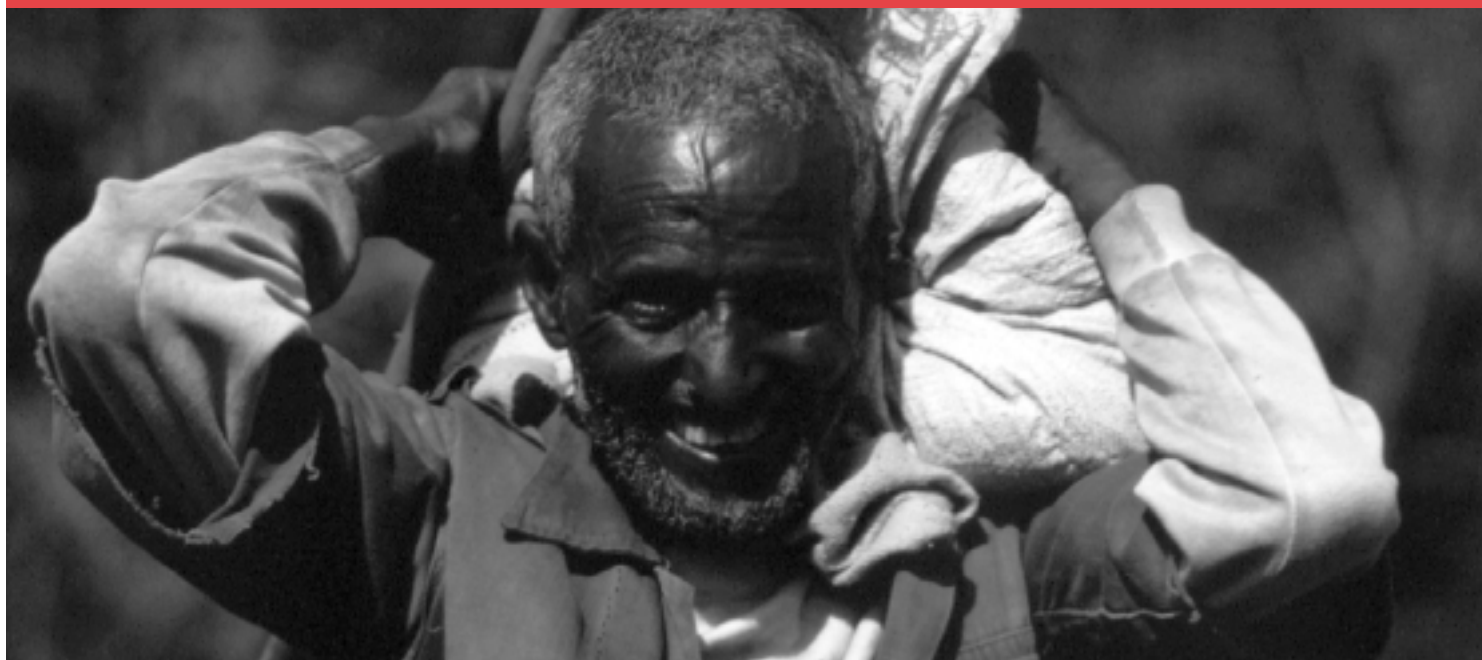


Ageing and Development

News and analysis of issues affecting the lives of older people

Issue 8 May 2001



Carrying through... African states are preparing a policy framework and plan of action for developing national policies on ageing.

African states to agree ageing policies

A policy framework and plan of action for developing national policies on ageing is to be adopted this year by governments across Africa.

At a meeting in Uganda in November 2000, more than 100 delegates from member states of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) agreed that the needs and rights of older people must be protected by better government planning and legislation. They also highlighted the urgent need to raise older people's awareness of their rights.

Poverty, rights, HIV/AIDS, and gender emerged as key areas where coordinated planning for older people was needed, as did the widespread impact of emergencies and conflict.

Given levels of poverty across Africa, particularly among older people, delegates stressed that OAU countries should tackle older people's economic rights as an integral part of wider poverty-reduction strategies, and develop

poverty-reduction programmes specifically aimed at older people. They stated that older people's rights to adequate food and nutrition should be legally guaranteed, and they should have equal access to means of production and marketing.

There was an urgent need to protect, support and educate older people in relation to HIV/AIDS. Specifically, more resources should be allocated to support growing numbers of older people caring for the sick, looking after orphans, and sustaining families and communities.

Delegates called for a review of areas of legislation of particular relevance to older people, such as property and land rights, inheritance and social security. National legislation outlawing mental and physical abuse of older people was recommended, while older people, especially women, needed guarantees of equal protection and provision under existing legislation.

'The design and implementation of realistic, far-sighted national

policies and plans of action on ageing over the coming years will be critical to the situation of older people across Africa,' says Tavengwa Nhongo, HelpAge International's Africa representative.

Recommendations from the meeting, together with a draft policy framework and plan of action, will be presented to the Heads of State and Government Assembly in July 2001 for adoption.

Older people's contribution to families affected by HIV/AIDS is recognised in the outcome document of the African Development Forum's annual meeting in Addis Ababa in December 2000 on 'AIDS the greatest leadership challenge'.

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HelpAge International

Leading global action on ageing

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Progress on UN ageing plan

Plans to revise the International Plan of Action on Ageing are well under way.

The new plan will be agreed at the Second World Assembly on Ageing in Madrid in April 2002. Arrangements for the Assembly include an NGO forum and round-table policy discussions. NGO accreditation to the Assembly has been agreed.

Three technical committee meetings and a meeting of government representatives have been held to review the draft, drawn up by the United Nations Programme on Ageing. In November 2001, the draft will be substantively debated at an inter-sessional meeting in New York. Governments have been asked to submit their views by the end of June.

All UN organisations have been asked to take specific action on ageing. In particular, they have been asked to adopt a range of measures to mainstream ageing into the international development agenda.

A special report on violence against older people is to be compiled and submitted to the Assembly, following a recommendation by the government representatives' meeting.

Involvement of older people

Issues arising from the meetings to date include greater integration throughout the plan of the nature and extent of old age poverty, human rights issues, income and employment, mental and physical disability, and resource issues.

Recommendations and action points for national governments and international institutions will be a key feature of the plan.

Older people and their representative organisations are

encouraged to feed into the revision process. The HelpAge International secretariat is supporting network members to do this – for example, through a consultation with older people in Lima, Peru in May.

UN Programme on Ageing

Alexander Sidorenko
Email: sidorenko@un.org
<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing>

Spanish organising committee

<http://www.madrid2002-envejecimiento.com>



Taking steps... older people's views will feed into the revised International Plan of Action on Ageing.

PH

Ageing study group launched

Ageing has been recognised as a key development issue by international development academics, with the launch of a new study group.

The Ageing and Development Study Group of the UK-based Development Studies Association aims to encourage research and discussion on ageing, poverty and wellbeing; intergenerational transfers; pensions and households; public policy towards

older people; health and ageing; support arrangements; and humanitarian assistance.

At the group's first meeting in May, members discussed gender, and ageing in the context of international development.

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Comment

Making connections

'The face of global poverty is the face of a young child,' declared the UK chancellor at a conference to launch the Child Poverty Initiative (page 3). But as several

of the articles in this issue show, outrage at deepening child poverty is taking place in the context of ever-worsening old-age poverty.

It is time to recognise the connections between the poverty, exclusion and discrimination faced by older carers and frail relatives, and the forces that drive

younger generations deeper into the poverty trap.

The growing commitment of international financial institutions, the private sector, the UN system and governments in the North and South to end child poverty by 2015 is to be welcomed. It is our hope that this will foster attitudes,

alliances, resources and policies that prioritise intergenerational programmes which will demonstrate how the different generations can and do support each other throughout the life-cycle.

Sylvia Beales

Policy Development Manager
HelpAge International

Letters

Ideas on the Plan of Action

I have read with interest your thought-provoking article, 'Reviewing the UN ageing plan – a flourish or a reality?' (A&D 7). You are certainly right that the issue of ageing is not receiving the attention it should from the inter-national community and national governments, despite the gravity of the problem. I have the following comments:

1. Lack of progress in the implementation of the UN International Plan of Action on

Ageing in developing countries could be partly attributed to their economic constraints. This could also explain their neglect to include specific ageing policies in many national development programmes.

2. I therefore support your proposal that the UN revised plan of action on ageing must be approached from the point of view of the mainstream development debate. It should include issues such as poverty eradication, creation of an enabling environment, achievement of gender equality, access to health and education for all, improved food security and HIV/AIDS control, and how they relate to the older population.

3. The UN conventions and declarations do not generally achieve much especially in poor developing countries unless they are backed by adequate research and technical support. (A good example of this could be seen in the slow implementation of the UN Beijing Plan of Action among developing countries.)

4. There is need to promote further ageing research and gerontological studies in the developing world, and adequate dissemination of such studies to governments in developing countries. This would help sensitise such governments to problems of ageing and how to deal with them.

5. Finally, I just wish to add that many developing countries are in a state of transition from the traditional family support system for older people and there is need for research and data to prove to them that such traditional support is hardly there any more, and new ways to cope with problems faced by older people must be found.

I certainly hope the Second World Assembly on Ageing in 2002 will come up with a revised long-term strategy on ageing.

Pamela A Mboye
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We welcome letters. Write to the editor or email: ctill@helpage.org

Intergenerational plan to tackle child poverty

A top-level initiative by the UK government to combat child poverty worldwide will help to focus attention on poverty across the generations.

The Child Poverty Initiative, launched jointly by the UK Treasury Department and Department for International Development (DFID), takes forward the UK government's commitments to the international development targets, laid out in DFID's globalisation white paper and target strategy papers.

The initiative calls on heads of international financial institutions, Northern and Southern government finance ministries, the private sector, NGOs and faith groups to collaborate to make the key actors accountable for the alleviation of poverty of children worldwide.

Each sector has signed up to a clear set of actions to help ensure that the commitment to the international development targets is translated into reality.

HelpAge International considers the initiative to be important, because it highlights the need to take into account the role of older people as carers of children.

'Links between child poverty and the wider poverty affecting family and community need to be addressed', says Sylvia Beales, HelpAge International policy development manager. 'The inclusion of age-disaggregated indicators will help to measure the nature and extent of poverty across the generations.'

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UK Treasury Department
<http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/press/2001>

UK Department for International Development
<http://www.dfid.gov.uk>

Voice in Europe

Three leading European networks of older people's organisations have joined forces to create AGE – the European Older People's Platform.

Launched in January 2001 by the European Platform of Seniors Organisations (EPSO), Fédération Internationale des Associations des Personnes Agées (FIAPA) and EuroLink Age, AGE aims to voice

and promote the interests of older people in the European Union (EU), and to raise awareness of the issues that concern them.

Membership is open to organisations of or for older people in the EU, with organisations of older people having the majority of votes in AGE's decision-making bodies. With plans to enlarge the EU – negotiations are underway with 12 countries – membership will extend to organisations in East and Central Europe.

A priority during AGE's first year is to monitor and respond to initiatives in EU health and social policy, particularly the development of a social policy.

AGE's monthly newsletter, *CoverAGE*, is available free on request in English and French.

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Giuseppe Prozzi/Panos Pictures

Making links... a new child poverty initiative raises broader issues.

News round up

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Family ties... relationships between older and younger generations have changed significantly because of changes in lifestyle.

Brent Madison/HAI

Poverty and HIV in Thailand

Tackling the generation gap

Relationships between children or young people and older people have changed significantly because of changes in lifestyle, says a report from upper-northern Thailand.

The study, using a combination of research methods in three communities, categorised older people into two main groups – those living in families with problems related to migration, drugs or HIV/AIDS, and a smaller number living in families not affected by such problems.

Older people in 'no-problem' families were, as a rule, taken care of by adult children, and were relatively well off. The majority, however, faced problems because their adult children were not there to take care of them.

Moreover, they had to take care of the grandchildren as well, often with little or no financial contribution from the adult children, making them struggle to make ends meet.

Overall, the relationships between children/youth and older people reflected inter-dependency. However, they were often marked by a communications gap, lack of understanding, and different expectations.

Responses from government agencies typically addressed only older people's physical and economic needs.

Recommendations include promoting and strengthening linkages between children/youth and older people as part of a package of support to families and communities.

Linkages between children/youth and older persons in the community in northern Thailand
Dusit Duangsa et al, UNICEF and HelpAge International, November 2000

Unparalleled impact of HIV

A report from northern Thailand highlights the 'unparalleled' impact of HIV/AIDS on older people, particularly those caring for adult children with AIDS and bringing up grandchildren.

A survey of 24 households with parents aged over 60 identified a wide range of problems of older carers, including physical exhaustion, over-burdened workload, financial hardships, emotional upheaval, lack of knowledge and resources for dealing with adult children with AIDS, increasing conflicts with grandchildren, social stigmatisation, discrimination and rejection, and exclusion from accessing appropriate knowledge and support services dealing with HIV/AIDS. These problems were exacerbated by poverty induced by the recent economic crisis.

Many older people could not maintain social contacts because of lack of time. Some could not afford to make offerings in the temple, causing feelings of guilt and resulting in isolation from religious ceremonies. Many had symptoms of severe stress.

The study also highlights older people's risk of HIV infection – in the last five years more than 100 older people had died of AIDS in the two sub-districts surveyed – and the fact that this has remained ignored by local government and most NGOs. The study recommends an urgent review of policies by government and non-government agencies.

When the boomerang returns: a qualitative study of the socio-economic impact of HIV/AIDS on older people in northern Thailand
Godfred Paul, March 2001

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Grim picture of life in Moldova

Research in the Eastern European state of Moldova paints a grim picture of life for older people.

A survey by the Moldavian NGO, Second Breath, of 1,500 people aged 65-90 (who represent 19.2 per cent of the population) shows that although most have material assets, their income is desperately low.

Pensions range from US\$5 to US\$14 a month, and are paid three to nine months late. With high unemployment making it very difficult for older people to find work, only 11 per cent of those surveyed earned additional income,

mainly by trading groceries or other items, or selling their own possessions. About 35 per cent received financial help from relatives or humanitarian organisations. The vast majority – 95 per cent – were living on less than US\$62, the minimum needed.

The survey highlights problems of poor diet, ill-health, difficulty accessing health services, lack of respect for older people's rights and a desire by older people to participate in social and political life.

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Displaced older people 'invisible'

More information is needed about growing numbers of older internally displaced people.

This was the call made in a speech by HelpAge International chairperson Flora MacDonald to the Washington College of Law in April.

Increased levels of conflict and violence and the impact of natural disasters have led to increasing numbers of internally displaced people. One estimate is 23 million,

with older people now making up 10-30 per cent.

Key issues are lack of data, older people's invisibility, the particular risks they face, their capacities and contributions, and their rights.

Legal protection of the vulnerable: internally displaced persons. April 2001.
Email: ahall@helpage.org

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

Productivity

'Older people are unproductive.'

This is a widespread view, shared by many older people themselves. Reasons given for thinking that older people cannot be a productive part of workforces include 'resistance to change', lack of knowledge of new techniques and practices, and precarious health.

Older people themselves often do not see their work as being productive. A study in Lima, Peru, found that older women, when

asked if they worked, would say 'no', even though they were selling home-made food on the street or in the market. Informal activity of this kind was not given the status of 'work'.

The fact is that older people remain productive, often well into old age. In societies where social security systems are practically non-existent, the lack of pensions means that older people have no choice but to continue to work.

In rural Tanzania, farmers in their 90s still average two hours of daily work. Household tasks, such as childminding, cooking and cleaning, are invisible but critical contributions to family economies, made by older people.

In future, shrinking proportions of younger workers in many economies will force reassessments of the capacities of older people, who themselves will begin to demand more opportunities to remain productive.

Rebuilding in Gujarat

Two months after the earthquake that devastated parts of the Indian state of Gujarat, most older people in the worst affected villages were still living in the open air or in makeshift shelters.



Emergency relief... a HelpAge India mobile medical unit provides healthcare services after the earthquake in Gujarat.

Bo Prestley/HAI

The earthquake in January 2001 left 600,000 people homeless and affected over 15 million people.

A rapid needs assessment by the University of Baroda in 15 villages in Kaachch district in March showed that most of the houses in these villages had been damaged or destroyed, but most older people surveyed had still not received any tents.

The assessment showed that other problems faced by older people included having to queue or walk long distances to collect water; being issued unsuitable clothing; eating poorly, because they were not reached by food distribution systems or had difficulty cooking; and being unable to access medical facilities.

'It's the sheer scale of the devastation that hits you,' says Ashok Rawat, director of programmes with HelpAge India, which has provided emergency aid through its mobile medical units. 'On the positive side, people are showing great courage. They remember rebuilding after the 1956 quake. But this time it will be a long process. They have never seen complete villages flattened like this.'

Local and international NGOs are coordinating a rehabilitation strategy. HelpAge India will work with 800 families of vulnerable older people to rebuild homes and support them in regaining an income.

More information:

HelpAge India:
<http://www.helpageindia.com>

Food shortages are worse for older people

Strategies commonly adopted by families to cope with severe food shortages are often inaccessible to older people.

This was one of the points made at a workshop on addressing the needs of older people in emergencies, organised by HelpAge International in Ethiopia.

Much of Ethiopia depends on food aid and selling livestock, because of drought, leaving older people particularly vulnerable. A new report from Norwegian Church Aid shows that in southern Ethiopia, households can only grow enough food to provide 10-35 per cent of their annual need, and 70 per cent

of older men and 50 per cent of older women are malnourished.

The workshop also noted that coping strategies are often culture-specific, and government food aid as food-for-work discriminates against older people.

Recommendations include developing a shared understanding among agencies, academics and donors of how to assess the nutritional status of older people, and documenting

and exchanging experience of supporting older people in emergencies.

Report on assessment of nutritional status and household food security situation in selected farmers association in Konso special woreda

Norwegian Church Aid, January 2001

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Briefing

Analysis of current topics in ageing

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HIV/AIDS: why strategies must include older people

HIV/AIDS is having a devastating impact on older people, with increasing numbers caring for sick sons and daughters and orphaned grandchildren. But links between alleviating child poverty and supporting older people are not being made. A&D explains why an intergenerational approach to tackling the HIV/AIDS crisis is essential, for the benefit of whole communities.

One day the son of a 68-year-old watchman in Thailand came home very sick. He died two months later, leaving his father to take on the job of caring for his five-year-old son. The child's grandfather

got up early each morning to prepare food and give it to his grandson before going to work, leaving the child with neighbours. After a while, due to deteriorating health and inability to provide

good care, much against his wishes, he sent his grandson to the government orphanage.¹

This story of sudden, practical and emotional pressures being placed on an older person by HIV/AIDS is not uncommon. In countries affected by HIV/AIDS, older people are increasingly acting as carers for sick sons and daughters and orphaned grandchildren. Governments and NGOs must now grasp this fact and incorporate older people into HIV/AIDS strategies. Failure to invest in older people will adversely affect not only the older generation, but also those they care for.

Older people as carers

Older people are now primary carers for younger adults sick with HIV/AIDS. Research in Thailand shows that two-thirds of adults who died of HIV/AIDS lived with or near a parent by the last stage of their illness. A parent, usually the mother, was the main carer for about half of them.²

Older people are also increasingly primary carers for children whose parents have died of HIV/AIDS. Most of the 7.8 million children orphaned by AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa live with older family members.³ A study in northern Thailand showed that grandparents were the main carers of children who had lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS, caring for an average of more than four grandchildren each.¹

HIV/AIDS puts huge economic, social and emotional pressures on older people – and on the young people they care for. In developing countries, pensions are rare, and

most older people work well into old age. Those caring for sick sons and daughters not only lose time for income-generating activities, but also have to meet extra costs of food and medical treatment. Burials add to the expense and take even more time away from work.

Often the sick son or daughter has spent everything to pay for treatment, and has nothing to contribute. Older carers are precipitated into poverty – at just the time when they might expect to start receiving more support from their families.

Older people bringing up orphaned grandchildren have to find money for school fees, books and uniforms, which many cannot afford. In Kagera, Tanzania, HelpAge International estimated that a key reason why only 1,000 of 146,000 children orphaned by HIV/AIDS attended secondary school was because their grandparents could not afford to send them.

HIV/AIDS places psychological burdens on older people, as well as practical ones. Older carers feel grief at losing sons and daughters, and worry that they cannot provide properly for their grandchildren – that their grandchildren have to care for them when they should be at school. They must cope with grandchildren missing their parents, generation gap problems, and social stigma associated with HIV/AIDS.

The time and cost of caring makes it difficult for older people to socialise. In Thailand, older carers cannot afford to take offerings to the temple, increasing feelings of guilt and social isolation.¹



Under pressure... older people are increasingly relied on to care for grandchildren whose parents have died of HIV/AIDS.

Hein du Plessis/HAI

Frequency of burials means cutting back on traditional customs, adding to their distress.

Older people are also worried about their own future – that there will be no one to support them in their old age, or give them a proper burial.

As carers, older people are at undue risk of infection, with few public information messages targeted at them as a group. Lack of knowledge about HIV/AIDS among older people also puts the young people they care for at greater risk – another reason for including older people in HIV/AIDS education programmes.

Risk through sexual activity

Older people are also at risk of getting HIV – and transmitting it – as a sexually active group. The effects of poverty and conflict, for example, younger women having sex with older men in return for gifts or payment, growing sexual violence against older women in parts of Africa, widow inheritance and misguided beliefs about protection from HIV, increase the risk of infection in older people.

But these risks are largely ignored. Data from UNAIDS on infection

rates stops at age 49, effectively discouraging interventions aimed at older people – and increasing the risks to all age groups.

Yet research in the USA shows that 10 per cent of people with HIV are aged over 50. Research in Thailand puts the figure at over 5 per cent, and in Kenya at 3.9 per cent. Actual figures may be higher, since symptoms of HIV infection in older people may be confused with other conditions.

Poverty – an overwhelming factor

Poverty and HIV/AIDS are linked in a vicious cycle. Poverty is an overwhelming factor in creating conditions for transmitting HIV – and one of the main impacts of HIV is to deepen the poverty of already poor communities. Unless poverty in old age is targeted, poverty of young people will be exacerbated – a point that needs to be recognised in strategies aimed at achieving the international development targets, which were agreed by OECD member states in 1996 and revised during 2000.

HIV/AIDS must not be separated out from other issues, but tackled in

the context of a multiplicity of problems faced by poor communities. For example, one researcher in Uganda who set out to study the impact of HIV/AIDS in a remote village found that it was impossible to focus only on HIV/AIDS. In the village, 30 older people were looking after 58 grandchildren, of whom two-thirds were orphaned for reasons other than HIV/AIDS.⁴ Grandparents caring for children for whatever reason need support, to enable the children to stay cared for within the community.

Key recommendations

Governments, NGOs and local communities need to work together to meet the needs of whole communities – which means including older people in policy development and programme planning. Key requirements include:

- More research on the impact of HIV/AIDS on older people, to develop effective programmes to support older people as carers and people living with HIV/AIDS.
- Funding for rights-based, social development and income-generation programmes that

include older people, to enable them to function more effectively as carers and people living with HIV/AIDS.

- Support for school and housing expenses of orphans and older carers.
- Gender-sensitive economic and social support to vulnerable older carers, including counselling, education, condom supply and support for parenting, giving priority to programmes involving older people as educators.
- Information-gathering and awareness-raising of the risk of HIV infection to older people and problems encountered by older people living with HIV.
- Gender-sensitive, older people-focused peer counselling and education programmes for older people living with HIV/AIDS.
- Awareness-raising among health workers of the impact of HIV/AIDS on older people, and development of strategies to improve services for older people.
- Awareness-raising programmes among younger people of the economic, social and emotional impact of HIV/AIDS on older people.

International strategies

Existing international HIV/AIDS strategies, produced by UNAIDS and the World Bank, do not target older people, either as carers or as an at-risk group.

Nor does the UK Department for International Development's new HIV/AIDS strategy, despite a recommendation by the House of Commons International Development Committee.

HelpAge International has identified HIV/AIDS as a programme priority for 2001/02, and is pressing for the inclusion of older people in key international agreements.

Opportunities include the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS in New York in June 2001, which will agree on a declaration of commitment to intensify efforts to tackle HIV/AIDS; and the Second World Assembly on Ageing in Madrid in April 2002, to review the International Plan of Action on Ageing (see news item on page 2).

Research round-up

Recent research into HIV/AIDS and older people includes:

Botswana Caring for family members with HIV/AIDS and other chronic illnesses: The impact on older women and girls (WHO/NMH/CCL/00.1)
Elizabeth Lindsey et al, WHO, 2000
Email: publications@who.int

Ethiopia Impact of HIV/AIDS and older people's knowledge, attitudes and practices to be studied by HelpAge International and Birhan Research and Development Consultancy (see page 12).
Email: hai@telecom.net.et

Thailand Major study of impact of AIDS on older people (see A&D 7 page 12).
John Knodel, Population Studies Center, USA
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<http://www.psc.isr.umich.edu/pubs>

Linkages between children/youth and older people (see page 4).
Dusit Duangsa et al, UNICEF and HelpAge International, 2001

Impact of HIV on older people (see page 4).
Godfred Paul, 2001
Email: goddy@helppageasia.com

Uganda We will be alone when we die: HIV/AIDS and the aged in rural Uganda – study supported by the Medical Research Council UK and HelpAge International, (see A&D 4 page 4).
Alun Williams and Grace Tumwekwase, 1999
Email: a.williams@mailbox.uq.edu.au
mrc@starcom.co.ug

Zimbabwe Methodology to assess the impact of HIV/AIDS on older carers to be developed by WHO (see page 12).
Email: agyarkor@who.ch

More information:
HIV/AIDS and older people: a summary
HelpAge International, 2000

Memorandum to the All Party Parliamentary Group on AIDS
HelpAge International, 2001
Email: ahall@helppage.org

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1. Paul, G. *When the boomerang returns: a qualitative study of the socio-economic impact of HIV/AIDS on older people in northern Thailand*. 2001
2. Knodel, J. *Older people and AIDS: quantitative evidence of the impact in Thailand*. Report no. 00-443. 2000
3. *UNAIDS/OHCHR guidelines*. January 2001
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Profile

Taking older people's interests forward

8

Making a hit with older women

Older people in the former Soviet bloc are suffering from the collapse of state welfare systems. A&D looks at how a Lithuanian NGO is supporting older women to take action to improve their lives.

In a hall in the Lithuanian city of Kaunas, a dozen 50-something women punch vigorously into the air. They are members of the Elderly Woman's Activities Centre and they training in self-defence.

Like other countries in East and Central Europe, older people in Lithuania have been hard hit by the transition from communism to a market economy. Under communism, the state took responsibility for health and social services, provided retirement pensions and sponsored pensioners' clubs. There was little need or encouragement for voluntary sector activities. Strengthening these is now a key challenge for civil society.

Struggle for survival

The end of communism and the collapse of state welfare systems, combined with high unemployment and inflation, have left many older people struggling to survive. Pensions have failed to keep up with inflation and do not even cover basic living expenses. Many older people rely on family support; others are left to cope alone, especially in rural areas, as younger family members have moved away to find work. Funds for health and social services have been cut and older people have problems accessing services.

The failing economy has also led to a growth in violent crime, including murder and robbery, with older women common victims. Hence the self-defence classes, which are a way of bringing older women together and helping them feel they can cope with possible attackers.

The proportion of older people is increasing, especially older women. In 1998, women aged over 55 made up 14.4 per cent of the total population, and men aged over 55 made up 9.2 per cent.

Getting involved

The Elderly Woman's Activities Centre (EWAC) was set up seven years ago to address some of the problems facing older women. EWAC aims to promote active ageing and build older women's self-esteem, provide social support, and create models of care for older people in the region.

EWAC's wide range of activities includes organising women's self-defence classes and activity clubs, running training courses for nurses, and training volunteers to care for ill and dying people and their families. EWAC also holds 'Saturday talks' (lectures and discussions on ageing), organises events to mark occasions such as the International Day for Older People, and produces literature and works with local government, the media and other NGOs to promote better services for older people.

'At the heart of EWAC's active ageing programme is a conviction that older people improve their situation by getting involved, developing voluntary action, and making sure they stay in touch with younger people,' says Nijolė Arbačiauskienė, chair of EWAC. 'Stronger relationships between the generations can greatly improve self-esteem.'

The Saturday meetings are a particular success, she says. 'They are like our laboratory. We talk about the activities we want to develop, exchange information between members, and challenge how we and others look at things.'

Training and education has increased members' confidence. Ellen, a company manager and widow in her 50s, is involved in EWAC as a project manager. She cares for her parents and has found particular support in understanding their needs from the lectures EWAC has hosted on the psychology of ageing and from the training courses on nursing older people. She herself now feels that she is 'not afraid to retire'.

Making links

The development of the voluntary sector is still at an early stage in Lithuania. EWAC is one of a growing number of voluntary organisations, and has joined the newly formed Lithuanian Network of NGOs Working for Elderly People, launched in 2000. Network members are gathering information about older people in their areas, and have identified support to isolated older people in rural areas as a priority.

EWAC's advocacy activities focus on building links with local government, rather than lobbying at national level. Says Nijolė Arbačiauskienė, 'The challenge now is to persuade local authorities that, if they make life better for older people, they will also improve the situation of everyone'.

More information:

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Gaining strength... self-defence classes are among the wide range of activities organised by the Elderly Woman's Activities Centre to support older women in Lithuania.

EWAC

Talking point

Understanding older people's experience

9

Witness to history

Older Cambodians have lived through turbulent times. With few historical records written by Cambodians, and a relatively low literacy rate, older people's memories are an important way of helping younger generations to understand and learn from the past.

An oral history project initiated by HelpAge International has captured some of the graphic memories older Cambodians have of their past. A new 30-minute video, designed to raise older people's status and influence NGOs, government officials, donors and journalists, shows older speakers reflecting on how the upheavals of the last half century shaped their day-to-day lives.



Ya Katey: 'We had nothing. We wore clothes we wove ourselves.'

Fight for independence

The video shows how, in the 1940s, life was hard for Cambodia's mainly agricultural population. Many were scraping by at subsistence level and at the same time fighting for independence from the French colonial government. Ya Katey, from the Kreung ethnic group in Ratanakiri, remembers starting work with his family as a cowherd when he was 11. 'We had nothing,' he says. 'We wore *pung* (loincloths) and *poy* (blankets) that we wove ourselves to protect us from the sun.'

Peing Ean, from Okambot village near Battambang, has memories stretching back over 50 years. 'I remember joining the Issarek independence movement,' he says. 'I wanted to stop the French and get power for Cambodians. I learnt how to fight and how to crawl along the ground so as not to be seen. I was trained to dive for cover when the enemy was bombing.'

When Cambodians won their independence under King Sihanouk in 1953, Peing Ean was overjoyed. 'I was very happy. I went back to my village and we lived in peace for about 15 years.'

There was a new sense of freedom and life was good. 'Even if we wanted to go out at night-time, no one would stop us. In one year we could get a high enough yield of rice from 20-30 hectares to feed our families for three years.'

Conflict and disarray

Then the Lon Nol coup d'état in 1970 threw ordinary people's lives into disarray again, and Cambodia was drawn into the Vietnam war. Peing Ean had to fight again. 'Any man over 18 years old had to join the army for a year and a half,' he says. 'We also had to labour for them twice a year.'

But even harder times were to follow. In 1975, Pol Pot's infamous Khmer Rouge regime took control. The entire population was forced into rural communes, facing death for disobeying orders or even revealing middle-class status.

Peing Ean's memories of that time are bitter. 'People had to leave our village – the houses were all burnt and it was empty. The Khmer Rouge took away all

our rice lands and farmland to use communally.'

Seng Sim, of Kong Var Thmey village, Banteay Meanchey, remembers labouring in the fields as part of a communal workgang and being abused if she didn't do enough. 'We weren't ever allowed to rest,' she says. 'If you couldn't transplant 160 handfuls of rice seedlings in one day, the Khmer Rouge said you were an enemy of the people. So we had to work hard, even though we only had watery rice soup to eat. Even if we felt sick they called you an enemy.'

'I never actually saw anyone killed, but I used to hear and see people being taken off to prison. Sometimes when I went to the rice fields I saw prisoners being forced to work. After the Vietnamese liberation, I saw many dead in the graves near the prison.'

'I tell my children about Pol Pot's time so that they know about the difficulties we faced. Sometimes they ask me: Is it true about Pol Pot? I tell them it's true.'

Better times

When the Khmer Rouge were overthrown in 1979 with the help of Vietnamese troops, there was fighting against the Vietnamese-backed government. 'After that we had a reconciliation when the



Peing Ean: 'Now we have a different kind of happiness.'



Seng Sim: 'I tell my children about the difficulties we faced in Pol Pot's time.'

Khmer Rouge joined the government, says Peing Ean. 'That's why things are better now.'

Asked when was the happiest time, Peing Ean names Sihanouk's time – and the present. 'Now, we have a different kind of happiness. The village has an older people's association, and a meeting hall for older people who cannot walk to the pagoda. The meeting hall can be the place for old people to pray to Buddha. That is very important to us.'

Making its mark

The video has been quick to make its mark. Minister of Women's and Veteran's Affairs Mu Suchua showed it as part of a presentation to older people. 'The group were so captivated that I realised that there are very few programmes about older people or for them', she said. She persuaded the national TV station to broadcast the video, and arranged to visit older people's projects – with the result that she has included older people in the ministry's five-year plan.

Witness to History: Conversations with Older Cambodians
VHS/PAL and VCD, 2000

Contact:

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Resources

New publications, websites, conferences and courses

10

Articles

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

National aspects

Population projection of the Czech Republic up to 2050 by the UN
A Andrie, V Srb, Demografie 42:3 (July 2000)

Population projection of the Czech Republic up to 2030
T Kretschmerova, M Simek, Demografie 42:3 (July 2000)

Family relationships in prediction of ageing (Croatia)
S Blazekovic Milakovic et al, Collegium Antropologicum 24:1 (supp) (Jul 2000)

Ageing of the Bulgarian population from 1960-1997
T Kaloyanov, Stats. in Trans. 4:3 (Dec 1999)

Japan's declining and aging population
N Yashiro, Jap. Rev. Int. Aff. 14 (Summer 2000)

Graying Japan, swaying the policy maker
H Morito, Int. J. Comp. Lab. Law and Ind. Rels. 16:1 (Spring 2000)

Demographic destiny, per-capita consumption and the Japanese saving-investment balance
R Dekle, Ox. Rev. of Econ. Pol. 16:2 (Summer 2000)

Japan's national innovation system: current status and problems
A Goto, Ox. Rev. of Econ. Pol. 16:2 (Summer 2000)

Food intakes and habits of rural elderly Malays
S Shahar et al, As. Pac. J. Clin. Nut. 9:2 (2000)

Intergenerational influence in Singapore and Taiwan: the role of the elderly in family decisions
L Williams et al, J. Cross. Cult. Geront.

The concept of family in Brazilian geriatrics and gerontology: echoes from multidisciplinary dilemma
S L Guedes, Revista Brasileira de Ciencias Sociais 15 (June 2000)

Ageing and social policy in South Africa: historical perspectives with particular reference to the Eastern Cape
A Sagner, J. S. Afr. Stud. 26:3 (Sep 2000)

The plight of rural elderly in South Africa: A case for a community development cadre?
M J Brown, J. Plann. Lit. 15:1 (2000)



Picture of health... a perspective from the Far East on health and ageing is the subject of a recent journal article.

Brent Mason/HAI

Labour migration as a social security mechanism for smallholder households in Sub-saharan Africa: the case of Cameroon
G Schreider, B Knerr, Ox. Dev. Stud. 28:2 (2000)

Care and social security

Pension privatization in Latin America
K Muller, J. Int. Dev. 12:4 (May 2000)

Historical analysis of the development of health care facilities in Kerala state, India
V R Kutty, Health Policy and Planning 15:1 (Mar 2000)

A fresh look at the Japanese welfare state
I Peng, Soc. Pol. and Admin. 34:1 (Mar 2000)

Requesting the operation of the Japanese care insurance system for the elderly: case study on the care insurance system for the elderly in a suburban city of Tokyo
S Yoda, J. of Tokyo Keizai Univ. 217 (Mar 2000)

International aspects

Confronting an aging world
J Gregg Washington Qnty 23:3 (Summer 2000)

Preparations underway (for Second World Assembly on Ageing)
Countdown (Jul 2000)

Technical committee: the first meeting
Countdown (Jul 2000)

Respect for elders: myths and realities in East Asia
K-t Sung, J. Aging and Ident. 5:4 (2000)

Health and aging: a perspective from the Far East
E Nair, J. Ad. Dev. 7:2 (2000)

Social capacity, sustainable development and older people: lessons from community based care in Southeast Asia
M Ritchie, Dev. in Pract. 10:5 (2000)

Old age and poverty in developing countries: new policy challenges
P Lloyd-Sherlock, World Dev. 28:12 (Dec 2000)

The current state of world population: a North-South contrast
M Atoh, As-Pac. Rev. 7:2 (Nov 2000)

Population problems: recent developments and their impact
J Cohen, As-Pac. Rev. 7:2 (Nov 2000)

Gender

Ageing, gender and widowhood: perspectives from rural West Bengal
S Lamb, Contribs. to Indian Soc. 33:3 (Sept-Dec 1999)

Reproducing elder male power through ritual performance in Japan
J W Traphagan, J. Cross Cult. Geront. 15:2 (2000)

Health

Prevalence of alcohol consumption and related problems in elderly clients attending primary health care services in Mexico
L R Solis et al, Salud Mental 23:3 (Jun 2000)

The Bambui health and ageing study (BHAS): methodological approach and preliminary results of a population based cohort study of the elderly in Brazil
M F F L E Costa et al, Revista de Saude Publica 34:2 (Apr 2000)

Stroke mortality in urban and rural Tanzania
R W Walker et al, Lancet 355:9216 (13 May 2000)

The changing demography of diabetes mellitus in Singapore
W R W Lee, Diabetes Research and Clin. Pract. 50:2002 (Oct 2000)

The effect of chronic medical conditions on functional capacity changes in Japanese community dwelling older adults
Y Fujiwara et al, J. Aging and Phys. 8:2 (Apr 2000)

The impact of chronic diseases on the health-related quality of life (HRQOL) of Chinese patients in primary care
C L K Lam and I L Lauder, Family Practice 17:2 (Apr 2000)

Regulatory factors of medical care expenditure for older people in Japan - analysis based on secondary medical care areas in Hokkaido
Y Fujiwara et al, Health Pol. 53:1 (August 2000)

Nutrition of elderly people in China
J D Stookey et al, As. Pac. J. of Clin. Nut. 9:4 (Dec 2000)

Insulin resistance syndrome in elderly Koreans
K M Choi et al, Diabetes 49:1624 (supp) (May 2000)

HIV/AIDS

Demographic interactions and developmental implications in the era of AIDS: findings from northern Thailand
H Jones, L Pardthaisong, Applied Geog. 20:3 (July 2000)

Risk factors for HIV-2 seropositivity among older people in Guinea Bissau. A search for the early history of HIV-2 infection
 A-G Poulsen et al, *Scand. J. Inf. Dis.* 32:2 (2000)

Journals

Education and Ageing
Journal of the Association for Education and Ageing, focusing mainly on the UK but with a section on international issues. Volume 15, No. 3, 2000 included items on Caribbean initiatives to empower elders, lifelong learning and the United Nations, witchcraft allegations in Tanzania, and impact of globalisation on images of older women.
 Price: £36 a year
 Triangle Journals, PO Box 65, Oxford OX10 0YG, UK.
 Email: journals@triangle.co.uk
<http://www.triangle.co.uk>

Books, reports and leaflets

Ageing in a gendered world: women's issues and identities
International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)
Contains academic papers on themes such as women and pension policies, older women as care-givers, family support systems and older women, and older women's identity and culture. Papers stress the importance of addressing the needs of older women when looking at social policy and identity issues affecting an ageing population.
 Price: US\$25 plus postage
 Orders: <http://www.un.org/Pubs/sales.htm> United Nations
 INSTRAW, PO Box 21747, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
 Fax: +809 685 2117
 Email: instraw.hq.sd@codetel.net.do

The imaginary time bomb: why an ageing population is not a social problem
 P Mullan
Focuses primarily on industrialised countries, but asks some thought-provoking questions applicable to ageing worldwide, such as: 'Can we identify political actions in which age-based interests predominate over interests based on economic status, geography, class or even gender?'
 Tauris Publishers
 ISBN 18606445

The politics of age and gerontocracy in Africa
 M I Aguilar (ed)
Africa World Press
 ISBN 0865435987

No aging in India: Alzheimer's, the bad family and other modern things
 L Cohen
University of California Press
 ISBN 0520083962

Widows in India: social neglect and public action
 M A Chen (ed)
Sage Publications, New Delhi
 ISBN 0761992480 (US) 8170367034 (India)

African families and the crisis of social change
 T S Weisner et al (eds)
 Bergin and Garvey
 Westport, CT, USA
 ISBN 0897894731

The human rights and the health care of the elderly people
Survey of 150 older people in Manisa, Turkey. Over 96 per cent were on social security and 54.7 per cent had a chronic illness.
 Dr Gülten Karadeniz, Celal Bayar University School of Nursing, 45 040 Manisa, Turkey

Model set-up and pilot operation of home help service programme for the elderly in Korea
HelpAge Korea, UNDP Soeul Korea, and Ministry of Science and Technology, Korea. June 2000
 UNDP ROK/97/008

Older people in disasters
Case study 11 in 'NGO Initiatives in Risk Reduction Study', DFID-funded study by the British Red Cross.
<http://www.redcross.org.uk> (click on Our Work, International Activities, NGO Natural Disaster Mitigation and Preparedness Project)

What can agricultural censuses tell us about rural population ageing in developing countries?
 Libor Stloukal
 September 2000
One of series of papers on rural ageing from FAO Population Programme Service
<http://www.fao.org/sd>

Older people in South Africa
Three booklets on access to health care, access to welfare and support and giving to family and society, for policy makers and the media.
 Contact: Thembi Mapetla, Programme Manager, HelpAge International, PO Box 30832, Braamfontain 2017, South Africa.
 Email: helpage@pop.ibi.co.za

Ageing issues in Africa: a summary
Booklet taking a practical look at older people's contribution, education and media, employment and income security, family care, health, poverty, rights, HIV/AIDS, conflict and emergencies, gender, housing and living environments, food and nutrition, and social welfare.
 Contact: Alex Diang'a, Communications Officer, HelpAge International Africa Regional Development Centre, PO Box 14888, Westlands, Nairobi, Kenya.
 Email: helpage@net2000ke.com.

Conference reports

10th Annual Celebration of the International Day of Older Persons, 5 October 2000, UN, New York
<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing/ageid00.htm>

Expert Group Meeting on Sustainable Social Structures in a Society for All Ages. Addis Ababa, 2-5 May 2000
<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing/ageadaba.htm>

2nd Annual Conference on Caring Communities for the 21st Century, 8 February 2001, UN, New York.
 Email: iccc@undp.org

Radio

The end of age
Transcript of Reith lectures by Tom Kirkwood on BBC Radio 4, April 2001. The lectures will be published as a book by Profile Books at £6.99.
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/reith2001/>

Websites

Policies and programmes on ageing
Global policy database on ageing initiated by the Division for Social Policy and Development of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA).
<http://www2.seniorweb.nl/un>

Magazines and tabloids for seniors
Gives names and contacts for magazines for older people in China, Colombia, India, Japan, South Africa and Taiwan.
<http://www.aarp.org/intl/senmagz.htm>

Portal for older people
New website on ageing issues in Chile, sponsored by the National Committee for Older People, including benefits, health, nutrition, services, rest homes, leisure activities.
<http://portaladultomayor.com>

Red Provida Latina
New website of HelpAge International members Provida Colombia, Provida Perú, Provida Bolivia and Provida Ecuador (in Spanish)
<http://www.redprovidalatina.org>

Events

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, VancoFr, BC, Canada V6B 5K3
 Fax: +604 291 5066
<http://www.harbour.sfu.ca/gero>

Global Embrace
 30 September 2001
Intergenerational walk, the major advocacy event of WHO's Global Movement for Active Ageing.
 For a handbook email: activeageing@who.int
http://www.who.int/ageing/global_movement

6th Global Conference on Ageing
 27-31 October 2002, Perth, Australia
 International Federation on Ageing
<http://www.congresswest.com.au/IFA>

Courses

Meeting the Challenge of Population Ageing Short Course: Public Policy and Service Provision for Older People
Two-week course on public policy and service practice issues specifically related to the quality of life of older people. Covers health policies, social security and pension programmes, and the provision of long-term care, specialised housing and social services.
 9-20 July 2001

University of East Anglia and University of Sheffield, UK
 Contact: Course Coordinator, Overseas Development Group, University of East Anglia, Norwich, NR4 7TJ, UK.
 Fax: +44 1603 505262
 Email: odg.train@uea.ac.uk
<http://www.uea.ac.uk/dev/odg/>

Ageing in Africa
Five-day course covering the rights of older people, health, care in the family, community and in residential homes, conflict and emergencies, social welfare and income security.
 23-27 July 2001
 Nairobi, Kenya
 Contact: HelpAge International Africa Regional Development Centre, PO Box 14888, Westlands, Nairobi, Kenya.
 Fax: +254 2 441052
 Email: helpage@net2000ke.com

Research update

Major new projects

12



In focus... health indicators are to be defined in the Caribbean.

Neil Cooper/HAI

Pensions and poverty prevention

A comparative study of how non-contributory pensions contribute to poverty prevention in South Africa and Brazil is to be carried out by the University of Hertfordshire Business School and the University of East Anglia.

Funded by DFID/ESCOR, the two-year study will look at the impact of non-contributory pensions on the wellbeing, participation and vulnerability of older people and their households, and identify lessons for other developing countries.

Contact:

Armando Barrientos, Principal Lecturer in Economics, University of Hertfordshire Business School, Mangrove Road, Hertford SG13 8QF, UK.
Fax: +44 1707 285489
Email: a.barrientos@herts.ac.uk

Factors in chronic poverty

Ageing is a factor in chronic poverty, according to research by the Chronic Poverty Research Centre (CPRC), University of Manchester Institute for Development Policy and Management, and academic institutions and NGOs.

The programme to research chronic poverty, funded by DFID/ESCOR, includes a two-year literature review to be followed by participatory studies in South Africa and Bangladesh, coordinated by HelpAge International. The study will focus on vulnerable older people's social capital (including indigenous networks and institutions) and the impact of any existing public social protection programmes on chronically poor older people. It will highlight areas for targeting poverty reduction

strategies, and identify possible indicators, based on older people's own experiences, that can be used to monitor the inclusion of older people in poverty reduction strategies and measure their success.

Contact:

Amanda Heslop, Research and Training Manager, HelpAge International, PO Box 32832, London N1 9ZN, UK.
Email: aheslop@helpage.org
CPRC website:
<http://www.deveinit.org/cprc.htm>

Impact of HIV in Ethiopia

A study by HelpAge International and Birhan Research and Development Consultancy in Ethiopia will look at how HIV/AIDS affects older people as carers and as a risk group, and assess older people's knowledge, attitudes and practice relating to HIV/AIDS. The findings will be used to recommend measures to improve the situation of older people affected by HIV/AIDS.

Contact:

Vanessa Tilstone, Programme Director, HelpAge International Programme, PO Box 3384, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
Email: hai@telecom.net.et

Minimum data set on ageing and HIV/AIDS research

The World Health Organization is working with partners in the Caribbean and Asia to establish a minimum data set (MDS) on health and ageing.

The MDS Project, which began in four African countries (see A&D5), includes defining indicators to assess the demographic, health, social and economic status of older people; developing methods of data management and analysis; supporting the development and implementation of policies; and, based on data obtained, planning interventions to improve older people's wellbeing.

In response to a key data gap identified by the project in Africa, a pilot project is being carried out in Zimbabwe to develop a methodology to assess the impact of HIV/AIDS on older carers. Results will be published in June 2001.

Contact:

WHO headquarters: Paul Kowal, WHO Evidence for Health Policy Department, Epidemiology and Burden of Disease, 20 Avenue Appia, CH-1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland
Email: kowalp@who.int

Caribbean: Martha Pelaez, Health Promotion and Protection Division, PAHO, Twenty-third Street, NW, Washington DC 20037 USA
Email: pelaezma@paho.org

HIV/AIDS: Robert de Graft Agyarko, WHO Noncommunicable Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Department, 20 Avenue Appia, CH-1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland
Email: agyarkor@who.ch

MDS project website:

<http://www.who.int/whosis/mds>

Older people in Vietnam

Participatory research into the situation of older people in Vietnam has been carried out by the Institute of Sociology, Hanoi and HelpAge International, with funding from Help the Aged (UK).

Contact:

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

Families and migration

The University of Wales is researching the effects of globalisation on the structure of societies, particularly the impact of migrant labour on sources of support to older members of Gujarati, Punjabi and Sylheti families living in the UK, India and Bangladesh. The DFID-funded study will be completed in 2002.

Contact:

Vanessa Burholt, CSPRD, University of Wales, Bangor.
Email: v.burholt@bangor.ac.uk

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

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

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

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

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