



Pirate Parties International

10th Session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing Focus Area: Education, training, life-long learning and capacity-building

Submission by Accredited Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) - Substantive Input (OEWG10)

Pirate Parties International Headquarters (PPI), A UN ECOSOC Consultative Member

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Substantive Input

1) Social protection and social security

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines "ageism" as "stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination against people on the basis of their age." While ageism can certainly take the form of overt bigotry or hatred towards the elderly, what is much more prevalent is the systematic oppression of older people through the political and social institutions that make up a society, such as the workplace, healthcare system, and public services.

Pirate Parties International Headquarters is represented in over 30 nations. Our organization seeks to assist older people collectively around the world by including them in online communities. Our relevant focus for the 10th Session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing are online social protections and digital support groups for older persons.

There are absolutely no legal frameworks promoting the right to social security or protections for older persons at an international level. No steps have been taken to provide universal coverage of health care and support services, or any standard of living whatsoever, if older persons are not domiciled. Most efforts to measure and improve the standard of living of the global ageing population are academic and philanthropic.



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As a growing number of public facilities enable online registration and reception of services, many older persons find benefits and deficiencies of internet-based social services. While we are very concerned that older persons have adequate and accessible information online, we worry that they will not be able to make use of this information. An online system for social security is irrelevant if older persons cannot use it. Services are necessary that will assist older persons to take advantage of the internet for their own purposes, anonymously if they so choose.

Our organization is perhaps best known for its promotion of democratic, online governance systems (e-democracy). One of the main disadvantages of such systems is that older persons have more difficulties participating, and they are likely to feel excluded or represented by a select elite of older persons who are internet-savvy. Amazing potential exists for online communities to enable older persons who might have more difficulties arriving to physical locations to participate in activities and obtain services. However, we must admit, that we also still actively seek the inclusion of more older persons in our global online community activities.

Vulnerable minority groups often seek our assistance to help provide them social protections that their governments do not adequately provide. Global scams and irreputable businesses target older persons through online marketing. Repressed minorities and those lacking advanced education are common victims. Older persons are the easiest population to take advantage of, as they are often naive to the complex realities of the vast online community and cannot make adequate assessments about the virtue of a spam email they receive or a popup window that appears in their browser. Protections to prevent older persons from being abused by internet fraud and privacy violations are needed at an international level.

2) Education, training, lifelong learning and capacity building

The world is changing rapidly due to technological innovations. The internet allows people all over the globe to connect with each other in ways that were previously unimaginable. Borders and nation states are becoming obsolete. We are able to communicate faster with a wider range of people, regardless of distance and socio-cultural barriers. Overall, there are few legal and policy frameworks at an international level to assist and protect older persons. The internet is an international network, and yet the issue of elderly internet rights is framed as a matter of national policy. Guarantees to assist and protect the rights of older persons will remain ineffective if we do not develop internet training for a global ageing community.

Computer-mediated communication can provide significant benefits for older persons, who can more easily connect with family, friends, and caregivers. The internet potentially provides older persons with easier access to a comprehensive support network. The integration of artificial intelligence and smart technologies into appliances enables older people to utilize greater degree of independence. Technologies, such as robots and exo-skeletons, can assist older persons to care



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for themselves and obtain necessary services. However, we must also recognize resulting violations of privacy and deficiencies in human interaction. At PPI we work to train older persons to use these technologies to their advantage and to be aware of the dangers to privacy.

PPI provides older persons with resources and support to actively participate in online communities. Our goals are both to promote and protect the rights of older persons. PPI provides instruction for older persons about using internet technology, and we also ensure that they and their rights are not discriminated against. As the pace of technological change grows, consideration must be provided for those who lack the background to efficiently navigate the digital world. We thus provide facilities, tutorials, and venues that assist older persons, so that they can be represented in institutions. Likewise, we aim to protect older persons by assisting them to utilize online resources. Mentoring is a valid model for collaboration, providing centers, facilities and service models to provide technological assistance and training for older persons. We must provide elder people with means to critically assess validity and credibility of information found on the internet, certainly an essential skill in today's "common post-truth" era.

Many parts of the world are now experiencing disproportionately large populations of older citizens. Lifelong learning needs to be elevated by NGOs and governments around the globe to include systematic and intensive assistance programs that are integrated into labor and social policies. The human capital of older people often falls short of its potential. Provided further training through sponsored lifelong learning programs, many more older people should be able to remain active for longer in the labor market. While older people can and should leave the workforce at a certain age, we should encourage in-real-life social connections, cognitive activities, and physical activities for elders. These are proven to mitigate and prevent early cognitive decline (e.g. by increasing brain-derived neurotrophic factor levels and preventing depression).

Pirate Parties International is working to remove prejudices against the employment and inclusion of older persons, which include biased perceptions of their work capabilities, mental capacity, ability to learn, and ability to adapt. Older people are often prematurely forced out of the workforce, because employers lack respect for the benefits that they provide the community. They can learn new skills for jobs and provide guidance for younger inexperienced populations. They are often discouraged from participating in groups with young people. It is incumbent upon society to enact regulations that will motivate older people to remain involved in both the work force, as well as motivate the younger generations to keep them involved.

The anthropologist Margaret Mead called the modern society a prefigurative one, a backwards reality in which elders know less about the world than youths. Such a society is not without its own dangers, both to the older generations themselves who feel disenfranchised with the present, as well as younger generations who run amok due to their lack of experience and wisdom. We must not disregard the importance of incorporating older generations, lest we forsake true progress in the name of Kuhnian innovations.