.org>

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HelpAge International

Leading global action on ageing

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Plans for second world assembly on ageing get underway

The International Plan of Action on Ageing, the document that laid the foundations for much of the debate on ageing issues over the last two decades, is again the focus of attention of the international community.

The UN General Assembly has received a recommendation from the Commission for Social Development to convene a Second World Assembly on Ageing in 2002, twenty years on from the first meeting in Vienna.

The second assembly, hosted by Spain, would review the International Plan of Action on Ageing adopted at Vienna and adopt a revised version as well as a long-term strategy for ageing.

In the last twenty years population ageing has continued its momentum, with nearly every country seeing rises in the numbers and proportions of its older citizens.

The Vienna Plan, addressing key issues for older people including health and wellbeing, family and community relationships, living environments, legal protection and more, now needs review in the light of today's political and economic realities.

The review process, coordinated by the United Nations Ageing Programme, is already underway, and views are being gathered from those concerned with ageing issues worldwide.

Database on ageing

In February, a new UN database featuring policies and programmes

on ageing was launched. The first of its kind on a global scale, the website is a collaboration of the UN Ageing Programme, the Institute for Applied Gerontology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and SeniorWeb, and is funded by the Government of the Netherlands.

Aimed to be an increasingly powerful information and networking tool, the website will be a major focal point for preparations for the Second World Assembly on Ageing.

UN Ageing Programme

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing>

UN database <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing/ppoa>.



Alyson Rose/Help the Aged

Facing the future... a new programme will help to protect people's rights after disasters such as the Orissa cyclone.

Protecting older people's rights in emergencies

Seventy-year-old Parbati Redy (left) has lived in her house in the Indian state of Orissa for 40 years when the cyclone struck last October. Not only were the walls and roof brought down, but her house was looted.

In the past year, older people in many areas of conflict or disaster, including Ethiopia and Eritrea, Sierra Leone, Mozambique and Orissa, have been subjected to violence, harassment and the loss of their homes and property. Respect for age has not shielded them.

A new programme developed by the British Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) will help to protect people's rights in emergencies. Led by the British Red Cross, the programme aims to strengthen member agencies' knowledge and use of international humanitarian law

and the code of conduct produced by the International Committee of the Red Cross. It encourages agencies to integrate these norms into their practical work.

HelpAge International is working to ensure that members and partners are familiar with the law and code of conduct.

More information:

*John Mitchell
Humanitarian Policy Advisor
British Red Cross
9 Grosvenor Crescent
London SW1X 7EJ, UK.
Email: jmitchel@redcross.org.uk*

Comment

Counting the cost of poverty

Poverty reduction targets and strategies are at the heart of development agendas worldwide. Poverty is now universally defined as the denial of basic capabilities and social exclusion, rather than material deprivation alone.

Participatory work with older people shows how poverty experienced in earlier life is likely to be exacerbated with age. Ageist attitudes also tend to stereotype older people as dependent.

Despite the over-arching goal of poverty eradication on development agendas, very little attention is paid to the growing numbers of poor older people in the developing world (see page 6).

This does not make economic sense, since support to older people's own efforts to support themselves and their families is an important strategy for poverty reduction. Nor does it make moral sense. Older people may have been ignored in decades of development practice and theory, but they are equal holders of basic human rights, including the right to development.

Development and social programmes should be explicitly valuing and supporting older people's contributions and their right to development, and upholding the United Nations Principles for Older Persons, of independence, participation, dignity, care and self-fulfilment.

Amanda Heslop

*Training and Research Manager,
HelpAge International Secretariat*

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Quality care... a new network hosted by Alzheimer Society Romania aims to raise care standards and create a stronger voice for NGOs.

Karen Peachey/HAI

New networks

Several new networks have recently been established to coordinate activities supporting older people.

In **Romania**, a national network of people working with and for older people has been launched. It aims to create a stronger voice for NGOs working with older people and to raise the standard of care of older people in Romania through information sharing, joint projects and strengthened links with government.

Contact:

Liana Dumitrescu, Executive Director, Alzheimer Society Romania, Bd Mihail Kogalniceanu 95U, ScA et 1 ap 8 Sector 5, 70603 Bucharest, Romania.
Tel: +401 686 3470
Fax: +401 311 3471
Email: alzocro@fx.ro

Five agencies in **Mozambique** met in late 1999 to discuss networking for the first time. They agreed the need for a forum to have a stronger voice, establish areas of cooperation and specify activities to strengthen their cooperation. The forum has held two workshops, one on cholera prevention and the other on land acquisition rights for older people.

Contact:

HelpAge International Programme, CP 4112, Maputo, Mozambique.
Email: haimoz@virxn.com

The Asia Gender, Ageing and Health Network (AGAHNet) has been formed following last year's conference, Women's Health: The Nation's Gain. The network aims to enable older women in **Asia** to achieve better physical, mental and social wellbeing through collaborative health promotion activities.

The Older Women's Mental Health Network was also formed. The network, an informal group mainly of Singaporeans, is gathering data on depression.

Contact:

Normala Manap, Tsao Foundation, 5 Temasek Boulevard, 12-01 Suntec City Tower, Singapore 038 985.
Tel: +65 4332740
Fax: +65 3379719
Email: tsao!@pacific.net.sg

In **Thailand**, two provincial-level agecare networks, AgeNet Trang and AgeNet Khon Kaen, have been established, bringing together government, NGO and private sector representatives. They are modelled on the Chiang Mai province network.

Contact:

Asia/Pacific Regional Development Centre, HelpAge International, c/o Faculty of Nursing, Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai 50200, Thailand.
Email: hai@helpageasia.com

African agreement accelerates change

The promotion of older people's rights in Africa has taken a major step forward with the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and HelpAge International (HAI).

The OAU and HAI have agreed to:

- support and promote the rights of older people, their inclusion in development, contribution to society and access to social and healthcare provision
- encourage member states to pass enabling legislation on older people, and encourage families and communities to support older people
- seek the adoption of the UN Principles for Older Persons as a charter of rights.

A policy framework and plan of action are being developed. This will pave the way for national policies and plans of action on ageing to be completed or underway by all 53 OAU member states by 2006. Joint projects, research, advocacy and monitoring activities are also planned.

'By 2025, older people in Africa will make up 75 per cent of the developing world's 1.2 billion older people. This agreement recognises the urgent need to encourage governments to address ageing issues. It also recognises HIV/AIDS, emergencies and violence as key issues for older people,' says Tavengwa Nhongo, HelpAge International's Africa representative.

More information:

Tavengwa Nhongo or Karen Peachey, Africa Regional Development Centre, HelpAge International, PO Box 14888, Westlands, Nairobi, Kenya.
Email: helpage@net2000ke.com

Letters

Ensuring true representation

I am delighted that a European Older People's Platform is being created (A&D 5) but am worried about its composition. I hope that it can truly reflect and be knowledgeable about issues of gender, race, lifelong learning etc.

Jim Soulsby

Older and Bolder Initiative, National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), 21 De Montfort Street, Leicester LE1 7GE, UK.
Email: jim.soulsby@nice.org.uk

Christine Marking replies:

The idea behind setting up a Platform is to have a truly representative, inclusive and democratic organisation which will provide a two-way flow of information and dialogue (from EU institutions to older people and their organisations, and vice versa).

The fact that it is being created by three organisations which have until now worked separately does not mean that these organisations will be the only members - quite the contrary. The first six months, after the launch in June, will be used to create the Platform, which means that decisions will be taken on a number of operational and practical matters. Also - and more importantly - new members of the Platform will be recruited and the current members of the existing organisations will be asked to join.

It is very much hoped that organisations active in the domains you mention will join the Platform in order to be able to address all relevant areas appropriately.

Christine Marking, Director, Eurolink Age, 111 rue Froissart, B-1040 Brussels, Belgium.
Email: christine.marking@skynet.be

We welcome letters. Write to:

The Editor, Ageing and Development HelpAge International Secretariat 67-74 Saffron Hill London EC1N 8QX, UK.
or email: ctil@helpage.org

Letters may be edited.

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Insights in Lao

A study of rural older people in the Lao People's Democratic Republic provides insights into gender, the 'dreams' of older people, the complexities of participatory research and links between families and old-age poverty.

Lao is one of the poorest countries in south-east Asia. The population is ageing - the number of people aged over 60 is projected to more than double from 206,000 in 1999

to 517,000 after 20 years. The study was commissioned by the Phonehong District Department of Social Welfare for planning projects to assist



Speaking out... participatory approaches have provided valuable insights into the lives of older people in Lao.

HAI

disadvantaged older people. It was conducted in six villages of Vientiane Province at the beginning of this year, with funding by HelpAge International through CUSO Lao.

The study focused on people aged over 55, using participatory approaches including mapping, daily activity charts, seasonal calendars, semi-structured interviews, ranking exercises and problem flow charts. It aimed to throw light on social attitudes, contributions of older people, support for older people, and older people's basic needs and aspirations.

The study shows the impact of older people's poverty on their families. 'Sometimes we have to care for our in-laws as well as our parents,' said a younger woman. 'Taking care of much older people is very difficult... because we are poor and do not have enough food.'

The poor, 'old old', and older women living alone without

family nearby are the most disadvantaged. 'I have to do everything for myself,' said one older woman. 'I have to go into the forest every day to find food. I am old and it is hard but I have to do it because I am so poor.'

The study found that 73 per cent of those living alone were older women, often widowed.

Recommendations include access to healthcare through mobile units, investment in localised income-generating activities, extension of credit facilities to older people, and more participatory studies to determine inclusive and targeted policies and programmes for older people.

Participatory Rural Appraisal of Older People: Understanding the Situation of Older People in the Lao PDR

Contact: Kathleen Tiffay, Programme Manager, Asia/Pacific Regional Development Centre, HelpAge International, c/o Faculty of Nursing, Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai 50200, Thailand. Fax: +66 53 894214 Email: kathleen@helpageasia.com

American fund for active ageing programmes

A fund for active and productive aging is to be created by the Inter-American Development Bank, as one of seven lines of action agreed by the bank in June.

The fund will support civil society networks and technical assistance to governments for the development of policies and projects.

More information in A&D 7.

IDB

1300 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20577, USA. Email: ageing@iadb.org <http://www.iadb.org>

St Lucia research

Insufficient income, neglect and isolation, healthcare costs and poor housing are key issues for older people in St Lucia, according to research carried out this year by HelpAge International for the St Lucia Government.

The aim of the study, supervised by the Ministry of Health, Human Services, Family Affairs and Gender Relations, was to help determine policies and practical measures to enhance the quality of life of older people.

St Lucia has a small but growing population of 12,100 people aged over 60. Of the total population, 4.8 per cent are older women and 3.2 cent are older men. The study used interviews, group discussions, visits and direct observation involving older people and others.

Problems of neglect, isolation and abuse were attributed to changes in family structure, migration of younger family members and breakdown of the extended family. Almost every older respondent encountered financial problems.

Older women were more likely than older men to continue being supported by their families, in return for help in the home.

Older people identified a wide range of healthcare needs, but were discouraged from taking up services because of cost and unavailability.

Both older women and men contributed to the wellbeing of their families and communities by supporting sick people, caring for children, teaching traditional medicine and practical skills, and providing advice. More than half were generating income, and most

were involved in household activities that allowed others to do so.

The research pointed to the importance of developing targeted, community-based programmes responding to the needs identified. Policy recommendations included introducing legislation to protect older people, increasing tax incentives for families caring for older people, reviewing pension policies, including older people in micro-enterprise initiatives, establishing community care programmes, providing age awareness training, establishing minimum standards of care, creating an effective network of older people's groups, and adopting and implementing a national policy for older persons.

Care of the Elderly in St Lucia

Contact: Jeff James, Regional Representative, HelpAge International Regional Development Centre, PO Box 8300, Kingston CSO, Jamaica. Tel/fax: +1 876 7547642 Email: helpage@cwjamaica.com

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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

Family support

'In developing countries, older people are better off than in the West because their families look after them.'

In the West, the population has gradually aged. About 20 per cent of people are now aged 60 or over. In developing countries, a similar demographic shift is

occurring very quickly. The proportion of older people is expected to reach about 12 per cent by 2025 and 20 per cent by 2050.

Family structures and patterns of care across the world are changing with increasing migration. There is no evidence to suggest that people in developing countries care less about older members of their families than they did in the past. However, increasing demands, especially on the poorest families, to earn and care for dependent family members leads to increased stress. Although many older people live with their families, this is no guarantee of support. Older people can live in family households in a state of neglect.

In the West, most older people can retire on a pension. In developing countries, most older people have no access to a pension and continue to work for as long as they can. They carry out both paid and unpaid work. Relationships within families are generally reciprocal, with older people cooking, caring for children, farming and contributing to household income, in return for accommodation, food and health care.

In Bolivia, for example, 73 per cent of older men are economically active. In Thailand, 70 per cent of people with HIV-related illnesses are cared for by their parents.

In Rwanda, 90 per cent of older people care for orphans.

Age discrimination is prevalent worldwide. Families have to make hard choices that can leave older people vulnerable to abuse. Responses need to build on what older people actually do on a day-to-day basis.

More information:

'Change, family life, coping strategies and seniors'

In The Ageing and Development Report, HelpAge International, 1999. Available from: Earthscan, Freeport 1, 120 Pentonville Road, London N1 9BR, UK.

Price £14.95 plus postage (£2.50 UK, £3.60 elsewhere)

ISBN 1 85383 648 6

*A 16-page summary in English, French and Spanish is available free from HelpAge International
Email: cdobbing@helpage.org*

Brighter prospects after Beijing review

Prospects for older women look better with the signing of a new Platform for Action at the Beijing Women's Summit review in New York in June.

The outcome document includes 32 references to older women, women of all ages, and the life cycle. 'The issue of older women has moved forward tremendously,' said Samantha Page of HelpAge

International's gender group.

A panel discussion on older women workers, organised by the International Labour Organization's Gender Promotion Programme and the United Nations Programme on Aging, emphasised the need for older women's work to be recognised.

But a new report by UNIFEM, *Progress of the World's Women: Targets and Indicators*, was criticised in a paper by Richard Leete of the UN NGO Committee on Aging for its lack of significant coverage of older women.

Outline document

<http://www.un.org/womanwatch/daw/followup/beijing+5.htm>

Progress of the World's Women

<http://www.un.org/events/women2000/index.html>

New design gets thumbs-up

Thank you to everyone who returned the questionnaire card in issue 5. We received replies from readers in 30 countries, working mainly in government, non-governmental and academic institutions.

The new format and contents got the thumbs-up - 'a great improvement'... 'very informative'... 'it is clear, easy to scan and gives enough details that original sources can be quickly found'.

Respondents asked for articles on a broad range of issues affecting older people, including health; HIV/AIDS; education and training; care; housing and environment; income and social security; roles, rights and discrimination; research, policy development and advocacy; and building older people into development programmes.

There were also requests for more case studies, statistical data, comparisons of ageing policies, addresses of organisations and lists of donors.

We will aim to follow up these requests in future issues.

Some respondents asked for practical information of the type that is included in *Ageways*, also published by HelpAge International. To go on the mailing list, please write to the editor with details about your work or email: ctill@helpage.org

A few respondents stated an interest in a particular region. *A&D* aims to maintain a geographical balance among the regions in which the HelpAge International network mainly works - Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America, and East and Central Europe.

Most respondents said they had access to email, but just under half have access to the Internet.

In the prize draw, the winners were K Raphael, Cameroon, Valerie Moller, South Africa and Mohamed Zarook, Sri Lanka. They have each been sent a copy of *The Ageing and Development Report*.



Looking up... older women feature in the outcome document.

Nicky Packman/HAI

Briefing

Analysis of current topics in ageing

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A world without poverty: time to include older people?

Major donors have drafted strategies to meet poverty reduction targets, but will they succeed? Sylvia Beales explains why older people need to be included, if poverty targets are to be met.

Older people in developing countries are recognised to be among the poorest of the poor. Their poverty is part of that lived by their families, who often depend on older relatives' help and contributions. This puts older people under great pressure at a time in their lives when they need extra support. Recent research by HelpAge International into the lives of poor older people in Bangladesh, Lao and St Lucia shows that older people in both rural and urban areas are unable to meet their own basic needs, yet are often expected to provide for others.

The poverty that people experience in old age is often the result of a lifetime's struggle to maintain their own and their families' survival. Poor older people often experience poor health, income worries, poor shelter, lack of employment for themselves, their sons and daughters, lack of land and livestock, and high costs of loans and credit.

In old age, poor people have few assets apart from their families. A lifetime of poverty often means that savings are not possible, any cash income is a fraction of minimum earnings, and material assets are of little value. The few social security and pension schemes that do exist are unavailable to most older people, who have worked in the informal sector.

Older women, who outlive men in nearly all countries, and are therefore more likely than not to be widows, are among the poorest. One older woman in Lao told researchers, 'It is hard for me to come and meet with you for

three days, because I have to go to the forest to find food to eat and sell. If I don't go I won't have any food to eat.'

Material poverty is matched by social exclusion. Older people are often isolated, even when they are living with or near their families.

Substantial contributions

Yet older people in developing countries make substantial contributions to the livelihoods of their immediate and extended families. These include work to support family and community; cash transfers; child-minding and basic education; care of family

members with disabilities or illnesses, for example HIV; domestic work; technical, agricultural or health knowledge and counselling; historical knowledge; some level of control of material assets and decision-making processes at family and community level. Older people often hold religious responsibilities and resolve conflict; they can influence younger generations in peace-building and community regeneration.

The problem in developing countries is that as people are living longer, the number of older people living in poverty is

increasing. Already 61 per cent of the world's population of older people - 355 million - live in poorer countries. This proportion will increase to nearly 70 per cent by 2025. The proportion of older women in most populations will continue to grow, particularly among the oldest old.

Lack of support

Given the evidence of increasing numbers of poor older people, the acknowledgement that older people contribute to family and community survival, and the acceptance by policy makers that older people are among the most vulnerable groups, we might expect more investment in programmes to support older people. But there is still poor data on the nature and numbers of older people in poverty. The contributions that older people make to their families and communities are neither well documented nor supported.



Melanie Friend/Panos Pictures

On the margins... poverty reduction programmes need to recognise and support older people.

Briefing

Analysis of current topics in ageing

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Even when older people are clearly primary carers of younger age groups, as in countries with a high incidence of HIV-related deaths, they are often not supported. In Uganda, for example, studies have shown that in some districts nearly a quarter of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS are cared for by their grandmothers, yet there are no programmes that target the needs of these women.

Freedom from poverty is as much a human rights issue as an economic one. The 1986 international agreement on the 'right to development' states that it is the duty of each nation state and related global institutions to assure each citizen their social, economic and cultural rights. But although internationally agreed strategies and social summits now embrace human rights and participatory approaches, they do not readily embrace the issues faced by older people (see box).

Need for inclusion

A key policy question is: what would happen without older people? Older people contribute in many ways to the wellbeing of their families and communities. They are both allies and beneficiaries of poverty reduction - without the work of older people, international and regional targets to reduce poverty will fail.

But to contribute, older people must be in reasonable health, have access to health services when sick or caring for sick dependants, be able to bring in some income, be able to live independently, have shelter and be in a community. It also helps if they are literate and able to experiment with new sources of livelihood, especially when they are primary carers of children, and when their physical strength is waning.

Programmes focusing on older people demonstrate that, with appropriate support, older people can and do contribute to the family and wider community well into very old age. For these

reasons alone, let alone the importance of advancing human rights, it makes sense to support older people.

Poverty-related studies point out the importance of supporting older people. A study in Ghana recommends: 'For older people's contributions to be valued and supported, older people need to be included in community meetings, their needs and opinions discussed and evaluated; for their poverty to be tackled along with younger members of the community they need to participate in decisions and programmes that will affect them directly and state their needs as well as listen to others.'

Future international development targets need to embrace the issues faced by older people. Priority should be given to increased data collection on the poverty of older people to ensure that global poverty figures are accurate. For this to happen, the deep-rooted attitudes and ageist assumptions that have excluded older people from the development debate need to be changed.

Sylvia Beales is policy development manager, HelpAge International Secretariat.

Uncertainty Rules Our Lives: The Situation of Older People in Bangladesh *HelpAge International with the Resource Integration Centre, Bangladesh Association for the Aged and Institute of Geriatric Medicine, Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, Bangladesh Women's Health Coalition, and Training Task Group, 2000*

Participatory Rural Appraisal of Older People: Understanding the Situation of Older People in the Lao PDR *Department of Labour and Social Welfare with HelpAge International, 2000*

Care of the Elderly in St Lucia *HelpAge International, 2000*

The Contribution of Older People to Development: the Ghana Study *HelpAge International/HelpAge Ghana, 1999*

Poverty websites
see page 10



Paying off... with a little help, older people can support themselves.

Helping the family

Michael Cobourne (left), a 63-year-old farmer in Jamaica, received 100 day-old-chicks, on condition he paid back 50 per cent of the cost. He reared the chickens and repaid the percentage. He continued rearing batches of chickens and selling some of the meat. 'It's a big help to my family,' he said. 'I use the money to help pay the light bills and buy food.'

What poverty means for older women

- Never studied because had to work
- No 'identity'
- Suffer serious health problems and physical disabilities
- Are not protected by laws
- Have little or no access to services
- Have little or no regular income
- Have no opportunity to participate
- Born away from where they live now
- Worked in other people's homes

Source: Latin America Regional Development Centre, HelpAge International

Development targets

The following targets were agreed by OECD member states in 1996. They will be revised during 2000.

Economic wellbeing Reduce by half, by the year 2015, the proportion of people living in extreme poverty in developing countries.

Social development Primary education for all by 2015, gender equality in primary and secondary education by 2005, a fall by two-thirds in the mortality rate of newborn and young children by 2015, access to reproductive health services for all of procreating age by 2015.

Environment Implementation by 2005 of national sustainable development strategies in order to reverse by 2015 the trend towards degradation of environmental resources.

Source: DAC/OECD

Strategies fall short

Department for International Development (DFID) Twelve strategy papers are being produced and a white paper on globalisation will be published in November. So far, the impact of ageing and the contributions of poor older people are not mainstreamed into these.

World Bank The ten-yearly *World Development Report* will be published in 2000. The draft shows that the World Bank now acknowledges the importance of social equity and participatory approaches to poverty reduction strategies. But the impact of ageing receives little attention.

European Union (EU) The EU's first development cooperation policy will be finalised in November. It has received criticism for its lack of attention to equity and human rights. HelpAge International has asked that older people's rights, needs and contribution be acknowledged and supported.

World Summit for Social Development A strategy will be developed, following the review in June of progress since the 1995 summit. HelpAge International has launched a vision document outlining how the issues of older people can be incorporated into the 13 areas under review (for a copy, write to HelpAge International or email: cdobbing@helpage.org).

Millennium Summit Major themes include poverty eradication and human rights, and the implications of ageing in the new millennium need to be taken fully into account in the final documents.

Profile

Taking older people's interests forward

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Smiling again... pensioners in South Africa's Northern Province return home from the pension pay point with goods they have bought, after pensions were restored with support from local organisation Elim-Hlanganani.

Hein du Plessis/HAI

Mrs Malaluke sought to have her pension, together with those of other affected beneficiaries, reinstated and all arrears paid. She also asked for an order to direct the respondent - the Member of the Executive Council for Health and Welfare - to pay her legal costs.

The combined efforts of Elim-Hlanganani and the Legal Resources Centre paid off. In his ruling, the judge said that the decision to suspend pension payments was unlawful and invalid. He ordered the Northern Province Government to resume pension payments, as well as paying arrears. He also ordered the government to pay interest to Mrs Malaluke at 15.5 per cent on the amount of pension withheld during the five-month suspension, and to pay her legal costs.

By early 1999, the intervention had led to the restoration of pensions to over 61,000 older people, including 200 Elim-Hlanganani members.

Mrs Maluleke can now lead a normal life. 'I am grateful for the intervention of the Legal Resource Centre and Elim-Hlanganani for helping me get my pension reinstated,' she said. 'We survived with the help of Elim-Hlanganani because they provided us with food during the hard times.'

The experience has also strengthened Elim-Hlanganani as an organisation. It is continuing its advocacy work with a programme aimed at helping older people and people with disabilities to get pensions. Activities include running workshops on the rights of older persons. 'It has benefited the organisation through closer ties between the provincial government and society on the one hand, and better treatment for clients at local level,' said Florence Khosa.

For more information contact:
Florence Khosa, Elim-Hlanganani Society for the Care of the Aged, Box 72, Elim Hospital, 0960, Elim, Northern Province, South Africa.
Tel: +27 15 556 3609
Email: elimcare@mweb.co.za

Fighting for the rights of older people

Suspension of pension payments in South Africa's Northern Province led to an advocacy victory by older and disabled people when they took the provincial government to court. Elim-Hlanganani Society for the Care of the Aged played a key part in the process.

In 1998, over 92,000 older people in South Africa's Northern Province became dependants when the Department of Health and Welfare stopped their monthly pension. The reason was unclear and the decision surprised many. Investigations later revealed that the aim was to help the government eliminate ghost pensioners.

The termination of the monthly R470 (US\$68) left many older people without any means of livelihood. Many relied on their pensions to support grandchildren. Without this income, they were forced to buy food on credit and seek help from relatives.

The crisis marked a turning point for local non-profit organisation, Elim-Hlanganani Society for the Care of the Aged. Elim-Hlanganani has been working in communities in Elim, a rural area in the far north of South Africa, since 1993. Most young people have moved out of the area in search of employment,

leaving older people struggling to make a living on their own. Staffed by volunteers, Elim-Hlanganani provides home care, food, and income generating, educational and social programmes for about 600 members.

Elim-Hlanganani was acutely aware of the suffering of its members. It responded by providing clothes, shoes and blankets as well as food, and by launching a campaign to advocate on members' behalf.

This was a new ground for Elim-Hlanganani. Florence Khosa, a community worker and volunteer with Elim-Hlanganani, sought support from the Legal Resources Centre, an independent, non-profit law centre providing legal services free of charge for people who are poor or discriminated against. The Legal Resources Centre agreed to act on the pensioners' behalf, with Elim-Hlanganani facilitating the process through fundraising and administrative support.

Elim-Hlanganani held meetings with members to inform them that help was available. It encouraged members to register with the Legal Resources Centre if they wanted their cases to be filed with the government. Follow-up meetings were held each month with applicants. A series of meetings was held between the Legal Resources Centre and the Department of Health and Welfare. Initially the department was unwilling to discuss the matter, but Elim-Hlanganani and the Legal Resources Centre persisted in seeking justice, and the first cases were eventually brought to court.

One applicant was 61-year-old Gladys Malaluke. She stated that she used the monthly pension to support herself and six orphaned grandchildren. The termination of the pension had had a 'devastating impact' on her household. 'Life was not easy for me and my family because the pension is my only source of income,' she said.

Talking point

Understanding older people's experience

9

Witchcraft - a violent threat

Belief in witchcraft exists in many countries but it has taken a sinister turn in northern Tanzania, where it lies behind a spate of murders, especially of older women. A&D investigates why.

In Tanzania, an estimated 500 women are murdered every year after being accused of witchcraft. The problem is particularly acute in the Sukumaland area of northern Tanzania. In Shinyanga region, 178 people were killed as a result of being accused of witchcraft in the 18 months from January 1996 to June 1997, according to a study by the Tanzania Media Women's Association, citing data from the Ministry of Home Affairs. The murders represented nearly 40 per cent of all murders reported in the region in that period.

The killings are only part of the story. Many more women are driven from their homes and communities for fear of being accused of witchcraft, living in destitution in urban areas. Nearly a third of those interviewed in the study were afraid of getting old because of the fear of being attacked as a witch.

Although belief in witchcraft goes back centuries, the violence has risen steeply in recent years. Research by HelpAge International points to social and economic problems including poverty, pressure on land, inadequate or inaccessible health services and poor education as the underlying causes. People need explanations for misfortunes such as illnesses and deaths, crop failures and dried-up wells, and they look for a scapegoat.

Traditional healers often make accusations of witchcraft at the suggestion of the accused person's family or neighbours. They may blame witchcraft to explain events that they cannot understand or control. For example, one young boy killed his

mother after a traditional healer told him that she was the cause of his problems.

Land disputes are a common underlying cause of violence against widows. According to inheritance laws, widows may remain on their husband's land, but they do not own the property. When they die, the land becomes the property of their husband's sons. Although this system is intended to protect women, it is sometimes used to get rid of troublesome 'tenants'. And it can be a lucrative income for hired killers.

Women's low status

Although men may be accused of witchcraft, women's circumstances and their low status in society make them more vulnerable to attack. Women usually live longer than men and marry men older than themselves. Many are therefore alone in old age, often living in poor housing, making them an easy target. Male domination of policing and counselling systems also means that older women receive little protection.

Myths about the physical appearance of witches increase women's vulnerability. For example, many older women are believed to be witches because they have red eyes - people do not know that red eyes can result from a lifetime of cooking over a smoky stove, or from conditions such as conjunctivitis.

Call for action

Community leaders are calling on the government to take strong measures. A former party

secretary said: 'It is a question of educating the people. In other areas of the country where people are better educated, we don't face this problem'.

Until recently, the Government of Tanzania was reluctant to acknowledge that witchcraft beliefs still existed. However, witchcraft is now being widely discussed and officially condemned. In 1999, the Tanzania Government made witchcraft the theme for International Women's Day.

Steps to improve the security of older women are being taken by a Tanzanian NGO, Magu Poverty Focus on Older People Rehabilitation Centre (MAPERECE) and the HelpAge International programme in Tanzania, through a project that combines both practical and advocacy work. The project will involve older people's

organisations, churches, schools and other groups to explore and change attitudes to witchcraft-related violence, and address practical problems such as poor housing and use of inefficient smoky stoves.

Older People in Magu, Tanzania: The Killings and Victimization of Older Women

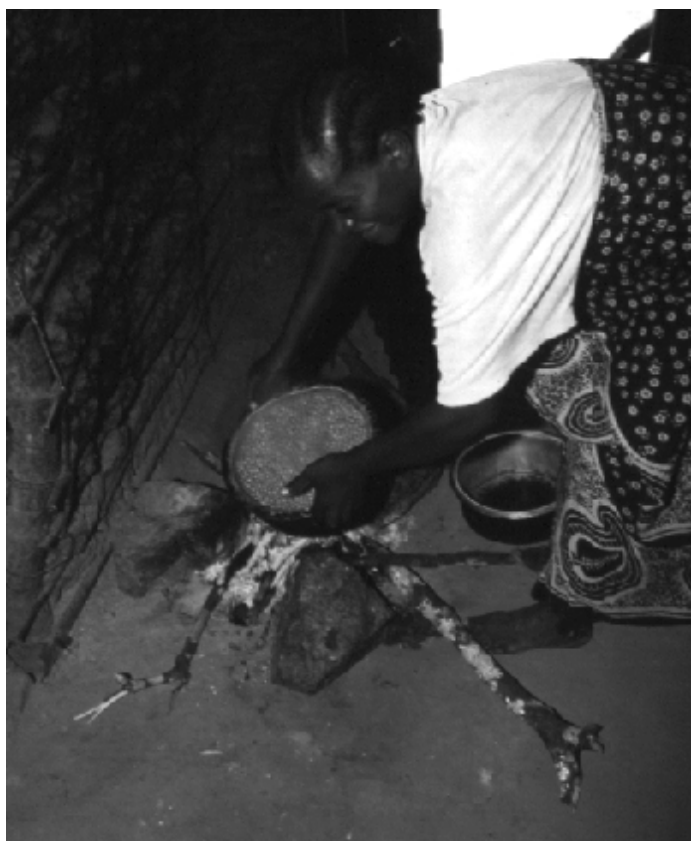
HelpAge International 1999. Available from Victoria Vincent, HelpAge International Secretariat (address on back page) or email: vvincent@helpage.org

Killing of Old Women on Witchcraft Beliefs in Shinyanga Region TAMWA, 1997

'Belief in witchcraft threatens older women's rights' panel from 'Gender and ageing'. In **The Ageing and Development Report**, HelpAge International, 1999 (details on page 5).

More information:

HelpAge International Programme, PO Box 9846, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Email: helpage@udsm.ac.tz



Andy Crump/Still Pictures

Occupational hazard... a lifetime of cooking over a smoky stove can cause red eyes, but in some areas, red eyes are believed to be a sign that an older woman is a witch.

Resources

New publications, websites, conferences and courses

10

Articles

Dementia

Worldwide prevalence and incidence of dementia.

L Fratiglioni et al, Drugs and Aging, 15:5 (1999)

Effects of education in dementia assessment: evidence from standardizing the Korean-Dementia Rating Scale.

J Chey et al, Clin. Neuro. 13:3 (1999)

Vascular dementia: the Latin American perspective.

R L Arizaga et al, AD&AD 13:3 (1999)

Alzheimer's: keys to better care and support (training programme in Romania).

D Ploiesteanu, Ageways 53 (April 2000)

Demography

Future shock: next century, the demographic revolution will also affect developing countries. Given the example set by the developed world in planning for an ageing population, is not optimistic.

M Kohler, Ger. Med. 28:9 (1999)

Percentage of elderly 'to rise sharply'.

M Littlejohns, FT (9 Feb 2000)

Economics of ageing

Age structure and economic policy: the case of saving and growth.

T Lindh, Pop. Res. and Policy Rev. 18:3 (June 99)

In search of the ideal measure of accuracy for subnational demographic forecasts.

J Swanson et al, Pop. Res. and Policy Rev. 18:5 (Oct 99)

Economic development and labor force participation of older persons.

R L Clark et al, Pop. Res. and Policy Rev. 18:5 (Oct 99)

Crisis of ageing in less developed countries: too much consumption or too little production?

M Messkoub, Dev. and Change 30:2 (1999)

Estimating the elderly's returns on the farm: evidence from Côte d'Ivoire.

F Grimard, B Hamilton, J. Dev. Econ. 58: (1999)

Emergencies

Coping with conflict? Meeting the needs of older people.

ID21 development research reporting service (29 May 2000)
<http://www.id21.org>

Older people are often humanitarian heroes.

F MacDonald, Humanitarian Affairs Review, No. 9 (Spring 2000)

Humanitarian crises and old age: guidelines for best practice.

L-A Knight, Age and Ageing 4:293-6 (2000)

Gender

'After my son grew up and my husband died...' Why we should invest in older women and men.

S Beales, Gender and Dev. (July 2000 edition on lifecycles)

Health

Japan to allow in foreign nurses to care for old people.

J Lamar, BMJ 320 (25 Mar 2000)

Depressive symptoms, cognitive impairment and functional impairment in a rural elderly population in India: a Hindi version of the geriatric depression scale.

M Ganguli et al, Int. J. Geriatric Psychiatry 14:10 (1999)

Ageism: a factor in the nutritional vulnerability of older people?

K Peachey, Disasters 23:4

Ageing and cardiovascular disease in developing countries.

G L Ianuzzi, Lancet 9149 (1999)

Social conditions and wellbeing

A comparative study of successful aging in three Asian countries.

V L Lamb, G C Myers, Pop. Research and Policy Review 18:5 (Oct 99)

Household extension of the elderly in China.

R S Cooney, J Shi, Pop. Res. and Policy Rev. 18:5 (Oct 99)

Relationship of perceived culture shock, length of stay in the US, depression and self esteem in elderly Russian speaking immigrants.

S Tsytsarev, L Krichmar, J. Soc. Distress 9:1 (Jan 2000)

Old age support in China: the role of the state and the family.

X Pei, V K Pillai, Int. J. Aging

Elderly immigrants: their composition and living arrangements.

M M Kritz et al, J. Soc. Soc. Wel. 17:1 (2000)

Ageing in India.

Indira Prakash, Intercom 6:8 (8 Feb 2000)

Determinants of life satisfaction in Hong Kong Chinese elderly: a longitudinal study.

K-L Chou, I Chi, Aging and Mental Health 3:4 (Nov 99)

Age and gender variation in the impact of household structure on elderly mortality (Bangladesh).

M O Rahman, Int. J. Epidemiology 28:3 (1999)

Grandparents in the US and the Republic of China: a comparison of generations and cultures.

R D Strom et al, Int. J. Aging

Training older people to protect their rights (programme in Peru).

L Barreto Carreño, Ageways 53 (April 2000)

Growing old in the South: the impact of gender on the lives of poor older people.

J Scobie, Soc. Dev. Newsletter, 8:1 (March 2000)

Ageing: growing in numbers, growing in strength

Special report in Urban Age. Winter 2000

Ageing in the 21st century.

G Andrews

The age wave (service programmes).

J Prather

Globe trotters.

D Luhrman

Options: payroll or pasture.

B Beck

Journals

Alzheimer Disease and Associated Disorders.

Abstract available at:
<http://www.bids.ac.uk>

Ageways.

HelpAge International (address on back page)

Ageing and Mental Health.

Carfax, PO Box 25, Abingdon, OX14 3UE, UK
Fax: +44 1235 401550
<http://www.tandf.co.uk>

British Medical Journal.

BMJ Publishing Group, BMA House, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9JP, UK
<http://www.bmj.com>

Clinical Neuropsychologist.

Abstract available at:
<http://www.bids.ac.uk>

Disasters.

Blackwell Publishers, 108 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1JF, UK

Drugs and Aging.

Adis International Ltd, Chowley Oak Lane, Tattenhall, Chester CH3 9GA, UK.
Fax: +44 1829 770330.
<http://www.adis.com>

Development and Change.

Blackwell Publishers (see above)

Humanitarian Affairs Review.

Forum Europe, rue des Patriotes 88, 1000 Brussels, Belgium

Financial Times.

London EC2R 8FT, UK
Fax: +44 2076432575
<http://www.ft.com>

Intercom.

Available at: <http://www.ifa-fiv.org>

International Journal of Aging and Human Development.

Baywood Publishing Co. Inc., 26 Austin Ave, Amityville, NY 11701, USA.
Fax: +1 516 691 1770.

Email: baywood@baywood.com
<http://www.baywood.com>

International Journal of Epidemiology.

Oxford University Press, Great Clarendon St, Oxford OX2 6DP, UK
Fax: +44 1865 556646
<http://www.oup.co.uk>

International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry.

Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic, 3811 Ohara St, Pittsburgh Pennsylvania 15213, USA

Journal of Development Economics.

Elsevier Science, PO Box 211, 1000 AE Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Fax: +31 20 485432
Email: nlinfo-f@elsevier.nl

Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless.

Kluwer Academic Publishers, POB 322, 3300 AH Dordrecht, Netherlands
<http://www.wkap.nl>

Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare.

Abstract available at:
<http://www.bids.ac.uk>

The Lancet.

London WC1B 3SL, UK
<http://www.thelancet.com>

Population Research and Policy Review.

Published in association with the Southern Demographic Association by Kluwer Academic Publishers (see above)

Social Development Newsletter.

Department for International Development, 94 Victoria Street, London SW1E 5JL, UK
Fax: +44 171 917 0197
Email: sdd@dfid.gov.uk
<http://www.dfid.gov.uk>

Resources

New publications, websites, conferences and courses

11

Comfort by design (housing in Hong Kong).

P Chatterjee

A sanctuary for the elderly homeless.

A Biles

Fade to gray (older people in the media).

R A Clay

Being old in Budapest: gambling with a stacked deck.

N Harrison

Is the check in the mail? (social security in Chile and Poland).

D Harris

A lifetime of caring (older women).

J Scobie

Urban Age.

Room F4K-256, 1818 H Street, NW, Washington, DC 20433, USA.
Fax: 202-522 2125
Email (subscriptions):
pmoran@worldbank.org

Conference papers

Ageing and Living Arrangements of Older Persons.

United Nations Technical Meeting on Population, 8-10 February 2000
United Nations Population Division
<http://www.undp.org/popin/popin.htm>

Generations of Peacemakers.

Fourth in series of four Julia Tavarez Alvarez Seminars - The Earthquake Debates, February 2000
NGO Committee on Aging, 49 West 45th Street, 7th Floor, New York, New York 10036, USA
Tel: +1 212 398 3175
Fax: +1 212-869-8042

Across Generations/Across Cultures.

1 October 1999
NGO Committee on Aging. See above

Interregional Symposium on Family and Community Caregiving.

November 1999
China National Committee on Ageing
Fax: +86 10 650 94747

Conference on the Situation of Older Persons in States with Transitional Economies.

2-3 December 1999, Moscow, Russia
Russian Party of Pensioners.
Email:
info@pensioner.org or vab@otik.ru

International Conference on Aging: Promoting Independence and Quality of Life for Older Persons.

2-4 December 1999, Arlington, Virginia, USA. *RERC-Aging*
Email: swilson@acsu.buffalo.edu
<http://www.asaging.org>

Conferences

World Federation of Public Associations 9th Conference.
2-6 September 2000, Beijing
Details from WFPFA, c/o American Public Health Association.
Email: cpma@ht.rol.cn.net

5th IFA Global Conference on Ageing - The Millennium Conference on Ageing: Challenges.

17-21 September 2000, Mar del Plata, Argentina
International Federation on Ageing, 425 rue Viger Ouest, Bureau 520, Montreal, PQ H2Z 1X2, Canada.
Email: ifa@citenet.net

Social Security in the Global Village.
25-27 September 2000, Helsinki, Finland

Details from International Social Security Association, PO Box 1, CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland.
Email: issac2k@ilo.org

29th ICSW International Conference on Social Welfare: Poverty, Social Welfare and Social Development: Challenges for the 21st century.
23-27 October 2000, Cape Town, South Africa. *ICSW, PO Box 44503, Claremont, 7735, South Africa*
Fax: +27 21 762 8606
Email: icsw@globalconf.co.za

World Conference on Gerontology.
1-6 July 2001, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
Gerontology Research Centre, Simon Fraser University at Harbour Centre, 2800-515 West Hastings St, Vancouver, BC, Canada V6B 5K3
Fax: +604 291 5066
<http://www.harbour.sfu.ca/gero>



'Across generations' is the theme of a conference report from the NGO Committee on Aging.

Alison Geldart/HAI

Courses

Postgraduate Diploma in Gerontology and Geriatrics.

October 2000-June 2001
Contact: *Director, Gerontology and Geriatrics, University of Malta, Msida, MSD 06, Malta* Fax: +356 319526
Email: geront@um.edu.mt

Books and reports

Nutrition Throughout the Life Cycle: 4th Report on the World Nutrition Situation.

This report acknowledges, for the first time, the importance of ageing as a nutrition issue.
United Nations Administrative Committee on Coordination Sub-Committee on Nutrition (ACC/SCN) in collaboration with International Food Policy Research Institute, January 2000
Available from: *United Nations ACC/SCN, c/o World Health Organization, 20 Avenue Appia, CH-1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland*
Fax: +41 22 798 88 91
Email: accscn@who.ch

Understanding Old Age: Critical and Global Perspectives.

By Gail Wilson
This book looks at old age in different societies, covering issues ranging from family and community to political change and globalisation. It argues that a better understanding of differing values across cultures is a necessary first step to implementing effective policies for older people.
ISBN 0 7619 6012 0
SAGE Publications, 6 Bonhill Street, London EC2A 4PU, UK
<http://www.sagepub.co.uk>

Elderly Females in India: Their Status and Sufferings.
Edited by Dr Kalyan Bagchi
Describes how older women suffer due to social, cultural and health reasons, and suggests strategies to improve their quality of life.
Published by the Society for Gerontological Research. Available from Dr K Bagchi, R18, Hauz Khas, New Delhi 110016
Email: kbagchi@del3.vsnl.net.in
Price Rs.200 (free to registered NGOs engaged in geriatrics) plus postage Rs.50

Diet & Ageing: Exploring Some Facets.
Edited by Dr Kalyan Bagchi and Seema Puri.

Society for Gerontological Research, New Delhi and HelpAge India.
Available from *Dr Kalyan Bagchi* (see above). Price as above.

4th Global Conference on Ageing, Montreal, September 1999:
Book of Abstracts.

Order from IFA at: http://www.ifa-fiv.org/abstracts_order.htm

World Atlas of Ageing.
World Health Organization
The atlas provides selected demographic and socio-economic statistics related to ageing, and discusses them. It presents ageing geographically and over time - 1975, 1997 and 2025.

Renouf Publishing Co. Ltd, Ottawa, Canada.
Email: order.dept@renoufbooks.com
Price: Can\$42 ISBN 1930150

Resettlement Handbook
Chapter 4: UNHCR criteria for determining resettlement as the appropriate solution.
Section 8: Elderly refugees.
United Nations High Commission for Refugees
States that unless people have claims to resettlement elsewhere in the handbook, resettlement of older people should only be considered in the context of family reunification.

Websites on poverty

World Bank.
<http://www.worldbank.org>
Preview summary of World Development Report on poverty
<http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/wdrpoverty>

UNDP.
Human developments and livelihoods
<http://www.undp.org/poverty>

Institute of Development Studies.
Site includes participatory approaches to tackling poverty
<http://www.ids.susx.ac.uk>

OneWorld.
Lists UK-based NGO sites
<http://www.oneworld.net>

Grameen Bank.
Poverty-focused finance
<http://www.grameen-info.org>

Overseas Development Institute.
<http://www.oneworld.org/odi/hpg/index.html>

International Institute for Environment and Development.
Research into urban poverty

UN Programme on Ageing.
<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing.htm>

Research update

Major new projects

12

Nigerian perceptions

The Centre for Social Policy, University of Ibadan, Nigeria is conducting a survey of nearly 4,000 older people and a smaller group of younger people in five cultural zones of Nigeria.

The survey aims to assess intergenerational relationships and the status and wellbeing of older people in Nigeria. It will be followed by workshops with policy makers and planners to share the findings with them and explore the implications for public policy and interventions by civil society institutions. The project is funded by the Ford Foundation.

Contact: Prof. Akeredolu-Ale, CSP, PO Box 22455, UI Post Office, Oyo Road, Ibadan, Nigeria.
Tel/fax: +234 2 8105097

Tanzania national policy research...

The University of Dar es Salaam Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and HelpAge International are working with the Tanzanian government on a policy research project. Background papers on six key themes - gender, education, social security, health, income

generation and a policy planning framework - were disseminated at a national conference in May, attended by older people and representatives of government departments, local and international NGOs and interest groups. The Department of Social Welfare will use the outcomes to draft a national policy on ageing.

A further round of consultation will follow at regional level and it is expected that a policy will be on the statute book by early 2001.

Contact: HelpAge International Programme, PO Box 9846, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
Email: helpage@udsm.ac.tz

... and support for the most vulnerable

Participatory research in Tanzania, funded by the UK Department for International Development, supports other research to show that the family is the main source of day-to-day support for older people, but family relationships can also be exploitative and contribute to older people's vulnerability.

More than half the most vulnerable older people have no identified

source of support in a crisis. Women are largely excluded from both traditional organisations and new groups, except women's groups. The most effective support groups are local community groups with a single function, such as burial groups, although these are not linked with other groups beyond the village.

The study will be used by the Tanzania NGO, SAWATA and the HelpAge International programme in Tanzania as a basis for further research at village level, and to pilot projects such as savings schemes and expansion of care schemes already in place.

For a copy of **Strengthening Village and Neighbourhood Organisations: Safety Networks for the Vulnerable** write to Liz Holmes, HelpAge International Secretariat or email: lholmes@helpage.org

South Africa study to investigate abuse

South Africa's Ministry of Welfare and Population Development, with the South African Human Rights Commission, is conducting a six-month study of how older people are treated, both at home and by government officials. The research team will travel across South Africa, conducting private and public hearings, visiting facilities including old-age homes and pension pay points, and accepting written submissions. There is plenty of anecdotal evidence of abuse. The aim of the study is to determine the direct and indirect causes of abuse and to make specific recommendations to be translated into policy.

Contact: Ministry of Welfare, Private Bag X901, Pretoria 0001 RSA.
Email: wels116@welspta.pww.gov.za
<http://www.welfare.gov.za>

We welcome brief details of current research. Please write to:

The Editor, Ageing and Development
or email: ctill@helpage.org

Correction: The woman in Orissa who was pictured in A&D 5 was Parbati Redy, not Kama Patra.

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 the HelpAge International Secretariat, 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 the Secretariat 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/publications/index.html>

Editor: Celia Till

HelpAge International Secretariat
67-74 Saffron Hill
London EC1N 8QX, UK

Tel: +44 20 7404 7201
Fax: +44 20 7404 7203
Email: hai@helpage.org

A&D email: ctill@helpage.org
<http://www.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: phinchli@helpage.org

Latin America
Email: helpage.bolivia@unete.com
<http://www.latinwide.com/helpage>

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Magnus Rosshagen/Panos Pictures



Hein du Plessis/HAI

Official treatment... a study in South Africa is investigating how older people are treated in places such as pension pay points.