



Programme Book

HelpAge Asia-Pacific Regional Conference 2018

Family, Community and State in Ageing Societies

23–25 October 2018
Tehran, I.R. Iran





Welcome

We are honoured and delighted to welcome you to the HelpAge Asia-Pacific Regional Conference 2018.

Tehran is a wonderful venue that promises not only a successful gathering and discussion but also offers a unique history and culture, amidst a friendly population and Iran's spectacular scenery.

The conference will focus on the roles of families, communities and the State in the scope of population ageing.

Much discussion has gone into better understanding the broad social and economic implications of new demographic change – shrinking proportions of children, larger proportions of older people, reduced workforce and extensive migration.

Now we turn our attention to older people and their families. How will families support – and be supported by – their older members? How will the State support older people and their families and communities as family structures change and populations age?

Our programme covers a lot of ground in two and a half days. Joining the conference are experts, representatives of civil society and international organisations, government officials, Parliamentarians, and older people themselves. The formal discussions, panels and presentations are important, but equally relevant are the opportunities to network, to connect with and learn from each other.

As co-hosts of this conference, we would like thank the many individuals who co-created this event. We encourage your active participation and interaction with one another during these days, laying the foundation for strengthened collaboration in the years ahead.

We wish you a pleasant stay in Tehran, and trust you will enjoy the conference and the traditional Iranian hospitality.

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Regional Director
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About the conference theme “Family, Community and State in Ageing Societies”

Throughout history, responsibility for older persons was assumed to lie with the family. Reflecting this shared human experience, many ageing and population policies in Asia have been based on the concept of families as the fundamental source of support in old age. The community or – as last resort – the government was expected to intervene only in cases of extreme neglect and deprivation.

This arrangement has always resulted in gaps and dilemmas, and now those gaps threaten to become wider as populations age at unprecedented speed. The shifting demographic context is affecting families, and Asian governments are struggling to understand how best to respond. Fertility has declined sharply and people are living longer. Nuclear families are becoming smaller and, with migration, more scattered. Women typically live longer than men and therefore form the majority of older populations, particularly in the oldest age groups. Women increasingly join the labour force, yet expectations of continued unpaid caregiving intensify the pressure on female family members.

In addition, the older individual as actor – presumed to be dependent on others – was largely absent from past policy discussions. The older person was viewed as the object of care by others. Now, with life expectancy extending, older people are spending more active years in relative independence and taking increased responsibility for their own care and affairs. The dynamics between older people and their families are evolving, along with consensus on how one should live the later years of life.

Families continue to be the foundation of Asia’s societies as they age. But in light of the emerging population and family dynamics throughout the region, how are responsibilities and expectations changing? How can population-wide policies and national or local services best assist older people and their families? Learning from international evidence, how can government promote functional independence in old age, thus reducing and delaying the care that older people need from others? What should be the role of local communities and civil society bodies in evolving societies, and how can government nurture those roles? What are appropriate functions for the private sector as societies age?



This 2018 HelpAge Asia-Pacific Regional Conference in Tehran will examine this theme of *Family, Community and State in Ageing Societies* from three main perspectives, learning from the rich experience of the international and Iranian participants and presenters. The first perspective is income security in old age. Material support and income from families to older household members remain strong in most of Asia, but how can we ensure that older people are not overreliant on family in light of the coming challenges posed by demographic change? The second perspective is long-term care, which in Asia continues to be provided largely by family members, particularly females. While income can be transferred from a distance, personal care requires proximity, yet proximity of family members is no longer a given. Finally, the conference examines social inclusion, which families have always facilitated for their oldest members. Increasingly, older persons need to build stronger social ties beyond their shrinking households to avoid isolation.

Where there is a vision, societies and their governments can adapt. The conference aims to share a vision of ageing societies which are fair and equitable for current and future generations of older people, as family dynamics evolve.

Conference programme

Tuesday, 23 October 2018

Morning plenary session

07:30 – 08:15	Registration
08:20	All participants seated
08:30 – 09:20	Conference opening
09:20 – 09:30	Introductions by country
09:30 – 10:30	High-level panel discussion
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee/tea break
11:00 – 11:15	Framing the conference
11:15 – 11:45	How is demographic change affecting older people and their families?
11:45 – 12:00	How can older people stay at the centre of the discussion?
12:00 – 12:10	Announcements
12:10 – 13:30	Lunch

Afternoon plenary session

13:30 – 14:30	Income <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How will income sources in old age expand as societies age?• Panel discussion
14:30 – 14:40	Short break
14:40 – 15:40	Care <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How will the long-term care context evolve as families change?• Panel discussion
15:40 – 16:00	Coffee/tea break
16:00 – 17:00	Social inclusion <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How can social connections beyond the older people's family flourish in ageing societies?• Panel discussion
17:00 – 17:10	Announcements
17:30 – 18:45	Side event 1 – Health systems and population ageing: the case of I.R. Iran Side event 2 – Emerging research on women's unpaid work



Wednesday, 24 October 2018

Parallel sessions

- 09:00 – 10:30 **Round 1: Older people and their changing families**
- **Income-1:** What trends in family transfers and personal income in old age will we see with population ageing?
 - **Care-1:** How will trends in family care for older people change in the future?
 - **Inclusion-1:** What triggers exclusion and isolation in old age and how may these grow in the future?
- 10:30 – 11:00 Coffee/tea break
- 11:00 – 12:30 **Round 2: The role of communities**
- **Income-2:** How can community organisations facilitate work in later life in ageing societies?
 - **Care-2:** What are the future drivers of expanding community-based care – civil society, market, government?
 - **Inclusion-2:** How can age-friendly communities prevent social isolation in later life?
- 12:30 – 13:30 Lunch
- 13:30 – 15:00 **Round 3: Government responses**
- **Income-3:** How can ageing societies reach universal pensions coverage and reduce overreliance on household income in old age?
 - **Care-3:** What are the most effective ways for government to support when long-term care is provided informally?
 - **Inclusion-3:** What are the most effective ways for government to reduce loneliness in later life as populations age?
- 15:00 – 15:30 Coffee/tea break

Afternoon plenary session

- 15:30 – 16:30 Panel: Drawing some conclusions
- 16:30 – 17:15 Closing
- 18:00 – 18:45 Press conference
- 19:00 Depart for dinner

Thursday, 25 October 2018

- 08:00 – 12:00 Field trip



Parallel session snapshots

Round 1: Older people and their changing families

Income-1: What trends in family transfers and personal income in old age will we see with population ageing?

Family is generally expected to provide financial support to older people, especially older women, and studies show that family continues to be a main source of income for older people in lower- and middle-income countries of Asia. But in many high-income countries where nuclear families dominate, older people increasingly rely instead on income they control personally – from state transfers, pensions, assets including home ownership, retirement savings, and wages from labour beyond retirement age. Based on recent trends, what balance in family and personal income should we expect in the future, and what is the implication of these trends for policy? How do the situation and challenges vary by gender, especially as women often have limited or no access to pension income?

Care-1: How will trends in family care for older people change in the future?



Asian populations are ageing, and many older people, the majority women, will need care and support at some point in life. Yet households are becoming smaller and more dispersed, particularly with migration of younger people, leaving fewer people at home to provide personal assistance. We celebrate expanded life expectancy and improved health prospects, which can delay the need for long-term care and allow greater independence in old age. Yet

when required, care is becoming more complex and specialised – in many cases beyond the capacity of untrained family members. Family members especially females have traditionally been the main providers. With demographic change, to what extent will the situation and past patterns of family care change? What are the main drivers of those changes?

Inclusion-1: What triggers exclusion and isolation in old age and how may these grow in the future?

Social inclusion is strengthened or compromised by a wide range of factors including public services and accessible environments and workplaces. But the first social circle for many older people is the family. In the past, many social connections by an older person took place within the household or else were facilitated

by the family. In large, multigeneration households, the older person routinely socialised with family members, or within the community together with family, although patterns varied by gender. For older persons with functional limitations, the family also provided mobility support. With family arrangements changing and migration of younger adults, the concept of family as social hub may be evolving rapidly. To what extent is family still important in a discussion of social inclusion? Will social isolation expand in the future as household structures change, and what factors including perceptions of ageism could contribute to exclusion?

Round 2: The role of communities

Income-2: How can community organisations facilitate work in later life in ageing societies?

Many older people stop working at a certain age, and beyond that point their families may provide for their material needs. But with changes in household structures resulting from demographic change, and increased longevity, work in old age is increasingly feasible and sometimes important for older women and men. For those who want to continue working, community-based organisations (CBOs) can provide credit, training, technical support and encouragement for older women and men to improve or expand their livelihoods, while linking them to government services. Such older people's associations and other CBOs can tap into the potential of people in later life to continue contributing and remain independent. But in many countries, such CBOs have struggled to expand in number or beyond a narrow range of social functions. How can such interventions reach scale and be sustainable, and what is the role of governments to promote their expansion?



Care-2: What are the future drivers of expanding community-based care – civil society, market, government?

In light of demographic and social change, the need for creative and responsive long-term care services is clear, and to move from an institutional model to home and community-based care models. But the assumed driver of expansion at community levels is not always clear. What do we mean by “community” – the spontaneous actions of community members (usually women) or CSOs, or local services funded and driven by the government or private providers?

How significant is the role of community volunteers in the provision of community-based care? In light of clinical, ADL and psycho-social services, what are the various roles and interactions as well as the relative strengths of the main providers – civil society, the private sector and government? What does international experience teach us about successful attempts to expand coverage and better integrate community-based care services? How does the impact of these interventions vary by gender?

Inclusion-2: How can age-friendly communities prevent social isolation in later life?

Family is an important channel for enabling social inclusion and preventing isolation, though these relationships may be different for older women and older men. With demographic change bringing smaller and more dispersed families, the practical and personal assistance family members provide older people may decline. At the same time, independence in older age is an increasing expectation among older people themselves. Expanding functionality and managing disability can support greater autonomy in old age. WHO highlights eight key domains of an age-friendly community: the built environment, transport, housing, social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, communication, and community support and health services. How can age-friendly communities (both urban and rural) facilitate that independence and compensate for the anticipated decline in personal assistance from family?



Round 3: The role of government

Income-3: How can ageing societies reach universal pensions coverage and reduce overreliance on household income in old age?

Old-age pensions are a key intervention for ensuring income security. However, expanding coverage has been a major challenge, and now populations of older people are rising rapidly. A focus on contributory pensions has limited the expansion of coverage in low- and middle-income countries, where the labour force is predominantly in the informal

sector and workers usually earn low and irregular incomes. This is especially true for women, who are disproportionately likely to be uncovered by pensions and dependent on others for income. There are various alternative approaches, including universal social pensions which have been introduced in a number of Asian countries in recent years. What are the options for expanding pension coverage and adequacy in contexts of informality and low incomes? How does their potential impact vary by gender?

Care-3: What are the most effective ways for government to support when long-term care is provided informally?

Governments talk about “supporting families”, but what does that really mean in practice? Most older people in low- and middle-income countries have their long-term care needs met informally, usually by females in the household. But this care and support may be inadequate and put profound stress on families, especially with care needs becoming more complex. This strain can also lead to violence, abuse and neglect. Which interventions can reduce the strain on families or promote the functional independence and autonomy of the older individual? Examples of interventions include allowances, training, respite care, tax credits, special leave arrangements or flexible work arrangements. Which approaches are really effective, and what are the characteristics of successful delivery? Does the provision of alternatives weaken family care (i.e. substitution) or complement it? What are the dynamics by gender?

Inclusion-3: What are the most effective ways for government to reduce loneliness in later life as populations age?

Many countries with advanced ageing populations – including Japan, South Korea and some European countries – have experienced worrying trends towards loneliness, depression and social isolation among older people. Isolation may lead to additional risks of violence, abuse or neglect. Isolation often occurs among older persons or couples who live alone or who lack close family ties, and those ties may come under additional pressure because of demographic change. With advancing age, many women and men lose connection with their friendship networks and find it difficult to initiate new friendships. If ageing in place is no longer an option, migration to a new social or cultural context may intensify feelings of isolation. What can government do practically, through policies or services, to prevent and address loneliness among older people? How might interventions vary by gender?

Join the discussion

We value your contribution and encourage you to participate in the discussions of the conference.

Please follow **@HelpAgeAPRO** and **@UNFPAasia** on Twitter and tweet your thoughts and comments using the hashtag **#HARC18**.

You can also follow the Facebook account **HelpAgeAPRO** and **UNFPAAsiaPacific**.

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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UNFPA is the United Nations sexual and reproductive health agency. Our mission is to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled.

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