

Strategy to 2020



HelpAge

International



HelpAge International

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HelpAge International

Strategy to 2020

Our vision is a world in which all older people can lead dignified, healthy and secure lives.

Our mission is to promote the wellbeing and inclusion of older women and men, and reduce poverty and discrimination in later life.

Our role is to work with older women and men in low and middle-income countries for better services and policies, and for changes in the behaviours and attitudes of individuals and societies towards old age.

The world we want is one where every older woman and man, everywhere, can say

I have the income I need

I enjoy the best possible health and quality of life

I am safe and secure, free from discrimination and abuse

My voice is heard

The environment - the century of ageing

The past century has seen greater population changes than at any time in human history. Since 1945, advances in education and health, together with reductions in poverty, have led to a surge in the world's population. In 2011 global population passed 7 billion, and we can anticipate a world population of nearly 10 billion by 2050, with nearly all this growth in developing countries.

One key population group is changing more rapidly than any other. For most of human history the world has been predominantly young, but today's over 60s are the world's fastest growing population group. Globally, the number of people aged 60 years or over may increase from 870 million today to more than 2 billion by 2050 - over 1 in 5 of the world's population. Much of this growth is taking place in low and middle income countries, where 7 out of 10 of the world's over-60s live today.

While the most rapidly ageing societies are in Asia, "ageing" is happening everywhere; even Africa, the "young" continent, is already home to more than 60 million older women and men. Globally, the older population is itself ageing, with the proportion of over-80s in the total older age group projected to rise from 14% today to 20% by 2050.

Longer lives throughout the world are a triumphant outcome of development progress. In many countries today's 60 year-olds now have significantly longer life expectancies than previous generations and increasing numbers are living their later lives in better health and material security than in the past. Nevertheless, the events and changes that we experience throughout our lives will lead to widely divergent outcomes in old age; relative wealth or poverty are still key to our health, wellbeing and life expectancy.

Our ageing world – embracing its opportunities and challenges

Our world is changing rapidly in many ways. In all countries, rich or poor, economic, social and demographic shifts are changing what it means to grow old. A world of longer lives presents both opportunities and challenges, calling on us all to rethink our view of ageing and later life and how we need to respond. Individuals, economies and societies will need to make far-reaching changes to address population ageing. Incentives for decent work, supportive health care systems, initiatives to ensure equity in old age as well as the involvement of older people in their communities and wider societies, all need their place.

Ageing, work and income

As populations age across the world, the debate on old age income security has also grown. While formal sector work and retirement have become the norm in the developed world, in developing countries many people, especially the poorest, go on working well into old age. In many countries older people contribute significantly to family incomes, and in some cases become the household's main breadwinners.

Governments in both the developed and developing worlds are beginning to recognise that enabling decent, safe and secure work, and support to income security in old age, have benefits across generations. Pensions in old age can tackle broader social inequality and support economic growth. Educational opportunities throughout life can improve work prospects at all ages. Policy change in these areas will have significant benefits both for individuals and wider development.

Ageing and health transitions

Patterns of health and disease are also changing. The rise of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as heart disease, stroke, cancers and Alzheimer's disease, once seen as only a challenge for the "rich" world, is affecting all societies. Low- and middle-income countries now have the highest global prevalence (and lowest treatment rates) for major NCDs. The challenges of physical and mental frailty are also growing with increasing longevity. In many countries this means that the extra burden of NCDs is added to the existing diseases of poverty in old age. In addition, more people living with HIV are accessing anti-retroviral therapy enabling increasing numbers to live into older age with the virus.

Few health systems either in the developed or developing world have responded adequately to the changing health and care needs of older populations. Physical access to clinics and hospitals, a lack of awareness of health conditions and social care needs in old age, or prejudice, are all barriers faced by older people seeking health care. Although many are living longer in better health, and can with the right support continue to live full, independent lives, as they grow older their needs for both health and social care are likely to become increasingly connected, calling for radical changes in the way that health and social care systems are developed.

Ageing in a less secure world

The world is becoming less predictable. Climate change and more unstable weather patterns mean that weather-related disasters have tripled in 30 years. Older people living in weak and failing states, and those exposed to disasters and conflicts, as well as the hazards of environmental degradation and climate change, are especially at risk. For individual older people too, especially the poorest, safety and security are major concerns. Too many older people, especially older women, face violence and abuse. Older people need support to gain the confidence to break down the barriers of long-held prejudice and discrimination.

Ageing and rights

People are growing old in a world which is increasingly unequal, but also one where the demand for participation in decision-making and accountability is ever stronger. As the world becomes more connected, new technologies are reaching into the lives even of the poorest, enabling the spread of information and the development of advocacy by all citizens, helping to increase government accountability. This has the potential for changing the lives of us all as we age.

Many more older people now need the opportunity to be part of the decisions which will affect their lives. The knowledge, skills and resilience which come from lifetimes of experience need to be harnessed. Everyone has an equal right to a life of dignity and continued development, at every stage of life and physical or mental condition, and we all need to create opportunities that enhance and support our continued growth and personal development in old age.

Ageing and gender

Gender, along with age, largely defines our place in society. Income and health in old age are major gender divides. Women outlive men in most societies, and face gender-based discrimination, aggravating hazards ranging from chronic health problems to poverty and widowhood. Older men (and increasingly older women too) may suffer from the loss of status once provided by employment and income. In many countries men are at risk of

dying earlier in old age than women. Understanding our changing gender identities and power relations throughout life is thus crucial to understanding our experience of ageing.

Responding to a world growing older

In recent years the progress of ageing has led to some global response. In 2002 the Madrid Plan of Action, adopted by 160 UN Member States, provided a new agenda for ageing in the 21st Century. Nevertheless, mainstream international development continues to overlook population ageing. Indeed, the Millennium Development Goals failed to address the impact of population dynamics on any age group. Although a positive sign is that the post-2015 Sustainable Development framework holds promise of beginning to shift this imbalance, ageing still has a low priority in the post-2015 agenda.

A new view of old age

While families and communities may value their older members, in many societies across the world a negative view of later life predominates. Old age is primarily viewed as a time of loss and vulnerability. The experience of ageism is even worse for older women as it is often combined with sexism.

We must change the way we view old age if society and individuals are to continue to flourish in an ageing world. Although old age does bring changes in physical and mental health that will affect all our lives, we can no longer treat old age only as a time of decline and loss.

Ageing should be positive both for individuals and for societies. Many older people around the world live healthier, more secure lives than those of past generations. The energy and commitment of older people across the world provide enormous social benefits. Security of income and health, physical safety, and freedom from discrimination in old age are attainable goals, even in the poorest countries. Achieving these goals will enable the older men and women to release their contributions to their communities and wider society.

HelpAge's Strategy 2015-20

Building on our current work

Our last strategy (2010-14) saw a number of key achievements -

We delivered key services

HelpAge and our partners now directly reach 1.8 million of the world's poorest or most vulnerable older people and their families, with essential services such as healthcare, income generation and humanitarian response. Members of the HelpAge global network independently reach tens of millions more. Our work at the community level also generated evidence and learning for governments and other policy makers, giving us legitimacy to influence policymakers and campaign alongside older people.

We made durable changes

HelpAge focused on creating lasting change for older people, using our partnerships with governments and international organisations. Most older people in developing countries have never been able to contribute to a pension or save for retirement. Our support to governments to introduce or improve social pensions contributed to significantly increased coverage and value of pension schemes.

We worked with the UN and governments on the provision of health, HIV and care services for older people. After years of encouragement, UNAIDS established the first statistics on the number of people over 50 living with HIV. We continued our partnership with the World Health Organization, and at national level we worked with governments on areas as diverse as health reform and health worker training. We also worked to influence humanitarian actors to ensure they reach older people and other vulnerable groups in their programmes. Most importantly, we worked alongside thousands of older people's groups, who organised together to lead development benefiting all generations in their communities.

We helped advance a global ageing agenda

In 2013 we developed the first global index to rank countries according to the social and economic wellbeing of their older populations. The Global AgeWatch Index, measuring the quality of life and wellbeing of older people across income, health, capability, and the

enabling environment, has stimulated debate in public, government and academic forums in almost every country which it covers. It is becoming recognised as an important framework to measure progress by the UN, governments and civil society.

We also worked for a UN convention on older people's rights. HelpAge and our network members, together with other partners, tirelessly promoted the convention with UN Member States. Our Age Demands Action campaign enabled older people to voice their concerns to their governments, in over 60 countries in 2013, with 200,000 activists. Both our campaigns and our policy and technical advice contributed to government commitments in many countries, with the potential to improve the lives of 10 million older people.

We improved our organisational effectiveness

We continued to strengthen programme quality and management systems. We reviewed our approach to gender, developed tools to assess the effectiveness of our health work, and established improvement plans against our accountability framework. We published more open data on our work, with a number of our activities now on the International Aid Transparency Initiative registry.

We designed and delivered common programmes with a wide range of donors, notably Age International, AARP and HelpAge Deutschland from within the HelpAge global network, and from key institutional partners including the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), Irish Aid and EuropeAid.

From Strategy 2015 to Strategy 2020

At the end of our 2010-15 strategy period we are working directly with nearly two million older people and supporting policy change reaching many more in low- and middle-income countries. Our goal by 2020 is to achieve significant increases both in the number of older people with whom we will work directly, and those who will benefit from our work for wider policy change in the low- and middle-income world.

Strategy 2020 – our goals

The world we want is one where every older woman and man, everywhere, can say

1. I have the income I need

HelpAge will work to secure the right of older people to the income they need through sustainable and resilient livelihoods, decent and appropriate work, with security of assets, and adequate social protection to ensure a dignified old age.

By 2020

- More older people will have access to adequate, sustainable minimum pensions as part of a social protection floor
- More households containing older people will be able to maintain, adapt or increase their income and food security
- The financial and food security of more older people will be protected and supported through both humanitarian responses and disaster risk reduction

2. I enjoy the best possible health and care, wellbeing and dignity

HelpAge will draw on a broad range of expertise to ensure the right of older women and men to the best attainable health, nutrition and care services, enabling them to enjoy the best possible health and care, supporting wellbeing right through to the end of life.

By 2020

- More older people will report better health and well-being
- More older people living in isolation, or with chronic conditions and frailty, will be supported to live well in a place of their choice
- The health, care and nutrition requirements of more older people will be provided for and protected in humanitarian crises through both emergency responses and disaster risk reduction

3. I am safe and secure, free from all forms of discrimination, violence and abuse

HelpAge will work to achieve the right to safety and security, and freedom from all forms of discrimination, violence and abuse, for older women and men.

By 2020

- Older people will have significantly better access to legal and other support services relating to violence and abuse
- More older people will be supported to prepare for and withstand the impact of shocks in their lives, livelihoods and health
- The protection needs of older people will be addressed by all agencies in humanitarian crises and disaster risk reduction actions

4. My voice is heard

Our intergenerational movement will campaign for the voices of older women and men to be heard by decision makers. We will ensure that their experience is recognised and supported, working together as agents of change.

By 2020

- More older people will be able to participate in decision-making processes that will improve life in old age now and in the future
- Significant progress will be made towards a convention on the rights of older people
- The UN, governments, donors and other bodies will adopt age-inclusive policies and programmes, responding to the commitments of the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals and of international humanitarian law

Achieving our vision – our theory of change

To achieve our vision of a world in which all older people can lead dignified, healthy and secure lives, we will work for three key changes in low- and middle-income countries

- Equity for older people in development and humanitarian planning and programmes
- The adoption and implementation of policies to address the opportunities and challenges of ageing societies and support older people
- Changed attitudes and behaviours – both those of society towards older people and those of individuals towards their own and others' ageing

How HelpAge International will work

We will

- Provide direct assistance, where necessary, to poor and vulnerable older people
- Build the capacity of key actors (older people, policymakers and service providers) to work together to develop policy and put changes into practice
- Advocate for change in policy, practice and behaviours directly, via international instruments and bodies, and influencing global debates related to ageing
- Strengthen the voice of people to influence policy by campaigning for change and implementation, and increasing the visibility of older women and men in society
- Make the case by building strong evidence, becoming a thought leader and a knowledge hub

Provide direct assistance to poor and vulnerable older women and men

Ageing brings greater need for support for many, especially the very poor, and HelpAge, with our partners, will **provide direct services** to vulnerable older people. **Our programme delivery** will help us to **develop good practice models**, generating evidence and learning that can support their expansion. We will **support service provision** by working directly with Older People's Associations (OPAs), grassroots entities that develop the capabilities and voice of older people, enabling them to take part in development and humanitarian initiatives. We will especially **encourage older women to participate and take up leadership positions** to influence decision making.

Many of the countries facing the most dramatic increase in climate-related risks are also ageing the most rapidly. We will therefore work to ensure that the specific vulnerabilities and capacities of older people are addressed in **humanitarian crises and in disaster risk reduction, by our programmes and those of our partners**. We will **assert the right** of older people affected by disasters and conflicts to timely and appropriate humanitarian assistance and protection. We will also build their **resilience to the shocks and stresses** of climate and environmental as well as social and economic change. We will **build the capacity of partner organisations** to provide assistance in preparing for and responding to emergencies, through programmes of health and nutrition, protection, income and livelihoods recovery.

Build the capacity of key actors to implement policy in practice

We will help key actors to implement policies affecting ageing and older people by offering **technical advice and assistance** in the development of services, programmes and standards. We believe that effective policies are best made and implemented through dialogue, and will **bring policymakers and service providers together with older people** so that experience can be shared. We will **measure the impact** of our programmes, and will draw on this knowledge, as well as that of our partners, to provide evidence and guidance. We will communicate this effectively so that we can **influence other providers** of humanitarian and development assistance, and thus reach many millions more older people.

Advocate for change in policy and practice

Supporting older people in today's world remains our focus, but we also envisage the HelpAge global network of civil society partners taking a leading role in shaping national, regional and global **debates on ageing** for the future. HelpAge will raise awareness of the scale and implications of ageing in the low- and middle-income countries. We will **represent the experience of older people** from these countries **in debates on ageing and related issues** at national, regional and global level, advocating for timely and effective planning and policies. We will lead action both to **connect global development with ageing** agendas and influence policy and practice in the developing world. We will

generate and use others' knowledge on population ageing impacts, to help reshape societies for all ages.

Our policy work will take a **life-course perspective**, understanding that ageing affects the whole of life. We will build evidence of how **disadvantage throughout life is amplified in old age**. We recognise that events throughout the life course produce differing outcomes for women and men in later life, and acknowledge existing power relations. We will therefore develop **age and gender awareness** at older ages in our learning and practice. We are committed to **reducing age and gender based inequalities** as a core component of our work by including age and gender monitoring, analysis and response at the heart of everything we do. We will ensure **systematic gender-based analysis** in our data collection and research, to understand the gaps, inform actions, monitor progress and evaluate impacts. Our vision is that **through our work people of all genders will enjoy greater equality** in old age.

Strengthen the voice of older women and men

HelpAge and our network partners will continue to **work closely with older people**, listening to what they say needs to change. We will ensure that **their voice is heard** both in our own work and in wider policy and practice, enabling them to fulfil their potential. We will continue to support older women and men to **resist prejudice and discrimination** on the grounds of old age, gender, ethnicity, disability or other social characteristics.

Taking a **rights-based approach**, we will support older citizens to hold to account all service providers, both public and private. Targeted **policy, advocacy and campaigning** activities, working with national and international institutions, and involving other actors such as the private sector, will be **key influencers** of change. We will ourselves be **accountable** to older people, to our network partners, as well as to our other key stakeholders and to international instruments that monitor and reinforce government action.

Make the case by building strong evidence, becoming a thought leader and a knowledge hub

As awareness of ageing grows, we are increasingly challenged to make the case for supporting older people. To respond effectively we must continue to **build strong evidence** in all our focus areas. We will therefore continue to **develop our own skills** in bringing together robust evidence to support our case, and will also **seek wider partnerships** to draw on other expertise **particularly from academics and research institutions** in both the developed and developing world. We aim to build our capacity to act as a **knowledge hub**, providing evidence and analysis to our partners.

The HelpAge global network

The HelpAge network has been essential to our identity and values since organisations in Canada, Colombia, Kenya, India and the UK set up HelpAge International in 1983 to provide a strong network supporting older people worldwide.

Both the network and the secretariat have grown significantly since then, but the power and legitimacy of the HelpAge network still flows directly from the strength and diversity of its members, and the people with whom they work. The global network has grown steadily, and today its members directly improve the lives of millions of older people all around the world.

Over the next strategy period, our governance will evolve further, placing our network members at the forefront of our policy, advocacy and programming work, and at the heart of our governance, working to create a much stronger sense of ownership for all the activities carried out directly by HelpAge International.

Our development and humanitarian programmes will bring together different members of our global network in the design, funding and delivery of our work with older people. We will do all we can to strengthen the profile and position of members of the HelpAge global network within their own countries, and with relevant institutions in those countries.

Working as a global network

Most members of the HelpAge global network are national organisations working with older women and men in their own countries, with some working internationally as well. The network showcases and champions diversity - members include some of the largest

and most established ageing organisations in the world, as well as small grassroots organisations campaigning for change at the community level.

We are committed to continue to develop the strength and diversity of our network, and to represent the older people around the world with whom network members are working. The HelpAge network will become a global movement, providing a platform for millions of older people to speak for themselves and their communities on issues that most affect them.

Through the breadth and diversity of this global network, we will make connections and nurture solidarity between older people around the world. These connections will be strongest during global campaigns, and in humanitarian responses.

HelpAge International

HelpAge International is the secretariat for the HelpAge global network. It spans the headquarters and the regional and country offices, with all playing a key role supporting global network members.

HelpAge International also designs and delivers programmes, and undertakes global, regional and national policy and advocacy, in partnership with our network members.

Where HelpAge International will work

Our direct presence will continue to be defined by our goals of maximising impact and response to the challenges facing older people in a broad cross-section of countries. While population ageing is a global phenomenon, its rate and nature, and the challenges and opportunities faced by older people and our network members, differ sharply by region.

We will continue to have a diverse portfolio of country programmes, with different operating models and approaches based on specific regional and national contexts, the situation facing older people, and the capacities of HelpAge network members. This means that HelpAge International's body of direct work will continue to reflect three broad country categories:

- Fragile and conflict-affected states
- Low income countries
- Middle income and fast-emerging countries

Much of this work will result from our partnership with older people's organisations in the developed world, whose membership of the HelpAge global network also allows excellent knowledge-sharing and influencing opportunities.

We will aim to increase our work with older people in urban areas, recognising that the world's cities are "ageing", and the challenges and opportunities that this creates for older people and for civil society organisations working with them.

Vulnerability to sudden-onset disasters spans all three of these contexts, and therefore HelpAge International will carry out and promote with our network partners disaster risk reduction and humanitarian response actions in all three country categories, as needs and opportunities arise.

In emergencies, HelpAge International is committed to the humanitarian imperative, and doing all we can to highlight and respond to the specific vulnerabilities and capabilities of older women and men in conflicts and following natural disasters, both directly and by influencing the overall national and international aid effort. We expect our HelpAge global network Disaster Group to play a growing role in resourcing our emergency responses, both financially and in terms of staff deployments and secondments.

We will continue to operate in emergencies directly, as well as supporting network members in affected countries, where this is the most effective way to meet our humanitarian mandate.

Reflecting our ambition to bring older people much more into national and international development and humanitarian awareness and programming, we will also aim for a significant increase in working as part of larger consortia, contributing our expertise and technical know-how to joint programmes that will not in all cases require HelpAge International to maintain its own country offices.

Our partnerships

Partnership is essential to our identity, and how we operate. Where possible, we will develop partnerships that reflect our commitment to ensure that the rights of older people have the same status as other age groups, reflected by their inclusion in development thinking, policies and programmes.

To achieve our goals, we will develop and deepen our partnerships with:

- members of the HelpAge global network
- older people's organisations and campaigners
- local and national government service providers and policy makers in the countries where we operate
- United Nations agencies
- other international organisations and networks working on ageing, such as the International Federation on Ageing
- youth organisations and those focusing on intergenerational work
- women's organisations and those focusing on gender equality
- the humanitarian emergency clusters.

We expect an increasing number of partnerships to be developed and held directly by our network members, delivering benefit across the HelpAge network and programme. These partnerships include:

- academia and research bodies
- the private sector
- strategic international donors
- the international development and humanitarian communities
- national ageing organisations , and their memberships.

Our people

The greatest resource that HelpAge International can draw upon to achieve our ambitious goals is our people – the older people with whom we work at community level, our colleagues in our offices, and those of the organisations in the HelpAge network. Over the period of this strategy, **our focus will be on the secretariat staff resources needed to support the HelpAge network.** We aim to:

- recruit, retain and develop the right people, and place them in positions where they impact positively on the lives of older people
- support and guide our people to achieve results in our complex, global organisation and network
- have the skills and structures to support our work and utilise the skills across our extensive network of expertise
- continue to strengthen an organisational culture driven by our values
- invest in our leadership, to ensure that we have innovative, inspiring leaders driving change for older people with whom they work.

To improve our organisational efficiency and accountability, we commit to:

- greater transparency and accountability at all levels of HelpAge International
- a significant increase in the participation of older people in feedback mechanisms, management and governance forums etc.
- continued investment in management systems, efficiency and value for money
- optimal allocation of financial and human resources between the headquarters, regional and country offices of HelpAge International
- identification of innovative and cost-effective ways to locate more HelpAge International capacity within members.

Resourcing our strategy

The neglect of older people in many donors' resourcing priorities contributes to a challenging fundraising environment for HelpAge International and members of the HelpAge network. At the same time, in order to deliver our ambitious targets to 2020 we need both to grow our own financial resources and embed capacity within the wider network. We will continue to raise funding from conventional sources, such as governments, trusts and foundations, whilst developing new approaches and responding to opportunities that are being influenced by the fast-changing external environment.

Alongside securing grants for the delivery of our development and humanitarian programmes, we need to generate complementary sources of flexible funding so that we can invest in a high performing delivery structure, a strong network of member organisations and innovative approaches. Continued strategic partnerships with governments including the UK and Sweden will remain critical, as will our long-standing partnership with Age International who will play a vital role in resource mobilisation from donors in the UK. Likewise, other global network members will continue to play a key role in mobilising both financial and technical resources.

To grow our resources over the next strategy period, HelpAge International will:

- Build a strong core of network members in key donor countries (including the UK, USA and Germany) who are able to mobilise public and private resources and develop and implement programmes jointly with HelpAge International

- Generate a steady flow of strong programme propositions
- Diversify our partnerships with other development and private sector actors that will add value to both our resourcing and our impact
- Broaden our flexible funding base through continued and new strategic partnerships with donors and network members
- Build and diversify resources and capacity across the network to deliver high quality responses to a growing number of natural and man-made disasters
- Pilot new approaches to resource mobilisation and develop complementary income streams

To deliver this strategy we will develop a rolling three-year business plan, which will guide allocation of resources to achieve the outcomes for which we are aiming. The business plan will lay out our priorities in more detail, and set out the indicators by which we will measure our progress.