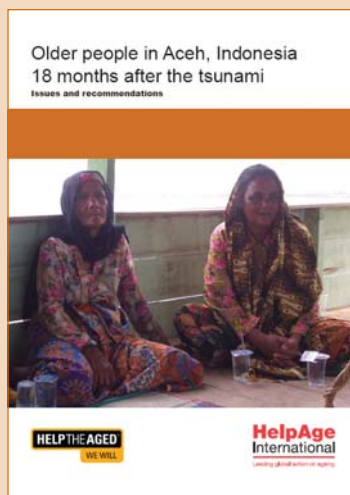




Executive summary

Older people in Aceh, Indonesia 18 months after the tsunami



This publication centres on the situation of older people in Aceh, Indonesia, and provides a selective assessment of ongoing rehabilitation programmes regarding the inclusion of older people over the first 18-month period of crisis intervention. The research began with assessments in India, Indonesia and Sri Lanka immediately after the tsunami disaster of December 2004. The specific observations presented in this publication are taken from a descriptive and analytical study using focus groups discussions with community organisers, community leaders and older people in Aceh that took place a year and half later. Relying on the anecdotal comments from these individuals, its initial assessments and its fieldwork experiences, all of which are reflected in this report, HelpAge International concludes that most rehabilitation programmes have failed to properly or widely consider the needs of older people in Aceh in social protection, health and livelihood initiatives.

During and after emergencies, older people have particular needs, vulnerabilities and capacities that differ from those of younger members of the community. These warrant special and specific attention from the humanitarian agencies providing assistance. The HelpAge International research indicates that such special attention was rarely provided in tsunami rehabilitation programmes in Aceh, leading to various discriminations in terms of new housing, health care and appropriate – if any – livelihood assistance. This can be attributed to a lack of awareness or familiarity with the needs and vulnerabilities, as well as capacities, of older people.

The tsunami had a profound impact on everyone living in Aceh but that impact has varied by age-groups. In addition to the dramatic loss of life and assets, there seems to be a pronounced loss of vitality amongst many older people. This malaise appears to be sustained or possibly reinforced by the very nature of the relief operations that have not considered older people as actors for rehabilitation and development.

To ensure older people's human rights at all times, and particularly during emergency situations, their capacities and vulnerabilities must be recognised. To that end, the following **principles of good practice** need to be applied:

1. Disaggregated information about older people must be included in any **data collecting and assessment**.
2. Older people must be recognised as **legitimate stakeholders for development**. At all stages of a project cycle, older people must be informed, consulted, encouraged to participate and provided enabling conditions for their involvement. Older people must be recognised as active participants in, for example, livelihood initiatives, social protection approaches and disaster preparedness.
3. Changes are required in the way relief and rehabilitation programmes are designed and implemented. This calls for **specialised interventions** for older people as a specific target group, as well as for **promoting and integrating age-friendly modalities and components** in all interventions.
4. Ageing issues need to be **mainstreamed** into organisational policies and practices. This requires more awareness of the particular problems and obstacles that older people encounter, changes in attitudes amongst humanitarian workers, increased knowledge and skills in addressing issues of ageing, developing age-friendly policies and allocating resources.

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