



UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

Population Unit
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Policy Brief on Mainstreaming Ageing


► Viviane Brunne



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Why policy briefs?

- The challenge: Break down abstract policy frameworks of MIPAA/RIS to concrete action
 - ✓ Outline rationale for choosing a particular policy alternative
 - ✓ Concise, easily understandable for broad audience
 - ✓ Summarize state of the art policy debate on an issue
 - ✓ Good practice examples represent geographic variety
 - ✓ Graphic illustration
 - ✓ Check list for implementation
 - ✓ Provide suggestions for further reading

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Policy brief: mainstreaming ageing

“to mainstream ageing in all policy fields with the aim of bringing societies and economies into harmony with demographic change to achieve a society for all ages”

Policy Brief
Mainstreaming Ageing
 To mainstream ageing in all policy fields with the aim of bringing societies and economies into harmony with demographic change to achieve a society for all ages (Commitment 1 of the UNICE Strategy on ageing)

Population ageing entails important and far-reaching implications across all spheres of society. Ageing-related issues therefore need to be integrated into all policy fields in order to bring societies and economies in harmony with demographic change. This policy brief looks at how governments can do this and provides selected examples. It also addresses the ways in which older persons can be involved in designing, implementing and evaluating ageing-related policies and programmes.

Challenges concerning ageing
 Populations in Europe and North America are ageing, but most find themselves still in the stage of the so-called demographic bonus, a situation when working-age adults make up the largest share of population and the share of dependent children and older adults is relatively small. This situation will end as the large generations are approaching retirement age and the dependency is increasing further. This requires adjustments in many policy areas.

Suggested strategy: mainstreaming
 Mainstreaming ageing is a policy process directed towards integrating ageing issues into all relevant policy fields at all levels. While relying on evidence-based policies, governments should involve other stakeholders and target groups in the policymaking process. This can be achieved through a participatory approach.

Expected result: integration
 Mainstreaming helps to ensure better integration of older persons' needs into the policymaking process. This would allow older persons contribute more to society, communities and families, which should eventually help to bring societies and economies in harmony with demographic change.

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The argument of the brief: context, strategy, result

What to expect from this brief

Graphic summary at a glance

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The context and challenge

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Demographic change
 As the world population is passing through the demographic transition – the transformation of a population characterized by large families and short lives into a population of small families and long lives – the distinctive trait of this century is going to be ageing, a process where the share of older individuals in the population is increasing.

Ageing in the UNECE region
 The demographic transition is universal across the world, however, its timing varies greatly between and within world regions, and so does the onset and pace of ageing. Populations in Europe and North America are ageing, but most find themselves still in the stage of the so-called demographic bonus, a situation when working-age adults make up the largest share of population and the share of dependent children and older adults is relatively small. This situation will end as the large generations born during the baby boom are retiring and the life expectancy is increasing further. In Europe, there are now 4.4 persons in the working age per one person 65 or older. By 2025 there will be 3.1 and by 2050 only 2.1¹.

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The suggested strategy and underlying concept

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Mainstreaming ageing

Concept

Older persons make important contributions to society, to their communities and families. To ensure that older persons can remain active and independent for as long as possible, policies supporting their social and economic integration in all spheres of society are necessary. To achieve this complex goal, a holistic approach whereby ageing is integrated in all policy fields is most promising.

Mainstreaming ageing is a strategy, a process and a multi-dimensional effort of integrating ageing issues into all policy fields and all policy levels. Ultimately, the objective is to achieve a more equitable development within a society for the benefit of *all* social groups. Successful mainstreaming includes all relevant stakeholders into decision-making to ensure older persons' needs are met in all policy fields. Mainstreaming can be seen as an important tool for achieving a society for all ages.

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Tools and techniques to implement the strategy

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Laws, policies and programmes

Laws, policies and programmes are important tools to achieve a holistic approach in mainstreaming ageing. Existing policies and programmes as well as laws and regulations should reflect adequately the concerns of persons of all ages and a general framework of non-discrimination should be provided. This means, that the concerns of older persons should not be seen in isolation or in competition with other social groups.

The implications for older persons of any planned legislation, policy or programme, should be systematically assessed by way of an impact analysis. Guidelines may help to screen new laws policies or programmes for their relevance on ageing as well as on how they implement identified national priorities on ageing and indicators of success. New laws, policies and programmes should be streamlined internationally agreed standards, based on the MIPAA/RIS framework.

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Good practice examples

"Bien vieillir": avenues towards good ageing in France

An important area of mainstreaming is development of national plans and policy frameworks. The French Plan Bien Vieillir (Good Ageing) for 2007-2009 is one such case. Adopted jointly by several ministries, the Plan pursues a holistic approach on good ageing while at the same time focusing on certain priority areas. It promotes healthy living and advocates prevention, seeks to improve the environment and quality of life for older persons (incl. infrastructure, technical aids, city development), advocates older persons' participation in social and cultural life and promotes intergenerational solidarity.

In the field of health, the Plan suggests activities for preventing accidents in daily life, dealing with hearing and visual disability, cancer or dental problems. Furthermore, it foresees a comprehensive campaign to communicate incentives for older persons to adopt habits that consciously take into account a healthy diet, physical activity, healthy sleeping, good use of medicine and the general frame of mind. To promote older persons' integration in social life, the event Semaine Bleue (Blue Week) sensitizes the public to the contribution of older persons to economic, social and cultural life. The Plan suggests intergenerational living arrangements to improve older persons' quality of life and promote intergenerational solidarity. Research and innovation are encouraged by offering research grants for innovative ideas of how to achieve good ageing. The Plan also foresees experimental activities in providing special living arrangements for ageing homeless people and older migrants. Finally, the Plan makes special provisions regarding the role of the local level and takes into account the international dimension through participation in EU level projects on ageing.

Sources: Ministère de la Santé et des Solidarités Ministère délégué à la Sécurité Sociale, aux Personnes âgées, aux Personnes handicapées et à la Famille, Ministère de la Jeunesse, des Sports et de la Vie associative, PLAN NATIONAL "BIEN VIEILLIR" 2007 - 2009, http://www.travail-solidarite.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/presentation_plan-3.pdf; Questionnaire pour le rapport de suivi de la mise en oeuvre du plan international de Madrid (2002), http://www.unecce.org/pau/_docs/age/2007/AGE_2007_MICAO7_CntrRprtFRA_f.pdf

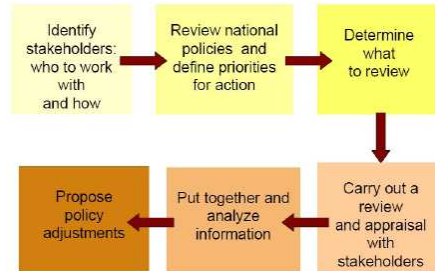


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Graphic illustration

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Source: Adapted from: United Nations. Guidelines for Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. New York, 2006, p. 18.



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Mainstreaming ageing: Checklist

Mainstreaming tools and techniques	Purpose	Tools	Participants
The strategic framework	Systematic consideration of ageing-related concerns in all areas and all levels of policymaking. Provide an overall framework of action	National action plan on ageing, a similar strategic document or a set of linked documents covering the area.	Government, interagency bodies, other relevant stakeholders
Laws, policies and programmes	Evaluation of existing laws and policies, making necessary adjustments with respect to needs and concerns of older persons	Guidelines on mainstreaming ageing concerns into new laws, policies and programmes; impact analysis regarding ageing and older persons	Legislative bodies, government agencies, consultative bodies on ageing.
Institutional setting	Ensure exchange between departments and agencies, to avoid duplication and achieve coordination. Achieve a clear distribution of tasks. Ensure representation of older persons and other relevant stakeholders in decision-making. Adherence to a non-discriminatory framework	Interdepartmental or interagency working groups, councils or commissions, national consultative bodies, focal point on ageing, office on age discrimination or ombudsperson	Government national, regional, municipal, older persons' representatives, NGOs, private sector, trade unions
National budget	Ensure annually that the budget process takes the concerns and problems of older persons into consideration. Increased equity in national resource allocation. Fair and progressive tax system.	Budget. Tax system.	Finance ministry. A unit or focal point on mainstreaming ageing may be established.
Data collection and analysis	Availability of socio-economic data about ageing and older persons as knowledge base for policymaking. Involvement of all stakeholders in the policymaking process through participatory methods	Quantitative and qualitative data collection: census, civil registration, surveys, focus group discussions.	Governments. Research institutions. NGOs.
Awareness raising	Increased visibility of the topic. Sensitization of the public to concerns.	Dissemination of data. Advocacy campaigns on local.	Representatives of groups of older persons.

Check list for easy implementation



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Check list for easy implementation

Consulted and recommended sources

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Zelenev S. Towards a 'society for all ages': meeting the challenge or missing the boat. *International Social Science Journal* 2006; 58 (190): 601-616

The listed materials of the United Nations are available through the web site of the Programme on Ageing:
<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing>

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- ✓ Suggest your good practice examples
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