

THIS IS AGE DEMANDS ACTION



ADA
Age Demands Action

HelpAge
International
global network

Age Demands Action is a HelpAge global network campaign

A FORCE FOR CHANGE

OUR MISSION: TO BUILD GLOBAL AND LOCAL MOVEMENTS THAT ENABLE OLDER MEN AND WOMEN TO CHALLENGE AGE DISCRIMINATION AND CLAIM THEIR RIGHTS.



HelpAge Korea

All over the world, older people are coming together to claim their rights and fight age discrimination. Their global grassroots movement is called Age Demands Action (ADA). It's the only one of its kind in the world.

The ADA calendar is organised around three big dates: ADA Global, 1 October (UN International Day of Older Persons), ADA on Health, 7 April (World Health Day) and ADA for Rights, 15 June. On these special days, delegations of older people meet their governments to call for change. But action continues all year round, with older people monitoring governments to hold them to pledges they've made – and raising awareness more widely at the same time.

Launched by the HelpAge global network in 2007 in 26 countries, the campaign has already more than doubled in size – proof of the energy it's igniting globally. Through ADA, many older people are finding their voice for the first time in their lives. Often excluded for many years, they're now sitting down with political leaders to speak from the heart about what they need.

Their demands couldn't be more urgent. Older people today are some of the world's poorest, most invisible, and most marginalised. Over 100 million live on less than US\$1 a day. Half the world's older people lack a secure income, with fewer than one in five getting any kind of pension.

Thanks to ADA, that's changing. In a survey of more than 1,200 older people, 86 per cent said ADA had helped them influence governments, while 95 per cent believed it had raised the profile of ageing issues in their country. When asked what they wanted ADA's ultimate global aim to be, the answer, from a resounding 97 per cent of campaigners, was a United Nations convention on older people's rights.

So now, HelpAge is working to draw all ADA voices into a powerful, unified call for exactly that: a convention to protect the rights of older people (you'll find more detail on page 11).

In the following pages, you'll learn more about ADA's progress to date. And if you're moved and inspired, why not become part of the story yourself? Whether you could help as a funder, partner or campaigner, we'd love to hear from you.

A GROWING MOVEMENT

SINCE ITS LAUNCH IN 2007, ADA HAS GROWN FROM 26 TO 62 COUNTRIES – AND IT’S CERTAINLY NOT STOPPING THERE.

Most campaigners start locally, before stepping up their influence to national level – when they meet face-to-face with senior government ministers and heads of state. By winning such an influential audience, older people are able to transform millions of lives.

Unsurprisingly, ADA’s profile is soaring. Every year, over 100,000 people march through the streets, standing up for their rights. As a result, their voices are heard by over 100 million people worldwide. In some countries, campaigners estimate that at least half the population has heard about the campaign.

An external evaluation, carried out in 2012, found that over 10 million older people stood to benefit from better policies secured by ADA’s passionate and determined campaigners.



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“I feel powerful and I believe I can make changes being part of a big and unique campaign that happens worldwide.”

Bucur Grigore, 68, Moldova

The evaluation also highlighted an achievement that’s beyond numbers: the way ADA boosts older people’s confidence levels. Armed with new skills, they feel able to negotiate with top-level decision-makers and tell their stories to the world.

And, incredibly, it costs almost nothing to achieve such tremendous results: less than 1.5 euros per participant.

FACES AT THE FOREFRONT

**OLDER PEOPLE IN 20 COUNTRIES
NOMINATED A NUMBER OF THEIR FELLOW
CAMPAIGNERS TO BE ADA LEADERS.**

Passionate and articulate, these figures play a frontline role in taking the campaign forward. They act as media spokespeople, lead delegations to meet politicians and champion the campaign with international diplomats. The trust and influence they've won also comes down to the fact that they've experienced older people's struggles first hand.

Meet four of these outstanding representatives:

KENNETH HEMLEY, 71, JAMAICA

Kenneth spent much of his working life as a technician in Jamaica's textile industry after beginning his career in construction. Today, he is President of the Rivoli Senior Citizens Club in St Catherine and an ADA leader. Having witnessed at first hand the discrimination faced by older people, Kenneth decided "enough is enough", joining ADA to bring about change. He has since been instrumental in persuading the Jamaican Government to widen access to pensions – mobilising delegations of older people to call for this essential step forward. The power of Kenneth's campaigning has been recognised by several UN agencies, which have invited him to speak to a number of UN forums in New York.



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“We, the people, are the builders of modern Jamaica. What do we want? We want a voice. We are proud to be part of Age Demands Action, a global movement of older people.”

Kenneth Hemley

“We have been removed from a very dark pit and brought to the surface where there is light. ADA has made me an ambassador to spread news about older people. I have learnt that even in older age I am able to do something worthwhile and constructive for my country.”

Rhoda Ngima



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RHODA NGIMA, 77, KENYA

Rhoda has long been a pivotal figure in her church and community, where she brings people together, inspiring them to stay strong and keep going through life's challenges. She's now bringing her leadership experience and social commitment to ADA, where she's already made a big impact.

For instance, in 2009, she led an ADA delegation to meet the Prime Minister. And the following year, she met the Minister for Gender, Children and Social Development to explain the benefits of increasing pensions. After the meeting, the Government agreed to raise pension payments for all older people in Kenya.

In 2012, Rhoda travelled to Brussels where she met several Members of the European Parliament. In her speech, she spoke about her life in Kenya and the challenges older people have in developing countries, urging the European Union not to forget her generation. She passionately believes that the world's older people should unite as one voice.



Benedicte Desrus/HelpAge International

“We want respect and attention from doctors and medical staff, for them to treat us with care and respect and to not use our age as an excuse for not paying attention. Through ADA I learnt that we have rights we did not know about.”

Vera Geikina



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VERA GEIKINA, 77, KYRGYZSTAN

Vera used to work as an engineer, also organising political discussions in the factory where she worked. Since 2010, she has committed her time to ADA, as well as being a full-time carer for her husband who is terminally ill. She'd love to see a world in which older people are empowered to help raise the next generation.

Vera leads a delegation of older people who lobby the Government on older people's rights. For example, in April 2012, she met with the Kyrgyz Health Minister to call for a new law stopping hospitals from sending older people home because of "lack of staff".



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“I advocate for equality between people so that there is no more discrimination. All people in the world have the right to live in peace, safety and dignity.”

Abed Errahman Shehada

ABED ERRAHMAN SHEHADA, 74, GAZA

Abed Errahman is an ADA leader, living in a refugee camp in Gaza. A member of the Arab Writers Union and the Palestinian Writers and Journalists Union, he has spent years campaigning for the most vulnerable.

Abed Errahman is remarkably active in the community – known as an inspirational speaker with a gift for communication. Over the years, he has played an active part in a host of national and regional meetings on human rights.

A passionate believer in older people’s rights, Abed Errahman has even written a play on the issue called *I want to live as other people*. As part of ADA’s 2011 activities, he took part in a silent march alongside nearly 400 older people. They carried placards, demanding change and greater respect for older people.

This event also saw Abed Errahman deliver a speech to the Ministry of Social Affairs, challenging the Minister to provide more accessible healthcare for older people. He is often invited to speak at schools and in the media about the contributions older people make, and the rights which should be theirs.



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THE BREAKTHROUGHS

ADA IS PROVING BEYOND A DOUBT THAT, WHEN OLDER PEOPLE COME TOGETHER AND SPEAK OUT, POLICY MAKERS ACT. THANKS TO THE CAMPAIGN, LIFE IS GETTING BETTER, FINALLY, FOR MANY OF THE WORLD'S OLDER PEOPLE. TAKE THESE EXAMPLES:



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SUDAN

Older people in Darfur's displaced people's camps can access vital health services.

In 2011, ADA campaigners in western Darfur met with the Director General of the Ministry of Social Welfare. Their objective: to convince him to provide health insurance ID cards for older people living in displaced people's camps. And they succeeded; 2,000 vulnerable older people were provided with a card, which will help them access vital healthcare. But the campaign didn't end there; in 2012, an additional 1,000 cards were distributed, thanks to the perseverance of ADA campaigners.

KENYA

33,000 older Kenyans now have a secure income.

ADA campaigners fought long and hard for this remarkable victory, first meeting the Prime Minister in 2009 to highlight their need for a secure income. As a result, in 2010, some of the poorest older people in Kenya began receiving a monthly payment of US\$17 from the Government – a figure that will soon rise to US\$23. They need that income urgently, as many feed and care for grandchildren orphaned by AIDS.

PAKISTAN

Older people in Pakistan get much needed discounts on public transport.

Many older people in Pakistan are highly dependent on public transport, but for most, fares are simply not affordable. In 2011, ADA campaigners worked on the issue, successfully campaigning for immediate reform. After a meeting with the President of the Public Transport Union, two major discounts for older people were introduced: a 50 per cent discount on buses in three districts (Peshawar, Nowshera and Mardan) and a 50 per cent discount for buses operated by the Northern Areas Transport Corporation. This new policy will have a real impact on older people's ability to travel locally in Pakistan.



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THE PHILIPPINES

180,000 older people benefit from the Philippines' first-ever social pension scheme.

Older people won increased income security after ADA delegations marched in their thousands and targeted the most influential members of Congress. As a result of this tireless preparatory work, the Government passed a new Act in 2010, guaranteeing pensions for the country's poorest older people.

ADA campaigners have continued to lobby the Government to include indigenous older people in the social pension plan. During the 2012 ADA campaign, the Secretary of Social Welfare and Development asked our partner in the Philippines (Coalition of Services for the Elderly) to provide a list of all older people excluded from the plan. It's a promising sign – indicating that hundreds more older people will now get their pension.

“We joined hands and agreed to demonstrate so the Government would remember us.”

Josephine, 78, Kenya

PERU

Peru's poorest older people are first up for a new pension scheme.

In Peru, it's been many years since campaigners started calling for *Pensión 65*, a non-contributory pension for Peruvians over 65. But with the added impetus of ADA and the support of members of Congress, the campaign finally bore fruit: the plan was approved in October 2011, as thousands marched in three cities. Payments are already being issued, with the country's poorest older people set to receive their pension first.

FIJI

The Pacific region's first National Policy on Ageing is launched.

In 2010, ADA campaigners in Fiji urged the Ministry for Social Welfare, Women and Poverty Alleviation to introduce the Pacific region's first-ever National Policy on Ageing. Less than 12 months later, the policy was approved by the Cabinet. At a follow-up meeting with 85 ADA campaigners in October 2011, the Minister announced the creation of a National Council of Older Persons to ensure the policy is carried out in full.

SRI LANKA

Everyone over 80 in Sri Lanka now gets a pension.

In 2010, ADA campaigners in Sri Lanka fought to get a pension scheme agreed for all Sri Lankans over 80. Besides a 500-strong march and a press conference, campaigners met with senior politicians and won the support of the National Secretariat of Elders, resulting in a proposal for the country's first pension scheme.

Sri Lanka's ADA campaigners did not stop there. In 2011, they called for pensions to be extended to all those over the age of 70. Once again, their efforts proved to be an overwhelming success. The country's President agreed, with payments starting in 2012. By this date, 192,000 senior citizens were reaping the benefits of the scheme.

“We older people deserve what we are asking for now – it is not a favour.”

Florence Schandorf, 78, Ghana

INDONESIA

14,000 older people in Indonesia will receive practical support at home.

As a result of the 2011 ADA campaign, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Women's Empowerment approved the expansion of home care to 22 regions in Indonesia. The government has also made it a priority programme for the coming years – with plans to extend it across 33 regions and reach 100,000 older people in total.

By 2012, the home-care programme was in place in 20 provinces, benefiting around 14,000 people. Campaigners were delighted to see policy makers working in related areas adopt the programme to support older people in their parts of the country.

The home-care programme has won acclaim in the wider region, with neighbouring countries now set to learn from Indonesia's success. This is a big step forward: home care means older people can get the support they need while getting on with a full, rich life.

INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION

Campaigners welcome a draft Inter-American Convention on the Rights of Older Persons.

On 1 October 2012, around 30 organisations from across the region, including former presidents and mayors, joined ADA to call for a convention on older people's rights.

And now it's happening. The region's governments have agreed a draft Inter-American Convention on the Rights of Older Persons. It's a huge step forward for older people, as it will make the protection of their rights legally binding. It could also speed up progress towards a universal convention: currently ADA's biggest objective (see facing page).



A UN CONVENTION: LET'S MAKE IT HAPPEN

WHY THE NEED?

Age discrimination is tolerated across the world and must be stopped. Older people experience discrimination and violation of their rights at a family, community and institutional level. As far as existing human rights laws go, they are very low down the list of priorities.

A UN convention on the rights of older people would be a remedy – a vital part of any global solution. As a monitor of global progress on older people's rights, it would provide a definitive, universal position that age discrimination is morally and legally unacceptable. For ADA campaigners, the day the convention comes into being will represent a huge victory.

THE VISION COMES NEARER

In 2010, ADA campaigners celebrated an interim breakthrough: the launch of the UN Open-ended Working Group on ageing (OEWG). It's a unique global forum: the only place where the world's most influential decision-makers focus on older people's rights.

The HelpAge global network and ADA campaigners keep a close eye on these discussions, and during the ADA for Rights campaign, which takes place in June, campaigners call on governments to put their full weight behind the OEWG and plans for a new convention.



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“My position is that older people don't have the luxury of time. We can't wait that long!”

Salvacion Basiano, 67, the Philippines

Meanwhile, ADA leaders from Jamaica, Kyrgyzstan and the Philippines have taken part in meetings at the OEWG to present their own passionate views. Globally, campaigners are backing them by signing a petition for a convention – which, by 2012, counted 74,000 signatures.

The HelpAge global network has now put in place a strategy for the coming years which draws together all kinds of partners, supporters and campaigners. Our big goal is to help ADA campaigners grow their movement from the ground up, generating grassroots support which world leaders will be unable to ignore.

www.agedemandsaction.org

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