



HelpAge

International

Including us

What older people say about the barriers they face to social inclusion

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HelpAge International is a global network of organisations promoting the right of all older people to lead dignified, healthy and secure lives.

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Introduction

Social inclusion is about creating an inclusive society that leaves no one behind. In older age, social inclusion depends on the enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms. In practice, however, many older people face significant barriers that limit their ability to participate, to have equal access to resources and services, and to have their voices heard.

Including us collates responses from a consultation with older people on their experiences of inclusion. This is one of the two topics for discussion at the thirteenth session of the UN Open-ended Working Group on Ageing in April 2023. This report aims to inform the discussions at this and future sessions.

HelpAge Global Network members and country offices carried out the consultation in November 2022. They conducted individual interviews with 50 older people (22 women and 28 men) in 5 countries: Colombia, Jordan, Kenya, Philippines and Spain. All participants lived independently or with family. The findings therefore do not reflect the specific challenges faced by older people in institutional care settings.

The report has four main sections:

- Section 1 explores the concept of social inclusion and how it relates to ageing and the rights of older people.
- Section 2 features quotes from older people's responses to a set of questions about their experiences of certain aspects of social inclusion.
- Section 3 summarises existing human rights law and identifies the main gaps.
- Section 4 clarifies what difference a UN convention on the rights of older people would make to promote social inclusion.

This report is part of a series on the rights discussed at the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing. It follows *Unequal treatment: what older people say about their rights during the COVID-19 pandemic (2021)*. →

Key findings

1. Ageism affects older people's social relations

Although many older people consider themselves to have 'good' (high quality) social connections, they find that their relationships with people younger than them can be challenging. This is due to ageist behaviours and attitudes towards older people.

2. Social activities benefit older people but are not always available or affordable

Like all other age groups, older people enjoy a wide range of different social and leisure activities. These social interactions have a positive effect on their physical and mental health. But a lack of availability and affordability limits older people's participation.

3. Older people face several barriers in accessing the digital world

Many older people do not have access to digital devices or the internet. They mainly rely on younger family members for support. While many are interested in using digital devices and social media, others prefer to stay offline.

4. Cities and communities are not age-friendly

When asked about their living environment, older people report that their mobility is limited by inaccessible and/or unaffordable public transportation. Some also say that they feel unsafe when they leave their home.

5. Lack of income and financial resources limits older people's inclusion in society

A cross-cutting barrier that older people face is a lack of income or financial resources. In their experience this affects their social relationships, limits their opportunities to engage in social and leisure activities, prevents them from using public transportation and from living in a place or house of their choice.





1. Social inclusion in older age

Social inclusion is the process of “improving the terms of participation in society, particularly for people who are disadvantaged, through enhancing opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights”.¹

Social inclusion in older age is therefore about optimising older people’s opportunities to have meaningful relationships and roles in society and being able to fully participate in all aspects of society.² Older people’s rights and voices should always be at the centre of that process.

Social inclusion for older people closely relates to, for example:

- access to resources (income, employment, land, housing, etc)
- access to goods and services, (healthcare, education, etc)
- equality and freedom from ageism and discrimination
- participation in societal relationships and activities.³

This multi-dimensional nature of social inclusion or exclusion can make it difficult to identify and measure. In addition, older people have historically been excluded from global data systems, sometimes due to deep-rooted systemic barriers that exist at every stage of the data production cycle – collection, analysis, reporting, dissemination and use.⁴ Often, the diversity of older people is not captured by data collection methods as most surveys lump people over 60 together in the same group, not accounting for their intersectional identities. The level of inclusion or exclusion also differs depending on the societal context and effects of cumulative disadvantage on groups such as older women, older migrants, older people with disabilities etc.

In this report, we focus on barriers that older people face in the realisation of social inclusion in three specific domains that have not been discussed yet within the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing⁵: social relations, digital inclusion and age-friendly spaces.

For older people’s experiences of other barriers to social inclusion, please see Annex 3. →

1.1 Social relations

Exclusion from social relations and connections is one of the main factors affecting social inclusion. Social connections have a clear impact on older people's health and wellbeing. In older age, social isolation and loneliness are known to increase the risks of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and depression.⁶ Recent research shows, for example, that socially isolated older adults have a higher chance of developing dementia.⁷ Social isolation and loneliness also shorten lives and reduce quality of life.⁸ On the other hand, some social relationships can have a negative impact on older people's health and wellbeing, such as conflicting, harmful or abusive relationships.⁹

Although one of the potential outcomes of exclusion from social relations is loneliness, they are not the same thing. Loneliness is the negative feeling caused by not having as many or as meaningful social connections as we would like.¹⁰

Social isolation and loneliness are widespread among older people in most regions of the world. Despite their devastating impact on our health and wellbeing, including in older age, this issue has remained largely unnoticed and unaddressed by governments.

To tackle social isolation and loneliness at community level, the World Health Organization recommends action at different levels, including improving infrastructure (for example, transport, digital inclusion, built environment) and promoting age-friendly communities. At societal level there is a need for laws and policies to address, for instance, ageism, inequality and the digital divide.¹¹

1.2 Digital inclusion

'Leaving no one behind' also means leaving no one offline. Digital inclusion has proven to be a fundamental aspect of social inclusion.¹² Yet older people do not have equal access to the digital world. Digital exclusion in older age can have multiple causes, such as limited access to digital devices and the internet, and limited digital literacy skills.¹³ The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to light this digital divide even further, limiting older people's access to information, decision-making and health services.¹⁴

Stereotypes and prejudice about older people's ability and willingness to use digital technologies are widespread.¹⁵ Yet many older people are able and willing to learn digital skills. Their digital inclusion can encourage their inclusion in community life and help make new connections and friendships with people of different ages in different spaces. As well as gaining access to online services, learning digital skills can increase older people's access to employment, and continue their personal development.¹⁶ At the same time, it is important to consider that while digitalisation can strengthen older people's connections, it could also drive social isolation and loneliness.¹⁷

To promote older people's digital inclusion, access to digital learning, age-friendly design and relevance of digital services, ageism-free, ethical and safe digital environments that embrace the diversity of older people are key factors.¹⁸ For those who cannot connect digitally it is essential that they can continue to access all public services in-person.





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1.3 Age-friendly cities and communities

Social inclusion in older age is also affected by our location and spatial environment.¹⁹ For example, while cities can be age-inclusive, many older people are marginalised and excluded, due to ageist attitudes and behaviour, and due to the lack of inclusive planning and development policy and decision-making.²⁰

The concept of age-friendly cities and communities arose in response to the challenges faced by older people caused by spatial exclusion.²¹ This report focuses on two specific aspects that need action: mobility (including providing age-friendly and accessible transportation) and safety. In many urban areas, older people rely heavily on public transport to get around. Inaccessible transportation affects older people's ability to work, visit friends and family, go to the clinic or hospital, and access other services. Older people are also affected by inadequate or unsafe pedestrian infrastructure. Fear of crime and feeling unsafe discourages them from participating in society and can prevent them from maintaining social ties with friends and family.²²

HelpAge promotes communities for all ages

In 2019, HelpAge International conducted research with 1,310 older residents in Delhi (India), Mexico City (Mexico) and Nairobi (Kenya) to understand how they experienced different aspects of urban life, such as transportation and crime, and the social outcomes of these, such as loneliness and isolation. Detailed findings from this research are given in a set of nine short papers along with a narrative summary and a description of the research methodology. *Ageing and place: exploring how cities shape older people's lives.* →

To promote age-friendly communities, HelpAge and partners launched a new guide in 2022: *Let's go! Steps for engaging older people and improving communities for all ages.* → It contains small, exciting, innovative, no-cost or low-cost initiatives that have had a significant impact on the lives of older people in communities throughout the Americas region.



2. Findings from the consultation

Definitions

Social inclusion is the process of improving the terms of participation in society, particularly for people who are disadvantaged, through enhancing opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights. (UNDESA)

Social isolation is the objective state of having a small network of kin and non-kin relationships and thus few or infrequent interactions with others. Some studies have found only a weak correlation between social isolation and loneliness. Socially isolated people are not necessarily lonely and vice versa. (WHO)

Loneliness is the negative subjective feeling that results from a discrepancy between desired and actual social connections. (WHO)

Age-friendly cities and communities are places that adapt their services and physical structures to be more inclusive and receptive to the needs of its population to improve their quality of life as they age. They encourage healthy aging by optimizing resources to improve the health, safety, and inclusion of older people in the community. (PAHO)

Digital inclusion means that everyone can contribute to, and benefit from, the digital economy and society by ensuring that digital technologies and the internet are available, affordable, accessible and that all individuals have the skills and ability to use them. (UNECE)

2.1 Social relations and participation in social activities

Older people who took part in the consultation showed great variety in their social relations. Many said they have a good relationship with their family, neighbours and friends. Others said that they had good friends but not a good relationship with their family members. Some also deliberately avoided harmful social contact.

“My relationships are great. I am very happy with the relationship I have with my neighbours, my in-laws, and my siblings. I always act as a mediator for reconciliation among everyone, including my neighbours.”

67-year-old woman, Jordan

“Sometimes when you go to gatherings you get people with hate speech that hurt you. Other people feel they are better than others so they make you feel low, so I just avoid them.”

65-year-old woman, Kenya

Older people talked about changes they experienced in their social relationships in older age. They found that lack of income and financial resources due to unemployment or retirement had negatively affected their social relations. They felt that people lost interest once they could no longer help them out financially or otherwise.

“I have a good relationship with my family, but my relationship with my wife got affected due to the lack of income. It has nothing to do with age. All my social relationships were cut off along with my source of income.”

73-year-old man, Jordan

“When you help people less, they will not remember you. They will forget you since the help they got from you is no longer there.”

82-year-old man, Kenya

Some participants said they get along well with people their own age but less so with younger people. They found that younger people do not value their wisdom, speak badly of them and even accused them of witchcraft. Within the family, children were said to become overprotective of their older relatives.

“Yes, my relationships are great. I have relationships as old as 20 years and we’re all close in age. As for my family, the age difference can result in constant clashes and disagreements. But with my friends, things are different.”

65-year-old man, Jordan

“Yes, there are times I feel lonely, like in this village, you are always isolated in the community by the younger people, and they talk about us negatively, and sometimes say inappropriate things about us older people. But the younger people lack respect for us by saying we are witches.”

69-year-old woman, Kenya

“My family and I are generally happy. However, there are moments when some of my children become overly protective of me. They don’t want me to be stressed... always working on a laptop. But for me, I’m actually still very much fit to do the job.”

62-year-old man, Philippines

“The family is something that has changed over time, many of the young who grow up in the community want to go to the city in search of better opportunities and are not aware of an intergenerational change, of the importance that older people have in a society.”

75-year-old man, Colombia

“When you get older, your children make you feel like your opinion is worthless, unless you have power or money. Once you’re retired or jobless, everyone turns their back on you.”

73-year-old man, Jordan



Limited mobility due to health issues was also identified as a barrier to social connections.

“When I aged, since my physical strength deteriorated, my relations with people kind of deteriorated too since it became a little harder for me to move and attend to their requests.”

68-year-old woman, Philippines

“[I] am also requesting the government to allow organisations like NGOs to go around villages and help those who are unable to walk get to places where they can socialise with others. This is because there are those who are unable to venture out and socialise with others, others are sick and unaware that they can get help.”

65-year-old woman, Kenya



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Others also found that their social relations had improved in older age. This included because their family had grown, because they had become more mindful of their relationships, or because they participated in more activities and became more open to engaging with others.

“The quality of my relationships has gotten better with age and experience. Everybody waits for me to come and visit, and we exchange information, news and experiences all the time.”

69-year-old woman, Jordan

“I can say that I am okay with my relationships. I get to say the things I need to say to my family, friends, and other people. I think I have become more open to engaging with other people when I grew older.”

68-year-old woman, Philippines

We also asked older people about their participation in social and leisure activities. They told us they enjoy participating in everything from charity work and volunteering, to sports, dance classes, university lectures, recreational trips and bingo sessions. However, many only participate in religious activities on a regular basis, or events organised by their local Older People’s Association.

“I participate in many social activities. I attend weekly lectures, which are suitable for all age groups. I also go on trips and have breakfast gatherings with my friends, and in winter, we plan visits to nursing homes where we collect money to buy older people all they need (bedding, clothes, medication, etc) and spend the day doing fun activities with them.”

74-year-old woman, Jordan

“We have social activities during ‘elderly month’ celebrations. We dance there. We also hold spiritual activities in churches where older people are also active. We also have leisure activities in the Day Centre. We play bingo and dance there.”

73-year-old woman, Philippines

“Yes, I am a church leader but I have retired. I have done the work for many years. I joined church in 1969 and I have been there from that time up to now. Whenever I go to the church I forget my problems, we sing, we are preached to, and we feel good.”

76-year-old male, Kenya



Participants mentioned that they had experienced more feelings of loneliness after their partner or other relatives passed away, or when their children or grandchildren moved to the city. Socialising with neighbours, participating in social and leisure activities, and running a small business were mentioned as ways to feel less lonely. Others feel that participating in social and leisure activities has a positive impact on their physical and mental health, and helps them feel included in society.

“Sometimes you feel lonely because you might have been a large family of ten, seven or eight pass away and you remain just the two of you or just one person. In such cases, one feels lonely but when you keep busy with neighbours, the loneliness goes away.”

70-year-old woman, Kenya

“Since I joined the older people here, I started feeling happy and the feeling of pitying myself went away.”

68-year-old woman, Kenya

“These activities help older people in having physical exercise. And apart from that, it gives older people some emotional support because these activities preoccupy older people’s minds taking them off their problems. That’s why we are really into these social activities. Older people feel that they are still important and part of society, it takes us off thinking that we are alone and isolated. It affects our mental health [and] wellbeing.”

71-year-old woman, Philippines

“In my experience, it’s really fun, it gives me relaxation, and I think these kinds of activities prolong the life of an older person.”

79-year-old woman, Philippines

When asked about the availability of activities, several mentioned that there are not enough social and leisure activities in their communities. Several participants mentioned that availability had decreased since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“There are not many social activities where I live. If there were more, I would participate more.”

67-year-old woman, Spain

“But when everything was interrupted due to COVID-19, it was like falling off a cliff. There are no more activities, and the lack of money prevents us from participating in them.”

73-year-old man, Jordan

Low income or limited financial resources also affects how much older people can participate in activities.

“Things are tight, so we don’t see family as we used to. I’d like to go to a gym, but I can’t afford it. Life is much more expensive now. I retired in 2008, and my pension is decreasing, and prices are going up. Even street food has become for rich people. Life has become so difficult.”

66-year-old man, Jordan

“Currently I do not do anything; I just sit. I don’t have anything to do. What is needed is just money.”

72-year-old man, Kenya

2.2 Digital inclusion

We asked older people whether they have access to digital devices, such as computers and smartphones. Many responded that they only have access to a basic cellphone. Others said they did have access to digital devices, and some responded that even though they had access, they were not interested in using them.

“I have a phone and access to the internet, but I don’t use them a lot. I prefer to read a book or a newspaper.”

77-year-old man, Jordan

“I don’t want to be connected through the internet. I see people in the world connected all the time and I don’t want to feel like I wasn’t a human being.”

75-year-old man, Colombia

Many of the older participants that do not have access to digital devices also have no access to the internet, email or social media. Some of the barriers mentioned include frequent power outages, poor connectivity in rural areas and the high cost of mobile data.

“There are many people as old as me, or even younger than me, pensioners who don’t have access to digital devices so they can’t practise. They don’t have access to those tools, let’s say, for economic reasons. There are others who have access, but don’t have help because their children or their grandchildren work. I don’t think that age is an obstacle, but society brings those obstacles.”

75-year-old man, Colombia

When asked about their digital skills, most older people said they need at least some support to use digital devices. Several participants mentioned they learned digital skills when they were employed, although upon retirement some felt they were losing those skills.

“I learned using laptops when I was still working so I know. But upon retirement, I already turned over the laptop. I think I lost the knowledge on using it, too. I don’t even know how to use these newer phones, the touchscreen ones.”

71-year-old woman, Philippines

“I am very self-taught in relation to computers. I have a computer, tablet, smartphone. I use them regularly now and used them regularly before because of my work. But many people my age have limited access. The digital age is a lie. In my environment, the number of people who need help with a computer is worrying now that public administration services are often digital.”

64-year-old woman, Spain



Several participants also mentioned that they would like training on how to use digital devices but no training was available. Most relied on their children, grandchildren or other younger family members to help them.

“Ah, you know, sometimes it gets really hard. Watching YouTube is easy, but Facebook is hard, especially when attachments are sent – I can’t seem to open them. You know, us older people have limited knowledge of those gadgets. That’s why it would actually help to have training on this so we can learn.”

69-year-old man, Philippines

“With the pandemic, many older people had difficulties handling the cell phone. I must confess that my grandson is better at using the cell phone than me; he’s just four years old. But I make an effort and my son and his wife help me, too.”

81-year-old woman, Colombia

2.3 Age-friendly cities and communities

We asked older people whether they go into town or the city, and many said they regularly do, especially if they live within walking distance.

“That is fine. I can go to town from my house, and I usually go on foot. I walk slowly to town, I go find something I wanted to buy and come back.”

72-year-old man, Kenya

However, they faced several challenges. Some said they need assistance due to health issues and an inaccessible environment. Long distances from the parking lot and waiting in long queues prevent some older people from going out on their own. Others mentioned the lack of seating areas in public places, roads in poor condition and lack of accessible spaces for wheelchair users as a barrier.

“Public places are not adapted for older people.”

73-year-old man, Jordan

“I’d like to see a football match in the stadium, but I can’t due to the long queues and the distance from the parking lot. It is not age-friendly.”

66-year-old man, Jordan

“Yeah, I can go to town from the house. I, however, have difficulties walking because of my knee and I also have arthritis which disturbs me. I wish to be treated and walk like others. I would be so happy.”

76-year-old man, Kenya



Juan Camilo Gonzalez, Santos Studio/HelpAge International



Whendy Ruiz/HelpAge International

To get around, many older people depend on public transport and taxis, however this can be expensive. In some areas, public transport is also not available or not frequent enough (limited service). Again, lack of accessibility creates additional barriers for older people.

“I take a taxi since it’s really hard to commute to our place. It gets really hard for me to go up and down the footbridges. The footbridges would have been okay because that will let me save more. But now, there are only designated places the bus can load and unload. So, you really have to go up and down several footbridges. That’s very hard for older people.”

69-year-old man, Philippines

“Honestly, it’s a lot harder for me to go out now. Before the pandemic, I was still used to walking around. Now it’s hard. It’s even harder since our house is not usually passed by public transport. You would really have to take a taxi, which is of course expensive. Before, I used to walk, ride jeepneys (minibuses) and buses. Now, I’m scared to ride the bus, because I know someone my age who got into an accident while riding the bus, and he is in a wheelchair now.”

80-year-old woman, Philippines

“There is public transport, but it is limited as there are only two buses heading to the city per day. There are times during the day that you are not able to reach the city if you don’t have a car.”

70-year-old man, Spain

“People with physical limitations find public transport very difficult due to the difficulties in accessibility. Going up to the train station, for example, is complicated.”

64-year-old woman, Spain

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, health risks also prevented older people from using public transport.

“I don’t ride jeepneys (minibus) because I’m scared to contract viruses from other people. Jeepneys are too crowded. So, I just take a tricycle taxi instead. The seats are limited, it’s safer for me.”

79-year-old woman, Philippines

Concern for safety affects older people's inclusion. While some older participants said they always felt safe, others were increasingly worried about their safety in older age. Some felt they were more at risk because of their health.

"I don't leave home alone. It's just that it scares me, you know. Many times you'd hear that someone who suffers from blood pressure problems was found lying on the street. I always think that something similar can happen to me, so I don't dare go out alone. That's why I feel unsafe, because of what may happen."

83-year-old woman, Colombia

Older people also expressed concern about the risk of theft and mugging when they are out, and even the risk of violence. Some also said they were particularly worried about their safety in traffic.

"At this age you have to fear because there are violent people. You know, right now our bodies do not have the ability to do things like running, so you have to be careful wherever you go, in case something happens. Can you run away? You have to consider such things."

81-year-old man, Kenya

"There is no security, let alone at night. Even during the day, people get attacked just outside my workshop."

82-year-old man, Kenya

"The city is a long way from being safe or age-friendly because roads are in poor condition, which means that accidents could be caused and affect older people."

82-year-old man, Colombia

Finally, when asked about where they live, older people often said they want to live close to their family. Those who did not live where they preferred often mentioned lack of financial resources as the main barrier.

"I prefer to have my family with me, so I'll stay here in Mondragon. I'm used to living here, even if I have friends in Catarman. Living there would be different. I like it better here in Mondragon."

73-year-old woman, Philippines

"I stay in my house with my grandchildren. They are young and their father passed away. As their mother was young, she could not tolerate staying with them. The environment is not very conducive. The room is small and I have grandchildren who are teenagers now. There are times when others want to sleep and others study. It becomes difficult. This I just do because I cannot afford another place."

65-year-old woman, Kenya

"I don't love it, because for now our washrooms are bad, very filthy. Even where we bathe is not that good. It is dirty, so I am not happy. I stay there because of poverty. There is no bad life like living in a slum. If I were young I would have not gone to stay in the slums, because I have seen all the problems and bad things there."

81-year-old man, Kenya

"I have been living in this neighbourhood for 77 years. We are all family, we all know each other. I do not want older people to face a lack of resources. A small business allows them to have their own resources and that is a source of pride for them. And this is my idea of getting older. Independent people who can live by themselves."

75-year-old man, Colombia



3. Social inclusion in human rights law

Although there is no right to social inclusion as such in international human rights law, they are closely interrelated. Achieving social inclusion depends on achieving the full range of human rights.²³ Dismantling structural inequality and ageism, for example, are important prerequisites for social inclusion of older people.

The right to equality and non-discrimination is guaranteed in various human rights treaties, such as articles 2(1) and 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), article 2(2) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and article 5 of the convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

The right to participate in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport is guaranteed under article 15 of the ICESCR and article 30 of the CRPD. The principle of “full and effective participation and inclusion in society” is provided under article 3 of the CRPD. The CRPD also provides for the right to awareness raising (article 8), and the right to independent living and being included in the community²⁴ (article 19).

These rights have not been specifically applied to older people in the existing international human rights framework. This leads to a lack of clear guidance on States’ obligations and a lack of implementation in practice.²⁵ They need to be included in a new convention on the rights of older people.



Haitham Matouk/HelpAge International

4. What a convention would do

A UN convention would foster key aspects of older people's social inclusion by clarifying how fundamental rights and freedoms apply to them and the specific obligations States have to respect, promote and fulfil our rights in older age. A comprehensive legal instrument can therefore act as a catalyst for the integration of a rights-based approach to ageing in the development and implementation of global and national policies on development and social inclusion.

4.1 Equality and non-discrimination

A UN convention would help ensure that older people everywhere are treated more equally and can enjoy their rights fully. It would clarify how the right to equality and non-discrimination applies to older people and the obligation for States to:

- guarantee the right to reasonable accommodation
- adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination laws
- tackle ageism and marginalisation of older people through raising awareness, training and other measures
- explicitly permit and require the adoption of positive action measures
- enact statutory equality duties that require public authorities and other duty-bearers to assess the impact of their policies on the rights of older people.

4.2 Financial resources

A UN convention would improve older people's access to financial resources by protecting their right to social protection and social security, employment,²⁶ and an adequate standard of living.

4.3 Participation, accessibility and independent living

A convention would facilitate social inclusion by ensuring older people's right to:

- meaningful participation in all decision-making processes
- ensuring older people's right to accessibility, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communication, and to public services and facilities, both in urban and in rural areas
- inclusion and independent living and being included in the community.



Whendy Ruiz/HelpAge International

4.4 Bridging the digital divide

A convention would help tackle barriers associated with digitalisation by:

- protecting the right of older people to access digital devices, digital technology and information on an equal basis with others
- promoting the development, production and distribution of accessible information and communication technologies and systems at an early stage, so that these technologies and systems become accessible at minimum cost
- protecting the right of older people to education, training and life-long learning, including digital learning²⁷
- protecting the right to accessibility of services for all older people, including those who cannot or do not wish to connect online
- ensuring governments put in place effective safeguards to protect older people's rights online, including their right to privacy, free and informed consent, and freedom from abuse (including online harassment, digital scams and fraud).

4.5 Data collection

A convention would clarify States' obligation to collect appropriate information, including statistical and research data, to enable them to formulate and implement policies to give effect to the Convention. This data collection would help identify barriers faced by specific groups, such as older women, older people with disabilities, older LGBTQI+ and older migrants.

4.6 Intergenerational solidarity

Finally, a convention would improve intergenerational solidarity by tackling ageism in all regions and all areas of society.

5. Annexes

Annex 1: Consultation questions

Question 1. Do you feel you have a good relationship with family, friends, your community? Has this changed as you grow older?

Probe: Do you feel lonely sometimes? Are there any obstacles that keep you from having social relationships? What would you want/need to feel less lonely/more included?

Question 2. Can you participate in leisure, social, cultural and spiritual activities in the community?

Probe: Are any community and social activities available for you? Can you afford to participate in those activities?

Question 3. Do you have access to digital devices and digital communication?

Probe: Do you have access to a computer, tablet or smartphone? Do you have access to the internet, to email, social media or other forms of online information and communication? Do you need support using digital devices and if so, is that support available/accessible to you?

Question 4. Are you able to leave your house and go into town/the city when you want?

Probe: If not, what prevents you from accessing public spaces? Is private or public transportation available to you? Can you access public buildings without support? Do you feel safe going out?

Question 5. Are you able to choose where you live?

Probe: Do you currently live where you would like to live? If not, what prevents you from living there? Did your family members/caregivers ask for your opinion on where you live?

Annex 2: List of countries and methodology

Colombia
Jordan
Kenya
Philippines
Spain

A total of 50 older people aged 60–87 from a mix of rural and urban areas took part (22 women and 28 men). Individual interviews were done by phone, video-call or in person. Participants were selected using non-probability sampling based on convenience and who was accessible to those carrying out the consultation. Responses were reviewed to identify themes within each broad category of interview questions. The findings are intended to capture the views of the older people interviewed and are not intended to be representative of the population of older people as a whole.

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Annex 3: The Open-ended Working Group on Ageing

The Open-ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG) was set up by the UN General Assembly in 2010 to identify possible gaps in the existing international human rights framework in relation to older people and how best to address them, including the possibility of new human rights instruments.

Including us is part of a series of reports on rights discussed at the UN OEWG. It follows:

Entitled to the same rights (2017) → on what older women say about their rights to non-discrimination and equality, and to freedom from violence, abuse and neglect, discussed at the eighth session.

Freedom to decide for ourselves (2018) → on what older people say about their rights to autonomy and independence, long-term care and palliative care, discussed at the ninth session.

Living, not just surviving (2019) → on what older people say about their rights to social protection and social security (including social protection floors), and to education, training, lifelong learning and capacity building, discussed at the tenth session.

Keeping our dignity (2019) → on what older people say about their rights to access to justice, and to work and access to the labour market, discussed at the eleventh session.

Unequal treatment (2021) → on what older people say about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on older persons' rights discussed at the eleventh session.

More information about the OEWG is available at <https://social.un.org/ageing-working-group> →

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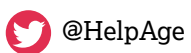
Find out more:

www.helpage.org/what-we-do/human-rights/

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