

Poverty Reduction in Multigenerational Households Affected by Migration

Issue #1 November 2010

Focus on:

- Project Partners
- Migration issues in Kyrgyzstan
- Older People Groups help each other



LIFE IS GOING ON

**WHEN YOU ARE TAKING CARE
OF YOUR GRANDCHILDREN**



**HelpAge
International**

age helps

Dear Reader,

It is with great pleasure that we present to you the first issue of our newsletter.

This year HelpAge International has started a new project “Poverty Reduction in Multigenerational Households Affected by Migration” which is being financed by the European Union.

Migration is a challenging experience, not only for Kyrgyzstan’s 800,000 migrants, but also for the thousands of older persons and children who they leave behind.

Presently, the vast majority of development projects which address the problems surrounding migration in Kyrgyzstan focus on the specific challenges faced by migrants. There has yet to be a project implemented which focuses directly on older persons and their grandchildren; in other words, on those ‘left behind’ by the migrants. There has yet to be a project which attempts to answer the questions: What are the consequences of migration on the well being of children? Or what are the ramifications of migration for older persons who are left behind? Or how can the society and the government support older carers ‘left behind’? This project is intended to address this shortcoming.

From the beginning, the important contribution remittances from migrants make towards helping families make ends meet must be recognized; however, there are a number of additional aspects of the phenomenon of mass migration which ought to be considered, such as the challenge living without the support of their children, while simultaneously being expected to support their grandchildren, poses for the older generation and the impact the absence of their parents will have on the future of those children.

Furthermore, although remittances from migrant workers certainly have a positive financial impact, it is widely reported that they are rarely regular as it often takes months or even years for the migrants to establish themselves in a foreign country and begin to earn sufficient money. As a result of this shortfall, many older carers have to rely upon their meager pensions in order to support their grandchildren, a situation which is exacerbated by the fact that their lack of parental rights means they are typically unable to access child benefits.

HelpAge International designed this project in participation with older persons from Issyk Kul, Chui and Osh provinces of the Kyrgyz Republic. We have met with so many amazing older carers who with great patience and wisdom nurture and breed and educate their grandchildren. These people are very concerned about the well being of both their children and grandchildren and endeavor to do their best to support them even at the expense of their own wellbeing.

The 71-years old leader of the Older People Group’s in this village Vera Abdilasovna

says: “We want to help our children. We want to see them happy and healthy. Life is going on when you are taking care of your grandchildren.”

In this project newsletter we will discuss how older persons support their adult children; how they cope with isolation, lack of physical care and increased responsibility for grandchildren. We strongly believe that with the right support from the society and the government our older persons can contribute a lot into the development of the new generation.

The project team and older persons hope that policy makers, service providers and civil society in Kyrgyzstan will take up the call to help older carers and those children left behind, by helping to reduce the vulnerability of migrants’ families. We hope that the changing role of older carers’ will be acknowledged by local and national governments in the future.

Begaim Eralieva,
Project Manager

Karysy bardyn yrysy bar

HelpAge International is implementing the project Karysy bardyn yrysy bar- Poverty Reduction in Multi-Generational Households Affected by Migration in the Kyrgyz Republic.

The project is being implemented in 20 rural communities in the Chui, Issyk-Kul and Osh oblasts.



Older People Group meeting in Aravan rayon

Our Local Partners:

1. Public Foundation
“Federation of Self Help Groups”
2. Public Foundation
“Mehr-Shavkat”

The project goals are:

- To increase the awareness of policy makers and service providers about the vulnerability of migrants’ families, and to acknowledge older women and men as effective contributors to the MDG targets.



Azuma Nakahira/HelpAge International

Always together

- To develop community and local authority partnerships which support sustainable income security and improved wellbeing in multi-generational households affected by migration in rural communities in the Kyrgyz Republic
- To strengthen capacity and collaboration between civil society organizations working on issues of poverty, migration and ageing in the Kyrgyz Republic through regular information exchange, debate and good practice dissemination.

What we are going to do to achieve these goals:

- Develop Older People's Groups (OPG) in target areas.
- Strengthen capacity of OPGs and our partners through training programs.
- OPGs will conduct monitoring on characteristics of poverty among multi generational households.
- OPGs will provide community based peer support to older carers.
- OPGs will work with local services in identifying multi-

generational households in need of professional care, whether in the area of health, education or social assistance.

- Micro-projects will be developed with local authorities including schools and older people's groups to enable practical collaboration and will explicitly serve to support multi-generational households.

Also we will:

- Review existing legislation impacting vulnerable multi-generational households.
- Develop research report assessing the impact of migration on older carers and migrants' children.
- Produce bi-annual newsletter on the project activities.
- Conduct two national forums to disseminate project findings to wider civil society and government audience and to encourage networking.



Our Partner: Public Foundation Mehr Shavkat

Public Foundation Mehr Shavkat is implementing the project in the Aravan and Kara Suu raions of the Osh oblast in the South of Kyrgyzstan. PF Mehr Shavkat was developed in 1996 by a group of women activists with the desire to support vulnerable people.

At present Mehr Shavkat has 120 Self Help Groups representing people of different ages and ethnicities. Groups include older and young people, men and women, Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Tajik and other ethnicities from 32 the



Alois Schlaeffer/HelpAge International

Older People Group meeting in Mehr Shavkat

poorest communities in the Aravan and Kara Suu raions.

As a result of the communal violence that started in the south of Kyrgyzstan on June 11, 2010 tens of thousands

of ethnic Uzbek residents of the Osh and Jalalabad districts of Kyrgyzstan crossed the border to Uzbekistan as refugees. About 90 percent of these refugees were children, women and older people. When refugees returned back to Kyrgyzstan Older People Groups from Kesov, Uigurabad, Janyabad and Chertik communities arranged collection of humanitarian aid for returnees in Osh: 310 lepushkas (local bread), 150 kg of onions, 200 kg of flour and 1,500 kg of potatoes.



Alois Schlaeffer/HelpAge International

Older People Humanitarian aid distribution

Our Partner: Federation of Self Help Groups

Public Foundation “Federation of Self Help Groups” in the Issyk Kul oblast is implementing the

project in 10 remote villages of Kemin, Ton and Jeti Oguz rayons.

“Federation of Self Help Groups” has been developed under the leadership of the Public Union “Resource Center for Elderly” a non-governmental non-profit organisation in Kyrgyzstan. The organization has begun its activities in 1991 to support elderly people in the country.

At present “Federation of Self Help Groups” has united 10 Older People’s Groups which are involved in the project helping out vulnerable multi-generational households with older people as carers of children.



Ak Tuz village Older People Group

Japar Kanaev/FSHG

Older People’s Group in Ak Tuz village, Kemin rayon

Ak Tuz village is located in the north of Kyrgyzstan high up in the mountains. During the Soviet time it used to be a highly

developed industrial workers’ town. Now it became the so-called “ghost town”. At present 669 people live there with 200 pensioners and 111 children. Thirty per cent of people are above 75 years old. The younger people have moved to Russia and Kazakhstan searching for job.

Federation of Self Help Groups has started a group of Older People in the village.

Ak Tuz village OPG is planning to develop a Resource Center in their village where older people would get together to discuss their problems and to support each other, to share their experiences in taking care of grandchildren.



Saida Kudaiberdieva, project coordinator visiting OPG

Alois Schlaeffer/HelpAge International

Federation of Self Help Groups has a sincere interest and enthusiasm in working with younger generation as well. They have conducted various activities with and for children in their communities. These activities help to develop an atmosphere of understanding and support between generations.

On the first of September Older People' Groups made excellent gifts for first grade school children from migrants' families. In some villages high school students participated in the "From Heart to Heart" activities and assisted older people to process potato fields and helped them with household chores.

In spite of being organized recently OPGs have already conducted activities dedicated to International Day of Children together with younger children in their communities. OPG "Onor Bulagy" made a wonderful gift for local kindergarten: soft toys for small children. In Kemin village OPG treated children with ice cream, and in Tegirmenti children received albums, pens, pencils and markers.



Federation of Self Help Groups has developed OPGs in the most remote villages Kaindy in Kemin rayon, Rosa Gulu in Tegirmenti village, Onor Bulagi in Shabdan village.

Japar Kanaev/FSHG

Rakhat OPG from Kaindy village is very active and supportive. Jyrgal Abdrakhmanova – a group leader is visiting migrants' families in the village.



Japar Kanaev/FSHG

According to the definition provided by the World Health Organization young olders are those aged 60-74, older people are those aged 75-89, and long –livers are those who are over 90 years of age. A person of advanced years is anyone who has reached the age of 65. Presently there are approximately 629 million people of advanced age in the world. This is almost one tenth of the population of the world. Many of these people are rich in experience, knowledge, skill and wisdom.



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This Newsletter is published in Kyrgyz, Russian and English. Hardcopies are distributed amongst any interested groups; however, it is also accessible on our website www.helpage.org.

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Useful links:

Campaign “Age Demands Action”: <http://www.helpage.org/Researchandpolicy/AgeDemandsAction>

Global Population Data:

<http://www.helpage.org/Researchandpolicy/stateoftheworldsolderpeople/Globaldata>