

# Ageways

Practical issues in ageing and development  
Issue 77 / July 2011



**The Madrid Plan and you**

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**HelpAge  
International**

*age helps*

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### Future issues

Issue 78 (February 2012) Dementia  
Issue 79 (July 2012) HIV and AIDS

We welcome articles for consideration.  
Please send them three months  
before the month of publication.

### Front cover

Older women taking part in the Age  
Demands Action campaign in Haiti.

Photo: CARPA



Children and older people  
in Macedonia discover their  
creative side.

# Letters

## Sponsors for radio programmes

It pleased me to see the suggestions for sponsoring radio programmes in response to the letter from Francis Mulubwa, Zambia in *Ageways* 75. Alternatively, the programme owners could contact philanthropic individuals, religious institutions, committees of the legislature (local, state, regional, provincial, national) covering sectors that relate to the programme, explaining the strengths and the returns of broadcasting such a programme.

*Nnamso Akpan, Nigeria (by email)*

# Comment

## Call from the United Nations

The year 2012 will mark 10 years after the adoption of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA). The second review and appraisal of MIPAA is now underway, with governments undertaking national appraisals during 2011.

Civil society organisations and older people themselves have a crucial part to play. The process calls for governments to consult with civil society on how their policies and programmes are being implemented. The United Nations believes that feedback from the grassroots level is the only way for successful policies to be made – at the local, national and international level.

This issue of *Ageways* talks about how you can do this. Please get involved and make a difference.

*Rosemary Lane, Senior Social Affairs Officer, Focal Point on Ageing, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs*

## Together in a kindergarten

The ageing process brings major changes. Older people retreat from society much more than they have to. Their children often have their own families and are obliged to pay more attention to them. Older people are left to themselves. They are often also financially insecure. They begin to treat themselves in the way that society treats them. They become passive and isolated, and feel useless. They associate themselves with things that are familiar to them and that they feel comfortable with.

Over a period of one year, our project, A Kindergarten – a Place for Getting Together, enabled older people to change their usual pattern of life and feel useful again by taking part in creative workshops. The workshops covered many topics including the seasons of the year, love, music, healthy food, sports and families.

Most of the older people involved in the project had never visited a kindergarten in their entire life, so participating in this project was a new experience. They said they couldn't remember the last time they had heard a child's voice. They were pleased to have an opportunity to pass on their life experience and knowledge to the children. At the same time, the

project strengthened the children's moral values and increased their respect for older people.

The children and older people enjoyed socialising with each other. The older people complained when the project ended, but we've promised to work in cooperation with two other kindergartens and are in negotiations with them.

*Ivana Stojanovska, Humanost, Vladimir Komarov Str. 1000, Skopje, Republic of Macedonia.  
www.humanost.org.mk*

## Writing about women's silence

I commend Tumaini Yarumba, Tanzania on her email in *Ageways* 74 ("Men are the ones to talk"). She asks: "What can we do?" She is doing the exact thing that she can do, which is writing. Already her email has reached us older people in Belize and I promise to spread her message at our next VOICE meeting.

*Pat Robinson, VOICE, Belize (by email)*

*Editor's note: Another way to spread the word is by blogging. You can apply for a blog on the HelpAge website by visiting [www.helpage.org/blogs](http://www.helpage.org/blogs) or email Sarah Marzouk, Online Communications, at: [smarzouk@helpage.org](mailto:smarzouk@helpage.org)*



# Reader survey

**Thank you very much** to everyone who returned the survey card in *Ageways* 76. We received replies from readers in 26 countries, with 85 per cent saying they find *Ageways* very useful and 82 per cent saying it has improved the way they work.

Readers use *Ageways* mainly for their own work and training. Topics of most interest are health and nutrition, followed by global ageing, social care, pensions and rights. Readers also asked for more information on funders, affiliation and particular countries.

We will use these responses to guide future issues. The next issue will be on dementia and the following one on HIV and AIDS. We will cover fundraising in a future issue. We try to cover a geographical spread and welcome ideas from readers.

You can obtain information on affiliation and partnership from the HelpAge regional centre for your region (see page 15) or the London office if you are not in one of these regions (address in grey box on this page).

Some readers asked for more research. HelpAge also publishes *Ageing & Development*, a twice-yearly newsletter for policy-makers, programme planners and academics, which contains research updates. If you would like to receive it, please use the web order form at: [www.helpage.org/resources/helpage-newsletters](http://www.helpage.org/resources/helpage-newsletters) or email: [info@helpage.org](mailto:info@helpage.org) (giving the subject as 'Publication order'). Alternatively, write to the Editor, *Ageing & Development*, HelpAge International (address in grey box).

Three-quarters of survey respondents have access to the web. If you have web access, you can also receive our bi-monthly eNewsletter by signing up at: [www.helpage.org/enewsletter](http://www.helpage.org/enewsletter)

Some readers asked for more copies of *Ageways*. For more copies, please write to the Editor (address in grey box) or email: [info@helpage.org](mailto:info@helpage.org) (giving the subject as 'Publication order'). Please say how many copies you need and how you will use them.

Other suggestions include better quality paper, more photos, more frequent publication and more language editions. We are limited by our budget, however, we encourage readers to reproduce, adapt or translate articles in *Ageways*.

## Keep in touch!

Please keep in touch to make sure you receive regular copies of *Ageways*.

If your contact details change, please post the form on page 15 or use the online form at: [www.helpage.org/aboutus/contact](http://www.helpage.org/aboutus/contact)

## We welcome letters

Please write to: The Editor, *Ageways*, HelpAge International, PO Box 32832, London N1 9ZN, UK. Fax: +44 (0)20 7713 7993 Email: [ctill@helpage.org](mailto:ctill@helpage.org)

Include your name, organisation (if any) and postal address. Letters may be edited.

# New publications

## Guidance on including older people in emergency shelter programmes

This booklet describes five key actions for humanitarian aid organisations to include older people in shelter programmes. These are: Understanding the needs and capacities of older people; Ensuring that older people participate and are represented; Targeting vulnerable older people; Incorporating age-friendly features in both household and community shelters; Promoting coordination, cooperation and information sharing.

*HelpAge International and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 2011*

Can be downloaded from: [www.helpage.org/resources/publications](http://www.helpage.org/resources/publications)

## Guidance on including older people in emergency shelter programmes



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

HelpAge International  
Age Help

## Ageing in Africa

Issue 36 of *Ageing in Africa* looks at poverty in old age. It highlights the role of social protection systems, such as universal pensions and cash transfers.

*HelpAge International Africa Regional Development Centre, 2011*

Can be downloaded from: [www.helpage.org/resources/helpage-newsletters](http://www.helpage.org/resources/helpage-newsletters)



# A plan for your future

**It is time for older people to remind their governments about MIPAA.**

**Sylvia Beales explains why.**

The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) and its Political Declaration, endorsed by 159 governments at the Second World Assembly on Ageing in April 2002, and subsequently adopted by consensus later that year by the UN General Assembly, is an aspirational document which sets out ways to achieve a society for all ages.

MIPAA emphasises that ageing must be mainstreamed into all social and economic development policies. It also calls for governments to include older people in policies and programmes to reach the Millennium Development Goal of halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015 (see page 12).

MIPAA consists of a political declaration and a plan of action. The status of these types of UN agreements is that they are not legally binding on member states and so MIPAA's implementation is voluntary.

MIPAA does, however, have an innovative participatory review and appraisal process every five years, in which older people are encouraged to be involved. Rosemary Lane, UN focal point on ageing, reminds us on page 2 that it is important for older people to use the opportunity of the ten-year review and appraisal process in 2011/2012 to remind policy makers of MIPAA's existence, review progress to date, and recommend how governments can implement it.

## What have governments done?

In 2010, HelpAge and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) reviewed policies, legislation and data on older people from 133 countries across the world to assess governments' progress in implementing MIPAA.

The review showed that since 2002:

- 48 countries have approved and published national policies on ageing.
- 10 countries have brought into force overarching legislation on ageing. Others have passed specific laws dealing with issues affecting older people.

- 64 countries have set up official bodies and institutions to respond to ageing with at least one ministry responsible for ageing or older people. However, these are rarely "strong" ministries such as finance or planning.
- 51 countries have produced research or surveys on ageing. But census data, which gives details of age and gender, is not routinely used by policy makers or made accessible to the public.
- In many countries, mechanisms for accountable practice, for funding and for binding legal mechanisms on implementation, are still not in place.
- In all regions, responses to ageing are not yet mainstreamed in core policies on emergencies, migration, HIV and AIDS, mental health, disabilities or family violence.
- Little information is available on budgets for implementing policies and programmes for older people.

Overall, the review shows that while there is progress, more mainstreaming of ageing into all sectors of public policy is needed. More human and financial resources need to be invested in building up data on older people and providing services for them. Good examples of research, data collection and service provision need to be shared. Greater transparency on budgets and other resources for ageing is also needed.

## Action by older people

Despite progress shown by the review in governments' implementation of MIPAA, it is important that older people say how far this has changed their lives – and push for more action.

**We have a plan**

**we want action**

HelpAge International



*"I speak on behalf of seniors of Jamaica. When our government adopts a plan, they must not forget all about it when they leave the conference hall. Someone has to remind them what they said they would do."*

*Kenneth Helmsley, Age Demands Action leader speaking at the NGO Forum, UN Commission for Social Development, New York, February 2011*

Between June and September this year, older people in at least 20 countries will be involved in group “listening exercises”. They will discuss whether MIPAA has made a difference to their lives and what they want their governments to do (see page 6).

Older people can use the findings from these discussions to raise public awareness, take their demands to government officials, contribute to national and regional reviews and action plans, and submit directly to the United Nations review process. The findings will also be a major part of a report on the state of the world’s older people to be published in 2012 by the UNFPA with input from partners including HelpAge.

The global Age Demands Action campaign is another way to push for MIPAA to be implemented. In 2007, as part of MIPAA’s five-year review, HelpAge and its partners organised in-depth

consultations with older people in ten countries to feed into national reviews and help identify policy demands in the first Age Demands Action campaign. This year, older people in more than 50 countries will take part (see page 9-10).

### Is MIPAA enough?

The five-year review of MIPAA in 2007 showed implementation of MIPAA to be patchy and inconsistent. The 2010 global review shows that much needs to be done in all the priority directions of MIPAA. Many older people continue to live and work in appalling conditions and to suffer discrimination and abuse.

The UN General Assembly has recognised that it is necessary to discuss how older people’s rights can be better protected. It has set up a working group to review how best to do this. Older people can be involved in this process, too, and it is important that they are (see page 13).

Older people who responded to the Age Insights survey conducted by HelpAge’s partners in 32 countries in 2010 said they were keen to campaign on both MIPAA and a convention. Some 65 per cent of respondents said they were interested in campaigning for the implementation of MIPAA, while 94 per cent said they were interested in campaigning for an international convention on the rights of older people.

We are convinced that older people’s demands to policy-makers are the key to making a real difference. This is shown in the story of positive change led by older people in the Philippines (see page 11). We hope you will use the information in this issue of *Ageways* to demand action on MIPAA and promote older people’s rights.

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## Timetable for MIPAA+10

### 2011

**Ongoing** Review and appraisal takes place at national level. You can contact your government (usually the minister in charge of social affairs) for details of the focal point on ageing in your country and ask for a meeting with them.

**June-September** HelpAge International and UNFPA are supporting older people to input into national reviews in at least 20 countries in Africa, Asia and Pacific, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Latin America and Caribbean, by organising group discussions. The findings from these discussions can be used for advocacy at national level, including presentations with government officials.

**October** The fifth global Age Demands Action campaign will take place in more than 50 countries. Groups of older people will call on their governments to meet the commitments they made in adopting MIPAA.

### 2012

**Ongoing** Regional UN Economic and Social Commissions for Asia and Pacific, Africa, Europe and North America, Latin America and Caribbean, and Western Asia will consolidate national information, produce regional reports and hold regional review meetings.

**February** Preliminary findings of national governments and regional bodies will be presented at the 50th session of the UN Commission for Social Development in New York.

### 2013

**February** The UN Secretary General will present a report on the second review and appraisal of MIPAA to UN member states at the 51st session of the UN Commission for Social Development in New York. A report on the state of the world’s older people will also be presented by UNFPA and partners. It will include a major section on how MIPAA has been implemented from the point of view of older people, drawn from the group discussions in 2011.



# Views that matter

**What difference, if any, has MIPAA made to older people's day-to-day lives? Ina Voelcker describes how to find out.**

The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) provides governments with examples of actions they can take to adjust to an ageing world. Regional implementation strategies identify priority actions in each UN region. Consequently, a number of countries have introduced new policies on ageing since MIPAA was adopted (see page 4).

However, even where there are policies, they may not actually change anything because they are not known about or properly implemented. It is therefore crucial that older people's experiences are fed into their government's review of MIPAA, as this is the only way that any decisions their government takes can actually address their needs. This is why the UN agreed that the review and appraisal of MIPAA should be "participatory, bottom-up and flexible" and is calling for older people to get involved.

How can you help older people make their views known to their governments? One way is to bring a few older people in your community together to talk about the issues referred to in MIPAA and record their responses.

## Gathering views

Between June and September this year, HelpAge International and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) are working with partners in at least 20 countries to find out whether MIPAA has made any practical difference, by organising discussions with groups of older people.

Whether you are involved in these discussions or wish to organise your own discussion, you could follow a similar methodology.

You will need:

- a facilitator to lead the discussion
- a note-taker to record what is said
- six to ten older people
- a quiet venue where these people can comfortably gather for about three hours.

First of all, you need to identify a person who can lead the discussion. They should be familiar with the community, know about MIPAA and have good communications skills. They must be able to make sure that everyone feels comfortable and participates actively, and that no one is too dominant.

Before the meeting, prepare a note summarising key points about MIPAA, the regional implementation strategy for your region, and any policy provisions your government has made since 2002 (see Resources on page 14).

## Leading a discussion

The following steps are useful for leading a discussion:

1. Welcome all participants and make sure they are comfortable.
2. Introduce the purpose of the event and provide a summary of MIPAA, the regional implementation strategy for your region and national policy provisions.
3. Let all the participants introduce themselves to each other. Tell them that there are no wrong answers to any of the questions that will be asked, and that the views gathered during the discussion will be used without using their names.
4. Start with the first question from the list below.
5. Allow each participant to share their experience in relation to each topic. You do not need to cover the full list of suggested topics.
6. Close the session by asking if people have any questions for you. Explain how you will use the information coming out of this discussion. Thank them for taking part.

If you would like to share your personal views on the topics, instead of organising a discussion, this is also a good way of getting involved the review of MIPAA. You can record or write down your own responses to the questions and use them in a similar way.

HelpAge International



## Topics and questions

Topics for discussion can be grouped into six themes:

1. Contributions and participation
2. Secure income and work
3. Health and caregiving
4. Discrimination and rights
5. Housing and environment
6. Conflict and emergencies.

Specific questions or statements for discussion may include:

- Please discuss this statement: "In general, older people's views and needs are given more priority by governments now compared with ten years ago." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Please give reasons.
- Think about your contributions over the last ten years. In which ways, if any, have government programmes or laws helped you to continue making these contributions? Please give concrete examples.
- Please talk about the main types of work older women and men do in this community to get money. Would you say that work is available for all older people who want to work?



Older people's views on MIPAA can be gathered through group discussions.

***Our views count***

***we want to be heard***

- Please describe the main ways in which older men and women get information and communicate with others. How has this changed in the last few years?
- Income from pensions and other benefits is a vital component of security for older people. Think about the last ten years. What measures has the government made to increase or introduce new cash benefits specifically for older people? What difference has this made to older people's households (ability to work, better healthcare, nutrition, education...)?
- Think about the last ten years. What new things has the government done that have most helped older people to maintain their health in old age (health services, information, pension and cash benefits, access to food, clean water...)?
- Think about this statement: "Health services should be freely available to everyone regardless of age. Good quality healthcare for older people also benefits their families and communities." In your own experience, how well has this been put into practice? What do you think are the reasons for this?
- Over the last ten years, how have services in mental health or psychiatry changed or improved for older people? How have they changed for other age groups? What programmes would help older people with mental health issues? Please give concrete examples.
- Unfortunately, many older people are mistreated because of their age, but this is not often talked about. Please tell us what you know about abuse of older people, for example, neglect, physical harm, emotional harm, sexual harm, financial abuse. In what situations does this abuse happen (in the home, service providers, carers...)?
- Please discuss the following two statements: "People treat older people with respect." "People treat older people unfairly." Which of these two views do you feel is true? Give reasons. (You do not have to agree with others in the group.)
- Think about the last few years. What, if any, improvements have been made to help older people participate in social and economic activities?

What could the government and private sector do to remove barriers and enable older people to participate more easily?

### Using the findings

As well as producing written notes from the discussions, you could record older people's views and experiences in other ways, such as photo diaries, videos or recordings.

The information can be sent to your country's focal point on ageing to feed into your government's national review of MIPAA. It can also be used to raise public awareness of older people's situation, generate media coverage and lobby decision-makers.

Please also send the findings to HelpAge International at the address below. We can use them to develop presentations with high-level decision-makers and to contribute to a report on the state of the world's older people, which we will present to the UN Commission for Social Development in 2013.

Ina Voelcker is Global Ageing Intern, HelpAge International, London (address on page 16).  
Email: [ivoelcker@helpage.org](mailto:ivoelcker@helpage.org)





# You can be that change!

How can you make change happen? *Barbara Dockalova reports.*

Whether you are an older person yourself or working with older people, you can help bring about change. Use the findings from group discussions (page 6-7) and other information such as survey results, statistics, photos and testimonies to remind politicians of their commitments and persuade them to support your cause.

It is important to influence the public too. One voice can be ignored, but thousands of voices together make the message loud and clear. Politicians need people's votes and are more likely to respond to demands made by a large number of voters.

## Use the media

The media is a key way to reach a wide audience. Millions of people depend on the media to learn about the issues of the day. You can use the media to raise issues they may never have heard of. Contact the radio or TV station serving your area to find out about their schedules and how you might contribute.

You could suggest having a radio or TV debate. In Haiti, HelpAge's partner CARPA organised an intergenerational debate on the public TV station, TNH. They arranged for 92-year-old Viviane Gauthier, a famous former dancer and choreographer, to be a special guest on the show.

You could organise a press conference to explain the issues faced by older people to journalists. Journalists like facts, testimonies and new stories. In Bangladesh, Resource Integration Centre (RIC) organised a media event for 55 journalists from national newspapers and online agencies. They presented research findings on the situation of older people in Bangladesh. Older men and women described their experiences and appealed directly to the media to publicise their call for a UN convention on the rights of older people.

Other ways into the media include opinion pieces, letters to the editor, press releases to online news agencies, participation in online discussion forums and posting blogs.

Some radio and TV stations provide free air time to community organisations. You may be able to arrange a free radio spot or advert by coming up with a catchy message, such as "Human rights correct human wrongs".

## Impress the public

A public event such as a march, street play or fun-run can be a great way to gain publicity. You could arrange for a government official to take part, and invite the media along. Politicians are keen to get media coverage showing they are doing something positive for their citizens. Ask questions and ask the government representative to prepare a response.

In the Philippines, nearly 2,000 older people gathered in front of the gigantic globe of the Mall of Asia on 1 October 2010 to call on their government to implement a social pension. This is included in the Expanded Senior Citizen Act, which they had successfully campaigned for with support from COSE (see page 11).





MUSA



Slovene Philanthropy



**Action by older people (left to right):**  
**March in Haiti (supported by CARPA), petition in Nepal (NEPAN), radio interview in the Czech Republic (Zivot 90), march in South Africa (MUSA), meeting with the president of Slovenia (Slovene Philanthropy).**

In Ghana, more than a hundred people took part in brass band processions in Accra and Volta region, supported by HelpAge Ghana. They were calling for faster registration of older people for the government's cash transfer programme for poor people over 65, and speedier implementation of the country's new national ageing policy.

You could start a petition and collect signatures at public events. You could present the petition to a government official, either at an event they are attending or at a special meeting with them.

In The Netherlands, Cordaid facilitated public meetings in 17 community restaurants. They showed videos containing testimonies from older people in Kenya who are fighting age discrimination. They collected a thousand signatures from the Dutch public expressing solidarity with older people in developing countries and calling on the European Union to mainstream ageing in its European Development Funding guidelines.

## Lobby decision-makers

Direct lobbying involves communicating directly with a decision-maker. Use your power as an older person or arrange for older people to come and speak for themselves.

When dealing with government officials, remember that they are busy people, so be sure to keep your message brief, clear and timely.

Remember the power of media too. Contact the media in advance to let them know about the meeting and follow up afterwards to tell them what the government representative agreed to do.

## Join Age Demands Action

The global Age Demands Action campaign is a key way to press policy-makers to put MIPAA's recommendations into action. Delegations of older people meet national government representatives on or around 1 October, International Day of Older Persons, to call for policy changes.

In Kenya last year, HelpAge Kenya worked with older people to organise a meeting with the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance. The delegation of older people presented a statement requesting the Ministry to increase the level of payment of the government's poverty-targeted pension. Their request was taken positively and in June 2011, the government announced a 33 per cent increase.

In Cambodia, HelpAge International helped form a delegation of older people's leaders. The leaders attended meetings at the provincial governor's office to call for free healthcare and homecare services for the most vulnerable people in Cambodia. Their voices were heard – the government is currently drafting a policy on homecare and has introduced a health equity fund to allow the poorest older people to receive healthcare.

*continued on next page*

# You can be that change!

*continued*

This is how Age Demands Action works:

## 1. Organise a meeting

Organise a meeting of older people. This could be an existing group, for example, involved in a development project, or a new group, set up with the help of a community representative.

Identify what you expect from your government. Make sure everyone agrees, and that their expectations are specific and achievable. Decide on up to three “asks” from different ministries or local authorities, which can be achieved in one year, as a step towards a longer-term aim.

Consider the political environment. For example, if your government is developing a policy on work, one “ask” could be to include older people in consultations on this.

## 2. Form a delegation

Identify two to five leaders who will represent your group to a decision-maker. A leader is someone who can talk powerfully and confidently about older people’s issues, and who can represent older people from their community or country.

## 3. Meet a decision-maker

Make sure you lobby the right government official. Find out who has the power to make the change you want. Talk to your contacts in the government and discuss the issues you want to raise.

Once you have identified your decision-maker, start by sending them a short letter (one page). Explain the issue and the action you want them to take. Include a heading to convey your main message. Then follow this up by making an appointment for your delegation to visit the government official.

At the meeting, provide personal examples of age discrimination as well as statistics. For example, one of the leaders could talk about their difficulty in claiming their pension from their employer after a lifetime of work. Another could provide statistics on the lack of pensions. A third might facilitate the discussion, summarising key points and agreeing the next steps for both the government official and the delegation.

*“I have learnt that even in old age I am able to do something worthwhile and constructive for the country I represent.”*

*Rhoda, 74, Age Demands Action leader, Kenya*

*Meet Mama Rhoda at:*

*[www.helpage.org/get-involved/meet-the-activists/rhoda-ngima](http://www.helpage.org/get-involved/meet-the-activists/rhoda-ngima)*



**Rhoda Ngima is promoting older people’s rights through Age Demands Action and HelpAge International’s Linking Lives project, with support from HelpAge Kenya.**

## 4. Call for a change

Set a deadline for receiving a response and tell the government official that you will track progress. Follow up the meeting by phone or schedule another meeting. In follow-up phone calls and meetings, state what you understood to be the outcomes of the first meeting and remind the official what they agreed to do.

Be assertive and always remain polite, no matter what their response to your request.

**Find out more**

**Visit:** [www.helpage.org/get-involved/campaigns/age-demands-action](http://www.helpage.org/get-involved/campaigns/age-demands-action)

**Email:** [campaigns@helpage.org](mailto:campaigns@helpage.org)

**Contact your regional HelpAge office** (addresses on page 15).

## Tell us your plans!

Tell us how you plan to get involved in the review of MIPAA or send photos and stories of your action. We can post these on the HelpAge website to inspire others.

Email: [campaigns@helpage.org](mailto:campaigns@helpage.org)

Write to: Barbara Dockalova, Campaigns Coordinator, HelpAge International, PO Box 32832 London N1 9ZN, UK.

Older people in the Philippines make their demands clear.

COSE



# Yes we can...

**How older people advocated for their rights in the Philippines, by Ed Gerlock, Erwin Escalada and Fransiskus Kupang of COSE.**

It was 4.00am on 3 March 2010 and still dark. More than a thousand older men and women from poor urban areas of the Philippines gathered near the presidential palace in Manila to celebrate. The president had signed into law the Expanded Senior Citizen Act, which includes a social pension for the poorest people over 60.

It was a fitting ending to a story that had started more than five years earlier, when the Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE) and its partner organisation, the Confederation of Older Persons Associations of the Philippines (COPAP), began discussing the deteriorating economic situation of poor older people throughout the country.

Our research showed that out of 6 million over 60s, only 1.2 million, mainly men, had some form of pension, because they had worked in the formal sector. We resolved to file a bill in both houses of Congress to grant a social pension of 1,500 pesos (US\$32) to the poorest older people.

Then the work began. Older people were tireless in advocating for the pension. COSE's team of community organisers ran rights awareness-raising sessions and training for about fifty older people's leaders. The leaders and community organisers then went around house-to-house discussing the importance of older people being organised if they wanted to bring about change.

New groups of older people were organised and new leaders trained. By 2010, there were 190 groups of older people organised as a federation in 33 cities across the country.

On 1 October 2007, when the bill was first introduced, more than 2,000 older people marched to Congress and filled the galleries. The privileged speech of the congressman introducing the bill was largely composed of their own thoughts. As congress people arrived for afternoon sessions, older people ambushed them to get them to sign a petition supporting the bill. Radio and TV programmes, as well as local newspapers, took up the issue. Reports were given at a special congressional hearing by joint COSE and COPAP representatives.

In February 2010, more mass rallies took place in Quezon City and Manila. In a special Senate Committee hearing, because of the objection of one congressman, COSE and COPAP representatives agreed to lessen the pension amount to 500 pesos (US\$12) per month. The bill was finally passed, marking a historic step forward in enabling older people in the Philippines

to enjoy their right to social security in old age.

COSE and COPAP were invited by Congress to join in drafting the implementing guidelines of the new legislation. We organised workshops and seminars throughout the country to inform older people's groups, government agencies and NGO partners about provisions of the law and to monitor its implementation. In March 2011, the first pension payments started to be made.

The new law and introduction of the pension is proof that older people are a powerful force in society. Older people identified their issues and brought them to the right people. They were tireless and full of optimism; no amount of power could stop them fighting for their agenda and pushing the policy makers to support them.

COSE, an affiliate of HelpAge International since 1989, works with poor older people in the Philippines. Known for its rights-based approach, COSE runs community-based programmes and supports older people's organisations.

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*"Before we were organised, we did not know each other that well. We just ignored each other if we met. But now we are one community."*

*Older people's leader involved in the campaign for a social pension in the Philippines*



# MIPAA at a glance

A summary of what MIPAA is and its recommendations.

## What is MIPAA?

The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) is a comprehensive action plan for governments, civil society and others for building a society for all ages. MIPAA was adopted by the UN General Assembly at the Second World Assembly on Ageing in Madrid in 2002.

It lists 33 objectives and makes 117 recommendations for action by governments, grouped into three priorities:

- Older people and development
- Advancing health and wellbeing into old age
- Ensuring enabling and supportive environments.

## Why is MIPAA important?

MIPAA is the first global agreement to recognise the potential of older people to contribute to the development of their societies, and to commit governments to including ageing in all social and economic development policies, including poverty reduction programmes.

MIPAA highlights eradication of older people's poverty as a fundamental aim, calling for governments to include older people in policies and programmes to reach the Millennium Development Goal of halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015.

## What does MIPAA say?

An analysis of issues presented to governments by older people's organisations from 51 countries that took part in the 2010 Age Demands Action campaign shows that the things older people want most are opportunities for decent employment for those who want to work; the introduction or expansion of pension schemes; policies to tackle age discrimination and include older people in decision-making; and better and more accessible healthcare. MIPAA makes the following recommendations on these issues:

### Discrimination and decision-making

MIPAA calls for governments to promote the implementation of human rights conventions and other human rights instruments, particularly in combating

all forms of discrimination (paragraph 21a). Governments should encourage the establishment of organisations of older people to represent older people in decision-making (22b). They should also take measures to enable the full and equal participation of older people, in particular older women, in decision-making at all levels (22c).

### Work and pensions

MIPAA says that older people should be enabled to continue with income-generating work for as long as they want to and can do so (23). It recommends promoting self-employment initiatives for older people by ensuring access to credit for older people (28e), and eliminating age barriers in the formal labour market (28g).

MIPAA calls for the promotion of programmes to enable all workers to acquire basic social protection, including, where applicable, pensions, disability insurance and health benefits (52).

### Health

MIPAA refers to the responsibility of governments to create a "supportive environment" that enables people to maintain their health and wellbeing into old age, and calls for older people to have the same access to preventive and curative care and rehabilitation as other groups (59).

MIPAA promotes a "life course" approach to wellbeing in old age (63). It points out that improvements in the economic and social situation of older people improve their health as well (64). Policies should be developed to prevent ill-health among older people (67). All older people should have access to food and adequate nutrition (68).

MIPAA calls for universal and equal access to healthcare (74), strengthening primary healthcare services to meet older people's needs (75), developing a "continuum" of healthcare services, including palliative care (76c), and involving older people in the development of healthcare programmes (77a).

MIPAA calls for an urgent expansion of training for health and social workers working with older people (82). It emphasises the need to develop a full range of mental health care services (86).

Leang Saorey/HelpAge International



## Issues covered by MIPAA

### Priority 1: Older persons and development

- Active participation in society and development
- Work and the ageing labour force
- Rural development, migration and urbanisation
- Access to knowledge, education and training
- Intergenerational solidarity
- Eradication of poverty
- Income security, social protection/ social security and poverty prevention
- Emergency situations

### Priority 2: Advancing health and wellbeing into old age

- Health promotion and wellbeing throughout life
- Universal access to healthcare services
- Older persons and HIV/AIDS
- Training of care providers and health professionals
- Mental health needs of older persons
- Older persons and disabilities

### Priority 3: Enabling and supportive environments

- Housing and the living environment
- Care and support for caregivers
- Neglect, abuse and violence
- Images of ageing

### Implementation and follow-up

- National action
- International action
- Research
- Global monitoring, review and updating

# Steps to a convention

*Bridget Sleep brings you up-to-date on steps to better protect older people's rights.*

## Why aren't existing agreements enough?

Existing human rights conventions do not adequately protect older people's rights. With the exception of one (on migrant workers), they do not explicitly prohibit age discrimination. The few specific provisions for older people that exist are scattered across the different conventions, leading to a lack of clarity about older people's rights and inconsistent attention to them.

The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) and other agreements on ageing make important recommendations for action on ageing. However, unlike a convention, they are not legally binding. This means that they do not provide legal protection of older people's rights, and that implementation and monitoring is voluntary. A review in 2007 showed UN member states' implementation of MIPAA to be patchy and inconsistent.

## What would a convention do?

An international convention on the rights of older people would protect older people's rights in law and practice. By being legally binding, it means that governments would have to put in place policies, programmes and budgets to realise older people's rights, and report on progress.

## How would a convention relate to MIPAA?

A convention would not replace or negate MIPAA. A convention would make it more likely that MIPAA would be implemented. For example, if states have a legal obligation to protect older people's right to health and have to report on a regular basis on how they are doing this, they may be more likely to implement the recommendation on health in MIPAA.

## What steps has the UN taken?

In October 2010, the UN General Assembly adopted a landmark resolution on older people's rights, which included setting up a new Open Ended Working

Group on Ageing (OEWG). The OEWG's main purpose is to recommend how to strengthen the protection of older people's human rights. It will examine the existing international framework in relation to older people's human rights and identify possible gaps and how best to address them, including the possibility of new human rights instruments.

## Why is the OEWG important?

Attention to older people's rights by governments, those working on human rights and NGOs has been woefully inadequate. This is the first time a process has been set up for UN member states to examine and explore how to better protect older people's rights.

## Who makes up the OEWG?

The OEWG is open to every UN member state to participate in. It is also open to participation from UN agencies, national human rights institutions and civil society.

Administrative support is provided by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Like all UN working groups, it has a bureau to organise its programme of work, made up of a member state from each UN region. Jorge Argüello, permanent representative of Argentina, has been elected president for 2011.

## Can civil society take part?

The resolution that set up the OEWG specifically invites civil society organisations to contribute. Member states' UN mission staff take their instructions on policy positions from their governments.

Civil society can influence government positions by providing information on older people's rights to their government's focal point on ageing or relevant ministry, and by raising public awareness of older people's issues in their country. In addition, NGOs can register to take part in OEWG meetings.

## What has the OEWG done so far?

The OEWG held its first four-day working session in New York in April 2011 to discuss existing international and regional human rights frameworks in relation to the rights of older people.

The session showed broad agreement among member states, NGOs, UN agencies and independent experts about the need to discuss the protection and promotion of human rights of older people. Overall there was recognition of the particular nature of some human rights challenges faced by older men and women that have not been adequately addressed. Two differing positions emerged – support for a new international convention, particularly from Latin America, and preference for a regional approach, using MIPAA.

## What happens next?

The OEWG will hold its second working session on 1-5 August 2011. The agenda will be posted in a new section of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' website.

## What can I do?

There are a number of ways in which civil society organisations can become involved:

- Inform government representatives in your own country about the OEWG.
- Provide evidence on discrimination against older people and violations of their rights to government representatives in your own country and to your country's UN missions in New York.
- Meet with government representatives to discuss issues that you think need to be raised in the OEWG.
- Work with journalists to get media coverage of older people's rights.
- Encourage older people's groups and associations to advocate for their rights.

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## Resources

### MIPAA

Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) (2002)  
*Commits governments to including ageing in all social and economic development policies. Available in English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese and Russian.*  
<http://social.un.org/index/Ageing/Resources/UNReportsandResolutions/SecondAssemblyonAgeing.aspx>

### Regional strategies

Regional Strategy for the Implementation in Latin America and the Caribbean of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing

Regional Implementation Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing 2002 (UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing)

Regional Implementation Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing 2002 and the Macao Plan of Action on Ageing for Asia and the Pacific 1999

Arab Plan of Action on Ageing to the Year 2012

African Union Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing

These are all available at:  
<http://social.un.org/index/Ageing/ActiononAgeing/ImplementationoftheMadridPlanofAction.aspx>

### Guidelines for implementing MIPAA

Guide to the National Implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing  
 UNDESA, 2008

*Suggests how to mainstream older people's concerns into all aspects of development and policy-making and how to apply an intergenerational approach. For national focal points on ageing and other policy makers, older people, civil society organisations, donors and service providers.*  
[www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing/documents/papers/guide.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing/documents/papers/guide.pdf)

The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing: Guiding Framework and Toolkit for Practitioners and Policy Makers  
 UNDESA, 2008

*Suggests how to create policies and programmes to promote a society for all ages. Available in English and Russian.*  
[http://social.un.org/index/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=8iGbix5\\_6gs%3d&tabid=502](http://social.un.org/index/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=8iGbix5_6gs%3d&tabid=502)

### Guidelines for reviewing MIPAA

Guidelines for Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing: Bottom-up Participatory Approach  
 UNDESA, 2006

*Step-by-step guide to a bottom-up, participatory review and appraisal of MIPAA, primarily for national focal points on ageing and policy staff in ministries such as Health, Finance, Development and Planning.*  
[www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing/documents/MIPAA/GuidelinesAgeingfinal13%20Dec2006.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing/documents/MIPAA/GuidelinesAgeingfinal13%20Dec2006.pdf)

Proposed Indicators for Tracking Progress of Implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing  
*Lists indicators for each of MIPAA's three priority directions.*  
<http://social.un.org/index/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=rxM-regd7PM%3d&tabid=1261>

### Consulting older people

Manual for MIPAA plus 10 bottom-up, participatory approach  
 HelpAge International, 2011  
*Provides guidelines for conducting reviews of MIPAA with older people.*

Testimony manual for MIPAA plus 10 bottom-up, participatory approach  
 HelpAge International, 2011  
*Provides guidelines for collecting case studies and video testimonies from older people.*

These are available at:  
[www.helpage.org/resources](http://www.helpage.org/resources)  
 Email: [ivoelker@helpage.org](mailto:ivoelker@helpage.org)

### Taking action on rights

Age Demands Action campaign  
 Global campaign run by the HelpAge network in 55 countries, in which older people stand up for their rights and fight age discrimination.  
 Email: [campaigns@helpage.org](mailto:campaigns@helpage.org)  
[www.helpage.org/get-involved/campaigns/age-demands-action](http://www.helpage.org/get-involved/campaigns/age-demands-action)

Your Human Rights: a Guide for Older People  
 British Institute of Human Rights, 2010  
*Provides practical information about human rights and their relevance for older people.*  
[www.bihr.org.uk/sites/default/files/Older%20people%20guide%20second%20edition%20FINAL.pdf](http://www.bihr.org.uk/sites/default/files/Older%20people%20guide%20second%20edition%20FINAL.pdf)

### HelpAge International publications

Ageways 60: Second World Assembly on Ageing  
*Includes a summary of MIPAA and ideas for putting it into action.*

Ageways 68: Advocacy with older people  
*How older people can bring change in policy and practice.*

Ageways 73: Age helps  
*How to spread the word that older people are a positive force for change.*

Ageways 74: Working with the media  
*How to obtain media coverage of older people's issues.*

Advocacy with older people: some practical suggestions  
*Describes ways of awareness-raising with older people that are culturally appropriate and sustainable.*

Why it's time for a convention on the rights of older people  
*Explains how older people's rights are being violated and why a convention is necessary.*

Insights on ageing: a survey report  
*Survey of more than 1,000 older people in 32 countries on what they think about ageing and what they would like their governments to do.*

These are all available at:  
[www.helpage.org/resources](http://www.helpage.org/resources)

### Organisations

UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs – Ageing  
 Focal point within the UN system on matters related to ageing. Its primary action is to facilitate and promote MIPAA.  
<http://social.un.org/index/ageing.aspx>

Open-ended Working Group on Ageing  
 Established by the UN General Assembly to recommend how to strengthen the protection of older people's human rights.  
<http://social.un.org/ageing-working-group>

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights – Human Rights of Older Persons

Section of OHCHR website on the human rights of older people.  
[www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/OlderPersons/Pages/OlderPersonsIndex.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/OlderPersons/Pages/OlderPersonsIndex.aspx)

Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People

*Civil society movement established in 2011 to strengthen the rights and voice of older people globally. Steering group members are INPEA, ILC Global Alliance, IFA, IAHSa, IAGG, HelpAge International, GAA, Age UK, AARP.*  
[www.rightsalliance.org](http://www.rightsalliance.org)



## Affiliates

**More than 80 organisations in over 50 countries are affiliated to HelpAge International, forming a global network standing up for the rights of older people.**

### Caribbean

Action Ageing Jamaica  
Dominica Council on Ageing ECHO, Grenada  
Haitian Society for the Blind  
HelpAge Barbados  
HelpAge Belize\*  
HelpAge St Lucia/National Council of and for Older Persons  
Old People's Welfare Association (OPWA), Montserrat  
REACH Dominica  
Society of St Vincent de Paul, Antigua

### Africa

Age-in-Action, South Africa  
APOSEMO, Mozambique  
CEM Outreach, Sierra Leone  
Elim Hlanganani Society for the Care of the Aged, South Africa  
HelpAge Ghana  
HelpAge Kenya\*  
HelpAge Zimbabwe  
Kenya Society for People with AIDS (KESPA)  
Maseru Women Senior Citizens Association, Lesotho  
Mauritius Family Planning Association  
Muthande Society for the Aged (MUSA), South Africa  
RECEWAPEC, Cameroon  
SAWAKA, Tanzania  
Senior Citizens' Association of Zambia  
Senior Citizens' Council, Mauritius  
Sierra Leone Society for the Welfare of the Aged  
Sudanese Society in Care of Older People (SSCOP)  
Uganda Reach the Aged Association (URAA)  
VUKOXA, Mozambique

### East Asia and Pacific

China National Committee on Aging (CNCA)  
Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE), Philippines  
Council on the Ageing (COTA), Australia  
Fiji Council of Social Services (FCSS)  
Foundation for Older Persons' Development (FOPDEV), Thailand  
HelpAge Korea\*  
Helping Hand Hong Kong  
Instituto de Acção Social, Macau  
Mongolian Association of Elderly People  
NACSOM, Malaysia  
Office of Seniors Interests, Australia  
Research Centre for Ageing Support (RECAS), Vietnam  
Senior Citizens' Association of Thailand  
Senior Citizens' Council of Thailand  
Singapore Action Group of Elders (SAGE)  
Society for WINGS, Singapore  
Tsao Foundation, Singapore  
USIAMAS, Malaysia  
Vietnam Association of the Elderly  
Yayasan Emong Lansia (YEL), Indonesia

### South Asia

Bangladesh Women's Health Coalition (BWHC)  
GRAVIS, India  
HelpAge India  
HelpAge Sri Lanka\*  
Pakistan Medico International  
Resource Integration Centre (RIC), Bangladesh

### Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Dobroe Delo, Russia  
Mission Armenia  
NGO Lastavica, Serbia  
Second Breath (Gerontological Association of Moldova)  
Slovene Philanthropy

UMUT (Resource Centre for Elderly People), Kyrgyzstan

### Western Europe

Age Action Ireland  
Age UK  
Caritas Malta HelpAge  
Centre for Policy on Ageing, UK  
Cordaid, Netherlands  
DaneAge Association, Denmark  
HelpAge Deutschland, Germany\*  
WorldGranny, Netherlands  
Zivot 90, Czech Republic

### Latin America

AGECO, Costa Rica  
CAPIS, Peru  
Caritas Chile  
Centro Proceso Social, Peru  
CooperAcción, Peru  
CESTRA, Colombia  
Coordinating Group for Older People (Mesa de Trabajo), Peru  
IPEMIN, Peru  
ISALUD, Argentina  
Pro Vida Bolivia  
Pro Vida Colombia  
Pro Vida Perú  
Red de Programas para el Adulto Mayor, Chile

### North America

AARP  
HelpAge Canada\*  
HelpAge USA\*  
West Virginia University Center on Aging

\*HelpAge "sisters"



## HelpAge International regional centres

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### Eastern Europe and Central Asia

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### Latin America

Calle Vincenti No. 576, Entre Claudio Pinilla y Luis, Uria de Oliva, Sopocachi, La Paz, Bolivia  
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# Pension promise wins election

**Carlos Alarcón of IPEMIN, a HelpAge affiliate, describes how older people in Peru have helped win a presidential promise of a universal pension.**

A new president has been elected in Peru on a promise to introduce a pension for everyone over 65.

The pension was a key issue in the campaign that led to victory for Ollanta Humala on 5 June 2011. In March, he signed a public commitment to introduce the "65 Pension" if he was elected president. Another candidate, Keiko Fujimori, promised to extend coverage of the *Bono Gratiud* (Gratitude Bonus) which was introduced in 2010 for people over 75 living in extreme poverty.

According to a survey by Ipsos-Apoyo, Peruvians ranked the social pension as one of Ollanta Humala's top three proposals. Between the first and second rounds of the election, the percentage of Peruvians in favour of a social pension rose from 59 per cent to 73 per cent. So as well as choosing a candidate, they were voting for a pension.

How was there so much support? Much of the credit goes to the National Association of Older People in Peru, ANAMPER. Over the past three years, with the support of IPEMIN, HelpAge International and other partners, ANAMPER ran an intense campaign at local and national level.

Jaime Castilla/HelpAge International



**Members of the Peruvian National Association of Older People (ANAMPER) march to demand a basic social pension.**

Members of local older people's associations around the country learnt about their right to social security, while at national level ANAMPER represented older people on the Social Security Committee and advocated with government representatives, the media and NGO platforms.

It was a great day when the previous president, Alan Garcia announced the launch of a poverty-targeted pension scheme in July 2010 – the first non-

contributory pension in Peru. However, this would only ever benefit a minority of older people. Now that Peru is on the brink of a new government committed to universal coverage, older people have renewed hopes for a pension.

#### More information:

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**HelpAge International helps older people claim their rights, challenge discrimination and overcome poverty, so that they can lead dignified, secure, active and healthy lives.**

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*Ageways* exchanges practical information on ageing and development, particularly good practice developed in the HelpAge network. It is published twice a year.

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Registered charity number: 288180  
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ISSN 1469-6223

Design: TRUE [www.truedesign.co.uk](http://www.truedesign.co.uk)  
Print: Park Lane Press [www.parklanepress.co.uk](http://www.parklanepress.co.uk)  
*Ageways* is printed using vegetable-based inks, with power from renewable resources and waterless printing technology.  
Paper: Corona Offset, 100% recycled

