

## **Social inclusion**

### *Belarus*

As a strategic set of measures for active longevity and improving the quality of life of older people, the National Strategy of the Republic of Belarus “Active Longevity - 2030” was adopted in 2020.

The goal of the National Strategy is to create a society for people of all ages, to create conditions for the fullest and most effective realization of the potential of older citizens.

Creating conditions for the social inclusion of older citizens and their full participation in the life of society is implemented through:

- activities of senior citizen councils. To organize the participation of older people in solving issues affecting their interests, councils of older citizens have been created in each region, which are empowered to submit proposals to local executive and administrative bodies on solving socially significant problems and issues of life of older citizens.

- popularization of volunteer activities. Volunteer groups organized at territorial centers of social services for the population, unite active older people.

- organizing the work of clubs, hobby groups, holding various festivals and events. Various mass sports events are held at the republican and local levels, including for senior citizens: competitions, sports days, tourist rallies. There are benefits and discounts for senior citizens when visiting museums, theaters, exhibitions, cinemas, fitness centers, swimming pools, etc.

As part of the patriotic education of children and youth in all regions, veterans of the Great Patriotic War and labor, take part in socio-political events (visiting cultural heritage sites, laying flowers at memorials and monuments, etc.).

In order to preserve the spiritual, moral and cultural values of the Belarusian people, meetings of elderly people and veterans with students are organized as well as intergenerational dialogues, round tables etc.

In turn, in order to instill in the younger generation a sense of responsibility for the older generation, numerous events are held on the basis of educational, cultural, social service institutions on significant dates.

In Belarus, conditions have been created for the longest work activity of older citizens, since the labor legislation of the Republic of Belarus does not contain any restrictions on the possibility of continuing and carrying out work activities by employees who have reached retirement age.

*For reference. As of January 1, 2023, 435 thousand pensioners continued to work after reaching retirement age.*

Additional education for adults (vocational training, retraining, advanced training) is carried out by educational institutions. It is also possible for older people to obtain additional education through non-formal education and training.

Training in digital and computer literacy for older citizens remains a popular area for communicating with relatives, ordering services and goods, searching for useful information, learning online.

Social services for older citizens are provided by 146 territorial centers of social services and 82 boarding homes. Priority is given to issues of quality and accessibility of social services for older citizens.

Social services in boarding homes, including psychoneurological ones, are organized on the principles of humanity and respect for citizens (Article 4 of the Law of the Republic of Belarus “On Social Services”).

In boarding homes, social rehabilitation of residents is carried out (rehabilitation and labor workshops, interest clubs), aimed at developing accessible labor skills, maintaining mental and physical health, and the skills necessary to gain everyday independence. This allows a person with multiple disabilities to be in a team, learn and develop.

As part of improving the work on social services, a new edition of the Law of the Republic of Belarus “On Social Services” provides:

- expansion of forms of social services, including long-term care, remote social services;
- ensuring accessibility of social services through organizing transportation of service recipients;
- improving the quality of social services through the formation of an assessment system, the introduction of a state mechanism for regulating the activities of “private” boarding homes.

**The priority areas of action are the following:**

- formation of a positive image of an older person;
- developing opportunities for older people to participate in public life;
- creating conditions for creating a comfortable level of income after retirement;
- increasing digital, computer and financial literacy;
- expanding opportunities to lead a healthy and active lifestyle;
- providing conditions for improving the quality of life of citizens in need of constant assistance.