

Handout nr. 1: Definition of a human rights-based approach to ageing

A human-rights based approach to ageing is a way of working which is based on human rights principles and human rights standards, and aims to ensure older people's dignity, voice and wellbeing.



Handout nr. 2: PANEL Principles

Participation	Ask yourself: Are older people able to meaningfully participate, including in decision-making processes? Are activities based on older people’s perspectives? Is participation accessible for older people in all their diversity?
Accountability	Ask yourself: Have I identified the human rights that are impacted by the issue/activity? Have I clarified that older people are rights holders and they have human rights? Which obligations does the Government or other duty bearers have?
Non-discrimination	Ask yourself: How does the issue/activity affect different groups of older people, such as older people with disabilities, older women, etc.? How can I prioritise those most at risk of discrimination or human rights violations?
Empowerment	Ask yourself: How can we increase older people’s understanding of their rights? How can we support older people to claim their rights and to participate in the decisions and development of policies that affect them?
Legality	Ask yourself: Which human rights norms apply to this issue/policy/intervention? Are there any human rights treaties that are relevant? Is there perhaps a lack of legal guarantees to protect older persons’ rights?

Handout nr. 3: UN special mandates

TOPIC	MANDATE
Poverty	Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights
Food & water	Special Rapporteur on the right to food
	Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation
Housing	Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living
Health	Special Rapporteur on the right to everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health
	Special Rapporteur on the elimination of discrimination against persons with leprosy
Inclusion	Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights
	Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities
	Special Rapporteur on the right to education
Gender (also see under VAN)	Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity
	Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences
Climate change	Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change
	Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment
Humanitarian crises and conflict	Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions
	Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders
	Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons
	Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence
	Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights
Violence, abuse and neglect (also see under Gender)	Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment
	Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery
	Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children

Handout nr. 4: Advocacy for a UN Convention

Barriers	DRIVERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human rights (treaty) fatigue. • Concern over the economic impact of a new convention. • Lack of priority setting of older peoples’ concerns by governments. • Lack of national policies/programmes/changes in law or enforcement of existing tools – “Civil society has nothing to work with”. • Lack of individuals in government to address concerns/push agenda forward. • Lack of spaces for meaningful engagement of older people themselves. • Lack of capacity (no funds, no staff, no human rights literacy) – resulting from the lack of Government prioritisation of older persons’ rights. • Low number of CSOs dealing with older persons’ concerns and/or adopting a rights-based approach. • Lack of human rights education and awareness and/or UN systems in civil society organisations. • Lack of a coherent civil society network (cf. disability rights movement). • Lack of support from ‘mainstream’ human rights organisations. • Difficulty in reaching entities and stakeholders that are relevant for addressing human rights concerns to bring about change (e.g. care providers). • No public interest in the topic. • Ageist attitudes (including internalised ageism and fear of stigmatisation) across the public. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns over population ageing among policymakers (impact on health, social security, labour market) boost a sense of urgency. • Reputation and esteem-seeking as key motivation for low-income and former authoritarian countries to negotiate. • Political figureheads who take the topic forward. • Support for (or at least refrain from blocking) a Convention by most influential Member States and transnational coalitions. • Strong pressure at national level from civil society (especially in democratic states) – “Name and shame” tactics. • Strong pressure from NHRIs. • Stronger Global Network of CSOs. • Strong local networks involving multiple stakeholders, including OPAs. • Advocacy resources, meetings and information exchange opportunities to support civil society. • Education resources for civil society. • Support for a Convention/rights of older people from CSOs working on women’s rights, disability rights, etc. • Celebrity supporters (“older people’s champions”). • Media and international advocacy opportunities, such as IDOP.

Sources: J. Sciubba (2014), “Explaining campaign timing and support for a UN Convention on the Rights of Older People”, *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 18:4-5, 462-471; A. Herro (2017) “The human rights of older persons: the politics and substance of the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing”, *Austrian Journal of Human Rights*; A. Herro (2019), *The Pre-negotiation of UN Human Rights Treaties: The Case of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*”, *International Negotiation*, Vol. 24/2, 240-265; C. Green (2023), “Supporting civil society organisations in mobilising for human rights of older people” (unpublished).

Handout nr. 5: Quiz

Question 1. Explain in your own words why a human rights-based approach to ageing is important?

...

Question 2. Which of the following are considered to be key principles of a human rights-based approach?

- Accountability
- Legality
- Partiality
- Empowerment
- Discrimination

Question 3. True or false? Empowerment is about increasing the capacity of Government actors to implement human rights.

- True
- False

Question 4. Which of the following statements reflects ageist bias and/or a needs-based approach? (select all that apply)

- Older people have a right to education regardless of their age.
- As active participants in the labour market, older people are entitled to human rights.
- Older people are assets to society, so Governments should promote their inclusion.

Handout nr. 6 Group Exercise: applying the PANEL Principles

Reflect and discuss with your group the assigned PANEL principle and respond to the questions listed under that principle.

1. Participation

- How do you ensure that older people (whose rights are affected) have an influence on and participate in the development of the activities?
...
- How do older people feel that their opinions are listened to, even if a contrary decision is made?
...
- How do you overcome barriers to participation?
...
- What about representation (geographically, marginalized groups, etc.)
...

2. Accountability

- Can you identify relevant duty bearers (people and organisations with human rights obligations)?
...
- How do you use/create mechanisms to hold those duty bearers to account?
...
- How do you identify the most important capacity gaps in duty bearers to meet their obligations?
...
- How do you monitor and evaluate the impact on human rights outcomes over time?
...

3. Non-discrimination and equality

- How can you determine the most impacted groups?
...
- What characteristics other than age should be considered?
...
- How are their needs taken into account, both in participation (see above) and in ensuring their issues are reflected throughout the work?
...
- How do you check and ensure the accessibility of your own materials for groups with particular needs?
...

4. Empowerment

- How does implementation of activities contribute towards building the capacity of older people as rights holders to claim their rights?

...

- How do older people know about how they can participate in your work? How available is this information?

...

- How do you empower older people to know and claim their rights?

...

- What information would be provided to older people about their human rights?

...

5. Legality

- What human rights are affected by the activity?

...

- How do you ensure that furthering these rights is the aim of the activity?

...

- How do you use relevant human rights standards and recommendations of regional and international human rights mechanisms to inform each activity?

...

- How does your work address the full range of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights?

...