

Ageing and Development

News and analysis of issues affecting the lives of older people

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Waiting for emergency aid... a new survey reveals widespread neglect of older people in emergency responses.

Neglect in emergencies

A survey of leading humanitarian aid agencies reveals widespread neglect of older people in emergency responses.

An estimated 2.7 million people aged over 60 worldwide are living as refugees or internally displaced people. In October 2005, HelpAge International surveyed leading UK-based humanitarian aid agencies about their policy and practice relating to older people in emergencies.

While most of the agencies were keen to emphasise that older people were not excluded from their programmes, they acknowledged that they did not directly target them either. Of the 15 agencies, 14 had no direct policies or procedures for older people.

Reasons given were the lack of any policy framework or independent needs assessments that would raise the issue of older people's needs within their organisation. Two-thirds of the agencies did not

systematically include older people when disaggregating data.

Agencies made assumptions about older people – that they were passive beneficiaries, that specialist agencies were dealing with older people's issues, or that older people were covered by their own agency's programmes.

'These findings emphasise yet again how important it is to incorporate older people's issues into humanitarian aid policies, in order to improve older people's protection,' says Sylvia Beales, HelpAge International policy manager.

Extensive research by HelpAge International shows that unless older people are directly targeted, they are excluded from emergency aid. HelpAge International has four core recommendations:

■ **protect** older people by including them as a vulnerable group in all relevant areas of humanitarian law and practice

■ **include** older people by breaking down data by age and gender, and ensuring older people's participation in all stages of the project cycle

■ **mainstream** older people's concerns into organisational policies, and train humanitarian aid staff in ageing issues

■ **resource** practical programmes and research, in order to provide appropriate support to older people.

The survey and recommendations are included in a new paper written by HelpAge International and published by the Overseas Development Institute. *Protecting and assisting older people in emergencies*, HPN network paper 53, is available from HelpAge International, London (address on back page) or www.odihpn.org

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inside...

- 2 **News** [Emergencies guidelines; rights in Moldova; inheritance in Tanzania; HIV rates in older people; cash for older carers](#)
- 6 **Briefing** [Reviewing the Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing](#)
- 8 **Profile** [HelpAge India's response to the tsunami](#)
- 9 **Talking point** [Survival strategies in Bolivia](#)
- 10 **Resources** [Publications, websites and events](#)
- 12 **Research update** [Social disruption in Cambodia; HIV/AIDS in Tanzania; older women in South Africa](#)

HelpAge International

Leading global action on ageing

News round up

Developments that affect older people's quality of life

2

Emergencies guidelines on older people



Kate Holt/HelpAge International

Woman and grandchild in Darfur.

Needs in Darfur

Findings from a HelpAge International assessment of older people (aged 50 and over) in West Darfur show that:

- 34% are disabled
- 27% cannot move without help
- 9% have severely impaired vision
- 20% have just one meal a day
- 21% do not have World Food Programme ration cards
- 80% have food aid as their only source of income
- 29% care for orphans
- More than 50% live alone
- Most are widows
- Food rations are frequently inappropriate for older people
- No agency specifically targets older people or has mechanisms to ensure their inclusion.

Adapted from 'Box 7: An illustration of specific needs of older people in Darfur' in *A review of cross-cutting and other key issues*, October 2005.

A study commissioned by the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO) recommends how to include older people in emergency responses.

ECHO spends US\$600 million a year on assistance to victims of natural disasters or armed conflict outside the European Union, working through 200 NGO and UN partners.

In 2005, ECHO commissioned a review of best practice on cross-cutting issues. A section on older people points out that, despite their extreme vulnerability and often specific needs, older people are more likely to act as aid givers than receivers in emergencies, particularly if they are properly empowered to do so. The section recommends ways to ensure that older people are included in

disaster preparedness and response activities. It draws on HelpAge International's experience and findings (see box).

A second review, on water and sanitation, recommends accounting for the needs and priorities of vulnerable groups, including older people. It calls for older people to be consulted about their problems and capabilities, and suggests practical ways to ensure that they receive equitable access to services.

'These reviews are an important step towards ensuring that older

people affected by emergencies are targeted with appropriate support,' says Bill Gray, HelpAge International emergencies manager. 'They provide concrete guidance for both policy makers and practitioners.'

Both reviews were distributed to ECHO's partners at their annual meeting in December 2005.

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Both reviews will be published on the ECHO website: http://europa.eu.int/comm/echo/evaluation/thematic_en.htm

Lack of services in Iraq

Older people in Iraq face continued hardship and lack of access to health and social services, according to a new study.

The study was commissioned by HelpAge International in 2005 to identify the most vulnerable older people and their families. It included interviews with 340 older people and their families, plus community activists and local government representatives, in disadvantaged communities.

Most of the family members interviewed thought that it was primarily the government's responsibility to provide services for older people. Lack of such services placed an extra burden on them.

Instability in Iraq, compounded by

more than a decade of UN sanctions, means there is no clear framework for health and social care. There is very little understanding of older people's healthcare needs.

More than half the families in the study lived below the poverty line of US\$3 a day. Although family care for older people is the norm, this has been weakened by displacement, loss of family members and economic hardship.

Disease and disability are major concerns. More than half the older people in the study had chronic conditions such as joint and bone

problems, hypertension, heart problems, diabetes, and problems with eyesight and hearing.

Discrimination and lack of education makes women more subject to neglect and abuse.

The findings are being used to develop a community-based care programme for vulnerable older people, which includes training social workers to strengthen government service provision.

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Comment

Emergency commitments

In emergencies, the poorest people suffer most. They include significant numbers of older people. Older people also have a unique contribution to make to the protection and rehabilitation of their communities.

This issue of A&D shows how targeted support to older people can help them recover from disasters (see profile on page 8). And new recommendations resulting from a study commissioned by ECHO are an encouraging sign that policy makers are starting to embrace older people's issues (see above). But as the front page story

shows, the overall picture remains one of dismal neglect of older people by humanitarian aid agencies.

As A&D goes to press, the UN Commission for Social Development is agreeing plans for the review of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. The Madrid Plan commits governments to recognise both the vulnerability and potential

of older people in emergencies.

To enable governments to meet their commitments, and to prevent older people from suffering disproportionately, it is essential that older people are included in all stages of disaster preparedness and management.

Bill Gray, Emergencies Manager,
HelpAge International

Pressing for rights in Moldova

Three-quarters of older people in Moldova say they lack access to decent food, water, accommodation, clothes and health services, because of very low pensions and lack of state support.

This is one of the findings from a survey of 1,000 older people in northern and central Moldova, commissioned by the Moldavian NGO, Second Breath, in 2005.

Moldova is one of the poorest countries in Europe. High unemployment, migration by younger adults, cutbacks in public services, and irregular state pension payments have left many older people on the margins of society.

While older people cannot rely on pensions, they cannot rely on employment either – 77 per cent of those surveyed said that employers would not hire them.

The survey highlighted older people's precarious living arrangements – 46 per cent said they did not have family support to enable them to live safely at home, and 42 per cent said they lacked access to social services.

The survey showed that older people were interested in their rights, but had little knowledge

of what these were – 72 per cent said they were interested, but 43 per cent did not know about their entitlements.

A previous survey by Second Breath in 2004 highlighted older people's poverty. It found that older people's average income was only one-fifth of the minimum daily subsistence level. Many older people pay for medicines, though these are supposed to be free.

On average:

- 80 per cent of older people's income is spent on public utilities
- 14 per cent is spent on medicine, and only 6 per cent on food
- Only 22 per cent of older people can afford a hot meal every day
- 4 per cent seek to survive on their pensions alone.

'The surveys highlight the urgent need to improve the level and reliability of state pensions and other services for older people, and for more information about

older people's rights,' says Nadeem Haider, HelpAge International's programme manager in Moldova.

HelpAge International is working with Second Breath and Rural Social Initiative to reintegrate older people into society in southern Moldova, with funding from the EU and DCI. The programme supports older people to set up self-help groups to develop

social, economic and educational activities, and lobby local governments for improved services.

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Moldova newsletter:

www.helpage.org/Resources/Regionalnewsletters



Second Breath

A 'warm house' party in Moldova brings isolated older people together.

Widows face eviction

Women in Tanzania are at risk of losing their homes when their husbands die, a new survey shows.

HelpAge International's partners surveyed 480 men and women in eight regions of Tanzania in 2005, to find out what they knew about inheritance laws and practices.

The survey showed there was confusion on the subject. It highlighted discrepancies between what people believed to be the law, and what they said happened in practice.

Customary inheritance law in Tanzania prohibits women from inheriting property or assets after the death of their husbands. However, recent statutes contradict these customary laws.

For instance, the Land Act of 1999 affords equal ownership of land between men and women.

When asked what the official government position on property and inheritance was:

- 70 per cent of respondents thought that widows could inherit the house and land
- 23 per cent thought widows could remain in the house without owning it
- 7 per cent thought the government supported eviction of widows.

When asked what happened in practice:

- 28 per cent said that women were evicted from their homes
- 55 per cent said that women remained in the house without owning it.

'Often, one of the deceased husband's brothers takes possession of the house. In urban areas, a widow's home might be reduced to a few rooms, while the remaining rooms are rented out by the brother, who keeps the rental income,' explains Flavian Bifandimu, HelpAge International Tanzania programme officer.

The vast majority of respondents thought that widows ought to inherit the house and land. More than 90 per cent of the

women surveyed said that they would like to inherit the house, land and household assets.

The survey showed that village leaders, followed by family members, friends and neighbours, were the most common sources of information on property and inheritance rights for both men and women.

As a result of the survey, HelpAge International is training community members as paralegal advisors to educate communities about widows' rights, with funding from Comic Relief.

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News round up

Developments that affect older people's quality of life

4

Backbone of AIDS care in Africa

Older carers are the backbone of HIV/AIDS care in Africa and they need more support, says a new report from HelpAge International.

Through its HIV/AIDS programmes in 11 countries in Africa, HelpAge International estimates that half of all older people in severely-affected areas now care for adult children living with HIV/AIDS or for orphaned children.

AIDS: the frontline looks, through the eyes of older people, at the impact that HIV/AIDS has had over the last ten years on extremely poor communities in three countries – Sudan, Mozambique and South Africa – and draws out lessons for the future.

HIV/AIDS causes older people who are already poor to fall into a state of destitution. Older carers face the challenge of finding enough money to pay for medication, home-based care, food and water, burials, and school fees and uniforms. The report highlights how rolling out anti-retroviral treatment reduces the burden on older people.

AIDS: the frontline argues for:

- targeted information on HIV/AIDS and entitlements for all older carers
- economic support to carers and their dependants, including

regular cash transfers for the most vulnerable

■ better support to access existing services, such as help with transport costs, identity papers, legal paperwork, anti-retroviral treatment and school grants

■ national and international recognition of the role of older carers in the form of targeted policies, programmes and budgets, and the involvement of older carers in the design and implementation of policies and programmes, particularly home-based care programmes

■ better data on older carers to facilitate these recommendations.

The report is funded by the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS.

AIDS: the frontline: supporting older carers of people living with HIV/AIDS and orphaned children in Mozambique, South Africa and Sudan

HelpAge International, 2005

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Nguinia's story

The monthly cost of caring for a child in Mozambique is estimated at US\$21. The cost of caring for someone living with HIV/AIDS is US\$30. The average monthly income for an older person in rural areas is US\$12.

Nguinia, a 58-year-old widow, bears the cost of caring for her sick son, his wife, who is also sick, and their three children.

'I had to find food and cook for all six of us,' says Nguinia. 'We went as far as Songo (40 kilometres away) for medical treatment, but there was no improvement. The transport and treatment costs were expensive, so we sold many of our belongings.

'Throughout my life I have been a farmer. With all of this, there was no time to go to the fields, so last year we didn't harvest anything.'



Emma Judge/HelpAge International

Cash payments help grandparent-headed households, says a new report.

How cash improves lives of millions

Regular cash payments can improve the lives of millions of children and older people affected by HIV/AIDS in Africa, says a new report from HelpAge International, Save the Children and the Institute of Development Studies.

Making cash count recommends supporting a universal pension in low-income countries affected by HIV/AIDS. This is because large numbers of children live with their grandparents, who play an important role in caring for children and their chronically-sick parents.

Unconditional cash transfer schemes supporting vulnerable households in 15 African countries were reviewed. Four programmes were examined in depth, in Ethiopia, Lesotho, Zambia and Mozambique. The value of cash payments ranged from less than US\$3 a month in Mozambique to US\$111 a month in South Africa.

The review shows that cash payments are put to a wide range of uses. These include food, clothes, education, healthcare, seeds and investment in small businesses.

In Zambia, a monthly US\$8 payment is targeted at the poorest 10 per cent of the population. More than half of the recipients are older people, mainly older women, caring for orphans. One-third of those receiving the payment use it to generate further income.

In Lesotho, the US\$25 monthly pension is used not only for basics, such as food, candles, medicine and clothes, but also towards grandchildren's education costs, such as uniforms, books and stationery.

'The bigger the cash transfer, the bigger the impact. However, the key is the regularity of the payment,' says technical advisor for the report, Amanda Heslop, HelpAge International's Research Manager.

'If payments are to be predictable and not reliant on external donor funds, they need to be institutionalised into national government structures and budgets.'

The study was funded by UNICEF as part of a review of education, public works programmes and cash transfer programmes.

Making cash count

HelpAge International, Save the Children UK, Institute of Development Studies, 2005

Available from HelpAge International, London (address on back page).

The report can be downloaded from: www.helpage.org

Diary

■ New socio-legal centres for older people in Bolivia and Peru are proving popular. Three opened in Bolivia last year, bringing the total to four. By December more than 7,000 older people had been attended to. Most were older women, many needing documentation to receive the *Bonosol* (annual state pension) and health insurance. A new

centre in Lima, Peru helped to resolve an older man's 13-year battle to receive his pension – plus back-pay worth US\$10,000.

■ Ageism is rife in all generations, according to the first national survey of attitudes to age in the UK. The study by the University of Kent and Age Concern England found that people of all types and ages experience age discrimination, and that this the most pervasive form of prejudice. www.ageconcern.org.uk

■ Violations of older people's rights come in all shapes and sizes. A couple living near Maputo, Mozambique – he aged 80 and she aged 75 – were refused the right to marry, on the grounds that they were too old. Fortunately a senior citizens' group intervened and persuaded the church to accept that the couple had the right to marry. The ceremony finally took place, and was covered by the Maputo-based television station, TV Miramar.

■ It is perhaps not surprising that two reports from different parts of the world recognise love as a driving force in older people's response to HIV/AIDS. *Coping with love* describes the contributions of older people in Thailand who care for dying adult children and become second-time parents to their grandchildren. It follows a similar report from Tanzania, *The cost of love*. Both are published by HelpAge International. www.helpage.org/Resources/Researchreports

High HIV rates reported in older people

The latest AIDS epidemic update from UNAIDS reveals high rates of HIV infection in people aged over 50.

In Botswana, 21 per cent of people in their early 50s are HIV-positive, according to a new household survey. This compares with 25 per cent of 15-49 year-olds.

In Uganda, 7 per cent of men aged 50-59 are living with HIV. This is the same as the national adult rate.

The rate for women in their fifties is 5 per cent.

This is the first time that data on over 50s has been included in the report. The report says the level in Botswana is 'unexpectedly high'.

The report comments that the emerging trend of rising infection rates among older generations in some countries may point to 'an important gap in prevention efforts'.

It calls for prevention efforts to address people of all ages to be fully effective.

'The inclusion of this data from Botswana and Uganda is a welcome step forward in recognising the extent of HIV infection rates among older people, and the need to include them in programmes tackling the epidemic, including access to anti-retroviral therapy,' says Bridget Sleep,

HelpAge International policy officer.

'However, these are only surveys for two countries. All data on infection rates needs to be disaggregated by age and gender for all ages. It is older people's invisibility in infection data that has largely contributed to their exclusion from HIV/AIDS programmes.'

AIDS epidemic update
UNAIDS/WHO, December 2005
www.unaids.org/epi/2005

Older-headed households 'significantly poorer'

Older-headed households have emerged as a significant household type in several African countries. Poverty in these households is much greater than average.

These are among the findings of a UNDP and World Bank study that draws on household surveys in 15 African countries.

The study considers the case for providing social assistance to older-headed households. It concludes that a social pension targeted at households consisting of older people living with children, and households headed by older people, would bring a considerable reduction in poverty. The case for covering households with older people only also appears strong, says the report.

The report shows that the cost of providing a universal non-contributory social pension to all older people would be 'quite high', at 2-3 per cent of GDP. It regards the case for such a universal pension to appear as weak.

The report explores the options for a targeted social pension with a fixed budget constraint of 0.5 per cent of GDP. It concludes that the best option appears to be to target the pension only at poor older people, keep the benefit level low (at about one-third of the poverty threshold), and the eligible age at 65-plus.

'We welcome the findings of this study regarding the level of old-age poverty at household level,' says Mark Gorman, HelpAge International's director of policy



Older-headed households are much poorer than average, a study shows.

development. 'However, we question whether the case for a universal pension is "weak" and would like to see more analysis of design options for different models of pension provision.'

Ageing and poverty in Africa and the role of social pensions

Nanak Kakwani and Kalanidhi Subbarao
UNDP/World Bank, 2005

Available from:
www.undp.org/povertycentre

Briefing

Analysis of current topics in ageing

6

Older people to have their say in reviewing the plan on ageing

The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing is coming up for review. The agreed process for MIPAA+5 gives older people an unprecedented opportunity to be heard. Amanda Heslop explains what this means for governments and civil society organisations.

The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing was adopted by 159 UN member states in 2002. Its central aim is 'to ensure that persons everywhere are able to age with security and dignity and to participate in their societies as citizens with full rights'.

In keeping with these principles, the UN Commission for Social Development, which is responsible for monitoring progress in implementing the plan, has endorsed a 'bottom-up' and flexible review process (see box).

This marks a significant shift away from the conventional review process, in which governments report on their own actions, towards sharing this responsibility with a wider group of stakeholders, including older people.

The participation of older people in the review of an international framework for action on ageing is an unprecedented and welcome step. Older people need to be part of the process of developing policies and plans of action that affect them. As those who stand to be most affected, older people and their organisations have a vital role to play in getting their governments to act on the recommendations set out in the Madrid Plan, and in monitoring progress.

Poverty reduction is a policy priority in most developing countries and underpins the internationally-agreed Millennium Development Goals. Older people tend to be

among the poorest groups. As numbers of older people rise, so do numbers of those living in poverty. Already, 10 per cent of those living on less than a dollar a day are over 60 years old. Tackling old-age poverty would do a lot to reduce national poverty.

There are other benefits of engaging older people in reviewing the Madrid Plan. The plan promotes the mainstreaming of ageing into policies and programmes across all sectors. This can be achieved more quickly if older people's views are taken into account in the monitoring and development of all policies that affect them.

But there are challenges too. The majority of the world's older people are excluded from mainstream policy development processes. Enabling poor older people to participate meaningfully in reviewing the Madrid Plan will require a special effort. But it is particularly important to involve poor older people, because their needs are usually invisible to decision-makers.

Guidelines on participation

In February 2006, the UN Commission for Social Development (made up of 46 member states) is discussing participatory approaches to reviewing the Madrid Plan. The UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs has produced guidelines for governments on these approaches.

Governments are encouraged to review the Madrid Plan as an ongoing process, open to all interested parties, including older people. They are advised to focus on themes that are relevant to national priorities and draw on resources that are already available.

Many countries have developed

systems for monitoring progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and national development and poverty-reduction programmes. Although these programmes directly impact on the lives of older people, older people's views are often absent in the reviews. The inclusion of older people's views can generate important information for developing policies that are more responsive to their needs.

An element of national-level review of the Madrid Plan is therefore a review of key policies, to see how far they are inclusive of all generations. Collaboration between government departments and civil society organisations across all sectors is important for achieving the objectives of the Madrid Plan.

Participatory approaches are the most effective way of enabling the views of older people to be taken into account. In many countries, civil society groups have experience of monitoring activities such as service delivery to poor people and access of marginalised groups to poverty-reduction resources and budgets. These groups could facilitate participatory exercises with older people to explore issues that are of concern to them.

The purpose of participatory enquiry is not purely to gather information, but to develop policies and services based on an understanding of the needs and capacities of all parties. The process brings together a range of stakeholders who jointly analyse the situation and come to understand each other's perspectives.

Awareness-raising about the Madrid Plan, and the development of partnerships between local and national actors, are key to the review process. Partnerships

created between older people and other stakeholders need to be maintained beyond the first review exercise, to ensure that older people's views are taken into account in ongoing policy development and implementation.

Putting the plan into practice

Participatory monitoring in Bangladesh

Older people in Bangladesh have been monitoring two government poverty-alleviation programmes and building relationships with government and civil society partners. Their work is contributing to the implementation of the Madrid Plan, particularly the goal to eradicate older people's poverty.

Facilitated by a Bangladeshi NGO, Resource Integration Centre (RIC),



Resource Integration Centre

Older people's groups in Bangladesh are a group in Gazipur district, now receives

older people in 80 villages are monitoring their access to the government old-age allowance and vulnerable group development programme.

At an early stage, the older people's associations conducted their own census. They found significantly higher percentages of older people than recorded in the latest government census. In one community, they found that 9 per cent of the total population was aged over 60, compared with 6 per cent recorded by the official census.

RIC held meetings with older people to discuss their priorities. They identified food security as a major problem, together with low income, lack of assets and the absence of government health services.

The meetings led to the formation of older people's associations. Members were elected onto monitoring committees. The older people concerned received training in leadership and data collection.

The monitoring committees reviewed government policies and identified indicators to monitor their implementation. They established systems to collect, analyse and discuss their findings with government officials and other stakeholders.

Older people's associations in each village have identified who is eligible for the old age allowance, and compared their findings with those actually receiving it. In one village, only 85 older people were receiving the allowance, out of 978 who were eligible. The group is petitioning for a further 243 of those eligible – the most vulnerable – to receive the allowance.

In 2005, the government increased the old-age allowance from US\$2.50 to US\$2.75 a month, and extended coverage from 1 million to 1.32 million people. This may be due in part to advocacy by RIC. Local-level administration has also improved. Banks have allocated specific times for collecting the allowance, making it easier for older people to collect it.

Collecting data in Bolivia

Although Bolivia's National Plan on Ageing was formulated some years ago, there was very little specific data that could inform how this plan could translate into policies and programmes.

In 2002, a year after the latest 10-year census, HelpAge International approached the National Institute of Statistics with a proposal to draw on census data to produce statistics on ageing. The UN Population Fund expressed interest in supporting the project.

A project was quickly set up between these three partners. Two demographers were hired to analyse the data. The partners met regularly to agree what information was needed, and to review first results. The process lasted three months.

Findings were published and sent to national agencies and all of Bolivia's 314 local governments. Leaflets were produced and used for awareness-raising, advocacy and training events.

The findings highlighted priority areas for policy development:

- High level of poverty among older people – 63 per cent
- Higher poverty levels among rural older people – 90 per cent
- Significant proportion of older people lack identification documents – 8 per cent
- High level of economic participation among older people – four out of nine work for a living, and in rural areas more than four out of five are engaged in agriculture.

Amanda Heslop is Research and Training Manager, HelpAge International

More information:

Suggestions: participatory assessment tools and indicators for national review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing
www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing/documents/MIPAA_annx_ii_fnl.pdf

Participatory research with older people: a sourcebook
 HelpAge International, 2002
 Available free from:
www.helpage.org/Resources/Manuals



monitoring the implementation of government policies. Sakina, member of her entitlements.

Reviewing the Madrid Plan

2002

- Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing adopted by 159 UN member states.
- UN Department for Social and Economic Affairs (DESA) responsible for promoting the plan.
- Regional UN economic commissions responsible for developing regional implementation strategies.
- UN Commission for Social Development (CSD) responsible for review and appraisal of the plan.

2003

CSD endorses a bottom-up and flexible approach to review and appraisal.

2004

CSD undertakes to carry out a global review every five years, with each review focusing on one of the plan's three priority directions.

2006

Governments, at the 44th session of the CSD in February, expected to agree how to review the plan, including content, timing and themes.

Profile

Taking older people's interests forward

8

Restoring livelihoods in India

HelpAge India is playing a leading part in restoring the livelihoods of older people in communities hit by the Indian Ocean tsunami.



John Cobb/HelpAge International

Pattammal's land is being restored, after the tsunami silted it over.

'No longer a burden'

Before the Indian Ocean tsunami, Pattammal's family in Tamil Nadu supported each other. Her husband and son fished for a living, while Pattammal laboured in the nearby saltpans, kept a few cows and goats, and farmed three acres of land.

Pattammal fled from the tsunami to higher ground. She returned home a week later to find the house empty, the fishing boat broken, her livestock missing and her land silted over. She was beside herself with worry. 'My neighbours said I could never use the land for agriculture. My son was also worried. I was afraid that I and my husband would be a burden to him.'

Pattammal is one of 100 older people whose farmland is being desalinated by HelpAge India. 'Now I spend most of my time working on my land,' says Pattammal. 'I am no longer a burden to my son.'

HelpAge India is one of India's leading development agencies. It has nearly thirty years' experience of working with older people and their families.

In recent years, HelpAge India has developed substantial expertise in emergencies. In 1999, HelpAge India and its partners played a crucial role in ensuring that the particular needs of older people were met after the cyclone that killed 10,000 people and displaced 2.5 million in Orissa.

HelpAge India continues to support older people whose lives were shattered by the earthquake in Gujarat in 2001. It is currently providing relief in Kashmir to people displaced by the South Asia earthquake of October 2005.

It is the Indian Ocean tsunami of 26 December 2004 that has led to HelpAge India's biggest emergency relief and rehabilitation operation. The tsunami waves hit the coastal provinces of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh, causing massive destruction.

More than 9,000 people died on the Indian mainland and almost 70,000 were displaced. As with all disasters, the poorest suffered most, including significant numbers

of older people. HelpAge India estimates that close to 30 per cent of the dead and missing were older people.

Immediately after the tsunami, HelpAge India worked with local partners to distribute relief items to 10,300 older people in the three provinces. An initial needs assessment showed that older people were being neglected by relief agencies, and that procedures such as long queues and lack of crowd control were preventing older people from accessing relief.

HelpAge India then commissioned a survey to assess the rehabilitation needs of older people, their families and communities. The findings revealed a strong wish by older people to resume their livelihoods and get on with their lives.

The tsunami had shattered delicate local economies that depended on fishing, agriculture, livestock-rearing and other small enterprises. HelpAge India is working with four local partners, with funding from the UK Disasters Emergency Committee, to support fishermen and their families, petty traders and artisans, whose livelihoods depended on the fishing communities, and farmers, whose land was contaminated by salt water.

The programme aims to restore livelihoods, enhance social protection, and help protect against future disasters, targeting the most vulnerable older people and their families.

A particular worry faced by older people in emergencies is that they will be a burden to their families who have lost their main source of income. Just over a year since the tsunami, hundreds of older people who lost everything are back to work and feel more secure.

HelpAge India has distributed boats to 240 fisher people, desalinated 93 hectares (230 acres) of agricultural land, and provided credit to more than 800 older people to establish small businesses.

Self-help groups are an important feature of the programme. About 250 groups with more than 4,000 members have been formed to enable older people to participate in planning and implementing rehabilitation activities.

Some 1,000 of the poorest older people have received monthly cash transfers and food items. Nearly 30,000 older people have been treated by HelpAge India's three mobile medical units, and

240 older people have received trauma counselling.

The self-help groups are also being developed as a forum for sharing problems, lobbying for improved services and preparing for future disasters.

Lessons learnt

HelpAge India's experience in emergencies shows that:

- Mobile medical units can deliver immediate medical help.
- Relief is best delivered with local partners who understand the area and people.
- Self-help groups of older people help to raise awareness of older people's needs and capabilities.
- Older people are a resource and, given the right support, an asset to their families and communities.
- Creating sustainable livelihoods strengthens family bonds and helps to develop local economies.

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Talking point

Understanding older people's experience

9

Surviving with little support

It is widely assumed that older people in developing countries are supported by their families. Emmeline Skinner discusses a new study from Bolivia which shows that older men and women can rely on neither the family nor the state.

In Bolivia, the poorest country in South America, only 26 per cent of older people in urban areas, and 4 per cent in rural areas, receive a pension.

At the same time, changing demographic, social and economic factors mean that older people cannot necessarily rely on their children for support. A study in three poor urban areas of La Paz shows that most older people have to continue generating their own income or develop alternative survival strategies.

Living arrangements

A clear majority (74 per cent of men and 77 per cent of women) of the 472 older people in the study lived with their grown-up children, and often their grandchildren. Who benefited from these arrangements was less clear, however.

In many cases, living arrangements reflected the needs of the younger generation. Most of the houses with multigenerational families belonged to the older person. Only 11 per cent of older men, and 24 per cent of older women, had moved into their children's homes. The figure is higher for women, both because they are more likely to be widowed, and because they are perceived to be more helpful in the house.

While living with adult children can certainly be beneficial for both old and young, it is not always the rosy picture presented. Some older people complained about having to continue supporting their adult children, or about lacking their own space and autonomy. Some dutifully accepted their responsibility.

Some older people hoped that their investment in the younger generation would eventually be reciprocated with care.

Working to survive

Unpredictability of family support leads many older people to seek alternative means of securing their wellbeing. Of the older people in the study, 41 per cent worked to earn an income. A further 21 per cent of men and 38 per cent of women carried out unpaid work for their families.

Paid employment was poorly rewarded, however. Age-based discrimination and high unemployment meant that older people must either create their own work or accept low-paid, demeaning jobs rejected by younger people.

Older women tended to be more accepting of low-status jobs, such as washing clothes, cooking, cleaning, street vending or recycling rubbish. Older men were more reluctant to accept work that they saw as being below their status or unrelated to their previous labour activities.

Men's working history left them less prepared for old age than women. They seemed to be challenged by the loss of their role as main breadwinner. They also complained that inactivity led to illness.

Many older men expressed uneasiness about being confined to the home all day – a space in which older women were more comfortable. Older men tended to be more socially isolated than women, who had operated in different social spheres over their lifetime and developed networks of friends and family.

Pensions for a minority

The few men who accepted old age were those with a pension. Their pension income enabled them to maintain their role as main breadwinner and preserve their dignity and autonomy.

For the great majority of older people, however, maintaining alternative activities in old age was their only means of survival. Although the Bolivian government has attempted to address old-age insecurity through the provision

of an annual, universal non-contributory pension, the *Bonosol*, the real issues of how to integrate older people more fully into society, harness their contributions and recognise their right to a more comprehensive social protection system remain to be addressed.

The study was carried out by Emmeline Skinner as part of a PhD at University College, London, funded by HelpAge International.

More information:

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This older Bolivian supports himself by making children's clothes.

What older people say

'Living with one's children is like hell – often they have no money and nor do I.'

Catalina, a widow sharing her home with her daughter and grandchild

'It's the parents' duty to help out, because they [our children] don't have the resources. We have to make a sacrifice until they get good jobs.'

Don Delfin, a retired miner, who uses his small pension to support five children and two grandchildren

'Our children's support is a question of them returning what we have given them. I gave them affection, love and patience and they have to repay that if they can. That's why we say "reap what you sow".'

Gertrudis, a 72-year-old woman with a dependent daughter and two grandchildren

'Older men are ashamed to go and work doing any old thing, while a woman can go anywhere – "I'll help peel potatoes", "I'll wash plates".'

Doña María, a working woman in her 70s

'One has to keep moving, to keep working... if you just stay sitting watching TV or sleeping, that's old age.'

Don Jorge, former miner

Resources

New publications, websites, conferences and courses

10

Journal articles

A round-up of what is being written on ageing issues. For journal details please write to the editor or email: ctill@helpage.org

National

Growing old in St Lucia: expectations and experiences in a Caribbean village
Kelley L, J. Cross-Cultural Gerontology 20:1, March 2005, pp 67-78

The elderly people of post-Soviet Ukraine: medical, social and economic challenges
Lipsitz L A, J. American Geriatrics Society 53:12, December 2005, pp 2215-2220

Socio-economic support of older people in Zimbabwe
Kimuna S R, Bold 15:4, August 2005

Recent developments in institutional elder care in China: changing concepts and attitudes
Heying J Z et al., Ageing and Social Policy 18:2, 2006, pp 85-108

Remembering in times of misery: can older people in South Africa 'get through'?
Van Dongen E, Ageing and Society 25:4, July 2005, pp 525-541

25th volume celebration paper: towards an international political economy of ageing
Walker A, Ageing and Society 25:6, November 2005, pp 815-839

Living arrangements, family solidarity and life satisfaction of two generations of immigrants in Israel
Katz A L R, Ageing and Society 25:5, September 2005, pp 749-767

Ageing, care dependency, and care for older people in Egypt: a review of the literature
Boggatz T and Dassen T, J. Clinical Nursing 14:s2, October 2005, pp 56-63

Geriatrics in Brazil: a big country with big opportunities.
Garcez-Leme L E et al., J. American Geriatrics Society 51:11, November 2005, pp 2018-2022

The social aid and assistance programme of the government of Egypt – a critical review
Sabry S, Environment and Urbanization, 17:2, October 2005, pp 27-42

Cultures of ageing in Thailand and Australia (What can an ageing body do?)
Fox N J, Sociology 39, July 2005, pp 481-498

Generations at war or sustainable social policy in ageing societies?
Lindh T et al., J. Political Philosophy 14:3, September 2005

Examining the types of social support and the actual sources of support in older Chinese and Korean immigrants
Wong, S et al., A Int. J. Ageing and Human Development 61:2, 2005, pp 105-121

International

The factor of ageing in international development cooperation
Fenech F F, Bold 15:3, May 2005

Elder abuse within the family
Kosberg J L and Torgusen B L, Bold 15:3, May 2005

Orphans and children

Older adults in sub-Saharan Africa living with children and grandchildren
Zimmer, Z and Dayton J, Population Studies 59:3, November 2005, pp 295-312

Orphans' land rights in postwar Rwanda: the problem of guardianship
Rose L, Development and Change 36:5, September 2005, pp 911-936

Migration

Migration patterns and remittance transfer in Nepal: a case study of Sainik Basti in Western Nepal
Thieme S and Wyss S, International Migration 43:5, December 2005, pp 59-98

Intergenerational transfers of resources between older persons and extended kin in Taiwan and the Philippines
Agree E M et al., Population Studies 59:2, July 2005, pp 181-195

HIV/AIDS

Impacts of HIV/AIDS on the older persons in China
Xu Qin et al., Bold 15:3, May 2005

Older-aged parents: the final safety net for adult sons and daughters with AIDS in Thailand
Knodel J and Saengtienchai C, J. Family Issues 26, July 2005, pp 665-698

Social security and pensions

Dynamics of the welfare mix in the Republic of Korea: an expenditure study between 1990 and 2001
Kim J W, International Social Security Review 58:4, October 2005

Extending social security in developing countries: a review of three main strategies
Overbye E, International J. Social Welfare 14:4, October 2005, pp 305-314

A new approach to social assistance: Latin America's experience with conditional cash transfer programmes
Rawlings L B, International Social Security Review 58:2, July 2005

Social protection in Latin America: the challenges of heterogeneity and inequity
Bertranou F M and Jiménez D O, International Social Security Review 58:2, July 2005

Can Latin America protect the elderly with non-contributory programmes? The case of Uruguay
Ferreira-Coimbra N and Forteza A, Development Policy Review 23:6, October 2005, pp 683-702

Emergencies

Aid agencies ignored special needs of older people after tsunami
Mudur G, BMJ, August 2005, 331:422

Ageing and emergencies
Theme of Ageways 66, HelpAge International, December 2005
www.helpage.org/Resources/Regularpublications

Health and wellbeing

Epidemiological change and health policy for older people in developing countries: some preliminary thoughts
Lloyd-Sherlock P, Ageing Horizons 2, 2005, pp 21-24

Does retirement affect healthy ageing? A study of two groups of pensioners in Mumbai, India
Chattopadhyay A and Roy T K, Asia-Pacific Population J. 20:1, April 2005

Identification of dementia cases in the community: a Brazilian experience
Ramos-Cerqueira A T et al., J. American Geriatrics Society 53:10, October 2005

Ageing, activities of daily living, disabilities and the need for public health initiatives: some evidence from a household survey in Delhi
Alam M and Mukherjee M, Asia-Pacific Population J. 20:2, August 2005

Ethnicity and health disparities among the elderly in Taiwan
Tung H-J and Mutran E J, Research on Aging 27, May 2005, pp 327-354

Development of social health insurance in Mongolia: successes, challenges and lessons
Bayarsaikhan D et al., International Social Security Review 58:4, October 2005

Health and living arrangements among China's oldest-old
Zimmer Z, Research on Aging 27, September 2005, pp 526-555

Economics

Asia's looming old-age tsunami
Discusses the economic consequences of rapid population ageing in China and India
Nicholas Eberstadt, The Wall Street Journal, 15 November 2005

Papers and reports

The impact of the Indian Ocean tsunami on older people
Based on surveys in India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Thailand
HelpAge International, 2005
www.helpage.org/Resources/Researchreports



Achieving a better quality of life for older people through local and national action and regional co-operation: report of regional activities [South East Europe]
HelpAge International, June 2005

Keeping the promise of social security in Latin America
Gill I et al., World Bank, 2004

Income generation and social protection for the poor
Assessment of the Mexican government's strategies
IBRD/World Bank, August, 2005

Pensions in the Middle East and North Africa: time for change
Robalino D et al., International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, World Bank Orientations in Development Series
www.worldbank.org

The new pensions in Kazakhstan: challenges in making the transition
Hinz R et al., Social Protection Discussion Paper no. 0537, September 2005
www.worldbank.org

Ageing and poverty in Africa and the role of social pensions
Kakwani N and Subbarao K, International Poverty Centre, UNDP, Working Paper no.8, August 2005

Living arrangements of older people around the world
UNDESA, United Nations, 2005
www.un.org/esa/population/publications/livingarrangement/report.htm

2005 World Population Data Sheet
Population Reference Bureau, August 2005
www.prb.org/pdf05/05WorldDataSheet_Eng.pdf

New thinking on aid and social security
Human Development Report background paper by Development Initiatives, 2005
<http://hdr.undp.org/publications/papers.cfm>

United Nations expert group meeting on social and economic implications of changing population age structures [meeting report]
Mexico City, 31 August to 2 September 2005
www.un.org/esa/population/publications/EGMPopAge/EGMPopAge.htm

Global ageing and fiscal social policy with international labour mobility: a political economy perspective
Tosun M S, IMF Working Paper, July 2005
www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2005/wp05140.pdf

Can low-income countries in Africa afford social transfers?
DFID Social Protection Briefing Note Series no. 2, November 2005

Social transfers and chronic poverty: emerging evidence and the challenge ahead
DFID practice paper, October 2005

Reducing poverty by tackling social exclusion
DFID policy paper, September 2005
www.dfid.gov.uk/news/files/social-exclusion-further.asp

The greying of India: population ageing in the context of Asia
Siddhisena, A, Sage, New Delhi, 2004

Social cash transfers – reaching the poorest: a contribution to the international debate based on experience in Zambia
GTZ, July 2005, commissioned by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
Email: social-protection@gtz.de
www2.gtz.de/dokumente/bib/05-0542.pdf

Will China eat our lunch or take us out to dinner? Simulating the transition paths of the US, EU, Japan and China
Fehr H et al., NBER Working Papers 11668, National Bureau of Economic Research Inc., October 2005
www.nber.org/papers/W11668

Is living longer always a good thing? The anomaly of longevity and human development in an ageing society
Skinner E J and McSharry P E, Eldis Document Store, 2005
www.eldis.org/fulltext/longevity.pdf

Chilean pension reform: the good, the bad, and the in between
Soto M, Center for Retirement Research, Boston College, June 2005
www.bc.edu/centers/crr/issues/ib_31.pdf

Growing up global: the changing transition to adulthood in developing countries
Lloyd C B (editor), Panel on Transitions to Adulthood in Developing Countries, National Research Council

Ageing in a low-income country: is an old age pension necessary and affordable? Case study of Sri Lanka
ODI Economic and Statistics Analysis Unit Briefing Paper no. 1, November 2004

Public works as a solution to unemployment in South Africa?
Two different models of public works programme compared
ODI Economic and Statistics Analysis Unit Briefing Paper no. 2, November 2004

Preventing elder abuse and neglect
Summary of elder abuse and initiatives around the world
Global Ageing/International Federation on Ageing, 2005

Chronic poverty in Uganda: the policy challenges
Chronic Poverty Research Centre, 2005
www.chronicpoverty.org/resources/cpr-Uganda_2005_contents.html

The impact of HIV/AIDS and ageing on the changing proportion of heads of households: a comparison of Kenya and Zimbabwe

Jägare S, Dissertation submitted for MSc in Population and Development, London School of Economics and Political Science, September 2005

Improving the health, nutrition and quality of life of elderly Guyanese living in residential homes
Hewitt G, PhD thesis, University of Westminster, 2005
Available from:
Cavendish Campus Library,
University of Westminster,
115 New Cavendish Street,
London W1W 6UW, UK
Tel: +44 7911 5000

Book

Sixty plus: the elderly Brazilians and their new social roles
Ana Amélia Camarano (ed.), Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada, 2005, 588 pp, English and Portuguese
www.ipea.gov.br

This book provides a wide-ranging and rich compendium of research on ageing and later life in Brazil. It is a substantial piece of work, updating a report originally published in 1999. Sections deal with socio-demographics trends, inter-generational exchange, public policies and the economics of ageing. From the book, it is evident that ageing research in Brazil is arguably more advanced than for any other developing country, both in terms of its sophistication and scope. One key strength of the book is its attempt to treat old age as a heterogeneous experience, drawing attention to both the opportunities and vulnerabilities that later life can bring. Another central theme is the impact that radically extending the pension system has had on many aspects of older peoples' lives, especially the poor and older women.
ISBN 85 86170 62 3

Websites

HelpAge International
The website has been relaunched to provide a very wide range of information on ageing in an accessible way. It focuses especially on social protection and livelihoods, rights, HIV/AIDS, and emergencies.
www.helpage.org

AIDSPortal

Launched by DFID's global AIDS policy team and the UK Consortium on AIDS and International Development.

Includes a section on older people affected by AIDS.
www.aidsportal.org/ckw2/overlay/V2/homePage.aspx

Mountain Voices

More than 300 interviews from people in mountain communities in ten countries, including older people, compiled by Panos Oral Testimony Programme.
www.mountainvoices.org

New organisation

HelpAge Deutschland
Supports projects designed to improve livelihoods and living conditions of poor older people in developing and transition countries. Carries out awareness-raising and advocacy aimed at mainstreaming ageing into German and European development policies.

HelpAge Deutschland e.V., Johannisstr 37-38, 49074 Osnabrueck, Germany
Tel: +49 541 4705511
Fax: +49 541 4705510
Email: info@helpage.de
www.helpage.de

Events

Global Ageing: Ageing Together
8th Global Conference of the International Federation on Ageing
30 May to 2 June 2006,
Copenhagen, Denmark
Tel: +45 7023 5056
Fax: +45 7023 5057
Email: global-ageing@ics.dk
www.global-ageing.dk

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
15 June 2006
International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse
www.INPEA.net

XXV IUSSP International Population Conference
18-23 July 2005, Tours, France
Topics include global ageing, social pensions, intergenerational transfers, older caregivers and impact of migration on the older people.
<http://iussp2005.princeton.edu/programSummary.aspx>

Research update

Major new projects

12



Jon Bugge/HelpAge International

One in four older Cambodians lost children in past conflicts.

Sexual activity in Vietnam

A new report from Vietnam analyses the relationship between sexual activity and age in Vietnam, with particular attention to older people.

Marital sexual behavior and aging in Vietnam in comparative perspective by John Knodel, Vu Tuan Huy, Vu Manh Loi and Sharon Ghuman (PSC research report 05-853, October 2005)

It compares results for Vietnam with those for Thailand and the United States. It shows that levels of sexual activity among older people are remarkably similar in Vietnam and Thailand, but substantially lower than in the US.

Contact:

John Knodel, Population Studies Center, PO Box 1248, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1248, USA
Email: jknodel@umich.edu

The report can be downloaded from: www.psc.isr.umich.edu/pubs/abs.html?ID=3995, or obtained from PSC Publications Population Studies Center at the address above.

Social disruption in Cambodia

A report from Cambodia examines the extent to which the deaths of children and spouses, forced migration and family separation during the Khmer Rouge period impact on indicators that are commonly used to measure the

welfare of older adults, specifically, those related to their living arrangements, support and material wellbeing.

The impact of past conflicts and social disruption in Cambodia on the current generation of older adults by Zachary S Zimmer, John Knodel, Kiry Sovan Kim and Sina Puch (PSC research report No. 05-582, September 2005, shows that the influence of the war was widespread.

More than one in four surviving older adults in Cambodia report that a child of theirs died from violent causes during the Khmer Rouge period. More than one in five report deaths of more than one child.

One conclusion is that the impact of deaths of children and spouses is somewhat modest. The reasons for this include high fertility among the current generation of older adults in Cambodia, the probability that losses during the war depended on family size at the time, and the pervasiveness of poverty in the country today.

Contact:

John Knodel (see above).

The report can be downloaded from: www.psc.isr.umich.edu/pubs/abs.html?ID=3995, or obtained from PSC Publications Population Studies Center at the address above.

Being old in times of AIDS

A study in Kagera district, Tanzania is being carried out into the impact of HIV/AIDS on older people's daily lives.

It examines how older men and women use history to explain the present, how they maintain their position in their families and communities, and intergenerational relationships. It looks at how older people experience HIV/AIDS, how they explain it to younger adults, how they handle emotions around the death of their children, and how communities deal with increased incidence of death.

Research methods include a year-long study of 10 older men and

women, semi-structured interviews with 50 older people, key-informant interviews and observation.

The research is being carried out for a PhD with Amsterdam School of Social Science Research. A report is due in mid-2006.

Contact:

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Tel: +31 20 525 2208
Fax: +31 20 525 2446
Email: j.deklerk@uva.nl

Role of older women in South Africa

A report from South Africa explores the coping strategies of households in rural South Africa.

Caring and contributing: the role of older women in multigenerational households in the HIV/AIDS era by Enid Schatz and Catherine Ogunmefun (Research Program on Population Processes POP2005-04) focuses on the role that older women's pensions play in multi-generational households, both during crises, such as HIV-related death and illness, and day-to-day subsistence.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 60 women aged 60-75. Half the respondents were South African born, and thus eligible for a non-contributory pension. The other half were self-settled Mozambican refugees, officially ineligible for the pension.

It finds that older women use pensions for much more than their own subsistence. They do not see their pensions as money meant specifically for their own upkeep, but rather as a subsidy for the household as a whole, or at least for themselves and their grandchildren.

Contact:

Institute of Behavioral Science, University of Colorado - Boulder, 483 UCB, Boulder, CO 80309-0483, USA
Email: ibs@colorado.edu

The paper can be downloaded from: www.colorado.edu/ibs/pubs/pop/pop2005-0004.pdf

HelpAge International is a global network of not-for-profit organisations with a mission to work with and for disadvantaged older people worldwide to achieve a lasting improvement in the quality of their lives.

Ageing and Development aims to raise awareness of the contribution, needs and rights of older people and to promote the development of laws and policies supporting older people. It is published twice a year by HelpAge International, with funding from Help the Aged (UK).

Copies are available free of charge on request to policy makers, programme planners and researchers. Please contact us with brief details of your work. If requesting multiple copies, please explain who these are for and how they will be distributed.

Ageing and Development is available on the web at: www.helpage.org

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Eastern Europe and Central Asia
Email: chine@helpage.org

Latin America
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