

**Guiding Questions for the focus areas of the 10<sup>th</sup> Session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing:**  
Education, training, life-long learning and capacity-building

**National Legal Framework**

1. In your country/region, how is the right to education, training, life-long learning and capacity building in older age guaranteed in legal and policy frameworks?

“Education for all” is a slogan in Rwanda where it is known that every child has the rights to 12 years basic education free of charge. Different mechanisms have been put in place to sensitize all parents to take their children to school and sanctions are known for those who fail to do so.

Unfortunately there is nothing in legal and policy frameworks to guarantee access to education, training, life-long learning and capacity-building for older people.

One of the identified threats in the draft national elderly policy, is illiteracy and so addressing this should be one of the priorities in the policy

**Availability, Accessibility and Adaptability**

2. What are the key issues and challenges faced by older persons in your country/region with regard to the enjoyment of all levels of quality education, training, life-long learning, and capacity building services<sup>1</sup>?

The following quotes show how older people suffer from not having access to education, training, life-long learning, and capacity building services:

« I’m left behind when it comes to technology, it’s even difficult to use my cell phone and television» Said older person in Kicukiro district.

“I need skills and knowledge in learning to write and read so I can access information”. Older person from Rwanda.

The fact that there is no formal or informal education, training and lifelong learning mechanisms for older people that allow them to remain informed/updated about the new technology constitutes one of the factors for them to be left behind in the sustainable development agenda.

3. What steps have been taken to ensure that education, training, life-long learning, and capacity building services are available and accessible to all older persons, adapted to their needs, suited to their preferences and motivations, and of high quality?

There is no initiative by the state targeting the education, training, life-long learning, and capacity building services for older people in Rwanda.

After the genocide against the Tutsi in 1994, there were several initiatives for the education of people of all ages, and many of us benefited from these initiatives. Unfortunately at a certain stage, the Ministry of Education stopped those private initiatives simply because they said that this is not appropriate. There are several initiatives that should include elderly capacity building (agriculture, health, technology, finance, etc) but do not.

There are some initiatives on adult literacy run by churches.

4. In your country/region, are there studies and/or data available on the access of older persons to the right to education, training, life-long learning and capacity building in older age?

One of the most pressing issues we have in Rwanda is the absence of data on the situation of older people, including information on access to education, training, life-long learning and capacity building in older age

### **Equality and non-discrimination**

5. In your country, is age one of the prohibited grounds for discrimination in relation to education in older age?

Though not formalized, older people are discouraged from enrolling in classes/training, because the community mindset is that education is for children and youth, and all programmes emphasizes education for all as priority for youth. All the applications for scholarship target youth and there is no opportunity for adult. At workplace opportunities for trainings are given to youth, saying that they will be able to use that acquired knowledge and that their absorption capacity is high compared to older people.

### **Accountability**

6. What mechanisms are necessary, or already in place, for older persons to lodge complaints and seek redress for denial of their right to education, training, lifelong learning and capacity building?

The absence of any legal framework at all levels (no national policy on ageing and they are not integrated in other sectoral policies such as education, health, agriculture..., no UN Convention on the rights of older people) means that there are no standards against which to hold the Government to account. This lack of legal guarantees or policy commitments prevents older people making complaints. Another problem is that older people do not understand their rights and public policy processes for them to engage effectively.