



Ageing

Almost every country in the world is experiencing growth in the number of older persons in their population. Over twenty percent of the population in 17 countries are older people and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division forecasts that this will be the case for 155 countries in 2100. According to the World Population Prospects, in 2019, the number of older persons aged 65 years and above was 703 million and this number is expected to rise to 1.5 billion in 2050. Two thirds of the world's older persons also live in developing regions. This trend has strong implications for sustainable development. This is because ageing cuts across the sustainable development goals on poverty eradication, good health, gender equality, economic growth, reduced inequalities, and sustainable cities. The SDG mantra to "leave no one behind" must include older persons and the implementation of the SDGs must be based on equality and human dignity over the life course of an individual. Policies must be economically viable, socially inclusive, and environmentally friendly for everyone including older persons. Societies that adopt policies that address the peculiar needs of older people will enable older people, live longer and healthier lives. The implication is that older people will have a chance to pursue new interests like furthering their education, investing in a long neglected passion, while continuing to make valuable contributions to family and the society.

Ageing and the 2030 SDG Agenda

- No poverty, Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 1 and 8): By making provision for older workers to access education or vocational training, or other channels that enhance their employability, older persons can remain in the workforce for longer periods and live above poverty.
- Zero Hunger (SDG 2): According to the World Health Organisation, nutritional needs change as we grow older. Older persons will need food that is rich in vitamins and minerals. Making provision for older persons who are poor and isolated to access healthy meals can help fight malnutrition.
- Good health and Well being (Goal 3): A robust health system that guarantees access to disease prevention and rehabilitation will ensure that older persons can access healthcare at reduced costs and live dignified lives.
- Quality Education (Goal 4): Lifelong learning will help older people stay informed and make decisions which will enhance their self worth
- Gender Equality (SDG 5): Promoting gender equality throughout life's course will help minimise marginalisation of older persons particularly older women. This is because women continue to experience restricted participation in the paid workforce and this could lead to negative outcomes at the latter stage of their lives.
- Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9): A collaborative approach between service providers, government, and CSOs will help foster innovation that targets the changes that population ageing brings. For instance connecting older persons virtually to services that can improve health and social outcomes.
- Reduced Inequality (SDG 10): Policy responses that mitigate against discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, and education level of older persons will ensure that older persons have equal access to relevant services and support.
- Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11): According to the UN, a vast majority of older persons dwell in environments that do not support their needs and capacities. Communities should be designed to enable older people maximize capacity across their life course. For instance, the construction of barrier-free buildings and streets can enhance the mobility of older people with disabilities.
- Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (SDG 16): Stereotypes that older people are uniformly frail and burdensome create barriers to developing sound policies. Formulating legislation and policies against age-based discrimination in all aspects of society will foster sustainable inclusivity and empower older persons.

From the field:

The effort of the Alliance for Aging Research in accelerating the pace of scientific discoveries and their application to improve the universal human experience of aging and health: ([Learn more](#))

The effort of the World Health Organisation Global Network on Long-term care (GNLTC) on providing strategic and technical advice related to long-term care for older people to achieve Healthy Ageing. ([Learn more](#))

How HelpAge International is working towards protecting the rights of older people. ([Learn more](#))

Senior Sense - A tech solution for senior care. ([Watch here](#))